



Smart Defense and the Future of NATO:

Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?

CONFERENCE REPORT AND EXPERT PAPERS

March 28-30, 2012

PRESENTED BY



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Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?

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Conference Report and Expert Papers

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Foreword

In June 2011 outgoing U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates repeated in public what many had privately acknowledged: NATO, the lynchpin of European security and transatlantic relations, faces “the real possibility [of] a dim, if not dismal future.” The experiences in Afghanistan and Libya have pointed to the consequences of chronically underfunding defense establishments, the difficulties in getting twenty-eight sovereign states to commit resources equitably and predictably, and the challenges of responding effectively to new, rapidly emerging threats. The transatlantic alliance must confront a number of fundamental strategic questions about its future.

It is good timing, then, that the 2012 NATO summit—to be held in Chicago on May 20-21—is quickly approaching. Some fifty heads of state and government from NATO member states and ISAF partner nations will arrive at Chicago’s McCormick Place for two days of deliberations. The most pressing issue will be the war in Afghanistan. Following the May 1 signing in Kabul of the U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement by Presidents Obama and Karzai, alliance leaders will give considerable attention in Chicago to shaping the contours of a wider NATO-Afghan partnership post-2014.

Beyond Afghanistan, leaders will no doubt have many notable items for discussion: defense spending in an age of austerity, NATO’s Smart Defense initiative, the alliance’s expanding global network of strategic partnerships, missile defense—the list

goes on. How will NATO choose to invest in collective security? How can the Chicago summit promote a more capable alliance? How will the alliance integrate new partners into operations without diluting its potency and flexibility? How can NATO devise a strategy in line with its ambitions? Where should the alliance place its focus in light of America’s strategic pivot toward the Asia Pacific?

These questions compelled The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, in partnership with eight institutions from NATO member countries, to bring together leading thinkers and policy practitioners in late March 2012 for a two-and-a-half-day conference, titled “Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?” Participants engaged in a focused examination of the challenges and opportunities confronting the transatlantic alliance in a time of changing threats and constrained resources. This report and the accompanying papers, which the Council commissioned in support of the conference, serve as a useful framework for understanding and discussing these issues in advance of the Chicago summit.

The Chicago Council has a rich history of collaboration with transatlantic research institutions and foundations. For more than thirty years, the Council hosted the Atlantic Conference, a biennial event that brought together North American, European, and Latin American thought leaders and decision makers. The last one, convened in 2006 in

partnership with Real Instituto Elcano in Madrid, focused on migration and migrant integration. The Council cosponsored a conference on homeland security in 2007 with London's Royal United Services Institute. And last year, the Council published *The Transatlantic Alliance in a Multipolar World*, a report that bundled five working papers on topics such as "NATO's Nonproliferation Challenges" and "NATO and the Protection of the Commons."

This year's conference brought together partners both old and new. We are grateful to the following institutions for their support, collaboration, and camaraderie: The Atlantic Council of the United States, Canadian International Council (CIC), Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI), Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS), the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Global Political Trends Center (GPoT) of Istanbul Kültür University, the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI).

The Chicago Council and its partners are sincerely grateful to the following organizations for their generous support of our March conference and this accompanying publication: NATO Public Diplomacy, Finmeccanica UK Ltd, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Consulate General of Canada in Chicago, Saab, the Cooper Family Foundation, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, and DePaul University.

Lastly, I would like to extend my appreciation to the members of The Chicago Council staff and its advisors who made this conference and publication possible. The Council's vice president of studies, Dr. Rachel Bronson, oversaw the conference's planning and execution. Ambassador Fay Hartog Levin, senior advisor on European affairs to the Council, provided invaluable guidance and was instrumental in securing the participation of key participants. Chris Moffo, assistant director of studies, managed the project and served as primary point of contact with our partners. Dr. Molly O'Donnell served as conference rapporteur and coauthored the report with Dr. Lisa Aronsson of RUSI. As always, Senior Fellow Richard Longworth turned his expert pen onto portions of the report. The conference's

strong execution is thanks to the Council's special events team, which includes January Zell, Elizabeth Lulla, and Carrie McAlpin. Elisa Miller and Anna Edwards were instrumental in securing sponsorship and funding support. Samantha Skinner and Nadine Apelian Dobbs managed the communications strategy and media outreach. Jon Macha, Craig Kafura, and Rick Dembinski coordinated the Council's social media platforms and online content. Program consultant Jillian Ridderbos and interns Abhit Bhandari and Janice Shon provided valuable project support. Catherine Hug was the editor for the report and commissioned papers.

This conference report and expert papers serve as a fitting "scene setter" for the NATO summit in Chicago.

Marshall M. Bouton
President
The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
May 2012

Conference Report

On March 28-30, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, in partnership with eight institutions from NATO member countries, hosted a conference on “Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?” The conference, which took place less than two months before the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago, brought together diplomats, policy practitioners, experts, and journalists from ten NATO countries as well as Australia, Pakistan, and Russia.

The conference focused on the ongoing campaign by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen to make NATO more efficient and cooperative through “Smart Defense.” The conference also addressed important underlying themes—transition in Afghanistan, defense spending in an age of austerity, stalled progress in the NATO-Russia relationship, new partners for twenty-first century challenges, and the future of U.S. leadership within the alliance—all of which illustrate how much has changed in the two years since the NATO summit in Lisbon, Portugal:

- The global financial crisis has taken root, especially in Europe. European defense spending is

falling, just as the United States is urging its allies to spend more. The American military budget is also likely to contract. Allied defense spending may be declining in real terms.

- The Obama administration has announced its “pivot” to Asia. For the first time since World War II, Europe may no longer be the focus of American strategic planning.
- NATO forces will withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2014—maybe sooner. At best, NATO will leave behind a secure nation, bolstered by billions of dollars in Western aid. Alternatively, it could leave behind a security vacuum with promises of aid that may never be fulfilled.
- NATO’s Libyan intervention ultimately succeeded in spite of complications that exposed the alliance’s interoperability gaps and lopsided contributions. The Europeans—the French and British, in particular—led the campaign, with the United States in support. This was a first in such a major mission. Still, only eight of NATO’s twenty-eight members flew sorties



Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, former U.S. under secretary of state for political affairs, speaks to an audience of more than 350 Council members.

over Libya. Germany—by far Europe’s strongest nation—remained on the sidelines.

- Europe is peaceful, which means that any future NATO missions will be “out of area,” as were Afghanistan and Libya. Is NATO going global? NATO leaders are talking now about future missions around the world carried out by groups of NATO members—a sort of “defense by breakout sessions.” Are there limits to these out-of-area ambitions?

Today, NATO faces a critical juncture. To remain relevant, it must continue to evolve and make major changes—to its structure, missions, and temptations. To remain in power, political leaders in the member countries must manage significant financial challenges. The issues and questions discussed at The Chicago Council’s conference in late March will be on the table at the 2012 NATO summit and may make the Chicago meeting a true watershed summit.

This report begins with a summary of the conference sessions, followed by commissioned papers by conference attendees, the conference agenda, and a list of participants. The report is a guide to the key questions being addressed at the 2012 NATO summit and to the questions that will likely confront the alliance in the coming years.

The report and papers that follow would not have been possible without the support of the key partner organizations, including the Atlantic Council, Canadian International Council (CIC), Canadian Defense and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI), Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS), the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Global Political Trends Center (GPoT) at Istanbul Kültür University, Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), and the Chicago NATO Host Committee.

Economic realities: Scope and depth of austerity

The decline of defense budgets among alliance members is one of the most important challenges NATO faces ahead of the Chicago summit. Strong and stable public finances are essential underpinnings for national security, and allies must reduce

their public deficits to help build and sustain their armed forces and defend themselves against external threats. Reductions in defense spending across the alliance, however, are driving a wedge between the United States and its European allies. Twenty-four allies failed to meet the agreed 2 percent benchmark for defense spending. In most countries, personnel costs—rather than investments in new technologies and capabilities—continue to account for most of national defense budgets.

The conference discussion began with a reference to Secretary Gates’ farewell speech in Brussels in June 2011. Gates warned that

the United States could soon grow tired of covering 75 percent of NATO’s bill and subsidizing NATO by spending three times the European average. Increasingly, American leaders will look for a genuine security partnership across the Atlantic as well as partners who take security seriously and make substantial contributions to their own defense. In this context, panelists focused their remarks on the interdependence of the European economies and North America, explanations and implications of uncoordinated cuts across Europe, the difficulties European politicians face in generating public support for defense, and the relative importance of the transatlantic political link in difficult economic circumstances.

The Rt Hon James Arbuthnot highlighted the close relationship between the United Kingdom and Eurozone currencies and the challenges both face. He argued not only that the concept of a com-



Council President Marshall M. Bouton welcomes conference participants.

mon currency was flawed, but that some nations had failed to play by their own rules. Fiscal union, he argued, ultimately depended on a preexisting political union: The EU cannot create such a union if its people do not want it. In this context, the Euro cannot survive. If it does, the political price for Europe may be too much to pay. The role of the European Central Bank is increasingly important, but it struggles to implement its mandate and support the troubled European banking institutions. Meanwhile, challenges related to unemployment and slow growth—or no growth at all—are not expected to let up. Europe’s institutional problems and declining defense budgets might leave its armed forces with outdated equipment and a reduced ability to project power.

Panelists agreed that NATO has, in some ways, become a victim of its own success. The alliance kept the peace in Europe for seven decades. During the Cold War NATO relied on nuclear deterrence, which was much more affordable than conventional armies. Mr. Arbuthnot argued that the right thing to do after the Cold War, with nuclear deterrence less effective, would have been to increase defense spending. Europeans, however, decided to take advantage of the “peace dividend” and reduce spending in the 1990s and 2000s, which has led to a European “crisis of understanding” around defense and security. Armed forces were drastically reduced, and the power of modern weapons meant fewer and fewer people were required to operate them. As a result, the percentage of people with experience in the services declined, and politicians grew less able to explain to their publics the importance of defense investment. It is now very difficult for political leaders to build support for defense. In emergencies, of course, military intervention can be necessary to uphold national interests, keep sea lanes free and open, and protect jobs.

Reductions in defense spending across NATO, coupled with operational fatigue from Afghanistan and a declining appetite for interventions, have proved challenging enough. NATO Senior Defense Economist Adrian Kendry argued, though, that further economic contraction could pose an even more dangerous threat to transatlantic relations

and NATO, as leaders across Europe are prioritizing debt reduction and economic growth over defense and security investments. As a first step they need to approve the European stability mechanism to avoid more of the contagion and destabilization that they have experienced in the past year. This must be done in difficult circumstances, with uncertain oil prices and crises flaring in the Middle East. Mr. Kendry argued that NATO should remain confident as Europe tackles these challenges, but that it must also remain realistic. He reminded conference attendees that, in addition to the explicit problems of debt and deficits facing Europe, the continent also faces demographic problems and looming increases in the cost of medical care and pensions as the population ages.

Mr. Arbuthnot and Mr. Kendry argued that interdependence among the NATO allies is also an important aspect of the debate about austerity and defense. It is vitally important that both North America and Europe continue to foster and support transatlantic trade links by reducing barriers and nontariff barriers to trade and by prudently managing their economic interdependence. The United States is vulnerable to future shocks and instability in Europe, with roughly 20 percent of American exports and 30 percent of its deposits finding their way to the European continent. All of the allies are exposed to Greece, Italy, Spain, and others, and all of this is happening at a time of significant geopolitical shifts as well as changes within NATO



The Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP, chairman of the UK Defence Select Committee, explores the challenges facing NATO in the midst of the global economic crisis.

headquarters, where reform of the agencies and command structure is under way.

The panelists concluded that when analysts look at the current economic crisis in the rear view mirror, the most important question will concern the relative importance of the transatlantic political link in global affairs. The United States will continue to be one of the most important economies in the world—one characterized by dynamism, technological development, and innovation. Europe, on the other hand, will be relatively less powerful in the world, even if it manages to chart a path toward a quick and stunning recovery. North Americans and Europeans will need to think of an imaginative solution if their political link is to remain as central for global security as it has been in this new economic context.

NATO's political ambition in a changing strategic context

The global strategic context is changing rapidly just as NATO is attempting to redefine its ambition, renew solidarity, and demonstrate its relevance for Europe and North America. In his keynote address to conference attendees, U.S. ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder argued that globalization is the main driver for these changes in the strategic environment and that the accelerating flow of communications, commerce, and capital across borders presented the most difficult challenges for NATO policy. As a consequence, allies face challenges concerning migration, trafficking, economic dislocation, the diffusion of power to nonstate actors, global terrorism, accelerating climate change, and natural disasters.

Dr. Karl-Heinz Kamp of the NATO Defense College argued that strategic change within the West would also affect NATO's choices. The U.S. strategic rebalancing toward Asia and the Greater



U.S. Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder delivers a keynote address to conference attendees.

Middle East, he said, may not lead to a trend away from Europe, but it will have important consequences for NATO, particularly on decisions related to resource allocation and political attention. It is in Europe's interests to keep the United States engaged and to ensure that NATO remains relevant for North American security. The imminent downsizing of the American military, which follows almost twenty-two years of persistent war fighting and massive increases in the American defense budget since the late 1990s, will also challenge NATO. Europe, on the other hand, faces continuing economic crises and social instability, which could lead to explosions of violence in

Greece or elsewhere. It might also lead to increasingly xenophobic policies, an inward focus, or even the balkanization of parts of Europe. Meanwhile, NATO-Russia relations are in the midst of a profound change: Allies feared a resurgent Russia in 2008, but challenges now stem increasingly from Russia's weakness rather than its strength.

Equally important shifts are taking place in other parts of the world. The Arab uprisings, revolutions, sectarian conflict, and civil wars across the Middle East and North Africa increase the likelihood that the region will remain unstable for years to come. The al Qaeda threat, though crippled in Afghanistan, will remain diffuse and unpredictable. Whatever the outcome of the crisis over Iran, the region will be transformed yet again. Deterrence will be brought back into defense planning debates if a nuclear Iran emerges. Whatever the outcome, NATO will be affected. It is not clear, though, what kind of a role—if any—NATO would be willing and able to play in such a contingency. A conflict on the Korean peninsula could draw NATO allies with commitments to South Korea into a conflict that NATO might not otherwise be prepared to fight. Equally, a miscalculation between the Chinese and one of its neighbors in the South China Sea would

challenge important trade routes for Europe. Uncertainties about China's military modernization and its underlying intentions are also leading to a quasi-arms race in what is already an region.

Participants discussed NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept in the context of a changing environment. The Strategic Concept defined NATO's core tasks as collective defense, cooperative security, and crisis management. The document outlined a "flexible, adaptable approach," though it did not update alliance ambition. Participants argued that the flexible, adaptable approach adopted at Lisbon is widely accepted as the right way to position the alliance. But Damon Wilson of the Atlantic Council suggested that it had not given NATO the renewed self-confidence it needs. Political divisions continue to reinforce gaps between NATO's ambition and its capabilities. Allies are reluctant to trim their ambition, but, without at least redefining it, they may be forced into a strategy of simply defending borders without any capability to project European power. NATO reform has attracted attention, but it is focused on slimming down the organization and streamlining the command structure. NATO isn't asking itself the most basic questions about what it wants to deliver in this rapidly changing context.

Dr. Jamie Shea, NATO's deputy assistant secretary for emerging security challenges, believes the alliance must get better at anticipating and preventing contingencies, deterring threats, and preparing for unexpected operations. This means doing a better job of modelling hybrid threats at NATO headquarters—identifying tipping points, triggers, and key vulnerabilities. It also means improving strategic consultations and assessments within NATO and with partners.

In adjusting to the new context, NATO must improve its relationships with other ministries, partners, multilateral organizations,

and civil society. As Dr. Shea pointed out, the "cyber czars" at NATO headquarters are an instructive example. The majority of them had never been to NATO headquarters, but their efforts have helped improve NATO's understanding of the extent to which it can work with Eupol and Interpol in sharing information. Improved engagement with multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the EU can also lead to smarter defense diplomacy. The UN works with parliaments, governments, and civil society when involved in operations, and NATO should be able to engage with those actors as well. The formal partnership frameworks should also be updated, and NATO's geographic focus should expand to include the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean (with its critical sea-lanes). Meanwhile, emerging economies are building their own institutions and investing heavily in NATO economies. It would be wise for NATO to build a strategy to engage these nations—even with those that do not share NATO's values. Partnerships are a growth area for NATO—they bring capability, knowledge, and opportunities for consultations to Brussels. NATO must consider what it can offer those partners in exchange.

Finally, Polish Under-Secretary of State for Security Policy Ambassador Bogusław Winid argued that allies must (re)commit their political attention to Article 5 and to European security. Europeans expect the United States will continue to demonstrate leadership in NATO, even as it rebalances its global strategy. NATO must also continue to invest in building interoperability with allies and planning for Article 5 contingencies. Damon Wilson added, though, that the United States expects European allies to continue to aspire to shape global affairs in spite of austerity. The United States expects Germany to take responsibility for Europe's



In his keynote address, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges Jamie Shea underscores the alliance's need to effectively manage new types of crises, including cyber attacks.



Damon Wilson, executive vice president of the Atlantic Council, responds to a question, while Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, director of the Paris office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, looks on.

defense, the United Kingdom to hold onto its ambition to play a global role, France to remain committed to Atlanticism as a default setting, and Turkey to take its place as a major strategic ally within the alliance. Other allies such as Norway, Denmark, Poland, Canada, and Italy must do more to provide enablers for deployable and sustainable forces. NATO can remain useful to Europe if it can facilitate European military action where individual nations would not be able to act alone. NATO will reaffirm its relevance if it can come to terms with austerity, reach out successfully to partners, and facilitate European military leadership.

Afghanistan: Learning the right lessons and turning to transition

The Afghanistan operation has consumed NATO for over a decade. It has become the glue that holds the alliance together as well as a driving force behind concept and capabilities development and interoperability. The mission has evolved over time from the initial operation in Kabul, to expansion across the country, to the surge and transition and now withdrawal. There has been no shortage of commentary about this operation, about what success might look like, and about whether it has been or will be worth the costs. Allies are beginning to ask themselves what NATO will leave behind in Afghanistan, what they will take away, and how the allies have been affected by the experience.

In reflecting on the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Lieutenant-General Marc Lessard (Ret.) identified areas where NATO had excelled and areas in which improvement is needed. NATO proved impressive in its ability to maintain cohesion despite challenges on the battlefield, political divisions, lack of public support, and changes in strategy. NATO was also successful in integrating more than fifty allies and partners into the mission and galvanizing support for a common purpose. This was done in spite of the fact that some brought difficult caveats into the theater, while others had niche roles, varied interests and different reasons for contributing to ISAF. Diverse partners lent legitimacy to the operation. At the same time, Lieutenant-General Lessard and another speaker, Pakistani author and journalist Ahmed Rashid, argued that the caveats proved a serious obstacle for NATO to overcome. When countries refused to go on the offensive against the Taliban, it was demoralizing for the Afghans and created confusion among them, while allowing the Taliban to penetrate the north and western regions. Meanwhile, relations between multinational commanders and national representatives were strained, and Lieutenant-General Marc Lessard felt NATO struggled to share appropriate intelligence, resources, and critical enablers. Lessons should also be drawn from the length of time it took to develop and implement counterinsurgency (COIN). Years were lost because of the absence of strategic focus during the Iraq war, and it was only with Generals McChrystal and Petraeus that the appropriate strategy was defined and funded. It also took too much time for the allies to get a basic understanding of the historical context, political sensitivities, and tribal structures in Afghan society.

NATO then turned its attention to transition. Beyond timelines and political communiqués, transition was intended to enable Afghans to provide adequate security themselves. Central to the strategy is NATO's support for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). As Ahmed Rashid pointed out, the Afghan forces have already been rebuilt three times. The challenge for NATO is not only to generate capacity but to build a sense of national

identity, leadership, and Afghan loyalties to the state. It took too long for the United States to take ANSF training seriously, and some argued the forces have consistently lacked a core officer group of Pashtuns on which they could rely to help build up the Afghan National Army (ANA).

To be sure, the ANA has come a long way. In 2006 joint ISAF-ANA operations were a real hindrance, but Afghan tactical skills have improved, and Afghans are now taking the lead in key operations. Still, the ANA cannot take much strain, and asking them to take over a government operation against an insurgency in 2015 would be setting them up for failure. Security-sector development will remain critical, and NATO will have to keep up the training, mentoring, and apprenticeships. It will also have to continue supporting the professionalization of the forces and the ethnic and regional balance within them. It will also have to continue providing enablers and support for ministerial reform. Beata Górká-Winter of the Polish Institute for International Affairs (PISM) argued that more emphasis must be placed on investment in the Afghan Defense University in Kabul and other military academies, while ensuring ANA officers enjoy continued access to Western military academies.

Transition has also brought a wider civilian focus to the operation, argued Dr. Mark Jacobson of the German Marshall Fund. NATO has invested in building up the rule of law, governance of civil society, and sustainable economic development across the country. President Karzai remains “reliably challenging,” and the politics of Kabul will con-

tinue to challenge NATO with the overlap of elections and the end of the combat mission in 2014. Unless the Afghan government can achieve legitimacy and deliver basic justice to its people, inequities will continue to drive the insurgency. Cohesion between Afghan government ministries and the Afghan armed forces must also be strengthened to foster a culture of service to the nation and to counter the perceptions of corruption and entitlement.

The economy also needs attention. Many Afghans will be out of work after 2014, and NATO must work with others to curb the flight of capital, engage ministries on financial management, and build expertise in online budget execution. The Tokyo donor conference in July 2012 falls at an important juncture and should ensure stable funding in the short term while plotting a strategy for longer-term sustainability.

Finally, the speakers agreed that a political settlement is a prerequisite for transition and withdrawal. NATO cannot leave Afghanistan in a state of civil war. Talks with the Taliban must progress toward some sort of a power-sharing arrangement with buy-in at the domestic, regional, and international levels. The talks are ongoing, but extremely difficult. Ahmed Rashid felt President Karzai has failed to build a political consensus around the talks. Warlords in the north have taken a belligerent stance against them. Some in Kabul still think talks are taking place for Karzai’s interests rather than for Afghans more generally, and talks are galvanizing tensions across the nation.



Panelists discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) as it prepares for transition in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, prospects for a regional settlement are worse than they were four years ago. All of Afghanistan's neighbors are problematic. Trust has bottomed out between the United States and Pakistan, and the crisis over Iran's nuclear ambition means it is impossible to engage Iran on the subject. None of the neighbors want to see ISAF in Afghanistan after 2014, but a rush to the exit might prove more problematic.

Panelists concluded that transition in Afghanistan is likely to dominate the Chicago summit agenda. Heads of state will announce that the process is on track and that the Afghans will be in a position to provide "good enough" security for their people beyond 2014. It is not yet clear, however, whether the statement will go far enough toward planting the seeds for a genuine political settlement. Nor is it clear that the NATO allies will be able to demonstrate that they can help put Afghanistan on a road toward a sustainable economy. They are unlikely to make concrete pledges for financing transition after 2014, and questions remain about their ability and willingness to support funding mechanisms in place for the ANSF. The messaging in Chicago will revolve around the recently signed U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership agreement and the contours of a wider NATO-Afghan partnership.

Implementing Smart Defense

In the conference's opening keynote address, General Stéphane Abrial, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), outlined "Smart Defense" as NATO's strategy to ensure that the development of capabilities remains commensurate with the alliance's strategic and political ambitions and the evolving security environment. The strategy was launched by Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Munch Security



NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation General Stéphane Abrial opens the conference with a keynote address on NATO's Smart Defense initiative.

Conference in 2011 and calls for the development of prioritization, specialization, and multinational cooperation. Smart Defense will be one of the Chicago summit's key agenda items, and allies will be under considerable pressure to demonstrate concrete deliverables in this area.

Some see Smart Defense as a new label for the old approach to capability development in the alliance or as a NATO rebranding of the EU's concept of pooling and sharing. NATO officials, however, like to think of it as a new mind-set. This mind-set aims to encourage members to work with others wherever possible; to set the right priorities at home and together in Brussels; and to encourage

nations, especially the smaller nations, to specialize in what they do best. The concept—as General Abrial outlined—envisages NATO's role as evolving into a facilitator, or "clearing house," tailoring funding mechanisms for multinational projects, bringing industry into discussions from the earliest stages, and enhancing bilateral cooperation and "islands of cooperation." After appointing special envoys for Smart Defense, NATO socialized the concept around the twenty-eight capitals and identified a series of "flagship projects" that would demonstrate how NATO can help achieve economies of scale across the alliance. The hope is that allies will agree to more than twenty "Tier 1" projects ahead of the Chicago summit, including maritime patrol aircraft, mine counter measures, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAVs), and support arrangements for deployed helicopters. For each project, a lead nation or a lead NATO body has taken responsibility for the project's scope. Partner nations are coordinating with one another and with EU staff, where necessary.

Panelists agreed that much work has been done to develop the concept of Smart Defense. Still, Dr. Hans Binnendijk of the National Defense

University in Washington, D.C., argued that it has not yet delivered a conceptual breakthrough. First and foremost, NATO must persuade nations to make bold decisions about sensitive issues—not in isolation, but in relation to one another. It needs to find a way to penetrate the national defense planning processes in the capitals, and it cannot work unless it can remove obstacles to cooperation whilst building trust between nations. It must also find a way to guarantee the availability of capabilities that are shared, pooled, or developed jointly and offset the costs of perceived intrusion on sovereignty that will invariably accompany Smart Defense. Low levels of threat perceptions, varying priorities, and pressures on defense budgets not only make this kind of penetration unlikely, they also make it unattractive. “Shopping together” for capabilities off the shelf is hard enough because of changing governments, national requirements for electoral budget cycles, bureaucratic oversight, and industrial sensitivities. It took almost nineteen years for allies to buy five aircraft (off the shelf) for Allied Ground Surveillance (AGS). This also explains why the United Kingdom dropped out of the French-Italian project on Horizon Frigates and why the French dropped out of the Eurofighter project to pursue the Dassault Rafale.

NATO will attempt to implement Smart Defense through a mix of means, ranging from confidence building among the nations to concrete incentives. The strategy is likely to produce savings for Europe, but it does carry risk. Alliance capabilities are already deteriorating, and one con-

ference attendee feared that Smart Defense could become an Achilles’ heel. By encouraging cooperation in small groups, Smart Defense might erode alliance solidarity, lead to fragmentation, and legitimize coalitions of the willing. Multinational funding mechanisms also carry risks. At present, when nations sign up for a mission, costs lie where they fall. This presents a major challenge for Smart Defense, and it explains why the NATO Response Force (NRF) has not delivered the results many had hoped. There are also risks associated with “overselling” Smart Defense. Smart Defense cannot be allowed to become a political tool to celebrate hollow cooperation or justify deeper cuts to national defense budgets. Finally, Smart Defense must deliver real financial gains for nations with different priorities. Some member states are seeking military capability, but others have little will to engage in operations. They are more interested in finding savings in their defense budgets than gaining capability.

Dr. Binnendijk argued that work on Smart Defense should be focused in three areas:

- NATO must imagine the “residual force” it will end up with if current spending trends continue. More than fifteen allies spend less than 1.5 percent of GDP on defense, and deeper cuts are expected. If this happens, horizontal cuts will lead to problems with readiness and sustainability. Vertical cuts, such as those that have already been made in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom, will leave few nations with a real, full-spectrum force. Others already have gaping holes in their capabilities and are moving toward “specialization by default” in niche areas.
- NATO should consider the “core force.” This has attracted attention at Allied Command Transformation (ACT) and at the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington, D.C. Work is under way to identify the minimum level of capabilities required for NATO to be able to deliver on its core tasks of collective defense, cooperative security, and crisis management. Once the minimum requirements have been set at the NATO level, the Chicago summit could



The panelists for the session on “Implementing Smart Defense” prepare to answer questions from the audience.

provide an opportunity for nations to pledge that they will not make any cuts in their national armed forces that might jeopardize the core force or undermine capabilities they have pledged.

- NATO needs to think conceptually about “Force 2020.” Allies should start imagining and defining an aspirational force that goes beyond the core force and enables NATO to deliver on its core missions and maintain its current levels of strategic and political ambition.

NATO’s operational agenda will also matter for Smart Defense. As Sir Brian Burridge of Finmeccanica UK argued, the capability requirements of the extended Afghanistan campaign and the short-notice Libya operation have served to heighten awareness of both NATO’s collective capability shortfalls and those of individual nations. Smart Defense will need this stimulus if nations are to see the concept as anything more than simply “shopping together.” Without the stimulus of operations, he argued, collective alliance capabilities and the interoperability between them are likely to wither on the vine. Sustaining them requires both proactive acquisitions and the preservation of corporate operational memory, which is likely to evaporate as NATO winds down its operations and ISAF is drawn to a close.

In the context of Smart Defense, Burridge argued that NATO must ensure that a system is in place to institutionalize lessons learned and guard NATO’s intellectual infrastructure. Industrial representatives agreed that NATO must now accept a more strategic role in maintaining the body of knowledge developed through collaboration between industry and nations’ armed forces to address the capability requirements of operations. This knowledge must be maintained in order to make role specialization or mission focus groups feasible and to ensure that NATO can continue to operate across the spectrum. It is this knowledge and experience that allows militaries to expand their capabilities to meet the challenges of individual operations, thus getting every ounce of functionality out of both equipment and people.



Hans Binnendijk, vice president for research and applied learning at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., discusses NATO’s Smart Defense agenda alongside Camille Grand, director of Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS).

The international context will tell NATO what is required in its next operations. If NATO is able to safeguard its knowledge, it will be able to respond quickly and appropriately rather than relying on nations, which is how responses have been formulated until now.

Smart Defense needs to pursue a new collaborative model that brings member states, NATO, and industry closer together at the earliest stages of capability development. Sir Brian highlighted that, increasingly, the defense industry has no choice but to follow the market. In essence, this requires individual companies to form alliances so as to maximize investments, available technologies, and access to markets to provide viable and cost-effective solutions to capability requirements. Supply chains should be configured on the basis of “best athlete” rather than in response to the iron grip of “work share.” Industry already understands that capturing knowledge, harnessing innovation, and meeting market requirements is essential and that, in the future, unfettered access to intellectual property will be paramount. Future capabilities will require assurance that intellectual property can be easily adapted, modified, enhanced, and shared, depending on the user’s requirements.

If Smart Defense does not push nations beyond “shopping together,” the strategy will not be able to guarantee nations access to NATO’s collective body of knowledge. NATO officials need to simplify their own acquisition processes, develop a better understanding of the industrial landscape, and

find a way to engage with what is now a globalized defense industry. The NATO body of knowledge already exists, but it needs to be optimized, joined up, institutionalized, and made accessible so that NATO can remain a smart organization in an age of austerity.

NATO-Russia relations: Achieving meaningful dialogue

Russia was, as one panelist said, “the elephant in the room” throughout the conference. Following the cancellation of the Russia-NATO Council summit meeting in May, Putin’s recent reelection, and Russia’s stance on Syria at the UN Security Council, there is great uncertainty about the future of NATO’s relationship with Russia. NATO’s Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) is inevitably linked with U.S./NATO–Russia relations and discussions relating to core security issues, including missile defense, nuclear arms, and conventional forces in Europe. None of these discussions are moving forward.

The U.S.-Russia “reset” has not borne fruit and does not go far enough. How can NATO manage this relationship in a more strategic way? What expectations are realistic?

Throughout the session, panelists provided useful context to these questions:

- There is no inclusive security community in the Euro-Atlantic region twenty years after the Cold War. This prevents us from working closely on issues.
- There is a deep-seated mistrust between the parties that will not be diffused easily.
- There is a lack of common ground between Russia and NATO.
- There are large cultural differences in how Russia and NATO negotiate.
- The “vicious cycle” of threats followed by cooperation is not productive. The “adversarial partnership” needs a more strategic approach.

- It is only through a strategic project that the relationship can be transformed. The missile defense issue will either constructively contribute to transforming the strategic relationship or will lead to further deterioration of the U.S./NATO–Russia relationship.

Despite one panelist characterizing NATO, the EU, and Russia as “natural allies,” there was fairly broad consensus that much of NATO’s relationship with Russia will need to be managed by the United States or through other bilateral relationships and not through NATO as a whole. At the same time, one conference attendee suggested that, particularly for “smaller” countries that are not “natural” partners for Russia, NATO may be a useful forum for discussion. In the end, participants suggested several ways in which NATO can work to soften the edges of discord that currently exist.

NATO will have a missile defense program, and it would be best for alliance to address it in collaboration with Russia and with respect for its concerns. One participant commented that U.S. engagement with Russia on missile defense will ensure that Russia remains on the right side of history moving forward and may lead to the creation of a strategic bond between Russia, the United States, and NATO. This is essential: Without more confidence on both sides, NATO will not be able to discuss Smart Defense with Russia.

A fundamental aspect of the EU-NATO relationship is a shared EU-NATO mental framework.



Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, stresses the need for the United States and Russia to move from residual adversary to strategic collaboration.



Ambassador Rastislav Káčer, president of the Slovak Atlantic Commission, recalls his diplomatic interactions with senior Russian officials while serving as ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States.

The same cannot be said of the NATO-Russia relationship. Russia sees missile defense systems in Europe not as a deterrent to Iranian or other outside missile attacks—of which both sides should be concerned—but as a threat to Russia. Russia’s viewpoint that any missile defense system in one of their former states is an aggressive act against them must be addressed before any conversations can move forward.

Russia will never see itself as equal to less powerful nations like the Baltic or Scandinavian countries and therefore is less open to sitting at a table of twenty-eight equal partners in negotiations. As it is virtually impossible to have any sort of treaty or agreement between all NATO member states and Russia, any demand on Russia’s side for a legally binding, written agreement on missile defense that would require the approval of all NATO governments—including U.S. Senate approval—is a non-starter. This prevents even modest advances in the negotiations between NATO and Russia. Any real progress will have to be made in bilateral negotiations between the United States and Russia.

Panelists proposed the following recommendations to enhance the relationship:

- Tactical nuclear weapons in Europe do not contribute significantly to its security. More consultations with Russia on transparency, confidence building, and reduction in these as well as conventional weapons would be an important part of a renewed dialogue.

- The Chicago summit should be a place for NATO to adopt a clear strategy for how to change the nuclear status quo relating to tactical nuclear weapons in Europe so that NATO emerges with a safer, more secure, and more credible defense. NATO should adopt a responsible framework that gives the alliance time to work on the issues associated with the removal of these weapons from Europe—including a reasonable approach to Russian reciprocity—over a reasonable period of time (five years). NATO should also issue a declaratory policy, making clear that the fundamental purpose of its nuclear weapons is to deter the use of nuclear weapons by others.

- A path to a more trusting and stable relationship must start with the search for common ground and purpose. Joint military exercises are one possible starting point. Military-to-military exercises can help build trust and hopefully reduce the Russian perception that NATO sees it as an enemy.

As one conference attendee noted, the NATO-Russia Council has done some good work. Still, the relationship is far from strategic. The United States will need to be a leader on many of the issues at hand, but Russia will also need to do its part by repairing relationships with countries in the former Soviet Union. Maintaining the status quo is not a viable option. With elections this year in both the United States and Russia, there is not likely to be any breakthrough in relations. However, this allows for time to think seriously about the relationship so that we are better prepared next year when discussions and negotiations begin anew.

Strategic partnerships: New partners for new challenges

NATO has developed a wide array of international partners since the end of the Cold War to help manage increasingly complex and interconnecting security threats. Partnership programs now exist with about forty countries:

- The Partnership for Peace (PfP), which is a framework for countries in the Euro-Atlantic region;
- The Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), which are frameworks for engaging the broader Middle East;
- Partners across the Globe (PAG), which is a more informal, less regionally specific framework that works with countries on a bilateral basis.

Each of these platforms works in different ways and under different conditions. Until recently, NATO did not have a cohesive partnership management strategy. At the Lisbon summit in 2010, NATO began to redefine its partnership policy. NATO activated a new management structure for all partnership programs in 2011, seeking greater openness and flexibility.

Against this background, General Vincenzo Camporini (Ret.) began the discussion on strategic partnerships with a very revealing anecdote: Some key ISAF partners were not invited to NATO's 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl summit, notwithstanding the fact that NATO's role in Afghanistan was an important agenda item. As NATO continues to rely on non-alliance forces, it is crucial to develop institutions and arrangements that routinely involve partners in decision-making processes. The story of Strasbourg-Kehl suggests a lack of cohesive networks between NATO and the nonmember partners that could hamper operations and strategy in the years ahead.



Jonathan Eyal of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) responds to a fellow panelist's remarks.

During the discussion, conference participants focused on three key questions:

- Can NATO develop a more robust regional strategy in Afghanistan?
- Is there a NATO role for reducing the continued political and military turmoil in the Middle East?
- Given the rising importance of Asia, should NATO consider reaching out and engaging new Asian, non-NATO partners?

Afghanistan

The NATO/ISAF mission in Afghanistan opened new avenues of cooperation with non-NATO states. The increases in interoperability have created better capability and cooperation with many nonalliance members. However, participants raised concerns that after 2014 there is no clear mechanism for how NATO and ISAF countries will continue to discuss the challenges confronting Afghanistan. Partners such as Australia have contributed significantly in Afghanistan and developed a strong connection to NATO and other partner countries. There is a desire to continue these relationships in some forum, but nothing has been formally established.

Participants also agreed that there will be no solution in Afghanistan without a regional solution. To date, NATO does not have a regional approach or a regional strategy. To this end, additional partner countries in the region should be engaged to help create and implement this strategy, and not just on a bilateral basis. Ad hoc groups like the Friends of Syria have shown this can work.

The lack of a proper platform for continued cooperation is particularly dangerous because ISAF nations will continue to support troops in Afghanistan after 2014. Who they will interact with after 2014 depends on the discussions that will take place over the next several months.

Panelists offered the following recommendations:

- NATO should consider developing a strategic consultative group that draws in regional players in Afghanistan.
- Prior to 2014, NATO leaders should establish some mechanism for ensuring continued inter-NATO/ISAF dialogue on Afghanistan to ensure a smooth transition after the official withdrawal date.

Middle East

Instability in the Middle East will continue for the foreseeable future. NATO has considerable expertise on civil-military relations that could be very useful to Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) states as they transition. However, there is no institutional mechanism with which to engage. This is where a consultative group with countries outside of NATO might make a major contribution.

Turkey was the focus of much of the regional discussion. Turkey has been a strong and reliable NATO member and needs to be better integrated into the partnership so that NATO can, as General Camporini said, “obtain the added value of them as a bridge to the MENA countries and the needed cooperation between NATO and the EU.”

NATO needs to enhance its image in the region and demonstrate that it is more than a war-making machine by using all the tools it has in its toolbox, including training and education. Along this line, several participants asked about how NATO could link activities in the Middle East and elsewhere to

overseas development agendas and the responsibility to protect (R2P) framework. Unfortunately, as one panelist noted, NATO does not feel comfortable in its capabilities outside a military role. “We allow our institutions to disable us from things we are capable of.”

Several panelists recommended that NATO explore new ways to reach out to MENA countries undergoing civil-military transformations, recognizing that each country has unique challenges and histories.

Asia Pacific

The ISAF mission in Afghanistan has significantly increased engagement between Europe and Asia. When NATO was created, the United States was building a system of extended deterrence across the globe. There was not a great deal of intersection between the system in the Pacific, where the regional institutions are built on economic cooperation, and in Europe, where they are more security oriented. The war in Afghanistan has changed this.

One participant argued that the Asia Pacific provides NATO with important opportunities. Engaging states in the region could help better develop regional institutions. Although we often think of China as the rising economic power, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, and others are also expanding. All are emerging as increasingly important trading powers. Many of them share our commitment to democracy and human rights. However, these countries will not reach out to NATO, but NATO could reach out to them.

Many non-NATO countries can play a valuable role in global security in the broader sense and should be invited to the table. Australia and Japan, for example, have made significant military and financial contributions to NATO missions and could be given more input in decision-making processes. Through exploration of wider partnership possibilities, NATO will have greater opportunities to build capacity and strengthen interoperability. There was a strong consensus among the panelists that NATO needs to widen the pool of potential partner countries, including some that may not be



Ambassador Ümit Pamir, former permanent representative of Turkey to NATO, details the value that Turkey brings to the transatlantic alliance.



Franklin Kramer, former U.S. assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, discusses NATO's future role in the Middle East and North Africa.

as politically or culturally similar as its members. Several participants debated whether a regional or functional approach to partnerships was the right approach.

Despite the changes that have been made in the revised policy of partnerships, some participants felt that the political components to partnerships are inadequate. NATO must create the means for both political and technical cooperation and understand that not every partner will have the same needs. The political value of the participation itself is as important as the technical cooperation—if not more so—for some non-member countries. When evaluating potential partnerships, NATO should consider not only what others can do for NATO, but also what NATO can do for others. Multiple participants called for consultative groups of member and nonmember countries to lead the way on the issue of regional strategy for Afghanistan, and for the Chicago summit to produce a declaration on the importance of clear regional strategies along with a call for a plan of action.

The transatlantic bargain after Gates

One of the Chicago summit's key themes is the use of Smart Defense alongside enhanced partnerships in order to keep NATO relevant and capable. Many larger questions remain unanswered, however, regarding cohesion, strategy, and implementation. This is adding stress to an already uncertain trans-

atlantic relationship. Will NATO members continue to make sacrifices for the benefit of the greater good in order to maintain the transatlantic bargain? As the Atlantic Council's Barry Pavel and Jeff Lightfoot put forth in their conference paper, "For this bargain to hold and for NATO to remain relevant for both sides of the Atlantic, its member nations will need to modernize and update their capabilities and form more dynamic and innovative regional and global partnerships to best address the array of modern threats likely to face the transatlantic community in the future."

Panelists agreed that NATO will remain a vital hub for European and North American security. There also was strong consensus that it is time for European member states to increase their capabilities and financial contributions to NATO as well as take more responsibility for security in Europe and its backyard. However, participants questioned whether the political will exists to do so, particularly in difficult economic circumstances and without strong public support in NATO countries.

Tough decisions must be made regarding how NATO's core missions will be achieved. Short- and long-term strategies must anticipate the future security risks that we know are on the horizon, and strategy must adjust to shifts in the global balance of power and to the diffusion of power to nonstate actors. Although threats and NATO's core missions are outlined in the 2010 Strategic Concept, there was much discussion in this session about priorities among threats, what would constitute an Article 5 threat, or what exactly is meant by "cooperative security." How are they defined and understood by the nations, and how are they going to be delivered? While there was general agreement that the more flexible, adaptable approach outlined in the Strategic Concept is the right way forward, there was a collective sense of frustration, given differences in national interpretations of those threats and core missions.

The larger questions and discussion of the session focused on when and how collective resources and capabilities would be used:

- If countries are going to pool resources through the Smart Defense initiative, how are they going to agree on the use of them?
- How will Article 5 be interpreted and handled and by whom?
- How would a cyber attack be interpreted under Article 5?
- Is it time for NATO to “come home” and remain focused on Europe?

NATO has strong capabilities and interoperability in some areas, but is weak in others. As panelists noted, twenty-first-century threats could come from cyber attacks, transnational threats related to climate change, terrorism, or missile threats from the Middle East or Northeast Asia—all of which could lead to Article 5 issues. However, member states are unprepared for transnational threats and still disagree about what might constitute an Article 5 response. If out-of-area operations increase, the contribution of European members will also need to increase. The United States may only lend support when interests coincide.

It is not just the United States that must contend with security issues beyond Europe. Asia and the Indian Ocean will play a big role in future security considerations for Europe, and NATO members need to consult with one another and with key

regional partners to gain a better understanding of regional politics, including areas where NATO may be able to exert leverage. If NATO is to be effective in future missions in the Middle East or North Africa, for example, it will need stronger partnerships with the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League, other international organizations, and key partner states, as the United States is less likely to play a significant role. As noted in Pavel and Lighfoot's paper, “[T]he time for NATO's political timidity in the face of such realities is over.”

Libya provides a potential model for future operations, but there was discontent over the number of countries that participated and those countries' contributions. The Libya operation also made clear that, although the United States may not be in the lead, major military action cannot happen without a significant U.S. contribution. Germany received the brunt of the criticism at this conference for not participating in the Libya campaign and for its restricted participation in Afghanistan, but several conference attendees noted that many countries either did not participate at all or participated only in a very limited way. Much concern was expressed that the splintering of NATO into fighting countries versus support countries could be devastating to alliance solidarity. However, others noted that having clusters of countries with specific skill sets might be an effective way to implement Smart Defense.

Something must be done in Europe to keep the alliance strong and secure. The first step, according to one participant, is to address the capabilities shortfalls. Second, Europeans need to tackle the underlying political issues among themselves, including differing threat perceptions and different thoughts on the relative focus between Article 5 and non-Article 5 operations. Much work remains to be done on NATO-EU relations as well. The EU, however, cannot necessarily cover all its security needs without NATO. One conference attendee claimed that NATO's significance to the United States is less about security (because of the dominance of the U.S. military) and more about political alliances that provide legitimacy for multinational operations overseas. NATO's future, according to one American participant, must “not [be] about the



The conference's closing session opens with remarks by His Excellency Philippe Errera, permanent representative of France to NATO, and His Excellency Martin Erdmann, permanent representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to NATO.



Panelists discuss the future of U.S. leadership within NATO and the internal and external challenges the alliance must overcome in the years ahead.

United States *in* Europe. It's about the United States *with* Europe." This is particularly true in areas such as Asia and in the Middle East, where individual European states do not carry enough weight to help shape the security environment.

The United States has complained in the past about the disproportionate burden it has borne for NATO, with its share of NATO's expenses rising from 50 percent at the end of the Cold War to 75 percent today. Until now, the United States has accepted the bulk of the financial burden as part of a bargain that integrated Europe within the West and gave the United States a position of leadership and influence within Europe. Now that the United States has committed to reducing its military footprint in Europe and reducing its contributions to NATO operations where its strategic interests are not threatened, European states must take on more responsibility as genuine security providers and partners for the United States. They must also begin to think more strategically about how, when, and where to take the lead in out-of-area operations.

NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept has the potential to address many of the strains in the current transatlantic relationship, but more work needs to be done. The allies need to set priorities among the conventional and new threats they face, and they must engage in more strategic discussions on core tasks and burden sharing. For a variety of reasons, some feel that the transatlantic bargain no longer has the solid foundation it had during the Cold War. The bargain has evolved in the past in light of new

circumstances, however, and there is no reason to think that it cannot do so again, assuming the vision and requisite political will exists.

NATO's Inward Outlook: Global Burden Shifting

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Abstract: *While European NATO partners have their difficulties coping with economic problems, the dire economic and budgetary situation in the United States matters more for the alliance. We have become familiar with the challenges European members face in fulfilling their obligations. But we should understand that NATO's lead nation, shouldering three-quarters of the alliance's operating budget, is in deep economic, budgetary, and political trouble. Hence the United States will seek ways to share the burden with partners inside and outside NATO. With the instrument of a "global NATO," the United States continues to assert its values and interests worldwide. In addition to the transatlantic allies, democracies in Asia will be invited to contribute their financial and military share to establish a liberal world order.*

Domestic pressure: The power of the empty purse

It is not a secret. European NATO members, with a few exceptions, fight below their economic weight. Only four European countries, namely Great Britain, France, Albania, and Greece, have committed the agreed 2 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) for defense. Given their economic troubles, even NATO's model students, along with their less aspiring peers, will have to curtail their defense budgets in the years to come (Keller 2011).

While the Europeans have already been cutting their defense budgets by 15 percent on average since 2001, the United States has doubled its military expenditures since 9/11 to about 700 billion dollars annually, the equivalent of 5 percent of GDP (Broder 2011). This trend cannot be sustained. Greeting the incoming U.S. President Barack Obama, the Government Accountability Office (2009) warned that the dire budget situation, along with pressures

from Congress to check spending, would make it necessary for the commander in chief to find a way to cost-effectively balance the competing demands for resources in his new security strategy. Although President Obama has already markedly reduced America's military "footprint" by bringing home American troops in substantial numbers from Iraq and Afghanistan and "controlling" these important geostrategic regions with unmanned aircraft, American resolve—among leaders and the public—to engage militarily in the world, especially in the form of peacekeeping missions, will be further weakened by budget constraints.

On both ends of the political spectrum—from libertarian Republicans to Democrats with close ties to unions—arguments against America's international military engagement continue, albeit for different reasons. Libertarian Republicans, worried about the "domestic capitalist order" and the growing budget deficit, criticize costly military engagement. Traditionalist Democrats (so-called "Old Liberals") are defenders of "America's social

interests” and are suspicious of international or militarist missions that drain resources for domestic social purposes. It will be very interesting to see sequestration in action—an across-the-board cut to all nonexempt budget accounts—beginning in January 2013, or to watch the political maneuvers to avoid some of the impending reductions in the U.S. defense budget totaling one trillion(!) dollars within the next decade.

To be sure, a liberal, hegemonic worldview according to which the United States seeks to shape the world order to advance its values and interests still dominates mainstream thinking in U.S. foreign policy. In response to those “misguided impulses” that seek to downsize U.S. foreign engagement in favor of pressing domestic priorities, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2011) has a compelling answer: “We cannot afford not to.” While the United States intends to maintain its global hegemony, domestic and fiscal pressure fueled by the ongoing financial and economic crisis will force a transatlantic debate about “burden sharing.” Even as a presidential candidate, Barack Obama (2008) already warned his European audience and his countrymen at home in his Berlin speech that America and Europe should not “turn inward.” Rather, the transatlantic partners should jointly assume responsibility and shoulder “the burdens of global citizenship.” A change of leadership in Washington, Obama predicted, would not lift this burden. Therefore, the time has come “to build new bridges across the globe” that should be as strong as the transatlantic bridge.

Articulating the view on Capitol Hill, where the power of the purse resides, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (2009, A17) has been publicly demanding that European NATO allies “shoulder a bigger burden” and contribute “more combat troops with fewer restrictions.” Sensing the pressure of the legislature and the general public, the outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (quoted in Jaffe and Birnbaum 2011) was even more articulate, hammering Europeans for not even being able to take care of their own security, let alone any global responsibility they might assume.

An alliance without solidarity?

From an American perspective, Europeans have been straining the solidarity of NATO for a long time (Szukala and Jäger 2002, 70-80). The limited capabilities of most European countries, attributed to decreasing military expenses and a lack of coordination, have been a constant bone of contention (see, for instance, Carpenter 2009). Eventually a division of labor solidified in which the United States and a few allies with the political will and means led military missions, while the rest were charged with long-term political and economic reconstruction (Kissinger 2009, A19; Glenn and Mains 2009; Patrick 2009). NATO’s mission in Libya may illustrate a pattern likely to be continued in the future.

Despite this functional differentiation, each alliance member is supposed to shoulder a fair share of the burden. This can be implemented through “common funding” or other methods to split the costs more even-handedly (Hamilton et al. 2009, 15, 45-48). To this end, more efficient voting mechanisms are necessary. In particular, the requirement for consensus is considered an obstacle to swift decision making and action (James Jones, as quoted in Yost 2008).

Improving cooperation

Given the difficulties of mobilizing necessary resources within the alliance, the United States will continue to insist that NATO cooperate with willing and capable partners in and outside the alliance. While many European NATO experts hope that the partnership issue is “off the table,” U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta (2011) reminded his colleagues in Brussels that “we should look for innovative ways to enhance and expand our partnership, both with those countries outside NATO that are exceptionally capable militarily and those that strive to be more capable.”

The European Union

In order to more efficiently use limited resources, U.S. security experts have been recommending that European allies coordinate their resources (Kaim 2006, 16). The creation of the European Defense Agency (EDA) was welcomed as a first step in the right direction to optimize EU member states' individual defense budgets. "Smart defense" is yet another buzzword, but it remains to be seen if Europeans will be able to "pool" and "share" this time.

Even expectations that European governments improve the development of civil capacities within NATO are low. Therefore, the United States has been suggesting that NATO use the civilian capacities EU member states have already been creating within the EU framework (Dobbins 2005). This pragmatic recommendation turns the "Berlin plus" debate in the opposite direction by asking what assistance the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) can provide NATO, thus improving cooperation (Haftendorn 2007, 153).

Russia

Scarce resources may also lead former Cold War antagonists to cooperate. U.S. Vice President Biden's (2009) announcement to examine—in coordination with NATO allies and Russia—the Bush government's missile defense plans by means of technological and financial criteria was a first indicator that the United States is ready to "reset" its relations with Russia.

To be sure, the North Atlantic alliance will rhetorically cling to its credo, according to which countries of the Euro-Atlantic area are free (i.e., without Russian veto power) to choose their allegiances and memberships.¹ However, for important issues such as the stabilization of Afghanistan and countering Iran's nuclear ambitions, which require Russia's cooperation, the United States needs to pay a double price. For the time being, plans for stationing components of the missile defense system in

1. This has been stressed by Asmus (2009).

Poland and the Czech Republic will be postponed or coordinated with Russia. In addition, the United States will not keep pushing to enlarge NATO eastwards, leaving Georgia and Ukraine somewhat out in the cold (Haass and Indyk 2009; Kaiser 2009).²

According to news reports by the *New York Times* (Baker 2009), President Obama at the time offered a deal to his Russian counterpart to jointly examine missile defense and to figure out ways to supply American and coalition forces in Afghanistan. The NATO meeting of foreign ministers on March 5, 2009, in Brussels resulted in more points of contact. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pushed for resuming talks with Moscow, which were suspended by the George W. Bush government after the war in Georgia (Burns 2009). Hence the foreign ministers of the twenty-six NATO countries decided to recommence the formal consultations of the NATO-Russia Council. For U.S. Secretary of State Clinton (2009b) this mechanism for dialogue could serve as a "platform for cooperation" on issues that are in NATO members' interest such as transit to Afghanistan or nonproliferation.

Countries outside NATO

In order to institutionalize links with states outside NATO willing and capable of contributing substantially to single missions, the United States already began advocating for a Security Provider Forum under Bush's leadership. In 2004 then U.S. ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns put the issue of enlargement through an alliance of democracies on the agenda (Kamp 2006, 3). Hence through close links (via "a global network," yet short of membership) with like-minded democracies—in particular Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand—the transatlantic alliance should be interlaced with "strategic partners" in the Pacific area.

2. From a "realists'" perspective, the Council on Foreign Relations' Richard Betts (2009) also recommended not to continue to provoke Russia and make it clear to Georgia and the Ukraine that they will not be admitted to NATO in the near future. See also the bipartisan recommendations of the Commission on U.S. Policy toward Russia (2009, 8-10), which was directed by Senator Chuck Hagel and former Senator Gary Hart.

NATO has already been considering bilateral cooperation partnerships, diverse approaches that need to be formalized. Since 2005 and 2006 the alliance has exchanged classified information with Australia and New Zealand, respectively (Dembinski 2006). Both countries have also contributed to NATO missions in Afghanistan. NATO has developed a strategic dialogue with Japan and India. Some of the most cooperative countries such as Australia, Japan, and South Korea, have already contributed military (in the case of Australia) or logistic support in the fight against terrorism.

U.S. Secretary of State Clinton (2009a) also looks forward to “strengthening the alliances that have stood the test of time,” thinking above all of NATO partners and allies in Asia. In particular, America’s alliance with Japan—based on “shared values and mutual interests”—“is a cornerstone of American policy in Asia,” key to maintaining peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States also cultivates “crucial economic and security partnerships” with South Korea and Australia. In addition, it seeks to build on its economic and political partnership with India, “the world’s most populous democracy and a nation with growing influence in the world.”

The blueprints of Anne-Marie Slaughter, former director of policy planning for the State Department, explain how Europe and Asia can be linked. According to Slaughter’s collection of ideas, NATO should reinforce partnerships with liberal democracies in Asia to create one of several formal and informal multilateral forums, helping to create a new, networked liberal world order (Ikenberry and Slaughter 2006, 27-28). Accordingly, in his memo to the new Democratic president, Will Marshall (2009) from the Democratic Leadership Council advised him to transform NATO from a North American–European pact into a “global alliance of free nations.” Integrating democracies such as Japan, Australia, and India into NATO would not only raise the legitimacy of global missions, it would also increase the alliance’s available manpower and financial resources.

This idea, in its basic features inspired by the Clinton government, has long been advocated by

Democrats, and, in particular, by experts in the think tanks with close links to Barack Obama. An “alliance of democracies,” which already exists in the eyes of some of its advocates (Daalder and Lindsay 2004) in the form of a “global NATO,” could compete with the United Nations or serve as an alternative when efficiency, legitimacy, and burden sharing are called for. The most prominent advocate of this idea, Ivo Daalder, is U.S. ambassador to NATO.

Conclusion and outlook: Instrumental multi-multilateralism

Following the Bush government’s unilateralist actions, the United States under President Obama has made efforts to return to the path of multilateralism. Whereas the Bush government, especially in its first term, still operated according to the motto “unilateral as far as possible, multilateral when necessary,” Obama’s government has announced a reverse operational logic: “We’ll work in a partnership whenever we can, and alone only when we must.” Clearly, the new government does not fear that international alliances and organizations will lead to a reduction in the power of the United States, but believes quite the opposite. According to the U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden (2009), “They help advance our collective security, economic interests, and our values.”

Nonetheless, Europeans should be aware that “multilateral” has always been understood differently in the United States, namely instrumentally (Krause 2005, 219-238). Multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and NATO were created to assert American interests and enforce its conception of world order, while sharing the burden with the beneficiaries and preventing free riders.

Domestic and fiscal policy pressure in the United States in the course of the economic and financial crisis is likely to intensify an already heated transatlantic debate on the issue of burden sharing. The European allies will soon have the opportunity to demonstrate their “effective” multilateral engagement, be it by training and mentoring Afghan forces for a longer time in Afghanistan or by

contributing more financial resources to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq, Afghanistan, or Libya and the development of Pakistan. The U.S. government under Obama will pursue diplomatic efforts to forge George W. Bush's much maligned "coalition of the willing" into a coalition of the financially willing.

Should the Europeans prove unwilling or incapable, they would have fewer effective arguments against a "globalization" of NATO. However, even without the instrument of NATO, the United States will attempt to find new ways to ensure that the democracies in Asia, along with the transatlantic allies, fulfill their financial and military obligations for a liberal world order.

In order to strengthen the United States as a Pacific power, President Obama attended the summit meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) during his visit to Asia in November 2009, where he also had the opportunity to talk with the ten heads of government of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). In addition to the APEC agenda, dominated by Washington, the intensification of relations between the United States and the ASEAN was also discussed.

For America the ASEAN integration is extremely interesting. There are plans to establish a common free-trade zone and a security, economic, and sociocultural community by 2015. Since Obama took office, the United States has made increased diplomatic efforts to accede, culminating with Secretary of State Clinton's signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) one of the main documents of the ASEAN, on July 22, 2009. This has also laid the foundation for America's accession to the East Asia Summit (EAS). In November 2011 Obama was the first U.S. president to participate in the summit. America's engagement in the region has been welcomed by the ASEAN states, precisely because America's interests also extend their scope for action, not least against China.

In the future, in the spirit of a competitive multi-multilateralism, the various multilateral organizations and institutions will be required to compete for the attention of the United States—if Washington's plans materialize. Consequently,

America wants to be able to select the most suitable instrument for the respective task from a broad range of multilateral service providers, and if required, create new multilateral instruments to secure its interests and enforce its conception of a liberal world order.

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Focused Engagement: NATO's Political Ambitions in a Changing Strategic Context

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Abstract: NATO is the strongest military alliance in the world, but it faces a strategic dilemma. Should it focus on a limited set of tasks, or should it broaden its mandate and expand its geographic focus? How can NATO renew the consensus about its purpose as it faces new challenges and smaller means? Existing strategic challenges remain such as Russia's drive for dominance, developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and transnational risks like terrorism. Other challenging developments are gaining in strategic importance. The Arab Spring might shift power structures along the southern brim of the Mediterranean. The growing importance of China and other emerging states as global players—active also in Europe's neighborhood—must be of concern for the alliance, together with the turn of U.S. foreign policy toward the Asia-Pacific region. A focused engagement on the regions closer to NATO territory, a clear strategic view of cross-border risks, innovative efforts for better partnerships, and limited missions if necessary might provide a pragmatic mix of solutions that serve the interests of all allies, even the most powerful.

The strategic dilemma

NATO has shown the ability to adapt to new conditions quickly, reinventing itself more than once while retaining its traditional functions. Perhaps because of these shifts, there is a lack of unity among its members and therefore a lack of political will to equip NATO with the capabilities needed for an ambitious agenda. The feeble consensus about the purpose of the alliance would imply a focus on a limited set of tasks, yet the shifting global strategic landscape demands more openness and adaptability. This dilemma is all the more acute since the global financial and economic crises has led to an uncoordinated dwindling of defense budgets among most NATO members.

The conflict about competing visions for NATO's future is not over (Nötzel/Scheer 2009).

Anglo-American partners lobbying for a geographical and functional expansion of NATO quarrel with status quo countries like Germany who wish to focus on projecting stability (in situations perhaps not as difficult as Afghanistan). Members in Eastern Europe demand a more traditional defense alliance with a stronger stance against Russia.

For an alliance, such differences do not need to be fatal as long as mutual respect for each other's concerns is reflected both in strategic discussions and factual preparedness. Unfortunately, the allies do not meet these conditions sufficiently. Strategic rapprochement in NATO does not yet convey a sense of true solidarity. And the long-standing capability gap between the United States and the Europeans has been undermining NATO's cohesion and American support for the alliance decades.

The warning of the outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (Gates 2011) that the United States might find it difficult to pay for an alliance that the European allies don't want to invest in was an alarm to the Europeans. Cuts also affect U.S. defense spending. As Gates' successor Leon Panetta outlined in Brussels, "We are facing dramatic cuts with real implications for alliance capability" (Panetta 2011). Any ambitions for NATO's future must carry enough political momentum to raise the political will to allocate resources to the alliance. "Smart Defense," one of the mottos of the Chicago NATO summit, will be cheaper only in the long run. In that situation, defining a focus for alliance activities might be helpful to regain political momentum behind the build-up of capabilities.

Strategic decision making in NATO is a difficult issue, not just when facing new challenges and smaller means. The conflicts among members over the alliance's ambitions have foreseeable fault lines. Is a risky development dangerous enough to one or more allies to trigger NATO involvement? Does the situation have a military character, and is the alliance the right organization to handle it, or is there the risk of a militarization of a political issue? Is the problem close enough to allied territory to make NATO a legitimate actor? What follow-up responsibilities will NATO's strategic commitment entail, and who will pay for it? Because these questions are so difficult to answer, the most effective drivers for strategic innovation in NATO are external crises, which are, in most cases, unpredictable.

A larger agenda

In the run-up to Chicago, the alliance is facing a number of potentially challenging developments—some of them old, some of them new—which will occupy the delegations at the summit.

Russia's drive for dominance has emerged as a persistent challenge for NATO. Balancing its two objectives of collective defense and cooperative security, the alliance has to find ways to tie in Russia while making clear that Article 5 is valid for the members of Eastern Europe. The difficult partnership with Russia has not brought about proj-

ects of strategic relevance between the two sides (Monaghan 2011), maybe because of Russia's interest to maintain a harsher tone from time to time and to prevent the resolution of conflicts in Eastern Europe. Relations with Russia can always deteriorate and move up on the agenda.

Afghanistan will also remain a challenge. Even if the Afghanistan mission is drawing to a close, NATO will play a role in this weak state until 2014 and most likely in the transformation phase until 2024. Afghanistan has been labeled a test case for several new profiles of NATO. While starting from the protection of the political transformation in Kabul, the Afghanistan mission adopted challenging tasks of regional development and state building in a society not used to central government. The alliance, with hitherto limited experience in war fighting, decided to operate against terrorists and drug traffickers and ended in a full blown counterinsurgency operation with frequent high-level combat. After the withdrawal of combat forces by 2014, protecting NATO's achievements without combat troops and keeping the weak Afghan National Security Forces from dissolving into civil war parties will be a difficult task.

Transborder risks like the drug economy or refugees will also be on NATO's agenda. The situation inside Pakistan, its stability as a state, and the existing command structures of radical insurgents on Pakistan's soil will remain a security concern NATO.

The Afghanistan experience works as a deterrent for military engagement. Military engagement entails civilian responsibility. A legitimate operation and a set of rational decisions to expand it have driven NATO into an unwanted role as guardian of a difficult state-building process. Member states react differently, shy away from missions, or focus on deployments with a smaller footprint, relying more on unmanned warfare and special operations.

Cross-border risks such as terrorism, cyber war, or aggressive energy disruptions are in NATO's portfolio, although they do not tie down numerous forces. NATO's role as coordinator and political link is important, but its operational role should not be overestimated. As a military alliance, NATO has dif-

difficulties cooperating institutionally with nonmilitary actors, although this ability would be crucial in playing an operational role in the fight against these threats (Keller 2012, 7).

The Arab Spring has brought about changes, but it is yet unclear what strategic consequences the reformist uprisings in the Arab world will have. It is good to see that autocracies can tumble, but the development is risky. Elections can result in diffuse outcomes. Networks between NATO members and their Mediterranean partners might break up—not least because the alliance has been partners with the old elites and is seen as a vehicle of U.S. foreign policy. In other words, the security and interests of NATO and its members might be affected by transitions that are generally desirable but that undermine the partnership with NATO since NATO is not the partner the new leaders might seek.

The great power competition in Asia is also a major challenge. The United States as a Pacific coastal state has been shifting its focus more and more toward the Asia-Pacific region because of the enormous economic dynamics, bilateral alliances, and, of course, the rise of China as a new global player. The growing importance of China and other emerging global actors is a development that needs to be placed on NATO's strategic map. China, especially, is investing globally and has economic and energy interests to defend in Northern Africa and the Middle East as well as in Central Asia. NATO is operating in China's neighborhood. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, when rolling out the most recent regional strategy of the United States, talked about cooperative initiatives, but also about "forging a broad-based military presence" (Clinton 2011, 57; U.S. Department of Defense 2012). Some have read this as evidence of the United States turning away from Europe. The situation might be even bleaker. In a post-American world, the United States might be "number one," but it has lost "centrality and command" (Jentleson 2009, 68) and cannot play a decisive role in international crises or sustain order. That would also imply that no other player can do that, so some disorderly times might lie ahead. U.S. diplomats have been traveling many miles to reassure their traditional allies, but the

shifting interests of the strongest ally need to raise attention in Europe.

Some argue that NATO should become an instrument to help the United States project power into the Asia Pacific. Certainly, there is reason to consider a stronger political presence in Asia. NATO has been active for a long time in Asia. It has Partnership for Peace partners in Central Asia, operates in the direct neighborhood of China and India in Afghanistan, and has International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) contributors from Asia. Closer partnerships are a natural demand (Weinrod 2008). And certainly, closer dialogue and confidence building with China and India are overdue. This would entail the addition of NATO troops to the military presence in the Asia Pacific. Yet, there are also arguments for NATO to refocus on European security (Coker 2008). Would that move NATO away from core U.S. interests?

Risks within reach

The answer, and not a bad compromise, might be that NATO's ambition should be simply to do well what it can do in its own neighborhood. NATO must find a balance between global availability and more regional involvement. The alliance has seen its outreach as global at least since 2002 when the fight against international terrorism was put on its agenda. When looking at threats to the security of its members in a globalized world, the sources of risk might demand long-distance power projection from time to time. Taking out terrorist networks, patrolling sea-lanes against pirates, or controlling cargo ships containing sensitive technology are conceivable tasks for NATO that might take allied forces far away from its territory. The question is no longer "home or away" (Hamilton 2009), but how far away from home should NATO operate?

When defining NATO's purpose and why paying for more capabilities is worth it, defining it in terms of global engagement might be less attractive than concentrating on challenges in the vicinity of Europe—especially for the thrifty European allies. Yet, a number of regions closer to NATO's territory are highly volatile. While most allies have strong

interests in stability in those areas, NATO has not yet found a clear framework for being a security provider in those areas and has not applied the resources needed to really work toward conflict prevention and stability.

In Eastern Europe NATO first and foremost has to protect its members' security, and not just against military intervention. Russia has the ability to make life difficult for NATO states and its partners in Eastern Europe. Cyber attacks, infiltration of Russian expatriate communities, or cuts in energy supplies are possible future tactics that might challenge the allies and partners there. NATO needs to collect knowledge and expertise to respond to such infringements, as it already does in the case of cyber war. In addition, there are a number of open conflicts, mislabeled as "frozen," resulting from Russia's interests in increasing its influence and keeping NATO from moving further east. These conflicts jeopardize security and economic development in Eastern Europe. Western states and Russia must do more to move the conflict negotiations toward pragmatic compromise and to implement agreed solutions. To work against escalation between Russia and the eastern NATO members and to address the open conflicts in Europe, the alliance has the NATO-Russia Council. The body can sustain dialogue but needs mutual trust to cooperate on projects of more substance.

Iran has already become the source of growing tension. The risks of military attacks to its nuclear installations, of proxy wars against Israel and U.S. troops in the region, and of further proliferation have never been as acute as today. The ensuing regional power struggles might keep NATO busy for some time to come. The alliance must prepare itself for crises that might emerge from aggressive meddling by Iran in Palestine, Iraq, or Afghanistan and that would involve deeper cooperation with Israel. NATO should consider its role in helping the United States guard the Strait of Hormuz. Two strategies need more resolve. First, NATO is already developing a missile defense program against Iranian intermediate range missiles, yet the Europeans are failing to pay their share for the system. Secondly, the ongoing Deterrence and Defense Posture

Review (Kamp 2012, 5f) should make clear the goal of extended NATO deterrence against Iranian nuclear threats.

NATO could find ways to be more helpful in stabilizing transition countries in the Arab world and the Maghreb. In NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept there was no special focus on the Mediterranean as a possible theater of operations. Yet, it was in Libya that NATO engaged in a complex operation only four months after the summit in Lisbon. Developments in Libya might turn into civil conflicts that would threaten the whole region. Even now, arms trafficking from Libya in the aftermath of the fall of Gaddafi has spurred civil strife in Mali and might have facilitated the arming of al Qaeda in the Maghreb. NATO did a good job of allowing for political change in the country, but seems to have lost interest in the aftermath. It would be hard to argue that NATO must play a central role in the creation of a new Libyan state and the disengagement of the opposing factions in the country. NATO cannot be seen as contemplating operations like in Libya for similar atrocities—Syria being a case in point. Every crisis, however, will generate options for limited crisis reaction, be it for creating a sanctuary for opponents, delivering humanitarian goods, assisting in security sector reform, or sending military experts for training and consulting. Afghanistan being a sobering experience, the allies will be careful not to be drawn into year-long responsibilities for state building. Yet NATO can make a difference in smaller ways, even in the form of fact finding and monitoring, to allow for early action in times of escalation.

The alliance must adopt regional strategies that address specific crisis situations, but tie in various bilateral relations to take on cross-border problems. Deeper regional cooperation of NATO with its neighbors based on an improved network of partnerships could address the following issues:

- Energy security, in terms of physical security of chokepoints, refineries, and pipelines;
- Terrorism, with an outlook at least as transnational as its al Qaeda opponents;

- Piracy, with a more active stance, together with partners along the African coast, toward fighting the home bases of pirates on shore;
- Small and light arms proliferation as well as arms control on the local level;
- Refugees and migration, also with a view to delivering humanitarian aid.

By improving its abilities to cope with these problems and to play a role in its wider neighborhood, NATO would serve some of the core interests of its strongest ally, the United States—next to regional stability.

Political entrepreneurs as partners

NATO's partnerships are an important topic of the Chicago summit. They are an underused tool, and many believe that NATO could multiply its capabilities through new and improved partnerships, even with smaller budgets. Zbigniew Brzezinski sketched out his vision of NATO as “the hub of a globe-spanning web of various regional cooperative security undertakings among states with the growing power to act” (Brzezinski 2009, 20). In 2010 NATO began a reform of its partnership programs, creating the Political and Partnership Committee as a unifying forum and streamlining the diverse programs (Reisinger 2012). In doing so, the alliance is looking at a multiplication of forces in times of scarcity. It should look, first of all, at what NATO can offer to the partners.

The partnership programs with aspiring members, with Eastern European and Central Asian countries, are important for networking between the militaries of these countries as well as between them and NATO, a critical function in times of crisis and transition. NATO needs to revise especially the programs with the Arab world and include more material assistance and advice, but the current transitions there might impede this.

Many non-NATO countries contribute to alliance missions—to strengthen those ties is an element of American policy (Panetta 2011). For some time, countries in the Asia-Pacific region have been

important for Washington's strategic outreach there. The United States has campaigned for special status of their allies Japan, Korea, Australia, and others. The idea was that NATO was limited by its geographical membership (Daalder/Goldgeier 2006). Many Europeans were anxious to prevent too deep an integration of these countries so as not to alter NATO's geographic focus. Labeled “Contact Countries” until recently, now “Partners around the Globe” (PAG), this class of partners now includes Pakistan and might be open to Mongolia or Afghanistan in the future (Reisinger 2012, 2). These countries strengthen NATO and have a role in operational planning when they contribute. There could be other criteria for individual partnerships such as regional political clout.

More attention needs to be given to the cooperation with regional organizations such as the African Union or others (Riecke/Koschut 2008). There are many reasons to be doubtful about the prospect of organizational partnerships, but the benefits of working support for their missions would be considerable. The Arab Spring experiences as well as the crisis in the Ivory Coast have shown how important regional organizations are for ownership and legitimacy of international engagement—and how hard it is to come to a consensus regarding a crisis. The Arab League in the cases of Libya and Syria is a welcome exception. Regional organizations that convene developing countries with authoritarian rule are usually ill-suited to take a stand for democratization. Regional organizations find it hard to equip complex missions beyond simple peacekeeping. NATO has had mixed experiences with the African Union (AU), which the alliance assisted with strategic airlifts for peacekeeping missions in Sudan and Somalia. The AU missions were underfunded and did not have the intended success. Nevertheless, the partnership has evolved; NATO now supports an African Standby Force.

NATO could reach out to other organizations, but the choice is small. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) might have a role in Afghanistan. This organization, in which Russia and China play dominant roles, seeks an intervention

capability. The SCO might play a role as arbiter in Afghanistan, but has an anti-American bias, being directed among many other things against the U.S. presence in Central Asia. Some countries are, by the way, members of the SCO and Partnership for Peace. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has a small nucleus intervention unit that could be built upon. The GCC, unfortunately, has been a conservative, status quo force in the Arab Spring.

Even if the current outlook is not promising, NATO should pursue its partnerships with regional organizations. It could develop new patterns of individual partnerships or closer ties with countries that act as political entrepreneurs in these organizations. South Africa or Qatar might be helpful allies in the fight for stability.

Conclusion

NATO could do well with what it already has on the agenda. Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East (and the Indian Ocean), and the Maghreb could be the area of activity for NATO. A focused engagement in these regions based on regional strategies will improve NATO's cohesion and help to create stability in the neighborhood—with limited missions. With enough resources and networks to cope with cross-border risks, such an approach would also serve American interests directly and relieve the United States for operations elsewhere. To support this and to help NATO gain influence, innovative efforts for better partnerships based on the needs of the partners are a prudent strategy.

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Challenges for the Security Sector in Afghanistan: How to Save Reform

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Abstract: Recent dramatic events in Afghanistan expose the lack of trust between the parties involved in the state-building process and the resultant difficulties to be faced in the future. Despite the “ISAF fatigue” felt by most NATO countries, the alliance must be willing and able to engage substantially with its Afghan partners to overcome these difficulties. Local ownership of state-building efforts in Afghanistan is lacking. Challenges for the security sector include the possible decomposition of the Afghan National Army (ANA), the mounting security threats to the population stemming from the presence of armed groups of different origins, and the vast amount of time and resources it will take to sustain the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Consequently, continued support from the international community is necessary. NATO should deliver the message to the Afghan people that it will remain committed to ensuring their security.

Introduction

Recent dramatic events in Afghanistan—the burning of the Koran at a NATO military base, the massacre of civilians in a district of Kandahar by a U.S. soldier, and the assassination of American officers in the Interior Ministry in Kabul—confirm that the process of transition may be even more challenging than assumed by most politicians and experts. Not only have these events ruthlessly exposed the problem of almost complete lack of trust and positive energy between the parties involved in the state-building process, but also point out the difficulties of establishing relations in a post-2014 Afghanistan. Just after the Kandahar carnage, President Karzai demanded (not for the first time) that NATO troops withdraw from the country. Even if this declaration was issued to mollify the public in Afghanistan, relations between NATO/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan govern-

ment will remain strained for months to come. During the upcoming Chicago NATO summit, the question of whether NATO and its allies are still “willing and able” to engage substantially with their Afghan partner will be extremely difficult to answer, as two totally divergent attitudes have now emerged in Western capitals.

On the one hand, “ISAF fatigue” is an obvious and predominant feeling among most NATO countries that are wrestling with their own economic and social problems. It is not surprising, then, that most governments are already waiting for the closing bell and for the opportunity to welcome their soldiers back home. The politicians and experts who back this stance stress that the state-building exercise in Afghanistan lacks “local ownership,” putting too much emphasis on what external stakeholders and donors have to offer rather than on what can be done by the Afghans themselves. As many people personally involved in this effort admit more or

less openly, for too long Western forces and organizations were fighting this war (in a much broader sense than wiping out the insurgency) instead of Afghans, who were at best supporting this prohibitively exhaustive campaign.

On the other hand, an equal number of commentators argue that too much has been done already to risk spoiling the positive effects of NATO's almost decade-long engagement. There is a deep conviction, backed by historical record, that some areas of the state apparatus, including the crucial institutions of the security sector, would not last long without further backing from the international community. Even if such a situation is to some degree caused by the mistakes made by the United States and NATO as the main architects of security sector reform (SSR), the Chicago summit should be used to demonstrate the political will for some necessary corrections to this process.

This paper outlines the desirable shape of future NATO commitments in the area of SSR, which are crucial to achieving a durable peace in Afghanistan. As epitomized by the Declaration on Enduring Partnership between NATO and Afghanistan signed at the 2010 Lisbon NATO summit, "NATO intends to provide sustained practical support to Afghan security institutions aimed at sustaining and improving their capacity and capability to counter threats to the security, stability, and integrity of Afghanistan effectively."¹ There are, however, many ways of interpreting such a commitment based on different assessments and scenarios for the future development of this sector once ISAF forces will have withdrawn.

Challenges to the Afghan security sector after 2014

Afghanistan's security sector apparatus (in its broad meaning as proposed by modern SSR approaches) will certainly face both internal and external

challenges.² Not all of these challenges may be addressed by NATO as de facto external actors, even if NATO decides to provide serious further support for reform. However, the alliance and its members have manifold instruments at their disposal to alleviate some of the negative influences, even if this requires substantial political and material support in the years to come.

Challenge 1: Possible decomposition of the Afghan National Army

Since the adoption of the Petersberg Decree by Hamid Karzai in December 2002,³ which created the Afghan National Army (ANA), a lot has been done—at least officially—to assure the responsiveness, effectiveness, accountability, and proper ethnic participation of these forces. Since the beginning, however, this last factor was seriously neglected for political reasons, despite the historically proven necessity of building an ethnically balanced force to avoid political polarization among factions. The takeover of power in 2001 by the leaders of the North alliance after the Taliban government was overthrown led to an obvious overrepresentation of Tajiks in the subsequently formed Afghan Military Forces (AMF) and, after their dissolution, in the ANA. Tajiks were overrepresented both in high-level positions in the Ministry of Defense as well as in the officer corps. This led to many difficulties, starting with problems recruiting rank and file in the Pashtun-populated south. It also impacted the image of the ANA as a formation with which most of the Afghan populace could not identify (even though there has been, reportedly, small progress in improving the ANA image in the southern provinces).

Recent data show that the situation has become more balanced (including among elite Afghan Commando Brigades or Special Forces),

1. See "Declaration by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on an Enduring Partnership," signed at the NATO summit in Lisbon, Portugal, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68724.htm.

2. See, for example, D. Hendrickson and A. Karkoszka, "The Challenges of Security Sector Reform," *SIPRI Yearbook 2002: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 179.

3. See "Decree of the President of the Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan on the Afghan National Army" (Petersberg Decree), Petersberg 2002, <http://www.unric.org/html/german/afghanistan/talks2002/decreed.pdf>.

but the situation remains volatile and may have serious consequences if a political arrangement with the Taliban is concluded and Taliban representatives are co-opted by the government. One cannot exclude a scenario in which some of the former commanders from the North alliance mobilize their supporters (both within and outside the Afghan National Security Forces, as the informal ties between former mujahedeen militia commanders still exist) and protest this arrangement. Such opposition might be fueled by mere political motives (fear of weakening their position in the state apparatus), but also by resentment, as official propaganda in the last decade aggressively mobilized Afghan society against the Taliban. Therefore, a situation in which the ANA becomes partially or totally fragmented cannot be excluded.

Challenge 2: Mounting security threats to the population stemming from various armed groups

ISAF's withdrawal from Afghanistan may bring multiple direct and indirect consequences for the Afghan populace. First, as mentioned above, the possible return of the Taliban to power may lead both to increased stability, as the rebellion will gradually peter out, and the eruption of new tensions, including a resumption of fighting between different political fractions and the military groups backing them. Even if such a situation can be averted by skillful management of these negotiations (assuming they will be continued in spite of recent incidents), the Taliban movement is itself a very diverse phenomenon that could create further tensions. Apart from the ideologically driven militants, the movement embraces groups with purely economic motivations (including mercenaries). These groups work for NATO as their "employer" because of tangible profits, providing security coverage for road transportation, and then share their income with the Taliban. On the other side, there are also thousands of paramilitary groupings of different origins, including militias of still powerful warlords as

well as legal Afghan Local Police⁴ who were armed by the coalition forces to face insurgency and terrorist networks locally. An end to hostilities following a political agreement would deprive many of these groups (which are now fighting on opposite sides) of their income and leave them searching for new possibilities. In addition to this militarized landscape, there are numerous private military companies (PMCs). Their activities may soon cease due to President Karzai's 2010 decree abolishing their activity. Or, they may simply lose their *raison d'être* if various international donors or businesses decide to terminate their activities in Afghanistan. Estimates show that roughly 11,000 Afghan guards are currently working for PMCs.⁵

Such abandoned "warlord armies," mere vigilantes coming from the ranks of Taliban-associated mercenaries or dismissed PMC personnel, may create a serious threat to Afghan society. This was seen after 1992 when the collapse of the Najibullah government and frequent clashes between warlord militias led to grave human rights violations, including enforcing tributes, illegal taxes, and abuses of women.

Challenge 3: Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces

The official data bear out the popular belief that, at least since the beginning of 2010 when the security sector reform project was given new impetus both by the U.S. administration and the ISAF command, the condition of the ANSF and the ANA in particular has been improving markedly. The current size of the ANA already exceeds the figure projected in the schedules and by the summer of 2012 the Afghan government should have more than 350,000 Afghan soldiers and police on the ground. Moreover, as stated in the latest U.S. Defense Department progress report on Afghanistan, the

4. Some reports of human rights watchdogs have already been dismissive about the role of the Afghan Local Police (ALP), which was created to revitalize local Afghan societies' potential to face insurgency.

5. See, for example, Matthew Rosenberg and Graham Bowley, "Security Fears Lead Groups to Rethink Work in Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, March 10, 2012, A1.

ANSF has continued to “increase not only in quantity, but also quality and capability and have taken an ever-increasing role in security operations.”⁶ Also, the number of operations the Afghan army successfully led doubled in the course of the last year. The ANSF has already assumed responsibility for some areas of the country and are performing operations with little ISAF support.

There are, however, legitimate concerns about the ability of the ANA to be self-sufficient if the U.S./ISAF role in mentoring, training, and equipment procurement were to become seriously limited. The strategy behind the creation of the Afghan army was incoherent for many years. Official statements, including UN Security Council resolutions, underlined the primary role these forces should play as a main security provider for the Afghan populace. Contrary to these declarations, both U.S. and ISAF forces treated newly created ANA battalions as “supplemental forces” and deprived them of the right to play the role of frontmen in combat and in operational planning.⁷ This was mostly the consequence of both a lack of necessary skills and experience among ANA soldiers (at least in the opinion of foreign mentors) and the desire of U.S. commanders to achieve quick victories. It has always been an open secret that Afghan counterparts were never treated—especially those coming from police forces—with trust and confidence. There were cases of some ANA battalions deployed in the southern provinces simply refusing to engage in kinetic operations and whole units deserting the battlefield. This caused a vicious circle and resulted in quite a poor rating of most of the ANA battalions, which are still considered not ready to effectively secure most of the Afghan territory.

Additional problems stem from financial constraints. Current estimates show that sustaining such a large army—expected to be 400,000 in 2014—will demand somewhere between \$US6 to

8 billion per year (including salaries, equipment upkeep, and logistics). The Afghan government will by no means be able to generate sufficient income to cover such expenses. On the contrary, most financial predictions show Afghan budget revenues falling after the ISAF withdrawal. Consequently, there is a serious risk of many soldiers and policemen abandoning their duties if their salaries are scaled down substantially and saturating the ranks of illegal paramilitary groups. Even if such a gloomy scenario could be prevented, there is the open issue of whether sufficient equipment for these forces can be assured for intervening even in the roughest and most demanding terrain (such as in high mountains or provinces without a road network). Many experts also stress that most of the Afghan air fleet (mostly Soviet-origin fighters and helicopters) will become obsolete no sooner than 2013.

Challenges to NATO before 2014

Assuming that ISAF forces will not be forced to immediately pull out of Afghanistan as a consequence of recent dramatic events, the 2014 time-frame for implementing a sensible strategy of averting the challenges outlined above should be treated with utmost seriousness. In the months to come, the signing of any NATO/U.S.–Afghanistan agreement on the post-2014 presence may simply be dangerous or at best awkward for the Karzai government, whose mandate is already being called into question following the “irregularities” that surrounded the last elections. Therefore, the possibility of postponing such agreements until after the Chicago summit should be seriously considered.

If, however, against all evidence to the contrary, the talks with the Taliban were to be revitalized, any political solution that includes power sharing must be preceded by serious consideration of how to integrate the Taliban militias into the Afghan National Security Forces. This would be critical to ensuring that the possibly destructive potential of these militias would not adversely affect the security situation in the country. There are basically two choices in this case: (1) the standard disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR)

6. Department of Defense, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, October 2011, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/October_2011_Section_1230_Report.pdf.

7. See, for example, Anthony Hoh, “The Problems with Afghan Army Doctrine,” *Small Wars Journal*, blog post, June 17, 2008, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/the-problems-with-afghan-army-doctrine>.

process or (2) direct integration of some of these groups into the ANSF. The former would demand, for example, close monitoring by the international community and financial schemes for reintegrating people into civilian life.

As outlined above, even a successful conclusion of talks with the Taliban may not result in stabilization of the country, as many rank-and-file members may decide to take advantage of the volatile environment. Some Taliban fractions may boycott the agreement and carry on fighting. Consequently, both the U.S. administration and NATO have to decide how large a presence they would be willing to maintain in Afghanistan, especially if humanitarian crises become evident. This would include predictions for the generation of new forces and proper budget allocations. As most NATO countries would be extremely reluctant to play any military role after 2014, post-ISAF engagement would likely materialize in the form of the U.S.-led “coalition of the willing,” most probably with the permanent presence of (mostly) U.S. special forces in the most volatile regions.

Moreover, it is not too late to rethink the shape of some of the Afghan security sector institutions and the actual need to invest in developing their capabilities. Not only would financial constraints not allow a robust force to be sustained (the proposal of cutting the size of the ANSF by one-third has been already put on the table), but there are doubts if some of the forces are true “security providers.” For example, units of the Afghan National and Local Police in some districts have a bad reputation due to corruption and human rights abuses. Therefore, the decision to support specific forces must be made not only on their ability to use force effectively, but also on their attitude toward the local populace and their willingness to accept rule of law.

As for mentoring, more intensive training should be provided to regular ANA battalions immediately. Consequently, NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A) should solicit contributions for further multiplying the number of Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) to cover the needs of the rapidly growing Afghan

Army. International donors, including the NTM-A mission, should also assure that Afghanistan will be able to (re)create military elites on its own. While ANA officers should continue to have access to Western military academies, more emphasis must be placed on investment in the Afghan Defense University in Kabul and other military academies. Apart from professional training, such institutions create a sense of national identity among cadets from different ethnic groups, which is of utmost importance in such a factionalized society.

Additionally, meticulous consideration of how to sustain the ANSF financially must be undertaken, taking into account not only the possibility of raising funds among NATO countries, but also engaging regional partners such as India and Russia who are already, though for different reasons, showing some eagerness to participate in the SSR process. The ANSF are not only a key to assuring the security of the Afghans, but also to providing a secure environment for future investments (such as in the promising extraction industry), which are coming mostly from Afghanistan's neighborhood. It is therefore in the best interest of Afghanistan's neighbors to support the ANSF substantially.

Last but not least, one of the main deliverables of the Chicago summit should be issuing a clear message to the Afghan population that NATO remains committed—on military, political, financial levels—to assuring Afghanistan's security and would not waste the positive effects of its prolonged presence in this country. Presenting such a message is important not only for the Afghan people, but also, paradoxically, for Western societies, which want to see this mission ended, but also want assurance that their efforts—human and financial—were not in vain.

NATO and Crisis Management Operations: A Canadian Perspective

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Abstract: *This paper looks at NATO's ability to conduct out-of-area crisis management operations, focusing specifically on Canada's engagement in Kandahar in the period 2006 to 2011. It brings to light the manner in which the Canadian experience changed over time as its troops moved from being under U.S. command, to under NATO command with a distracted America, to under NATO command with an engaged U.S. core. The paper assesses five layers of relationships Canada has in the security/defense arena. All layers are important in different ways, and the ideal for Canada to fight with its "four eyes" partners. But the bottom line, as drawn out clearly in this case, is strong U.S. leadership: Canada should say "yes" to operations preponderantly led by the United States. This finding may have relevance to other countries.*

The Pentagon's 2012 strategic guidance calls for high technology and small footprint approaches to maintaining global leadership. Canada must ensure from the outset that any future NATO non-Article 5 operation in which it participates enjoys core U.S. support and direction. When the United States leads, it will still need dependable and capable allies to contribute a robust combat capability. Canada and others must decide how to respond to this opportunity.

Introduction

At its 2010 summit in Lisbon, NATO released its most recent Strategic Concept. *Active Engagement, Modern Defence* identifies three core tasks of the alliance: (1) collective defense of alliance territory in accordance with Article 5, (2) crisis management of conflicts that impact or have the potential to impact alliance security, and (3) cooperative security by actively engaging with other countries and international organizations to enhance international security. Few would dispute the political and security value of NATO engaging with other countries and international organizations. And, although as yet not tested, we can surmise that NATO's collective defense mission is one at which

it would excel. But what about the alliance's other core task, crisis management?

This paper discusses NATO's ability to conduct out-of-area operations. It focuses specifically on Canada's experience in Afghanistan in the period 2006 to 2011, assessing what this particular mission reveals about when and whether Canada should contribute military forces to future NATO crisis management missions. Any firm conclusions about NATO's out-of-area capability would require a broader study involving additional countries and cases. This is the picture from a Canadian perspective, with regard to one operation.

The early years: NATO in Afghanistan 2003 to 2005

The Canadian and NATO experience in Afghanistan is closely tied to the preoccupations of the United States in the decade following September 11, 2001. In the fall of 2001 the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), an almost entirely U.S. operation. Within months it toppled the Taliban regime, enabling the international community to establish the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under UN auspices to carry out stabilization and reconstruction activities in and around Kabul. OEF continued operating under U.S. command, conducting counterinsurgency operations in the more volatile southern and eastern areas of the country and establishing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in various locations.

With ISAF hard pressed to secure a new lead nation every six months, NATO took command in the summer of 2003. In the months leading up to this, the UN and others had recommended ISAF expand beyond Kabul to cover the entire country. But the alliance was in no mood for expansion, and America, too, was not in favor because it felt an insufficient number of troops would be available. In the second half of 2003, however, the United States became involved in a resource-intensive counterinsurgency mission in Iraq, much different from the Iraq war of earlier that year. As OEF became an economy-of-force mission, over the next several months America encouraged in ever-stronger terms that NATO expand its ISAF footprint by taking command of the PRTs now dotted throughout the country. The North Atlantic Council authorized the expansion of ISAF to the north in 2003-04, to the west in 2005, to the south in the summer of 2006, and to the east in the fall of 2006. By this time, all previously OEF-owned PRTs in the east were shifted to ISAF command.

Mandate expansion: NATO in Regional Command (South), 2006

Preoccupied with Iraq, the United States increasingly wanted some of OEF's counterinsurgency activity in the south also to be undertaken by ISAF. As a means of "easing in" such a transition, the decision was made to establish a multinational brigade in the south reporting to OEF and then to switch command after five months to ISAF. Canada agreed to take the lead, not only assuming responsibility for the PRT in Kandahar, but committing a brigade headquarters and an infantry battle group for counterinsurgency work. Canadian Brigadier General David Fraser took command of this new multinational brigade, which also included large British and Dutch contingents and smaller forces from other countries. Canada took responsibility for the volatile Kandahar province, Britain for the equally restive Helmand province, and the Dutch for the somewhat more peaceful province of Uruzgan. The multinational brigade shifted from OEF to ISAF command at the end of July 2006, when NATO took command of Regional Command (RC) (South).

Before and after the change of command

The fact and timing of the change in command in RC (South) had a significant impact on Canada's early experience in Kandahar. The first half of 2006 ended up being far from peaceful. An early indicator of things to come was the car bomb that killed Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry in January 2006. Over the next several months it became clear that the Taliban were building up forces in the area around Kandahar City. Charged with the general mission of disrupting Taliban activity, the Canadian battle group known as Task Force Orion adopted a strategy of sending platoon-sized patrols to area villages to detect such activity and, if found, sweeping the area clear of Taliban.

The growing Taliban presence—at first not fully acknowledged by OEF because of the U.S. desire that nothing disrupt its handoff to NATO—meant that Canadian troops fought numerous skirmishes and a few all-out battles in the period before the change of command. During this time U.S. support for Task Force Orion and the multinational brigade was significant. “The Americans always arrived when the Canadians were in trouble,” the task force’s commander recalls. “There was one radio network [and] when there was a call for support, everyone could hear it.”¹ Within minutes of a call, U.S. air support would arrive en masse, including, depending on the requirement, Predator unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), Predators armed with precision munitions, Apache attack helicopters, fighter aircraft, B1 bombers and/or Black Hawk helicopters for medical evacuation. With some eighty helicopters in RC (South), OEF was readily able to respond to Canadian requests for assistance—as long as they were part of the OEF chain of command.

Such support “died the moment NATO took over.”² The operational impact of the change of command was felt almost immediately by Canadian troops on the ground. In the middle of a battle to clear a large number of Taliban occupying an abandoned school, Task Force Orion called in air support. Rather than receiving immediate, low-flying assistance from U.S. Apaches, as had been the case in the past, they were supported by Dutch Apaches that, due to national caveats, were barred from flying below a certain altitude. Because requests for fire did not comply with new rules of engagement brought in when NATO took command, the Apaches refused orders to engage the Taliban around the school, and the Brigade Tactical Operations Centre at Kandahar airfield denied desperate requests for the use of artillery fire on Taliban positions.³

Medusa and caveats

The suddenly new circumstances within which Canada found itself became even more apparent as it prepared for what was billed by the commander of ISAF and the NATO secretary general as NATO’s “main, main fight” of the season: Operation Medusa.⁴ Conducted by Canada’s Task Force 3-06, which replaced Task Force Orion in mid-August, the operation also involved a British combat support element, a Dutch support element, and U.S. special operations troops. Over the course of about three weeks in September 2006, the combat forces engaged what turned out to be a conventionally dug-in army of Taliban in the Panjwayi district not far from Kandahar City, ultimately succeeding in clearing the area of Taliban forces.

General Fraser began plans for the operation in August, crafting a four-phase operation that was coherent except for one key component: sufficiently large combat forces. The British were engaged in combat in the Helmand province and thus were unable to contribute forces. The Dutch declined to participate in the actual combat, but did take over responsibility for a forward-operating base, thus freeing up more Canadian resources for combat.⁵ Unofficially, the United States provided Canada with significant forces and enablers.⁶ That said, America was intent that other NATO countries step up to the plate. The key reason U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had sought to increase NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan over the previous three years was to lessen the burden on U.S. troops.⁷

But military and geographic caveats placed by national governments on their contingents in Afghanistan meant that other NATO countries were unwilling or unable to step up to the plate. Tactical caveats involved restrictions on how or when NATO commanders might deploy the troops, while

1. Author interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ian Hope, Ottawa, November 8, 2011.

2. Ibid.

3. Chris Wattie, *Contact Charlie: The Canadian Army, the Taliban, and the Battle for Afghanistan* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2008), 265.

4. British Lieutenant General David Richards, as quoted in Bernd Horn, *No Lack of Courage: Operation Medusa, Afghanistan* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010), 35, 44.

5. Horn, 38-39, 45.

6. E-mail from Major General (retired) David Fraser to author, February 13, 2012.

7. Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 689.

geographic caveats involved restrictions on where troops could be deployed. The combined effect was that as Fraser drew up plans for and carried out Operation Medusa, he had only a relatively small number of combat troops with which to work in the south, and many of the troops he did have were operating with restrictions.

After Medusa: NATO in southern Afghanistan, 2007 to 2008

Operation Medusa was successful in its immediate goals of disrupting Taliban forces and clearing the enemy out of the Panjwayi district. But long-term success—phases three and four of the operation’s plan—called for creating a secure zone to pave the way for stabilization and reconstruction operations that would enable the population to return. This task, even more so than the actual combat operation, required additional forces to operate in the more dangerous south. Over the next two years, repeated requests by the United States, Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands that other NATO countries send forces to help combat Taliban activity were consistently rejected.

For Canada, allied refusals to send forces and equipment south had two notable negative impacts. The first centered on helicopters. Canada did not have its own troop lift helicopters, the result of an early post-Cold War decision, and supply chain bottlenecks meant it could not quickly remedy this situation through acquisitions. Thus, while Britain and the United States did most of their resupply of forward-deployed forces with heavy lift battlefield helicopters, Canada was forced to send convoys that were regularly exposed to improvised explosive devices. From the summer of 2006 onward it was clear that Canadian troops were at a higher risk of injury and death than those of our allies because of the lack of transport helicopters.

With British, Dutch, and U.S. helicopters stretched to support their own troops, NATO’s secretary general appealed to other allies for military transport helicopters. But several NATO countries turned down requests to redeploy existing aircraft in the theater to the south and/or to send helicop-

ters that were available in their home countries.⁸ NATO was forced into the short fix of chartering civilian aircraft to conduct routine supply missions to free up British, Dutch, and U.S. helicopters to help maintain the more dangerous supply lines.

A second negative impact involved consolidating the gains. Effective counterinsurgency doctrine called for areas to be cleared of Taliban insurgents and then for an ISAF presence to remain to ensure they did not return—a basic “ink-blot” strategy of slowly spreading stability outward. Yet with insufficient troops, this was not possible. Even if the initial “rooting out” could be accomplished, an insufficient number of forces meant that insurgents were able to regain ground.

These two factors figured centrally in a commission established by the Canadian government in 2007 to provide advice on whether Canada should commit to ISAF past 2009. In its January 2008 report, the Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan recommended Canada’s continued involvement be contingent on securing, by early 2009, the assignment of an additional ISAF battle group of about 1,000 troops; heavy lift helicopters for troop transport; and UAVs for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.⁹

All three factors were ultimately met—two of the three by the United States—paving the way for a mandate extension. The government leased Israeli-built Heron UAVs from a Canadian firm; Canada was able to buy a half dozen second-hand Chinook helicopters from the U.S. Army; and America fulfilled Canada’s requirement for additional troop support. For the latter, France sent 700 soldiers to RC (East), enabling the United States to redeploy the necessary forces to RC (South).

America changes tack

In fact, as reported at the time, well before the commission issued its report, the United States

8. Paul Koring, “Beleaguered NATO Set to Charter Helicopters,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, October 24, 2007; Omar El Akkad, “Hillier Calls for Allies to Share Load in Afghanistan,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, October 25, 2007.

9. *Report of the Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan* (Ottawa, 2008), 38.

had given private assurances that it would answer Canada's call for troops if no other country came forward.¹⁰ This was part of a change in approach to Afghanistan by the Bush administration that dated back over a year, coinciding with the resignation of Secretary Rumsfeld in November 2006. In the fall of 2006, as recounted by Canada's deputy military representative to the NATO Military Committee at the time, "Every time Canada said it needed more troops it got blank stares. Then, one day, a few weeks after Rumsfeld's resignation and [General James] Jones' subsequent departure as SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe], [American ambassador to NATO] Victoria Nuland announced at a meeting of the North Atlantic Council the United States wanted to put the issue of more troops on the table."¹¹ This represented a complete reversal of the U.S. position under the new Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

The change in the U.S. priority of Afghanistan is central to understanding the NATO and Canadian experience in Afghanistan. Following a White House review of U.S. policy in Afghanistan completed in early 2007, America's troop strength began a slow upward trend under the Bush administration. First was the addition of 3,500 U.S. Army soldiers in the spring of 2007, then the deployment of 3,200 U.S. Marines in the spring of 2008, and finally a decision in the fall of 2008 to send an additional 20,000 U.S. soldiers to Afghanistan in 2009.

These trends continued and accelerated after Obama came into office. The new president had campaigned on the importance of the Afghan mission. Also, by this time the "surge" of U.S. forces begun in Iraq in 2007 had achieved real results, enabling a drawdown of U.S. forces there and freeing them up for other potential missions. Yet although he authorized the additional 20,000 soldiers, the new president still questioned whether "piling on more and more troops" was the correct approach in Afghanistan.¹² It was a report by

General Stanley McChrystal, who took command of both OEF and ISAF in the summer of 2009 that proved the decisive factor. The report concluded the situation in Afghanistan was deteriorating in the face of a resilient insurgency. The requirement was for tens of thousands of additional troops to implement a refocused counterinsurgency campaign involving targeting terrorist networks, stabilizing urban areas, and training domestic security forces. In late 2009 Obama authorized an additional U.S. troop deployment of 30,000 soldiers, raising America's total troop strength in Afghanistan to 100,000 by the summer of 2010.

NATO in Afghanistan, 2009 to 2011

It is difficult to overstate the operational impact on ISAF of receiving core U.S. strategic leadership in 2009. "We need to enter into any crisis with a conceptual framework that demonstrates unity of thought, unity of purpose, and unity of action," argues Canada's Lieutenant-General Stuart Beare, deputy commander of police for the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011. According to Beare, McChrystal's perspective was that we "change or fail." As Beare says, "Not until the McChrystal plan did we have unity of thought, and the alliance was able to reorient around that vision."¹³ Canada's Major General Jon Vance, commander of Task Force Kandahar in 2009 and 2010, similarly points to the importance of the McChrystal report. Canada and the alliance in general, he argues, initially "shied away from the truth of the conflict [as counterinsurgency]." According to Vance, not until Obama and the McChrystal report did things truly change. The impact was powerful. As Vance states, "Whereas the commission asked for one battalion, the United States sent twelve."¹⁴

The McChrystal approach established another important element of any effective military operation: unity of command. Having two military commands in Afghanistan—OEF and ISAF—with two

10. Matthew Fisher, "Political 'Hot Potatoes' on NATO Agenda," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 31, 2008.

11. Author interview with Brigadier General (retired) Serge Labbé, Kingston, Ontario, November 29, 2011.

12. As quoted in Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "In Afghanistan, U.S. May Shift Strategy," *Washington Post*, July 31, 2009.

13. Author interview with Lieutenant-General Stuart Beare, Commander of Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command, Ottawa, December 6, 2011.

14. Author interview with Major General Jon Vance, Director of Staff, Strategic Joint Staff, Ottawa, December 6, 2011.

separate staffs created coordination problems, not least of which was increased potential for collateral damage to the civilian population. Although OEF usually operated at the eastern fringe of Kandahar province, there were frequent requirements to deconflict operations. McChrystal resolved this problem by creating a dual-hatted commander position, a four-star U.S. general that is both commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan and commander of ISAF.

At the tactical level, the increased U.S. commitment to Afghanistan had a significant impact on Canadian operations. The stretched resources and ongoing pressure on Canadian troops in Kandahar in 2006 and 2007 were eased by U.S. Marine Corps operations in the neighboring Helmand province in the spring and summer of 2008.¹⁵ Whereas Task Force Kandahar was the only brigade in Kandahar in 2008 and 2009, in 2010 and early 2011 it shared Kandahar with three-and-a-half U.S. brigades. Instead of experiencing challenges with respect to allied caveats and heavy lift helicopters, later Canadian commanders could report that “German and Italian caveats had no bearing” on Task Force Kandahar and that the Task Force “had no problem at all with air support.”¹⁶ Before Canada switched to a training role in the summer of 2011, there was a belief that NATO “worked well” and “while there were some restrictions on troops, this did not present a big problem.”¹⁷

Layers of relationships

The key factor in discussions about a “NATO operation” is what is meant by the reference to NATO. The discussion above reveals that when an operation includes a large U.S. combat element, then Canada’s experience is a relatively much better one than when the operation is not built on a strongly engaged U.S. core. What this means for Canada’s future participation in NATO missions can be bet-

ter understood in the context of five different layers of relationships in the security and defense arena.

At the very center, Canada’s first and most important relationship is the bilateral one with the United States. The next layer comprises the “four eyes” partners, sometimes shortened as ABCA, meaning America, Britain, Canada, and Australia. The third involves those allies “who are willing to play hardball” such as the Dutch, the Danes, and sometimes the French. The fourth layer includes countries that make a small but tangible contribution to military operations such as newer NATO countries from Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁸ Finally, the fifth and outermost layer comprises the “nonswimmers,” that is, countries that are NATO allies but are unwilling or unable to make a significant combat contribution to an out-of-area mission.

The nonswimmers are important for NATO operations because of the intangible but critical component of legitimacy. Canada’s Major General David Neasmith, who worked in the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011, has pointed out that there can be a stigma attached to a U.S.-only operation. “NATO brings legitimacy both for the United States and for the Afghans. Legitimacy is worth the existence of a club, and [the club] has to have international recognition—we can’t just label everything ‘coalition of the willing.’” Moreover, the United States “cannot do everything on its own.” Allies can provide very important contributions, even if these are not in a combat role.¹⁹ For Vance, “The value of having nonswimmers is that you can add to the number of flags” involved, thereby adding to legitimacy and covering secondary but necessary jobs.²⁰

The legitimacy the NATO name conveys also makes it easier to attract participants in the fourth layer. While ISAF is a NATO operation, almost half of those involved are non-NATO countries. Legitimacy makes this possible. “If an alliance is seen as credible,” notes Beare, “[non-NATO countries] don’t

15. Murray Brewster, “U.S. Offensive Taking Pressure Off Canadians in Kandahar,” *Canadian Press*, June 1, 2008.

16. Author interview with Vance.

17. Seminar presentation in Ottawa, Fall 2011, under Chatham House (nonattributable) rules.

18. Author interview with Major General David Neasmith, chief of staff, assistant deputy minister information management, Ottawa, November 18, 2011.

19. Ibid.

20. Author interview with Vance.

question the mission, they just fit in. There is no other military organization in the world that can do this. . . . Without NATO the international community could not have rallied in Afghanistan.”²¹ Under the multinational surface, however, the practical mechanism by which these contributions are actually made is through bilateral agreement with the United States. If a country wants to contribute military forces to ISAF but is unable to get its soldiers to the theater and/or sustain them, then an arrangement is usually struck with the United States for assistance in one or both areas.²²

In the third layer, NATO is important because it acts as an effective mechanism for standardization and interoperability. A long history of exercises and implementing NATO Standardization Agreements has promoted interoperability, that is, the compatibility of communications, information technology, doctrine, and logistics. “The benefit of having an alliance,” states one former Task Force Kandahar commander, “is the standardization of everything from staff and operation order procedures to training, map symbols, bullets, and fuel. . . . When you conduct an operation, we all talk the same language. . . . The military value of NATO is that you don’t have to rediscover these things every time.”²³

Canada’s second layer of defense relationships, ABCA, comprises the core group of countries with which Canada is most likely to fight in the future. This conclusion is supported by Canada’s experience in Afghanistan, which involved close operations with the United States and Britain throughout, and included a key Australian presence. The Dutch were also in the theater, but they did not always take part in combat operations. France provided close air support to Canadian troops from 2007 onward, and although not covered in this paper, Canada’s more recent experience in the Libya operation indicates France is a country with which Canada will fight in the future.

The experience in Afghanistan most clearly highlighted the importance to Canada of its bilat-

eral relationship with the United States. A 2010 snapshot of a sea of U.S. trucks and armored vehicles lined up in compounds outside Kabul is an overwhelming reminder of the degree to which this “NATO” operation depended on America’s active involvement. Notes Neasmith, “The vast majority of theater support and logistics was done by the United States. The command structure was dominated by the United States, the facilities, the trucks . . . the sustainment of the Afghan National Army, the resources for building the force. . . . The lion’s share was provided and paid for by the United States.”²⁴ All of the fourth-layer participations, and no doubt many of the third, were made possible by the United States. A key second layer participant, Australia, was there primarily because of America. And Canada’s own experience in Afghanistan, the highs and lows at the tactical level, in the final analysis reflected and depended on the commitment and support of the United States.

Conclusion

An assessment of the NATO mission in Afghanistan in the period from 2006 to 2011 yields some important lessons about its ability to conduct crisis management operations and about Canada’s future participation. Given the experience of conducting tactical operations under NATO command, Canada should only take part in such missions if it is supported by U.S. assets. “Canada can fight as long as the U.S. is there to fill the gaps.”²⁵ For those who worked at the operational/strategic level within ISAF, the ideal is that there be “four eyes” involvement, but the bottom line is core American involvement. Canada should say “yes” to NATO operations “preponderantly led by the United States.”²⁶

This conclusion has important implications in light of the strategic guidance for the U.S. Department of Defense released by the Pentagon in January 2012. The new strategy stresses America will sustain its global leadership by focusing on a combination of high technology and small foot-

21. Author interview with Beare.

22. Ibid.

23. Author interview with Brigadier General Denis Thompson, Commander of Canadian Special Operations Command, Ottawa, November 30, 2011.

24. Author interview with Neasmith.

25. Author interview with Hope.

26. Author interview with Neasmith.

print approaches. Central to the strategy, to compensate for a reduced force size, is that “U.S. forces will plan to operate whenever possible with allied and coalition forces.”²⁷

For Canada the new strategy points to both caution and opportunity. The caution involves ensuring from the outset that any future NATO crisis management operation it participates in enjoys the core support and direction of the U.S. government and military. The case examined here reveals there is no substitute for U.S. leadership, vision, and engagement. The opportunity lies in the fact that while America will still act in a leadership capacity, it will want and need dependable, capable allies that can contribute a robust combat capability. Canada—and others—will need to decide how to respond to this opportunity. “NATO is an *us* not a *them*,” Beare has underscored.²⁸ It is easy to fall into the mind-set of looking for “NATO” to provide capabilities when what we need to do is look at our own individual, national capabilities. As we look to the future of NATO’s crisis management task it is this sort of thinking that should be the conceptual and concrete starting point.

27. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, D.C., January 2012), 4.

28. Author interview with Beare.

Smart Defense

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Abstract: Austerity measures spurred by the global financial crisis have led to decreases in defense spending in almost all allied countries, especially in Europe. Indeed, these cuts are the most visible marker of the challenges to Western leadership in international security affairs. As former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates cautioned in his famous farewell speech in Brussels, there is serious risk of the “demilitarization” of Europe as more and more nations are unable to provide militarily relevant forces to NATO (or EU) operations. In this context, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen launched the “Smart Defense” concept in February 2010, which aims to transform the approach to defense acquisition in order to deliver capabilities in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. A multifaceted concept, Smart Defense promotes new ideas and management, facilitates better coordination within NATO, and provides strategic responses to capability shortfalls. It will require significant political will and cooperation among allied countries, but is critical in combatting the current challenges of the defense sector.

Facing the budget and capability challenge

In the context of the global financial crisis, fiscal austerity has been leading to severe cuts in defense spending in almost all allied countries in the last few years, primarily in Europe but also in North America. The eurozone crisis has led to sharp declines in defense spending in the short term (often up to 10 percent over a single year, with some extreme cases of cuts up to 28 percent) and plans for further reductions in the future. In Europe many countries are under extreme budgetary constraints as they try to address the economic and fiscal challenges associated with massive public debts.

In this context many “small” European allies refuse to contribute even modestly to operations. Other traditionally important contributors to NATO engagements—such as the Netherlands—are

abandoning support for critical capabilities. The largest European NATO countries are no exception, with deep cuts in Germany and Italy (10 percent), plans for severe reductions in the UK (at least 7.5 percent over the next four years), and expectations of further cuts in France after an already significant slowdown. Altogether, twenty out of twenty-eight allies reduced their defense budgets last year. The vast majority of NATO countries already dipped below the threshold of 2 percent of GDP for defense spending years ago and are heading for 1 percent.

The decline in European defense spending contrasts sharply with developments in the rest of the world. Globally, defense spending increased 50 percent in the last decade. From 2001 to 2010, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), defense spending in Europe only increased by a meager 4.1 percent. Most of the increase came from Britain and France, while spending in most other European countries

was decreasing or stagnating. During the same period, China increased its budget by 189 percent, Russia by 82 percent, the United States by 81 percent, India by 54 percent, and Saudi Arabia by 63 percent.¹ In 2011, for the first time, Asia spent more than Europe on defense.

Even if NATO still accounts for two-thirds of world military expenditures, this rapid decline in relative terms—which could be amplified by the announced U.S. cuts—is the most visible marker of the challenge to Western leadership in international security affairs. In Europe it is all the more worrying because the money spent is often not militarily effective. Many European armies continue to sustain large conscription forces mostly unemployable for crisis management outside their respective territories. In addition, procurement policies are not harmonized, and many competing programs continue to be developed at the expense of a more integrated and cost-efficient acquisition policy.

As former U.S. Defense Secretary Gates pointed out in his famous farewell speech in Brussels, there is a serious risk of “demilitarization” in Europe as more and more nations are simply no longer able to provide militarily relevant forces to NATO (or EU) operations. This trend is undermining the credibility of the alliance in the mid-to-long term and could weaken the transatlantic relationship if Americans are no longer willing or able to compensate for European shortfalls. These shortfalls were clearly identified during the recent Libyan operation. The U.S. decision to “lead from behind” left only a handful of European allies able and willing to conduct the bulk of combat operations, with the United States providing indispensable enablers such as most of the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and air-to-air refueling.

Confronted with this combination of growing capability shortfalls and declining defense budgets, many experts and leaders have come to acknowledge that “business as usual” is no longer possible and that the traditional NATO approach to capabil-

ity development and defense planning no longer suffices to address the organization’s challenges.

In February 2010 the secretary general of NATO launched the “Smart Defense” concept at the security conference in Munich. The concept aims to transform the approach to defense acquisition to deliver capabilities in a more efficient and cost-effective manner.

While the plan for Smart Defense is a major “deliverable” for the 2012 Chicago NATO summit, the substance of the initiative still needs to be more accurately defined in the longer term. Concrete projects need to be developed and endorsed by all allies. In recent months, work conducted jointly under the leadership of the Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation (SACT) and the deputy secretary general of the alliance defined both a conceptual framework and a first set of projects. This first step was critical to getting beyond the political slogan and developing a shared vision of Smart Defense to be submitted in Chicago.

A multifaceted concept

At this stage, several key policy objectives underlie the Smart Defense initiative:

- Organizing and mitigating the effects of the announced reduction in defense budgets of NATO countries by making better use of the available resources;
- Reviving the old theme of “burden sharing” between Americans and Europeans by highlighting the need for closer coordination of defense policies of the allies in a context of fiscal austerity in Europe and cuts in U.S. spending in the decade to come;
- Providing responses to the capability shortfalls identified during the engagements in Afghanistan and Libya;
- Promoting new ideas and management methods such as coordinated acquisitions and integrated management of common capabilities;

1. All data extracted from SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2011, <http://milexdata.sipri.org>.

- Coordinating better NATO capability initiatives with the recent efforts of the European Union through the European Defense Agency and European projects under the “pooling and sharing” label that pursue similar objectives;
- Finding innovative ways to cooperate on some flagship projects such as alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) or missile defense, identified as major “deliverables” for the Chicago summit.

The secretary general intends to achieve the adoption of a Smart Defense “package” at the Chicago summit, responding to the three pillars already identified by Allied Command Transformation (ACT)—cooperation, prioritization, and specialization—and combining the launch of new initiatives labeled Smart Defense and the funding of projects already identified.

Faced with this ambitious agenda, nations have adopted a supportive but prudent approach. If they acknowledge that “business as usual” is not an option in the current budgetary context, they also emphasize the cost of past and ongoing multinational projects (the A400M military transport aircraft, the NH90 helicopter, and the JSF/F35 fighter) and express legitimate concerns about the impact of Smart Defense on their sovereignty, their industry, and their budgets. Some of them fear that Smart Defense will be reduced to the multiplication of common funding, leading nations that maintain a reasonable defense effort to also pay for those who behave as free riders.

In order to better understand the potential of Smart Defense and submit for consideration projects that could fall under this initiative, it is necessary to identify the risks beforehand.

- The lack of accountability—An initial paradoxical pitfall would be to increase the disempowerment of Europeans who would be tempted to fulfill their role in the alliance by getting involved in a couple of flagship projects without maintaining a minimum defense capability.
- The limits of the niche approach—Many are likely to resist the logic under which Europeans

would specialize in specific assigned roles in future alliance missions at the expense of their sovereignty in matters of defense and their ability to act without the Americans.

- Ending up as another bumper sticker for a summit—Without a radical change in mind-set, Smart Defense risks being a simple rebranding of existing projects without responding to the necessities of the coming decade or addressing the capabilities shortfalls.

Some elements for a successful Smart Defense

In the light of past successful cooperation in defense matters, several lessons can be drawn:

1. Successful cooperation combines strong political will, a clear vision of job sharing, and significant financial or industrial gains.
2. Cooperation between a limited number of similar countries (e.g., France/UK, Visegrad countries, Nordic countries) tends to be generally more successful and efficient than vast multinational projects run by NATO involving too many partners.
3. The pooling of capabilities becomes more complicated as combat approaches. It is easier to share maintenance facilities, training facilities, and strategic enablers than to create dependencies on critical capabilities required for combat operations. Many remember that recent NATO engagements were marked by caveats or by the abstention of allies refusing to take part in a particular mission.

If Smart Defense is only used to disguise cuts, the support and ownership of the ministries of defense is unlikely. It thus appears desirable that savings generated by Smart Defense should be reinvested in capability development.

Finally, from a European perspective, establishing transparency with ongoing projects within

the EU is essential, including the efforts of the European Defense Agency and the various initiatives under pooling and sharing. A true first goal for Smart Defense would be to better coordinate the work of the alliance with the modest but real role of the EU, while respecting the independence and respective roles of the two organizations.

Indeed, behind the displayed role of clearing house, NATO plans to use this project to mobilize allies around priority capabilities today with little or no additional funding. Such an approach has the merit of helping fill capability gaps and of providing a partial solution to the low investment in defense of the vast majority of the allies. NATO should also take into account the views of the European allies who seek to preserve a coherent defense capability and a technological and industrial base.

Conclusion: Some final policy recommendations

Smart Defense cannot be a substitute or an alibi to justify future budget cuts and capability. While many of the European armies have already reached or are about to reach critical thresholds of military readiness that affect their ability to fulfill missions, whether the defense of their territory or the ability to contribute to militarily significant operations of the alliance, it is necessary to recall that Smart Defense must preserve and strengthen the overall defense posture of the alliance and not simply mask cuts or facilitate the behavior of free-riders.

The priority given to the reduction of capability gaps must be affirmed. Smart Defense is not a tool of industrial policy, but must focus on building capabilities that Europeans are not all able to acquire only through national budgets. Particular emphasis should be given to critical enablers to prevent the undermining of NATO's ability to act. Amongst the projects that deserve to be given priority, ISR capabilities and air-to-air refueling stand out.

The availability of capabilities developed jointly as part of Smart Defense through a multinational project is a critical principle. Pooled capabilities

whose use would be conditioned on the authorization of one partner of a particular project would be counterproductive and almost absurd. The difficult experience of Libya and the difficulties involving collective capabilities (AWACS planes), when nations not involved in Operation Unified Protector did not authorize their crews to fly the mission, set a worrying precedent. Clear rules establishing the availability at all times of capabilities procured jointly need to be set and endorsed by all participants.

The reality of the financial gains needs to be demonstrated on a case-by-case basis. Cooperation sometimes has a high cost, and NATO does not have the best track record for managing multinational programs. The NH90 program is often cited as a negative example both in industry and in the armed forces due to its length, cost overruns, and bureaucratic management. With regard to industrial cooperation, a project can hardly be described as "smart" if it falls victim to all the usual problems of past multinational cooperation (e.g., ensuring fair industrial returns for all partners and accumulation of national specifications). Smart Defense must be accompanied by the acceleration of reform of alliance agencies.

Dialogue with the defense industry should not be neglected. NATO should establish a dialogue/partnership with the defense industry of all allies in order to be able to meet the two objectives of responding to capability requirements and reducing costs and acquisition times. It is particularly necessary to better organize the debate with European industry, which faces fiscal austerity, but could become a major player in Smart Defense if it fits into ambitious projects.

The choice of flagship projects will be an interesting marker. In his public statements the secretary general often associates Smart Defense and consolidation of large projects such as AGS or missile defense without explaining the link further. An emerging consensus exists on the major projects that could be endorsed at the Chicago summit: a

broader ISR initiative going beyond AGS, air-to-air refueling planes, missile defense, and precision-guided munitions (PGMs).

The role of NATO still needs to be fully defined.

Is this role as a useful facilitator promoting cooperation among nations and offering a forum to enable pooling and specialization fully in line with the defense-planning process, or is it a more global and more questionable ambition under which NATO would define and manage a multitude of projects labeled Smart Defense without clear added value? Debates have already taken place and a number of points stand out on the possible role of NATO in regard to the three pillars (cooperation, prioritization, and specialization) identified by ACT.

1. Regarding cooperation, if the ambition goes beyond the role of clearing house, it is necessary to consider Smart Defense within the NATO Defense Planning Process (NDPP). But NATO recognizes it will essentially be the facilitator of cooperation by allowing the partners to identify joint projects.
2. Prioritization is not new to NATO, as previous capability initiatives (e.g., Prague, Lisbon) remind us. However, as the identification of priorities has not yielded the expected results of delivering enhanced capabilities, the question is how NATO can articulate common, realistic priorities consistent with the mission and level of ambition of the alliance. The main difficulty is the relationship between the priorities of each ally and the priorities of the alliance, which do not always overlap (to put it mildly).
3. Specialization is the most difficult because the smallest allies are sometimes reluctant to position themselves in niches and the “big” Europeans have not given up maintaining a coherent defense apparatus. What is most important for NATO is to promote specialization by design rather than see the specialization by default.

Closer coordination with the EU should be an integral part of the Smart Defense package.

If the Europeans (or the EU as such) were able to put forward joint capability initiatives, such an approach should be labeled Smart Defense and should be hailed as such in Chicago, even if NATO is not involved in the development of a project. A truly European approach requires close coordination with the pooling and sharing of the EU through the development of proper European projects. It should be clear that ownership by European governments will be increased by projects involving European industry. The fact that these projects were originally developed and launched under the European Defense Agency project or pooling and sharing could also promote opportunities for European industry. The fact that such projects are endorsed by NATO under the Smart Defense label is not a risk but an opportunity to see them succeed and bring together more partners. A good example is the case for any initiative around the acquisition of in-flight refueling capabilities (MRTT).

A failure of Smart Defense in Chicago is unlikely from the strict view of the political dynamics of the summit itself. (Who would support “dumb defense?”) The summit is likely to ensure both the adoption of the initiative by the alliance and endorsement of a handful of visible projects. The real issue remains the ability of the initiative to develop over time and to produce the required change in mind-set. In this regard, the ACT approach that sees Smart Defense as a project developed “with nations, by nations, for nations” is probably the way to secure an appropriate level of allied endorsement and a commitment to go beyond a good slogan for the summit.

NATO-Russia Relations: Toward a “Strategic Partnership”?

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Abstract: *The formal launch of the NATO-Russia relationship in 1997 has resulted in fifteen years of progress, but also disappointment and frustration on both sides, raising questions about the effectiveness of the relationship and its precarious future. Russian and NATO goals and expectations are often at odds, and dialogue over issues of European security has been shaky. The Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008 typified these opposing interests and reinforced differences within the alliance on how best to engage with Russia. Does the necessary political will exist with which to develop consensus for joint action? Can a “strategic partnership” between NATO and Russia truly exist when the parties’ interests diverge as fundamentally as they do? The NATO-Russia Council has for the most part failed in its overarching goal of developing an inclusive security community within Europe. That said, at practical level there have been significant milestones in the relationship—notably with regard to Afghanistan—but the road ahead appears bumpy. In addition to a broad security dialogue involving high-level political and military engagement, an enduring foundation of confidence and trust between the two partners must be built for there to be any hope of sustainable cooperation leading to a new quality of relations in the future.*

Shaky premises

The NATO-Russia relationship was formally launched in 1997 when the alliance and the Russian Federation decided to create a forum for regular consultation on security issues—the Permanent Joint Council (PJC). The two sides seemed, at the time, to have decided to trade an adversarial relationship based on escalating rhetoric, intimidation, and confrontation for dialogue and cooperation. Over the past fifteen years, however, the relationship has generated significant waves of disappointment and frustration. The first major blow came in the wake of the Kosovo war in 1999, which prompted the Russians to suspend their ties with NATO. Nonetheless, when Lord Robertson, acting as NATO secretary general, and President Vladimir

Putin met in October 2001 to reassess the potential for NATO-Russia relations after the Kosovo episode, they embarked on a new approach with a far-reaching multilateral process that would transform the NATO-Russia relationship and serve as a key instrument in anchoring Russia in a cooperative agenda with the West. At the Rome NATO summit in 2002, the alliance and the Russian Federation created the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) to replace the PJC and stressed that the new council would function as a forum of twenty *equal* members. NRC was designed to avoid the pitfalls of the previous forum, which had become essentially a confrontation between nineteen NATO allies and one Russian partner. And yet, in the summer of 2008, the Russo-Georgian conflict dealt a second major blow to the NATO-Russia construct. This time, the allies suspended the NRC and its activities, decid-

ing that it could no longer be “business as usual” between NATO and Russia. For about a year, the NRC stopped meeting and cooperative activities came to a halt.

Russian actions in Georgia met with disappointment and disbelief on the part of the most moderate allies—long supporters of NATO-Russia cooperation—but it served as justification for the “cold warriors,” who called for punishment for what they perceived as an aggressive and anachronistic policy towards Russia’s weak southern neighbour. Diverging interpretations of Russian actions in the summer of 2008 reinforced differences within the alliance on how to best engage with Russia. The suspension of political dialogue and military cooperation between NATO and Russia resulted in polarized positions within the alliance that have persisted to this day, have affected the normal functioning of the NATO-Russia Council, and still hamper the potential development of an inclusive security community in Europe. For its part, Russia had felt for some time—and President Putin made it clear at the Munich security conference in February 2007—that it could no longer be the object of derision and accept the post-Cold War settlement. It saw this settlement as incompatible with its core national interests, but had not opposed it in the early nineties because of the country’s own weaknesses at the time.

This polarization of positions may have been rooted in a fundamental misunderstanding between NATO and Russia about their respective expectations, probably dating back to the onset of the relationship. NATO-Russia relations developed on the false premise that, on the one hand, Russia was embarking on a path towards sharing and integrating Western values fundamental to the post-Cold War alliance transformation. Russia was thereby perceived by Western observers to be reconciled with NATO’s “open door” policy. On the other hand, Russia expected that it would be given a voice around the table in Euro-Atlantic security affairs, where it could influence alliance thinking from within. The creation of the NRC and the 2002 Rome Declaration were thus developed under the dubious assumption that both parties, NATO and

Russia, would be in a position to influence each other’s decision-making processes and to pursue a cooperative agenda in addressing common threats and challenges jointly. The first question one might ask is whether cooperation between NATO and Russia could develop on the basis of mutual respect without an expectation on either side to win over the other on the merit of its own position. Is there political will to seek compromises towards developing consensus for joint action?

Toward a strategic partnership?

Over the past decade, the ambitious agenda of the NRC set forth in 2002, building on the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act—essentially seeking cooperation to jointly face common security challenges—has evolved towards defining cooperation in terms of limited “areas of common interest.” It has become commonplace in relations between NATO and Russia to “agree to disagree,” recognizing that cooperation will be limited to areas where the parties can agree to work together, while on other matters they will work at cross-purposes. One might argue that this has tacitly led to revisiting the very concept of cooperative security and partnership. Russian authorities have clearly stated that the prospect of NATO enlargement to Georgia and Ukraine presented a challenge to Russia’s core national interests. On the one hand, Russian national documents from military doctrine to foreign policy statements have been unequivocal in this regard. On the other hand, NATO’s position on enlargement has been just as clear and unwavering in reaffirming its open-door policy over the years. One may wonder whether a “strategic partnership” can truly be envisaged when parties agree from the onset that, in certain areas, positions among them will remain antagonistic.

The resumption of NRC meetings and cooperation in the spring of 2009 proceeded on the same basis of partnership and cooperation developed in 1997 and 2002 in then-agreed-upon documents. In reality, the alliance could not find the necessary consensus from within to refine the basis for its relationship with Russia, and it papered over

the fact that various parties came out of the 2008-09 period with different outlooks on the potential for the NATO-Russia relationship. It is widely acknowledged, however, that the Russo-Georgian war was an attempt to put an end to any prospect of Georgian membership in NATO. On the Russian side, the conflict certainly marked a turning point. Moscow felt the need to draw “a line in the sand,” using military force to delineate Russian core national interests. It had been unable to achieve this outcome diplomatically, making use of its strategic partnership with the alliance alone. Having resumed cooperation on the basis of the same principles of cooperative security, one may wonder whether Russia and NATO allies have fully considered the impact of the Russo-Georgian war on the NATO-Russia relationship.

By the end of 2009 the NRC was back in business, at least on the surface. The official documents issued at the last NATO summit in Lisbon in November 2010 state the importance the allies attach to “developing a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia” and show the twenty-nine NRC leaders pledging to “work towards achieving a true strategic and modernized partnership based on the principles of reciprocal confidence, transparency, and predictability, with the aim of contributing to the creation of a common space of peace, security, and stability.” Perhaps of most significance, at least most visibly, the Lisbon summit marked a renewed commitment to cooperation in the area of missile defense. One should ask whether Russian statements of the past six months regarding missile defense are, as often interpreted, essentially electoral rhetoric or whether they reflect something much more fundamental.

In reality, behind the Lisbon rhetoric and just below the surface lies a very uneasy partnership between NATO and Russia, one still suffering from what led to the Russo-Georgian war and its ultimate impact. This conflict called into question the core assumption binding NATO and Russia into a partnership, namely that Russia would become progressively more integrated into the Western community of states. Events and declarations in the last five years have often diverged from the cooper-

ative agenda of the 1997 Founding Act and the 2002 Rome Declaration, highlighting a more competitive and at times even confrontational relationship. In fact, twenty years of NATO-Russia cooperation have evolved to the point where the so-called “strategic partnership” seems of limited impact in addressing today’s strategic issues in Europe and beyond. One may wonder indeed to what extent the NATO-Russia relationship has improved the ability of the parties to deal with strategic security issues within Europe, let alone to face challenges from Central Asia to the Middle East.

Acknowledging serious efforts and projects

That said, the limits of the NATO-Russia relationship should not overshadow some genuine efforts on the part of practitioners to develop useful projects in various areas of cooperation and concrete results emanating from such projects. From its inception, the work of the NRC had been divided between what was commonly labelled “political dialogue” on the one hand and “practical cooperation” on the other—both elements of the cooperative agenda set out in 2002. While the “political dialogue” did not yield much commonality of views and generally failed (with a few exceptions) to provide consensus that would enable “joint actions” in the face of common strategic challenges, specific projects have led to some joint training exercises and continue to offer interesting prospects.

Two examples are worth mentioning. In June 2011 NATO and Russian fighter aircraft took part in the counterterrorism exercise “Vigilant Skies 2011,” a joint demonstration of the NATO-Russia Council Cooperative Airspace Initiative (CAI). This initiative was designed to prevent terrorist attacks using civilian aircraft, as in September 2001, by sharing information on movements in NATO and Russian airspace and by coordinating interceptions of renegade aircraft. This new airspace security system provides a shared NATO-Russia radar picture of air traffic and allows for early warning of suspicious air activities through commonly agreed procedures. The new system has two coordination centers—

in Warsaw and Moscow—and local coordination sites in Russia (Kaliningrad, Rostov-on-Don, and Murmansk), Poland (Warsaw), Norway (Bodø), and Turkey (Ankara). This was the first counterterrorism exercise held between NATO and the Russian Federation and was a major milestone in developing the capability of a CAI system now declared operational. This exercise could probably serve as a solid basis for cooperation in other areas in the future (including missile defense).

Cooperation with Russia on Afghanistan has also yielded three projects. The first is focused on counternarcotic efforts and the second on cargo shipments through the Northern Sea Route in support of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to and from Afghanistan. The third project is the establishment of a trust fund in support of helicopter maintenance, essentially helping to build the capacity of the Afghan army. These projects have been punctual and limited to specific areas of cooperation, often on a commercial basis. Political discussion with Russia, however, (or other countries in the region) on possible regional cooperation beyond the 2014 transition to Afghan security forces and withdrawal of ISAF troops remains limited. Talks about NATO's Enduring Partnership with Afghanistan beyond 2014 and with countries of the region, including Russia, could be further developed.

Beyond these specific examples, a significant number of other cooperative projects between NATO and Russia have been undertaken in the past fifteen years. The question, however, is whether these projects can ultimately lead to the development of a strategic partnership. To date it could easily be argued that cooperative efforts within the NATO-Russia framework are yet to translate into the strategic partnership envisaged in the founding documents of the NATO-Russia relationship. Yet could the sum of positive developments and cooperative projects ultimately trigger a snowball effect and eventually amount to a strategic partnership?

This paper argues that the NRC has actually been unable to develop a European security framework in which all twenty-nine members feel their respective interests are equally addressed and has

essentially failed in developing an inclusive security community within Europe. Because of “unfinished business,” a different approach may be required to ensure that the NATO-Russia relationship remains on the cooperative security track and to avoid a bifurcation in European security that divides East and West.

Refocusing on confidence building and trust

It is safe to say that the NATO-Russia strategic partnership never fully materialized despite the fact that both NATO and Russia are strategic players and cannot ignore each other in defining and addressing today's security challenges. The partnership was conceived as a cooperative framework in which to deliver win-win solutions. It led instead to a crisis of confidence about each other's intentions. Declaratory policy has hardly matched the facts on the ground, and the rules of the game remain blurred, with actors cooperating at times yet resorting to adversarial negotiating tactics and confrontational rhetoric at other times.

While the ultimate goal may still be a strategic partnership based on broad cooperation and win-win proposals, it is likely to remain a long and bumpy road ahead. While the result is not assured, the rules of the game between NATO and Russia have to be refined. The game should be one of building confidence if there is any hope to get back to a broad cooperation agenda. Acknowledging a crisis of confidence between Russia and its European and North Atlantic partners will be necessary in order to refocus on building confidence in the short term and undertaking cooperative projects that can yield meaningful results in the long term.

Assuming that confidence building becomes the name of the game, the process will have to abide by key principles of the 1997 Founding Act such as increased transparency, reciprocity, and predictability. Borrowing from the rules that prevailed in East-West arms control negotiations during the Cold War might assist in refocusing the relationship on the long-standing and thorny issues upon which NATO and Russia have agreed to disagree,

notably Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), missile defense, tactical nuclear weapons, and NATO enlargement. Progress on contentious issues will be required to build the genuine trust that underlies a true strategic partnership. The obvious question, however, is whether a cooperative relationship can be developed on the basis of old arms control (i.e., adversarial) negotiation techniques.

In the aftermath of the Russo-Georgia war, NATO has responded to its difficult relationship with Russia by essentially reassuring Central and Eastern European allies, while reaching out to Russia through cooperative activities. The challenge of this approach is that NATO reassurances to its Central and Eastern European allies have usually been interpreted by Russia as antagonistic. This has triggered Russian rhetorical and military responses, including military exercises and the maintenance of nonstrategic nuclear weapons to offset the inferiority of Russia's conventional forces. Similarly, measures to build confidence with Russia and any mutual attempts to reduce nonstrategic nuclear weapons systems have often been perceived in Central and Eastern Europe (although the views in Central and Eastern Europe are not monolithic) as a weakening resolve on the part of NATO to use its capabilities and ultimately as a weakening of the NATO Article 5 commitment.

For its part, Russia reacted on numerous occasions to what Moscow has consistently perceived as threatening moves towards Russia. The Russian military conducted the military exercises *Ladoga* and *Zapad* in 2009 near the Baltic States based on a simulated nuclear attack on Poland. Moreover, when Warsaw decided to host U.S. ground-based interceptors as part of the Bush administration's Third Site missile defense program, Moscow threatened to target some allied territory with Russian nuclear systems based in Kaliningrad. This threat was reiterated at the end of 2011, presumably a result of the lack of progress on potential cooperation with Russia in the area of missile defense. Moreover, the weakness of Russian conventional forces has led to Russian promulgation of a "first use" nuclear doctrine. In 2010 the Russian military doctrine reiterated language previously used by the Russian military

against NATO's expansion and its global projection capability as threats to the Russian Federation. How can this vicious circle be broken?

In today's European security context, trust and confidence are elusive in most partnerships with Russia. In addition to a broad security dialogue involving high-level political and military engagement, a specific set of measures to build confidence with a broad cooperative program needs to be developed on the basis of today's security agenda in order to reassure Russia (while also expecting Moscow to respond accordingly). Tangible results on concrete measures to reassure Russia will take time and must proceed through incremental confidence-building efforts. This is, however, the price for a genuine strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, a partnership that is key to an inclusive European security community.

NATO, Russia, and the Vision of a Euro-Atlantic Security Community

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Abstract: *While there have been improvements in the U.S.-Russia relationship, relations are still stuck halfway between former enmity and aspired strategic partnership. Emphasis should be placed on transforming relations to make an inclusive security community in the region more likely. In addition to transforming strategic relations between the United States and Russia, historical reconciliation must be achieved between Russia and several NATO member countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Without either of these, there will be no inclusive security community in the Euro-Atlantic and thus no stable peace in this part of the world. The challenges are tremendous, but returning to the status quo is not a sustainable, longer-term option. Missile defense can act as a catalyst in improving relations.*

The absence of an inclusive security community in the Euro-Atlantic twenty years after the end of the Cold War is something that ought not to be overlooked. It prevents NATO member states, Russia, and other countries in Europe from cooperating more fully to solve the existing security issues on the continent and to address common challenges and threats from outside the region. Moreover, plain dangers are not to be ruled out. The 1999 Kosovo conflict and the 2008 Russo-Georgian war should serve as clear warnings. In both cases, direct Russo-NATO/U.S. collisions were only narrowly avoided.

There are many reasons for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. The principal cause, however, is the deep-seated suspicion within Russia's ruling circles about the strategic intentions of the United States and an equally strong, if not stronger, suspicion in several NATO countries, mostly in Central Europe, about the long-term geopolitical designs of Russia. As the past two decades have demonstrated, no amount of diplomatic communiqués about partner-

ship and no amount of practical but limited cooperation has been sufficient to dispel that dual mistrust.

This is not to say that dialogue and joint activities are meaningless. They have improved mutual understanding on particular issues and helped achieve useful results. Russia, for example, has materially assisted NATO in transiting troops, goods, and material to and from Afghanistan. Yet the current pattern of NATO-Russia cooperation, as it has evolved over the past fifteen years, does not allow the sources of mutual mistrust to be addressed. Rather, it helps perpetuate a relationship that is stuck halfway between former enmity and the aspired strategic partnership.

To break out of the present mold, serious steps that squarely address the sources of continuing mistrust are necessary. To deal with Russia's America problem and the Central Europeans' Russia-related issues, simply waiting for Russia to transform into a liberal democracy ready to accept U.S. leadership is not a credible option. Russia is certainly changing, with the social dynamic impacting the politi-

cal landscape, as events in recent months have demonstrated. Still, the process of its evolution toward a recognizable democracy will take a fairly long period of time. And even a more democratic Russia's acquiescence to America's leading role should not be taken for granted.

Rather than waiting for Russia to transform itself, emphasis should be placed on transforming the two sets of relationships that are currently troubled. The issue, then, is how to transform strategic relations between the United States and Russia and how to achieve full historical reconciliation between Russia and several countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Without both of these, there will be no inclusive security community in the Euro-Atlantic, and thus no stable peace in this part of the world.

If the above diagnosis is correct and the proposed treatment credible, the next logical question is whether such treatment is obtainable. Can the U.S.-Russia relationship really be transformed from adversity to strategic cooperation? Can Russia and Poland, Russia and the Baltic States, Russia and Georgia become truly reconciled? Even the questions sound a bit too optimistic. Clearly, the challenges are tremendous on all sides. The inertia of the Cold War and the postimperial syndrome are still very strong on all sides. The sense of urgency is largely absent. There are important vested interests that are quite comfortable with the status quo—psychologically, politically, and materially. These interests want no change.

What could break that inertia? Above all, a new assessment of risks and threats and the vision of the unsustainability of the status quo over the medium term. On the issue of U.S.-Russian strategic relations, missile defense acts as a catalyst. This issue offers both the prospect of serious deterioration of Russian-American relations, complete with a new crisis in Moscow's relations with NATO *and* the possibility of transforming the entire relationship away from its residual adversity toward genuine partnership. Continued inertia actually equals a choice in favor of the former.

The United States, of course, may decide to ignore Russian concerns and fears, which it sees

as unfounded and inordinate. Yet, a Russia that once again feels spurned by Washington is not in the larger U.S. interest. The U.S.-Russian reset has allowed the Obama administration to rely on Moscow's valuable support in putting together the Northern Distribution Network with reference to Afghanistan. Even in the more distant future, after the United States has completely withdrawn from Afghanistan, Russia's geopolitical position abutting simultaneously Europe, China, and the Muslim world will remain an important factor in U.S. foreign policy. Engaging Russia in meaningful cooperation on missile defense with the United States and its NATO allies will ensure, apart from many other things, that whatever else happens in relations among the major strategic players in the world, Russia will at least not land on the wrong side as far as the West is concerned.

For Russia, a failure to reach agreement with the United States and NATO on missile defense would pose even greater risks. Moscow would have to commit considerable resources to protect itself from a threat that is imaginable rather than real. Its countermeasures against a NATO-only missile defense system in Europe, announced by President Medvedev on November 23, 2011, would lead to a revival of tensions in Russia's relations with a number of European countries, not just the United States. A perception of being "isolated" in the West might push Russia to seek balance through a closer alignment in the East, resulting in Russia becoming more dependent on and eventually subservient to China.

On the issue of historical reconciliation, Moscow has already seen the light. It saw, correctly, that a continued impasse in its relations with Warsaw was turning into a real obstacle in Russia's exceedingly important relations with the European Union. Having reached this conclusion, Moscow then decided to engage Warsaw directly rather than trying to pressure the Poles with the help of Russia's principal partners in the EU, Germany and France. Early engagement with the Poles revealed the need for the Russians to do two things: to start treating Poland with respect and to look into the difficult issues of common history. Thus, something that began as a purely pragmatic attempt to do away

with the Polish roadblock on the Moscow-Brussels highway morphed into the issue of basic values, moral responsibility, and reconciliation.

However, unless the initial progress achieved between Poland and Russia is not furthered, much of the effort may be wasted. It will also remain an isolated, though important case, rather than a continentwide trend. Thus, Russia's overwhelming interest in having a productive relationship with the European Union, which is its biggest trading partner and most important modernization resource, would be damaged. It is very much in Russia's interest, then, to expand its reconciliation agenda to include other states in Europe such as the Baltics.

The kind of hard-headed risk assessment described above is a necessary first step to fundamentally revamping the NATO-Russia security relationship. Other steps include devising realistic strategies for transforming the nature of U.S.-Russian relations in the politico-military field and for deepening, sustaining, and expanding historical reconciliation between Russia and several of its neighbors in Europe.

On the U.S.-Russia track, missile defense cooperation has been long identified as a make-or-break issue and a potential "game changer." Initial approaches by both sides, however, turned out to be unrealistic. NATO essentially invited Russia to join its project, which influential voices within the Russian defense establishment viewed as detrimental to the survivability of the Russian deterrent. Russia, for its part, tried to turn the NATO project into a joint venture without contributing serious assets to it, but with a dual-key provision that would have allowed it to block NATO's decision and actions. The Russian "sectoral" approach was designed to exclude NATO missile defense deployments from the areas from which they could impact the Russian deterrent—at the price of making Poland and other countries located in those areas dependent on Russian protection. Moscow, of course, would never accept a similar security protectorate from NATO or the United States.

The objective, then, is to come up with a method that would (1) address a real missile threat,

(2) provide for meaningful and coequal military cooperation, and (3) accommodate Russia's security concerns without prejudice to the sovereignty and security interests of any other party to the cooperative project. An arrangement that provides for joint data and information processing, close communication, and clearly stated rules of engagement between the fully autonomous missile defense systems of NATO and Russia in Europe would not only resolve the current missile defense issue, but lead to deeper transformation. A version of such an arrangement has been recently drafted by a group of eminent personalities from the United States, Europe, and Russia known as the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative Commission.

Missile defense cooperation between Russia and the United States/NATO would be strategic enough to promote transformative changes in both sides' defense establishments. Deterrence would remain, as would nuclear weapons arsenals, but it would be progressively less relevant in Russian-Western relations. National security strategies and military doctrines, however, would need to take account of institutionalized strategic collaboration. This cooperation would still be less than an alliance, but due to its truly strategic nature would leave less and less room for surviving elements of Cold War enmity. As the old culture of mistrust would be receding, elements of trust would start forming a new culture.

Missile defense, of course, is not the only salient issue in Russian-Western relations. It would be wrong to focus on it to the exclusion of everything else. There are a number of arms control topics, from conventional weapons to tactical nukes to advanced precision systems. Much can be said about enhancing both sides' confidence by means of addressing these weapons categories. Confidence building and arms control, however, are of a different and lower order than building trust. While obviously important and even urgent—some of them at least—these measures are not transformative. Only cooperation at a strategic level makes a difference.

This year is an election year in the United States. In Russia the parliamentary/presidential campaign is over, but a major government reshuf-

file is about to begin as Vladimir Putin gets ready for his third inauguration. This is certainly not a good period for negotiating breakthrough agreements. Yet, this is a good year for reflection and for thinking strategically in the United States, Europe, and Russia. Then, if the renewed U.S. and Russian administrations prove receptive to bold thinking and their leaders demonstrate leadership, important national decisions could pave the way to an unprecedented common undertaking.

The way the missile defense issue plays out in 2013-14 will have massive consequences. It will provide an answer to the question of whether crucial first steps toward mutual rapprochement can be taken. Putin's forthcoming inauguration does not look like a spoiler. He is on record saying he is willing to walk "very far" to obtain a new quality for the U.S.-Russia relationship. Putin's grandiose plans for rebuilding air and missile defenses would result in Russia acquiring some assets like the S-500 systems, which could make the Russian military a more credible and valuable partner for the Pentagon.

The Obama administration, should it remain in power after November 6, 2012, would need to take another look at the U.S.-Russian reset. Actually, the reset is not a policy, but essentially a clearing operation. The operation having been largely successful, the time has come to formulate a new U.S. strategy toward Russia—something that has been missing for a decade and a half. The world has changed in that period, and it keeps changing. The global power shift toward Asia demands that the United States seek new resources at home and abroad and formulate new policies with a larger emphasis on cooperation. A smarter U.S. foreign policy needs to bring Russia back from the cold.

NATO and the Middle East: A Positive Agenda for Change

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Abstract: NATO has been given an excellent opportunity to refocus itself. For once, its cooperation framework is likely to become important. Indeed, with the recent challenges in the Middle East and North Africa, NATO is virtually guaranteed to have a role to play. And it has a lot to offer—it is the one organization with the most extensive track record in managing military transformation, an area of experience and expertise that will be essential in the region. It has the necessary credibility to engage with military establishments in the region, and the Arab Spring is inviting NATO to do what it does best—engage in discussions and dialogue on core military issues. The negatives pale in comparison to the potential positives if NATO engages as an enduring example that “soft” security measures can still help achieve hard security goals.

It is easy to deride NATO’s efforts in the Middle East as an exercise in futility. Despite ringing declarations, communiqués at various summits, and an untold number of bilateral and multilateral meetings, there is little to show for this effort. NATO did not predict or foresee the wave of revolutions that have swept through the region since January 2011. It was unable to influence outcomes and is playing catch-up with events. The notable exception was the operation last year in Libya, yet even this was undertaken as a result of UN Security Council resolutions rather than alliancewide consensus, which remained elusive. Finally, regardless of the “conclusion” of the Iranian nuclear standoff—if that’s the right term for a crisis that will endure for years, if not decades—it is certain that NATO as an alliance is likely to play only a marginal role on Iran.

The fundamental problems with NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) are well known:

- Like any international organization, NATO is best when it implements one partnership policy in a consistent manner. But that never applied to either the MD or the ICI since it was understood from the start that a one-size-fits-all policy would not work for a region as diverse as the Mediterranean basin or the Gulf. As a result, the outcome was a set of bilateral initiatives only loosely connected to the broader cooperation frameworks.
- NATO never enjoyed a strong level of support for its MD and ICI efforts. While all member states agreed that the effort was worthwhile, some countries preferred the emphasis to be directed on the Gulf region, some wanted it to be directed toward North Africa, and quite a number were simply indifferent to the entire exercise.
- Key players in the region were either excluded from cooperation or shied away from any contact. This applied not only to the so-called “pariah

states” such as Iran, Syria, and Libya before the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi, but also to Saudi Arabia—the most important player in the Gulf—and Iraq and Lebanon, some of the most volatile nations.

- NATO was not the only multilateral actor in the region. The European Union played a key role—often crowding out or negating the alliance’s efforts—while individual NATO member states also expressed strong preferences. France, for instance, remained protective of its primacy in the formulation of policies towards the Maghreb. The United States was sensitive to the particular security needs of Israel. Turkey frequently blew hot and cold over the entire effort as it began to assert itself as a key player in the Middle East’s strategic architecture.
- While a “modular” approach to cooperation with the region was clearly the right—and possibly only—approach, it also meant that the effort lacked strategic direction. In theory, NATO was open to any kind of cooperation, but in practice this usually amounted to a formulaic set of seminars, conferences, and plenty of “military tourism.”

And yet, despite this rather patchy record, NATO has now been given an excellent opportunity to refocus itself. For once its cooperation framework is likely to become important.

Why now?

It would be foolish to predict the outcome of the wave of revolutions sweeping the region. These may end with an “authoritarian restoration” of the kind experienced in Europe in 1848 or with the rise of Islamic-based regimes that succeed in “stealing” the popular sentiments of the revolts. It is equally possible that the result may be the perpetuation of weak governments that owe their intellectual allegiance to no ideology, but merely totter from one day to the next, sometimes repressing popular dissent and sometimes buckling under it. Whatever

the outcome—and it is quite likely to be a mixture of all the scenarios outlined above—NATO is virtually guaranteed to have a role to play for the following reasons:

- All Middle Eastern regimes will require a new “social contract” with their national armed forces. In all of the region’s countries the military will have to withdraw from politics and accept a more institutionalized presence, one that is hemmed in by some predictable, prescriptive constitutional norms.
- Whether Syrian President Bashar al-Assad survives in power or is overthrown, his country will never again be the tightly controlled nation it was over the past half century. There is a real risk that Syria will descend into perpetual civil warfare of the kind experienced by Lebanon. The result may therefore be an “arc of conflict” spanning from the Gulf to the Mediterranean and including Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. This would be a vast expanse, where militias would be confronting each other in a bigger regional proxy war in which Iran and Saudi Arabia support and supply various protagonists.
- Whether Iran succeeds in acquiring a nuclear capability or not, the question of confidence-building measures in the Middle East will be the key concern for years to come.
- The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is seeking to transform itself into a regional military alliance, largely in order to meet the perceived security gap as Iran’s military clout and ability to destabilize the region increases. It is in everyone’s interests that a GCC military alliance be based on objectives countries wish to promote—such as regional security—rather than on what countries oppose—such as the destabilization of regional monarchies. In short, the question is whether a GCC alliance will resemble NATO or whether it will resemble the old Warsaw Pact, an alliance that only went into action against its own member states in order to perpetuate a political status

quo. This is now the Gulf's most pressing question and one in which the West has a major stake.

Why NATO?

To all these forthcoming challenges of the Middle East, NATO has a great deal to offer. It is the one organization with the most extensive track record in managing military transformation, with a repository of good practice stretching back decades. It also has a long experience with efforts to implement and perfect democratic control of the armed forces, as almost half of the alliance's member states can attest. It is second-to-none in negotiating confidence-building measures of a military nature and in the implementation of arms control agreements. And NATO includes all of the key actors with relevance to the Middle East. In short, it has the necessary credibility to engage with the military establishments in the region and the political credibility to engage with the region's new leaders. Paradoxically, having spent years trying to fathom what it could usefully do in the Middle East, the "Arab Spring" is now inviting the alliance to do what it always did best—engage in discussion and dialogue on core military issues.

What should and should not be done

As always, it is easier to prescribe what should not be done rather than what should be pushed forward in this dialogue. Nevertheless, a list of the "don'ts" remains critically useful since—as the experience with the MD and ICI indicates—presentation is often as important as the message itself. NATO should avoid:

- *Offering one approach to the entire region.* While the problems may be similar, no nation wishes to be treated as part of a group.
- *Prioritizing one action over another.* While Libya may welcome assistance with the reconstruction of its armed forces, Egypt, for instance, may not. Efforts will have to be calibrated to what is desired by nation states rather than what is desirable.
- *Treating countries as infants in need of learning.* That may seem a fundamental and well-understood point, but it is not. On many occasions NATO put forward its experience as a model, with little practical effect. Touting Turkey, for instance, as an example of a democratic yet Muslim nation whose path may be followed by Arab countries is probably counterproductive, largely because Turkey's model is not easily copied elsewhere, however appealing it may be.
- *Organizing many public conferences and seminars in the region.* Given the greater openness of the Middle East, the temptation and ability to organize such conferences is much larger. The impact of such conferences, however, is diminishing, as local NGOs—the usual interlocutors for NATO at such conferences—still do not have much impact on policymaking. By engaging too much with NGOs, NATO risks creating the impression that it wishes to go behind the backs of national leaders. That is already the view of the military in Egypt, for instance, and it is harmful to the alliance's engagement efforts.
- *Launching new, grand partnership initiatives.* The MD and ICI frameworks are perfectly adequate for all needs, and any new overarching strategy is likely to be met with public incredulity in the Middle East.
- *Taking credit for supporting the wave of revolutions in the region.* The true heroes are the people of the region, not the alliance, notwithstanding NATO's huge contribution to the liberation of Libya.

This list of negatives may seem daunting. But it pales in comparison with the positives, with the opportunities that NATO has in the region. These include the following:

- Engage directly not only with national military establishments, but with finance ministries in Middle Eastern countries. That is the kind of dialogue that often does not exist at the national level and where NATO can help.

- Move quickly to bring Libya, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia into the alliance's frameworks for dialogue.
- Use the offer of dialogue as a positive public policy instrument and do so in a clear, declaratory manner. There is no reason, for instance, why Iran should not be promised strategic dialogue with NATO should it comply with the nuclear verification requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the UN Security Council. There is every reason why a similar offer should be made to Syria well in advance of the collapse of the current dictatorship in that country.
- Allow some of the new members of NATO—those that experienced both dictatorship and a transition to democracy fairly recently—to take the lead in some of these engagement efforts on behalf of NATO. These countries are likely to be more accepted in the initial phase of contact.
- Highlight the fact that NATO is a repository of information on arms control and confidence-building measures.
- Act as a venue for security dialogue between regional countries. These happen far less than desired, and NATO can be the “midwife.”
- Encourage high-profile visits from Middle Eastern military commanders to Brussels, partly to break down negative perceptions of NATO in the region. That is one kind of “military tourism” that should be actively promoted.
- Achieve a division of labor between NATO, the EU, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund in dealing with the region. That, admittedly, has proven to be a difficult course. But the task may be easier now that a division of sorts is already emerging, with the EU coordinating broader economic and political moves, while international financial organizations are there to provide credits and economic reconstruction expertise.

The practices of dialogue, socialization, and cooperative security pioneered by NATO will remain

crucial. They will become even more important in tomorrow's Middle East since they will be combined with the formation of new regional alliances, balance-of-power games, and, potentially, also deterrence practices. NATO should be engaged as an enduring example that “soft” security measures can still help achieve hard security goals. And the opportunity for doing so has never been greater than now, despite the currently confusing strategic map of the Middle East.

Turkey's NATO Agenda: What Role in the Middle East?

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***Abstract:** Turkey relied on the NATO alliance throughout the Cold War years, but, at times, it has come to feel like the “lone wolf” in the alliance. The country still relies on NATO, to be sure, but the extent to which Turkey can count on NATO is contingent upon NATO's cohesion in how it contends with pressing security concerns. Given Turkey's strategic geopolitical location, Turkey cannot remain indifferent to the ongoing crises in North Africa and the Middle East. Indeed, Turkey has demonstrated the ability to facilitate intensive dialogue and consultation to promote regional peace and stability.*

The NATO stage

At the age of sixty-three, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the longest living military alliance in history. This could not have been possible if, through the years, it did not satisfy its members' expectations and if members had not fulfilled their commitments to achieving its purposes. NATO's longevity also proves that the alliance has been transforming successfully in response to changes in the security environment. Its membership has reached twenty-eight, and several more countries are aspiring to accede. Over thirty countries from the Southern Mediterranean to Central Asia, plus Russia and Ukraine, are engaged by NATO in dialogue or as partners. This indicates that the alliance is prestigious and credible, with an extended reach.

It is also true that the alliance is going through difficult times. Difficult issues confront the alliance's solidarity and cohesion, ranging from the diminishing military capabilities of most members to the shifting of U.S. priorities from Europe to the Pacific. Differences in degree amongst members in their threat perceptions, security concerns, interests, and preferred responses are also challeng-

ing. For this reason, the alliance, having decided on a new strategy, reiterated its determination to undertake yet another transformation so that it is prepared to address twenty-first-century security challenges. To achieve this in a time of austerity, the alliance has to seek ways to become leaner and more capable with less money. It must engage with partners for regional and global security, while ensuring the fulfillment of its core mission, i.e., collective defense.

Where does Turkey stand?

During the Cold War NATO was the backbone of Turkey's defense against the Soviet/Warsaw Pact threat. NATO membership implied a Western identity for Turkey and offered an equal say in European defense matters. In return, Turkey shared the burden of guarding the southern flank, while alienating itself not only from the Soviet Union but also from all the Soviet satellite states in its immediate neighborhood. Turkey's reliance on NATO increased as the Turkish military became totally oriented and dependent on the United States and NATO. Turkey became aware of the constraints of this depen-

dence after its “Peace Operation” in Cyprus and in its struggle against the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), when it became subject to arms embargos imposed by its NATO allies.

As European integration deepened and the Western European Union, which ultimately became the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) of the European Union (EU), gained prominence, Turkey was concerned about being left out, with a degraded association arrangement that did not assure a firm commitment to collective defense that is spared for EU members only. Discussions on whether Turkey was a security provider or a security consumer were more confusing. This undermined Turkey’s confidence in the European allies’ fulfilling their NATO obligations for its security and defense. Hence NATO’s security assurance essentially meant a U.S. assurance for Turkey, and bilateral relations with the United States were its special transatlantic link. At times, when its relations with the United States went sour, Turkey felt like a “lone wolf.”

Today, for Turkey, NATO is still the precious alliance that it was in the past. Turkey shares the values that NATO cherishes. It needs the assurance and the deterrence that NATO provides against potential adversaries. Turkey also needs the nuclear umbrella and the missile defense extended through NATO. The new Strategic Concept and the core tasks assumed by the alliance are basically aligned with Turkey’s security requirements. But how much Turkey can count on NATO is contingent upon NATO’s capabilities and on its cohesion with regard to its pressing security concerns, which are piling up in its vicinity.

Strategic partnership

Once the Cold War was over, Turkey chose to follow a multidimensional foreign policy to improve its security environment in a way parallel and complementary to NATO enlargement and engagement, not necessarily as an alternative to it. In this context, military-to-military contacts with other countries, regional or otherwise, led to more structured relations, including regular exchanges, joint exercises, and industrial cooperation. Based on

the merits of its location and its growing economic and political power, Turkey gained popularity as a strategic partner. U.S., EU, and Israeli leadership, amongst others, often pronounced Turkey as a strategic partner, apparently to express a high level of desirability for such a relationship in the geopolitical context. Turkey needed strategic partners to construct a safe and stable periphery. Recently, striking discord amongst Turkey, the United States, and Israel, however, has shown that achieving a long-lasting strategic partnership requires more than desire and intent.

Strategic partnership may be defined as a commitment between two or more states to work together and cooperate closely to achieve a strategic objective with a long-term perspective, especially where vital interests are concerned.¹ It represents a partnership beyond short-term, close cooperation or an alliance.

A strategic partnership can be realized when achieving the strategic objective is worth the struggle, when both parties have an equally high stake in getting involved in a balanced and concerted way, and when the strategic objective cannot be achieved alone. Mutual confidence between partners is a vital ingredient of an enduring partnership.

Most often, the strategic objective is to establish and deny others control over an area of high geostrategic value or to gain the support of a pivotal country. The Shanghai Five and U.S. relationships with Gulf states are perfect examples of strategic partnership. alliances of necessity do not always mean strategic partnership.

NATO might not have been a strategic partnership, but as it becomes engaged in places such as Afghanistan and Libya and expands its role to cover “global interests,” it may look more and more like a strategic partnership, provided that it acts in union with balanced burden and benefit sharing. Thus far, however, NATO resembles more a convenient platform for consultation and for organizing coalitions.

1. Gültekin Sümer, “A Comparative Survey on the Concept of Strategic Cooperation and Strategic Partnership,” *Ege Academic Review* 10, no. 2 (2010), 673-700.

The Middle East and the Turkish dilemma

Turkey, situated on the margins of Europe and the Middle East, is both a European and a Middle Eastern country. As such, Turkey's perception of the region often differs from that of its NATO/EU partners. Most of the allies' vision of the region is focused on sustaining unopposed influence and unhindered access to hydrocarbon resources and on the security of Israel. Their vision is also clouded by Islamophobia and selfish preferences. Turkey is more interested in regional development, peace, and stability. To be in good relations with its neighbors is a fundamental principle of Turkish foreign policy. Naturally, Turkey has to be more sensitive regarding its relations with Russia and Iran; hence it should be more than reluctant to call them adversaries.

Turkey, in comparison to its NATO/EU partners, is less concerned with the Strait of Hormuz and more concerned with arms buildup, existing nuclear weapons, and unresolved conflicts. It seems like no other state cares about a peace settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians as much as Turkey does. Turkey cannot tolerate religious, ideological, and sectarian fragmentation in the region and encourages interdependence.

Turkey's involvement in the Middle East is welcomed by some countries, but is irritating to others. Turkey is either doing better than the EU on its Neighborhood Policy or is shifting its axis. Some say Turkey is a model for the region, but has a few shortcomings. Some say Turkey must be tightly anchored to Europe, but it has no place in Europe. These controversial attitudes observed both in Europe and in the Middle East compel Turkey to look more after its own interests.

In the regional context, Turkey has tense relations with Greece, Greek Cypriots, Armenia, and Israel. While all these countries could have come together to form a functional group to take up regional initiatives, Turkey is being circumvented by them in what some might see as a strategic partnership. For instance, Israel stands out amongst the Mediterranean Dialogue countries since it already has a well-established dialogue and affiliation

with the transatlantic community. With its military strength, Israel could have been a valuable partner were it not in conflict with the rest of the Middle East, including Turkey, over the issue of Palestine. This situation creates an obstacle to cooperation with Israel in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) context and could be a serious impediment to advancing its relations with NATO.

The Middle East is the hub of potential conflicts and crises such as the following:

- Fear about Iran's nuclear and missile programs and its regional challenges constitutes a threat to global peace and stability, even a risk of war, as the United States and Israel send signals of pre-emption and Iran threatens to close the Strait of Hormuz.
- As Iran struggles to expand its influence in the region, a Sunni-Shia polarization gains momentum and the risk of a sectarian clash rises. The Arab uprisings are already providing fertile ground, exploited by the Taliban where feasible, for such a polarization. This may open the stage for long-lasting chaos in the region, spurring radicalism and terrorism.
- The uprisings in Syria and Egypt and the situation in Iraq generate uncertainty and instability, inviting external involvement. As a region of critical interest for oil- and gas-dependent countries, the Middle East is once again a region where competition for influence prevails.
- Currently somewhat obscured by the above, the issue of Palestine remains the biggest impediment to regional peace and security.

This "zero sum" setting may be transformed into an "all win" situation only if the root causes are addressed. Arab-Israeli peace and the settlement of the Palestine issue are fundamental to engage all the countries of the region toward a common goal: peace and stability for a better future. This should be envisaged together with the denuclearization of the region. Introducing better governance that is more responsive to public demand would be para-

mount to achieve such a transformation. But above all, international consensus over such a vision is essential.

What can NATO do?

Through the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, NATO has been in touch with eleven MENA countries to develop mutual understanding, confidence, and cooperation. Through this engagement, NATO has partners it can communicate and interoperate with on the same frequency. Although this engagement was designed to be inclusive, countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia remain outside of this initiative. This situation looks divisive for the regional cooperation that must be sought. Libya and Iraq were engaged in different ways by NATO through wars, which left them in need of recovery from the ensuing turmoil. Whether or not they will remain intact is still a valid question.

The new command structure that brings the joint land command to Izmir, Turkey, is a timely response for the likely contingencies in the region, as are the deployable air command and control and communication elements. NATO's comprehensive approach that brings military and civilian elements together to bring a failed or war-ridden country back to its feet is certainly a step in the right direction.

What NATO can actually do in various situations is more intriguing. All the allies can be expected to share a certain amount of concern over already rising oil prices and to be more concerned if the Gulf exits were closed. The Gulf Cooperation Council already has a unified military presence in place to defend the Gulf against an attack from Iran, together with the backing of the United States, as necessary. There, NATO involvement may not at all be required or desirable in a wider context.

NATO members should not and could not condone a preemptive attack on Iran by either the United States or Israel. Instead, NATO should insist on a political solution and appeal for a nonnuclear MENA. That appeal should come as part of a vision for the region that is built upon a peace settlement

that could be ensured by NATO if the partners agree and if there is a UN mandate.

The situation in Syria is the most demanding. The NATO intervention in Libya might have raised expectations of NATO among the protesters, as indicated by NATO's regionwide rise in popularity ever since. However, even with a UN mandate, prospects of NATO involvement in Syria seem dubious.

Turkey is in a position to influence the regional balance geographically, politically, economically, and militarily. Turkey cannot remain indifferent towards what is taking place in the Middle East. But there is not much it can do in forging a democratic solution to the ongoing Arab uprisings. Turkey cannot take sides with any of the parties struggling for power; it can side only with the people of the country. An intervention from the outside for the purpose of stopping the bloodshed would help only to topple the regime at the price of more bloodshed and devastation, as past experience has proved. This explains the hesitations Turkey had at the start of the events in Libya and Syria.

But Turkey can play a role in garnering and coordinating an international response by mediating an intensive dialogue and consultation, as is already being done for finding an acceptable and legitimate way out from the crises of governance in the Middle East. Turkey would be ever ready to provide relief and recovery support.

Summary

NATO is settling on a new course to meet twenty-first-century challenges, all of which demand a collective and cooperative effort to be dealt with effectively. Turkey stands on the front line, facing the security challenges in the Middle East that are becoming increasingly pressing.

The Syrian uprising and worries about Iran's nuclear program require immediate action by the international community. Simply put, the situation in the Middle East is unpredictable and explosive. As of yet, no formal consultation has taken place in the NATO Council regarding a NATO response to the crises in the Middle East.

The Transatlantic Bargain after Gates

Barry Pavel

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Director, Program on International Security, Atlantic Council**

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***Abstract:** As the United States reassesses its defense priorities towards the Indo-Pacific region amid cutbacks on defense spending, European partners in NATO must take on a larger responsibility for security within their own region and remain a close partner with the United States in providing security for the Middle East.*

Introduction

The tough love farewell speech of former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in June 2011 was more than a major policy speech on the state of NATO. His remarks were also highly symbolic, coming from a legendary cold warrior whose forty-year career had been oriented around the transatlantic relationship. Gates used his final appearance at the bully pulpit not only to warn Europeans that declining defense budgets risked undermining the credibility of the alliance among U.S. policymakers, but also that a new wave of American decision makers would not necessarily share his generation's knowledge of, concern for, or sentimental attachment to the transatlantic alliance.

Since Gates' departure, the United States has announced major revisions to its defense strategy and military posture as a result of its own spending constraints and a reassessment of the international landscape. After years of growth, current projections show the U.S. defense budget shrinking by \$487 billion in the decade to come, with another half trillion in cuts possible depending on the outcome of highly partisan negotiations over future reductions to the federal deficit. On the

international front, the United States has begun to adjust its international priorities in the aftermath of a decade of draining combat in the Middle East and Southwest Asia and the rise of new powers outside the Euro-Atlantic area. The fast emergence of China, India, and other powers in Asia as well as Iran's continued pursuit of a nuclear program in defiance of the international community have caused the United States to prioritize Asia-Pacific security and focus secondarily on the Persian Gulf as its top security concern.

This fundamental reassessment of U.S. defense strategy necessitates a similar rethinking of the transatlantic bargain if it is to remain relevant to the security of Europe, Canada, and the United States. As the United States adjusts to its own challenge of austerity and the need to place priority on Indo-Pacific security, Europe will need to take on more responsibility for security within its own region and remain a close partner with the United States in providing security for the Middle East. For this bargain to hold and for NATO to remain relevant for both sides of the Atlantic, its member nations will need to modernize and update their capabilities and form more dynamic and innovative regional and global partnerships to best address the array of

modern threats likely to face the transatlantic community in the future.

A greater burden for Europe as America rotates to Asia

If Gates' tough words in Brussels failed to win the attention of U.S. allies in Europe, President Obama certainly gained their full attention when he announced his administration's new defense strategy in January 2012. The document emphasized that the United States "will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region," while also remaining heavily engaged in supporting the security of Israel, the Persian Gulf, and other partners in the greater Middle East. The document recognizes that Europe remains Washington's "principal partner in seeking global security and prosperity," but that it will occupy a different place in U.S. defense policy and strategy in the future.

Over the last decade, Europe has remained central to U.S. strategy as a means of supporting U.S. forces engaged in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. With these wars concluded or winding down and the United States focusing the bulk of its defense resources on Asia, the United States no longer needs—nor can it afford—to maintain its current military presence on a continent that is at peace. With the United States forced to take on additional security responsibilities in Asia and the Middle East in pursuit of shared transatlantic objectives, Washington will look to its European allies to take a leading role in managing certain crises and contingency operations on their own periphery.

This does not mean that the United States will not come to the defense of its European allies when the chips are really down. If Article 5 beckons, the United States should and will be there. But if the types of discretionary operations that have characterized NATO's post-Cold War history (e.g., Bosnia, Kosovo, counterpiracy) continue to arise, then Europe should expect a relatively reduced U.S. role and a relatively greater role for their own forces. With Europe at peace and likely to remain so, it must tend to its neighborhood with greater care and call in the reinforcements of the United

States only when absolutely needed. In this way, NATO's Libya operation indeed may be the model for humanitarian interventions along Europe's periphery. The United States will do what it must—playing roles and providing surge capabilities that only it can provide—and Europe will bear the rest of the burden for operations that are more in its own interests than those of the United States.

A slimmer and smarter U.S. military presence in Europe and its periphery will enable Washington to increase its presence in the Pacific in pursuit of shared transatlantic objectives of peace and security in Asia. China's rapid accumulation of economic, political, and military influence has left U.S. allies and partners in the region uneasy and eager for a reinforced American diplomatic and military presence to balance Beijing. As China and other Asian economies continue their torrid economic growth, trade and investment flows into the region will become an increasingly important, shared economic interest for both the United States and Europe. But even as the region grows more prosperous, spoilers such as North Korea and lingering conflicts such as the China-Taiwan rivalry and the South China Sea dispute will require a sustained U.S. presence and attention to preserve the fragile peace in the region.

Few of America's NATO allies possess the capability or even the interest in taking on a large role in security in the Asia-Pacific region. But all of the allies have an interest in preserving a fragile peace and stability in a region crucial to Europe's economic prospects. Moreover, U.S. engagement in Asia through its network of alliances also helps to advance shared transatlantic ideals in a region of contested values.

While the United States may not expect Europe to follow in its rebalancing toward Asia, it will seek to maintain strong transatlantic support in striving for security in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. The region's rich energy reserves, geostrategic position, and continuing political instability will ensure that it remains at the top of the security agenda for the United States and its transatlantic allies and partners, even in the aftermath of the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops from Iraq and the draw-

down from Afghanistan. The Libya conflict demonstrated the positive impact that a closer partnership between the transatlantic community and key Gulf states can have on the region's security. Fortunately for Washington, strong ties between Paris and London and key Gulf allies such as the UAE and Oman can ensure that the United States preserves critical European support in pursuing shared security objectives in the Middle East.

NATO's role in a new transatlantic bargain

A new transatlantic bargain has direct implications for NATO's vast but critical agenda. First, with the continuing drawdown in Afghanistan, NATO must prepare anew for serious Article 5 threats and challenges. This does not mean a return to Reforger exercises or Cold War mind-sets, as the current and future threats to NATO member states are, for the most part, very different from those of the past. This century's Article 5 threats will be manifested by ballistic missiles originating from the greater Middle East, coercive Russian energy threats and Arctic resource claims, challenges in cyberspace from a variety of sources, and, in the near future, challenges posed to the alliance's space capabilities, which are increasingly vulnerable and upon which the alliance's militaries (and societies) are ever more reliant.¹

Thus, the focus of NATO exercises and training to strengthen interoperability for contingencies in Europe should emphasize needed defenses against these new types of threats. This means, for example, increasing NATO's capability for cyber defenses and planning for contingencies that feature coercive Russian oil and gas supply measures and militarized Arctic resource grabs.

For Article 5 threats to members' security originating from outside of Europe, i.e., from the greater Middle East, NATO will need to continue to exercise its naval, air, and ground forces for expeditionary

operations. No-fly zones, naval blockades, precision air campaigns, and selected ground operations will continue to be required for contingencies that unfold in the context of the Arab Awakening and by the range of threats posed by Iran.

Of course, just as in previous decades, the United States should retain a core role in the alliance for the full range of such Article 5 operations. This fundamental element of the bargain will not change, for when Europe's vital interests are threatened from within Europe or beyond, so too are those of the United States.

Second, as stated above, the relative role of Europe in non-Article 5 operations will of necessity increase. However, with austerity afflicting defense budgets on both sides of the Atlantic, there is no thought that Europe will all of a sudden increase its inventories of the types of critical and expensive military assets that the United States maintains in disproportionate numbers—C4ISR assets, targeteers, logistics, and other enabling capabilities.² The United States will need to continue to provide those capabilities when such assets can be made available. But the days when the United States provided the preponderance of the assets of all types for operations that do not involve Article 5 are over. The United States will support such European-led NATO operations when it deems them in its interests to do so and when such assets are available, but this support will no longer be automatic or comprehensive.

Third, the "plug and play" command and control structure that has brought NATO through the Cold War and a range of post-Cold War contingencies continues to be highly valuable and very relevant to today's security challenges. NATO should sustain this core framework at all costs, as its value endures and enables new partnerships.

Fourth, NATO's approach to partnerships in recent years has proven prescient, but much more needs to be done, and with some urgency. The greater Middle East is in turmoil and will likely remain so for a generation as the Arab Awakening plays out across the entire region. Surely the alli-

1. One threat that lingers still from the Cold War is the ongoing campaign by Russian covert operatives, which according to published reports is in full throttle again. NATO dealt with this threat in the Cold War and can deal with it again in this century.

2. C4ISR stands for command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

ance should be prepared for demanding contingencies that affect very important or even vital interests of NATO member states. Moreover, the possibility of a crisis or conflict with Iran—either before it acquires nuclear weapons or after—must be taken seriously. Such a conflict would from its very outset directly affect NATO members, including Turkey, but also the United States and other NATO members whose national forces are hosted in significant concentrations in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (particularly Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait). For example, an Iranian ballistic missile in flight will be picked up by U.S. and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) radars, and depending on its arc and range, by NATO's missile defense radars in Turkey and NATO members' shipborne radars in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, a single Iranian ballistic missile in a Gulf crisis will lead almost automatically to Article 5 consultations, if not operations, by the alliance.

All of this means that the time for NATO's political timidity in the face of such realities is over. With some alacrity NATO should work out a robust partnership arrangement with the newly prominent GCC as a group and with the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) individually. There is much to do. The focus should be security cooperation with MENA partners and strengthened interoperability with the GCC in air defense; naval operations; missile defense; coalition air operations; and command, control, and communications. Where possible, Turkey should play a leading role in the alliance's efforts. The key partners at this point, if current events and the Libya operation are any indication, are likely to be Qatar and the UAE, but there will be others.

Finally, NATO cannot ignore the Indian and Pacific Ocean regions. Our globalized world means that significant economic disruptions in Asia almost instantly affect Europe and North America. The melting Arctic ice cap means that an increasing amount of maritime traffic from Asia will transit northern European waters on its way to distant ports. New, critical sea lines of communication will need to be patrolled; new patterns of international maritime activity will begin to form. NATO needs

to be ready—to be thinking, talking, and at some point, planning—for these geostrategic changes occurring due to the most rapid shift of economic and political power in history.

NATO should begin by initiating a consultative forum for Asian partners that are interested in a dialogue as well as develop means to enhance their interoperability with the alliance through joint exercises. The most likely initial partners should include Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. NATO itself should begin to devote a portion of its own deliberations to Asian security matters. This is not to suggest that NATO begin Article 5 planning for China-Taiwan scenarios or for the Korean peninsula. But NATO should begin talking about Asian security, amongst its own members and with key Asian partners who share the values that animated the formation of the alliance in 1949. For if the next century features the rise of Asian powers to the apex of global power, it will be incumbent upon the United States, Canada, and Europe to strive to the greatest extent possible to ensure that the new global order reflects transatlantic values.

The transatlantic partnership can have a bright and robust future, even in the face of a new array of threats and challenges to the security of alliance members. Just as it has done before, the adaptable Atlantic partnership will need to evolve once more to address a new international landscape. The broad strategic interests of the Atlantic community are in greater convergence than ever before, but divergences in capabilities and regional priorities require an adjustment to the transatlantic bargain to ensure that the partnership remains as relevant in the future as it has been in the past.

Conference Participants

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Ambassador Bogusław Winid

Under-Secretary of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

Conference Agenda

28 March: The Future of NATO

18:00-19:15

Public Program

Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, Professor of the Practice of Diplomacy and International Politics, Harvard Kennedy School, and Former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, U.S. Department of State

19:30-21:15

Private Dinner and Remarks

General Stéphane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, ACT, NATO

Introduction

Dr. Rachel Bronson, Vice President, Studies, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

29 March: Collective Defense in the Midst of Economic Turmoil

08:45-09:00

Welcome

Marshall M. Bouton, President, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

09:00-10:15

“Economic Realities: The Scope and Depth of Austerity”

Economic turmoil on both sides of the Atlantic is leading to a serious reconsideration of spending priorities, including defense spending. The manner in which states respond today will have a profound impact on tomorrow’s capabilities. How are global economic conditions impacting national security decision-making processes and domestic budgetary considerations? What does slow or stagnant growth mean for member states’ defense spending, investment, and financial contributions to NATO? What does it mean for the alliance’s ability to carry out current operations? What are the implications for future missions and capabilities?

Speakers:

The Rt Hon James Arbuthnot, MP, Chairman, UK Defence Select Committee

Adrian P. Kendry, Senior Defence Economist and Head of Defence and Security Economics, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, NATO

Chair:

Ambassador J.D. Bindenagel, Vice President for Community, Government, and International Affairs, DePaul University

Paper writer:

Dr. Josef Braml, Editor-in-Chief, DGAP Yearbook,
German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

10:30-12:00

“NATO’s Political Ambitions in a Changing Strategic Context”

Have U.S. and other allied interests diverged? Do European and Canadian allies have their own vision for NATO’s future? How can NATO devise a strategy in line with its ambitions, and where should it place its focus in light of America’s pivot toward Asia? What types of stresses might future political ambitions place on NATO’s consensus decision making?

Speakers:

Dr. Karl-Heinz Kamp, Director, Research Division,
NATO Defense College

Damon Wilson, Executive Vice President, Atlantic Council; Former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs, U.S. National Security Council

Ambassador Bogusław W. Winid, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

Chair:

Dr. Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, Director,
The German Marshall Fund of the United States—France

Paper writer:

Dr. Henning Riecke, Head of Program,
Transatlantic Relations Program, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

12:00-13:30

Lunch and Keynote Address

Ambassador Ivo Daalder, Permanent Representative of the United States to NATO

Introduction

Ambassador Fay Hartog Levin, Senior Advisor, European Affairs, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs; Former Ambassador of the United States to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

13:45-15:15

“Afghanistan: Learning the Right Lessons and Turning to Transition”

How effective has NATO been in commanding complex military operations? ISAF has taken a large share of responsibility in Afghanistan. What lessons can be learned from balancing interests of contributing nations with different levels of training, different command structures, rotating commands, sharing of air resources, and divided command? Can military effectiveness be improved given NATO’s basic political structure? What are the mid- and long-term obstacles confronting transition in 2014 and the enduring partnership with Afghanistan? What implications will these challenges have on Afghanistan’s economic future?

Speakers:

Dr. Mark R. Jacobson, Senior Transatlantic Fellow, The German Marshall Fund of the United States; Former Deputy NATO Senior Civilian Representative and Director of International Affairs, NATO ISAF Headquarters in Kabul

Lieutenant-General Marc Lessard (Ret.), Mentor/Senior Directing Staff, Canadian Forces College; Former Commander, Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM)

Ahmed Rashid, Journalist and Author of *Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan*

Chair:

Professor Michael Clarke, Director General, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

Paper writers:

Beata Górka-Winter, Programme Coordinator on International Security, The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM)

Dr. Elinor Sloan, Associate Professor of International Relations, Carleton University, Ottawa

15:30-17:00

“Implementing Smart Defense”

What are the basic requirements for operationalizing the “Smart Defense” agenda? Can concepts such as the Mission Focus Groups be helpful? What mechanisms exist or should be built to inform and consult on pending national decisions that could affect alliance capabilities? How can the NATO summit in Chicago promote a more capable alliance vis-à-vis Smart Defense?

Speakers:

Dr. Hans Binnendijk, Vice President for Research and Applied Learning, National Defense University (NDU); Director and Roosevelt Chair, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)

Sir Brian Burridge, Vice President, Strategic Marketing, Finmeccanica UK Ltd.

Paper writer and chair:

Dr. Camille Grand, Director, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS)

19:00-20:45

Dinner at Gibsons Bar & Steakhouse

30 March: Diplomacy, Partnerships, and Cooperative Security

09:00-10:30

“NATO-Russia Relations: Achieving Meaningful Dialogue”

What are the concrete achievements of the U.S.-Russia “reset,” and what is the outlook for a step change in NATO-Russia relations? Is genuine

partnership possible if Russia does not see security as indivisible? Is there scope for technical and industrial cooperation short of missile defense cooperation? Can there be more cooperation on Afghanistan, transnational threats, and issues pertaining to the global commons? What are the implications of bilateral arrangements with Russia (such as in Germany) for the alliance?

Speakers:

Steve Andreassen, National Security Consultant, Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI); Lecturer, Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs; Former Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control, U.S. National Security Council

Ambassador Rastislav Káčer, President, Slovak Atlantic Commission; Former Ambassador of Slovakia to the United States

Dr. Dmitri Trenin, Director, Carnegie Moscow Center

Chair:

Dr. Kennette Benedict, Executive Director and Publisher, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*

Paper writers:

Dr. Isabelle François, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, National Defense University (NDU)

Dr. Dmitri Trenin, Director, Carnegie Moscow Center

11:00-12:30

“Strategic Partnerships: New Partners for New Challenges”

Operations in Libya showed that non-NATO partners can contribute to NATO operations in positive ways. This trend could continue if NATO is pulled into new areas and new kinds of conflicts, which seems likely. Through the creation of organizations such as the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) and the NATO Response Force (NRF), NATO has

demonstrated a seriousness of purpose through engagement with nontraditional partners in non-traditional missions. If and how can NATO streamline its command structure to better integrate non-NATO partners into future operations? Is there the capacity for more training, capabilities, and/or support for democratic, civil-military cooperation in times of economic stress? What is Turkey's vision for the region and where can it exercise leverage? Should partners in the Asia Pacific, like Australia, be more directly engaged?

Speakers:

His Excellency Kim Beazley, AC, Ambassador of the Commonwealth of Australia to the United States

Franklin Kramer, Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense

Ambassador Ümit Pamir, Former Permanent Representative of Turkey to NATO; Member of the High Advisory Board, Global Political Trends Center (GPoT)

Chair:

General Vincenzo Camporini (Ret.), Vice President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI); Former Chief of Defense Staff, Italian Armed Forces

Paper writers:

Dr. Jonathan Eyal, Senior Research Fellow/Director, International Studies, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

Lieutenant General Şadi Ergüvenç (Ret.), Former Turkish Military Representative, NATO Military Committee; Member of the High Advisory Board, Global Political Trends Center (GPoT)

12:30-14:00

Lunch and Keynote Address

Dr. Jamie Shea, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges, NATO

Introduction

Dr. Fran Burwell, Vice President and Director, Transatlantic Relations Program, Atlantic Council

14:15-15:45

"The Transatlantic Bargain after Gates"

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' speech in June 2011 repeated in public what many have privately acknowledged: NATO, the lynchpin of European security and transatlantic relations, faces "the real possibility [of] a dim, if not dismal future." At the same time, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has made it clear that the United States intends to pivot from its traditional Western focus and look to "lock in a substantially increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise—in the Asia-Pacific region." Although Secretary Clinton has made clear that Europe is a partner of "first resort," where does NATO fit into a broader U.S. security strategy? Is NATO best seen as a European security framework rather than a transatlantic one? What does the future hold for NATO and for America's leadership role within alliance?

Speakers:

His Excellency Martin Erdmann, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to NATO

His Excellency Philippe Errera, Permanent Representative of France to NATO

Barry Pavel, Director-Designate, Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, Atlantic Council

Chair:

Dr. Rachel Bronson, Vice President, Studies, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Paper writers:

Barry Pavel, Director-Designate, Brent Scowcroft
Center on International Security, Atlantic Council

Jeff Lightfoot, Deputy Director, Program on
International Security, Atlantic Council

18:00-19:00

***Reception at the Residence of Robert Chatterton
Dickson, British Consul General, Chicago***

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on Global Affairs**, founded in 1922
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