

**ADAPTATION PROJECT
PROJECT GLOBSEC
GLOBSEC NATO ADAP
NATO ADAPTATION PR
ADAPTATION PROJEC
PROJECT GLOBSEC
GLOBSEC NATO ADAP
NATO ADAPTATION PR
ADAPTATION PROJEC
PROJECT GLOBSEC
PROJECT GLOBSEC**

**NATO IN A CHANGING STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT:
THE QUESTIONS NATO ADAPTATION MUST ADDRESS
STEERING COMMITTEE SCOPING PAPER**

GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Project

On behalf of the Steering Committee of this project, please find attached the paper:

GLOBSEC is well known in European and North American security circles as one of the key entities studying the security realities of Europe, NATO, and the concept of the Transatlantic Alliance. Annually GLOBSEC is viewed as one of the leading security conferences in Europe and is second-only in size to the Munich Security Conference.

Given the substantial changes in the strategic environment affecting NATO and its member states, GLOBSEC has undertaken a year-long project, following its annual Spring conference and the July Warsaw Summit, to explore the challenges NATO faces in adapting to a very different strategic environment than that of any time since the end of the Cold War, thus, the GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Project. And while NATO is aware of the initiative, and will be a consumer of the products, it is not connected with the content, which is solely that of GLOBSEC and the authors. The project is anchored in the GLOBSEC Policy Institute's Defence and Security programme.

The NATO Joint Communiqué of the most recent summit in Warsaw lays out the challenges:

“Building on the success of the Readiness Action Plan, today we are adopting a broad approach to deterrence and defence which draws upon all the tools at NATO's disposal. This will provide the Alliance with a range of options to be able to respond to any threats from wherever they arise. Given the different nature, types and origins of the threats, we will tailor our response to specific circumstances. Taken together, the measures we are approving at this Summit will enhance the security of all Allies and ensure protection of Alliance territory, populations, airspace and sea-lines of communication, including across the Atlantic, against all threats from wherever they arise. In this context, our response is united and adequate to the new security environment, demonstrating our ability and willingness to defend one another. As part of the Alliance these measures are defensive in nature, proportionate, consistent with our international commitments, and demonstrate our respect for the rules-based European security architecture”.

Paragraph 38, NATO Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 9 July, 2016

The GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Project envisages a series of papers to be released over the next several months which will address the nature of NATO adaptation and the challenges it must overcome if it is to remain a viable and credible alliance for the peace and stability of Europe and North America. The project will culminate at the annual GLOBSEC conference in late May where the results of this project will frame the conference overall.

Attached, please find the first paper of the series: NATO in a Changing Strategic Environment: The Questions NATO Adaptation Must Address. Timed to be released following the US election, it seeks to describe the strategic environment within which NATO will be required to operate in the future, lays out the broad approach for this initiative, and poses a series of questions and problems that will require the attention of NATO and its member states in the immediate term and years ahead. It also broadly lays out the work plan overall for the project.

To be sure, we don't have all the answers. We don't even have all the questions, but we do believe this project can be helpful to NATO leadership and to the leadership in capitals as together we seek to adapt NATO to an uncertain future.

On behalf of the project's Steering Committee, which consists of General John Allen, US Marine Corps, (Ret.), former Commander of the NATO ISAF and US Forces – Afghanistan, and Steering Committee Chair; Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, Italian Navy (Ret.), former Minister of Defence of Italy, Former Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, former Chief of Defense, Italy; General Wolf Langheld, German Army (Ret.), former Commander NATO Joint Forces Command, Brunssom; Professor Julian Lindley French, Vice-President, Atlantic Treaty Association, (Lead Writer); Ambassador Tomáš Valášek, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to NATO; I am forwarding the project's first paper.

John R. Allen
General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)
Chair, Steering Committee
GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Project

GLOBSEC NATO ADAPTATION PROJECT

NATO in a Changing Strategic Environment:
The Questions NATO Adaptation Must Address

Steering Committee Scoping Paper

14 November, 2016

The Steering Committee:

General (Retd.) John Allen, Professor Dr Julian Lindley-French, Admiral (Retd.) Giampaolo di Paola,

General (Retd.) Wolf Langheld, Ambassador Tomáš Valášek

Project Manager: Alena Kudzko

Headline:

Britain's decision to leave the EU and Donald Trump's election as president of the United States raise fundamental questions about the future strength, cohesion and very credibility of NATO. Fifty years on from the Harmel Report the Alliance must again consider its place and role in a rapidly changing world. Both the internal political environment and the external strategic environment of the Alliance are markedly different from when even the 2010 Strategic Concept was drafted. NATO faces not only a challenge from a revanchist Russia, but the threat of Islamist terrorism driven in turn by a failing Middle East and North Africa. There are also 'exotic' technologies emerging enabling ever smaller actors to generate ever greater threats. This Steering Committee Scoping Paper lays out the challenges of the strategic environment with which the Alliance must contend, and establishes the direction of travel for the GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Project.

Key Project Questions:

Introduction

Can NATO Strategic Adaptation be achieved through evolution or is something of a revolution needed to make the Alliance fit for twenty-first century purpose? What does NATO Adaptation mean and what changes must it drive in the roles, missions, capabilities, capacities, and structures of the Alliance? These are the essential questions the NATO Adaptation Project seeks to answer.

NATO's Adaptation Challenge

Does the Alliance and its member nations really understand how twenty-first century security and the strategic environment of which it is a vital part is unfolding, and what policies, strategies and action are needed to preserve a just and equitable peace? Is the crafting of the grand strategy implicit in NATO Adaptation any longer possible?

The Need for NATO Adaptation

What type of security and level of defence will be needed to 'safeguard' NATO 'peoples' in an age that in some ways is immeasurably more complex than the state-centric, Euro-centric bipolar strategic environment of 1949?

Twenty-First Century Megatrends and NATO

Given emerging megatrends can NATO think and act big enough? Given the shift in relative power away from the West how can the Alliance afford to generate sufficient power to mount credible deterrence and defence?

NATO's 'Classical' Threats

Is the Alliance sufficiently politically robust to undertake proper threat assessment and make reasoned strategic judgements in the face of more 'classical' threats?

NATO's Internal Political Environment

What are the implications of a Trump presidency for the Alliance? What are the implications of Brexit for the Alliance? Does sufficient shared political vision and courage to maintain all-important Alliance strategic unity of purpose and effort? Are the Allies up to making such choices? Can the Alliance any longer generate sufficient political cohesion to craft strategic judgement? What would be the balance to strike as part of a new transatlantic burden-sharing compact?

NATO Military Adaptation?

Given the very different 'strategic cultures' within the Alliance can NATO generate sufficient military capability and capacity to meet the many roles and tasks agreed at both the Wales and Warsaw summits? What level and kind of armed forces should the Alliance aspire to generate? Such a question also raises further issues over what platforms and systems might need to be Alliance-wide projects, what level of military mass and twenty-first century manoeuvre Alliance forces should aspire to, and what minimum level of interoperability should Alliance forces maintain?

Dealing with NATO's Here and Now

What role if any does NATO have to play given the challenges posed in and by the Middle East are generational? Does NATO really deter Russia?

GLOBSEC NATO ADAPTATION INITIATIVE

NATO in a Changing Strategic Environment: The Questions NATO Adaptation Must Address Steering Committee Scoping Paper

“The idea that the future will be different from the present is so repelling for our conventional way of thinking and for our behaviour that, at least the vast majority of us, if not all, pose a great resistance to acting on it in practice”.

John Maynard Keynes, 1937

Introduction

Can NATO Strategic Adaptation be achieved through evolution or is something of a revolution needed to make the Alliance fit for twenty-first century purpose? What does NATO Adaptation mean and what changes must it drive in the roles, missions, capabilities, capacities, and structures of the Alliance? These are the essential questions the NATO Adaptation Project seeks to answer.

Paragraph Three of the 1967 Harmel Report states, “...the Alliance is a dynamic and vigorous organisation which is constantly adapting itself to changing conditions. Given such changes people in NATO societies want action/protection and not seeing it. It has also shown that its future tasks can be handled within the terms of the Treaty [Washington] by building on the methods and procedures which have proved their value over many years”.¹ Is that true today? The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word ‘strategic’ as, “dictated by; serving the ends of strategy”.² It defines ‘environment’ as, “surrounding; surrounding objects, region, or conditions, esp. circumstances of life, of person or society”.³ This Steering Committee Scoping Paper considers the ‘circumstances of life’ of the Alliance in 2017 in an effort to establish the parameters of NATO Adaptation and thus meet the challenges set by the Warsaw Summit Statement.

In fact, NATO has always been adapting. There have been several strategic concepts since 1949 all of which have endeavoured, with varying degrees of success, to drive and harmonise the defence and force planning of the Allies. There have also been successive reports that have sought to establish NATO’s role beyond the strictly politico-military. For example, in 1956 Canada’s Lester B. Pearson joined Italy’s Gaetano Martino and Norway’s Halvard Lange to produce, “The Report of the Committee of Three into Non-Military Co-operation in NATO”. Perhaps most famously fifty years ago Pierre Harmel of Belgium led the landmark “Report of the Council on the Future Tasks of the Alliance” which re-established the need for NATO and properly established at the core of the Alliance the twin strategic purposes of deterrence and dialogue; purposes which remain pertinent today.

The NATO Strategic Adaptation Project shares a similar level of ambition to its famous predecessors,

¹ http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/nato-strategy/Harmel_Report_complete.pdf

² “The Concise Oxford English Dictionary” (7th Edition, 1982) (Oxford: Oxford University Press) p. 1052

³ *ibidem* p. 323

and has been instigated at a similar moment of strategic uncertainty over the purpose and method of the Alliance that is not dissimilar to 1956 and 1967.

The Mission of the Paper

The mission of this paper is to a) provide the strategic context of NATO Adaptation from which adapted politico-military, military-strategic, comprehensive security and partnership strategies must necessarily flow; and b) establish the scope of the Project to assist the drafting of both the Main Paper, and the other supporting and augmentation papers. To that end this paper establishes the essential intellectual tension that will drive the NATO Adaptation Project by posing essential questions that the Main Paper and other Project papers will seek to answer. The Main Paper will be published at GLOBSEC in May 2017.

NATO's Adaptation Challenge

Does the Alliance and its member nations really understand how twenty-first century security and the strategic environment of which it is a vital part is unfolding, and what policies, strategies and action are needed to preserve a just and equitable peace? Is the crafting of the grand strategy implicit in NATO Adaptation any longer possible?

The Harmel Report and the NATO Adaptation Project share one important genus; both reports sought/seek to understand the place of the Alliance in contemporary geopolitics, and by extension, the meaning of 'geopolitics' in their respective ages.

Equally, the strategic environment of today is very different from the one that faced Pierre Harmel and his 'wise men' fifty years ago. If NATO is to properly secure and defend the citizens who pay for it the Alliance must also necessarily consider its role in, and the changing strategic context of inter alia defence and deterrence, nuclear policy, protection of the global commons (including space), geopolitical disorder, global instability, the consequences of failing and failed states, internal European disorder, societal resilience, hyper-migration, conflict over primary commodities, regional conflicts, most notably in the Middle East, terrorism, the challenge posed by illiberal states and sectarian forces to the liberal world order, non-conventional threats from new disruptive, penetrative, and destructive technologies, the consequences of the democratisation of destruction via other forms of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), societal resilience and recovery, as well as the potential for future shock.

Meeting such a challenge will not be easy. At the time of Harmel the control of security-critical information was almost everywhere the exclusive preserve of the state. This is why espionage was so central on both sides to the conduct of the bipolar Cold War. Globalisation, the internet of ideas and things, and information technology (IT) in general, has rendered a far greater degree of knowledge (and a far greater propensity to opine) far more open to all; elites and citizens, friends and enemies, states and non-state actors, the law-abiding and the criminal. In so doing this 'democratization of defence' has helped to change the social contract between the state and the individual, ended deference, and changed forever the relationship between security and defence, between the offence and the defence, and between defender and defended.

It is not only information that is today more diffuse in Alliance societies. Power is also more diffuse and more widely distributed, and governments no longer hold such power in exclusivity. This new reality has not only changed the very nature of critical strategic decision-making, but made it far more difficult. It has also spawned a generation of politicians, particularly in Europe, who see 'leadership' as the deft following of public mores and opinion.

The Need for NATO Adaptation

What type of security and level of defence will be needed to ‘safeguard’ NATO ‘peoples’ in an age that in some ways is immeasurably more complex than the state-centric, Euro-centric bipolar strategic environment of 1949?

For all the challenge posed by the democratization of defence even the most cursory analysis of NATO’s changing strategic environment reinforces the need for NATO Adaptation. Indeed, NATO’s environment has changed dramatically since the founding of the Alliance. Between 1949 and 1989 NATO’s purpose was the stuff of defence grand strategy; the organisation of credibly robust defence means in pursuit of equally challenging higher, political, defence and strategic ends in a dangerous Euro-centric world.

In the late 1940s there were over three hundred Red Army divisions just over the River Elbe on the inner-German border facing roughly half that number of Western forces, albeit underpinned by an as yet implicit American atomic guarantee. From the founding of NATO with the Treaty of Washington in April 1949 the Alliance had to adjust to a range of challenges any one of which could have ‘de-coupled’ the all-important transatlantic strategic link.

The post-war dismantling of Germany; the appearance of Soviet atomic and nuclear forces; the Korean War; the European Defence Community and the first putative steps towards the creation of ‘Europe’ – part state, part international institution; the rearming of the German Federal Republic; the creation of the Warsaw Pact; the decline of Britain and France as imperial powers; Sputnik and the missile gap crisis; Berlin crises, including the 1961 raising of the Berlin Wall; the Cuban missile crisis; Vietnam and the draining of US military manpower; the 1973 oil crisis and the threat of decoupling; the Euromissiles crisis; the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall; the 1991 Gulf War; the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia; the Kosovo Crisis; 9/11; the 2003 Iraq War; the return of a revanchist Russia post-2000; and the rise and challenge of political Islamism; and all such events punctuated by repeated economic crises in both Europe and North America.

In spite of all those many challenges the preamble to NATO’s founding charter, the Treaty of Washington, is as valid and as relevant today as it was back in 1949. “They (the Parties to the Treaty) are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law”. However, whilst the Treaty may be as valid as it was in 1949 what does it actually mean in 2017?

Twenty-First Century Megatrends and NATO

Given emerging megatrends can NATO think and act big enough? Given the shift in relative power away from the West how can the Alliance afford to generate sufficient power to mount credible deterrence and defence?

The generation of influence is also becoming more complex, particularly in the context of the global megatrends NATO faces in which geopolitics and macroeconomics combine to radically alter the underlying assumptions driving security and defence policy. The relative decline of Western economic power, and the rise of Asia is going to further complicate policy-making via huge shifts in both the focus and the movements of populations, the emergence of country-size mega-cities, many acting as states within states, the march of technology and both the benefits and the burdens it brings, all leavened and forced into inter-connectivity by climate stress and the search for secure primary commodities and life fundamentals.

Over the medium to longer term twenty-first century geopolitics and macroeconomics would suggest four big geopolitical groupings are emerging all of which have critical strengths, and suffer from critical, potentially systemic weaknesses. Russia is a military, primarily nuclear power with a one-shot energy-producing economy. Whilst currently led by a political strongman Russia is structurally weak both politically and economically. China is a burgeoning military and economic power. Beijing is also an insecure and inexperienced strategic actor and subject to profound internal divisions. However, sooner or later China will challenge American influence in Asia-Pacific. Should the Allies prepare to get directly involved in such competition or seek to help keep America strong where the Allies need America to be strong? For example, what role would there be for NATO in dealing with a future nuclear Iran or North Korea? That in turn will mean a renewed commitment to demonstrating an idea of global-reach burden-sharing to an American public less instinctively Atlanticist by the year. And, at a time when American leadership of the West is perhaps as weak as at any time since the Vietnam War and possibly since 1945-1947 when the pressure was “to bring the boys home”.

What of geopolitics and Europe? The EU is a political and economic grouping that is grappling with its putative role as a military ‘power’. It may over time develop such power. However, the pending loss of its strongest military actor and second biggest economy will not only delay such ambitions, but will tend to reinforce the soft power leanings and preferences implicit in the July 2016 EU Global Strategy. The EU is also indecisive of action and will remain at best a weak military power, even if four of the world’s top ten economic powers are currently members.

Certainly, the West is not what it was. Power is shifting away from Europe, and quite possibly Canada and the United States, towards Asia-Pacific, and perhaps in time to Western Asia, and maybe even Africa. According to a 2010 Citigroup report, Asia accounted for some 24% of world trade, will account for 42% of such trade by 2030, and 46% by 2050.⁴ Whereas, whilst Western Europe represented 48% of world trade in 1990, 34% in 2013 it could fall to 19% in 2030 and 15% respectively by 2050.⁵ In other words, NATO’s world is today a fractured multipolar world dotted with asymmetric poles of power in which the price of generating strategic influence and effect, security and defence is ever rising for the Western state.

For example, some estimates suggest the global population could reach 9 billion souls as early as 2020, of whom over 70% will live in cities, compared with 7.5 billion in 2016.⁶ By 2050 50% of the world population will live in cities, with 75% of that population living less than 100kms from the sea, which will further facilitate mass movement. Emerging and re-emerging non-Western or non-aligned powers such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - the BRICS - represent 25.9% of the world’s landmass, 43% of the population and 17% of global trade.⁷

Urbanisation and littoralisation are also taking place in parallel with the rapid growth in the world’s population, developments which reinforce the critical relationship between economic security and defence. The UN Development Programme suggests that by 2020 the combined economic output of three leading developing countries alone – Brazil, China and India – will surpass the aggregate production of Canada, France, Germany, Italy and the United States, even though there are many potential shocks that could prevent the painless realisation of such an outcome.

Much of the change with which the Alliance and its members must contend is driven by people. There

⁴ See “US to fall behind India in world trade, report says”, USA Today, 7 March 2011 http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/money/world/2011-07-03-cnbc-us-trade-india_n.htm

⁵ *ibidem*.

⁶ <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

⁷ See BBC News, 25 March, 2013, “Brics nations meet to cement relationships” www.bbc.co.uk/business-21923874

is a massive demographic shift underway in some of the poorest and least developed countries, with a huge population bulge in the world's East and South, allied to an ageing, often stagnant or even shrinking population in the North and West. This 'shift' will inevitably lead to even greater migration flows than hitherto experienced, as well as increased urbanization.

Climate change is reinforcing societal stress world-wide. According to the International Office of Migration in 2015 some 65 million people were displaced, which is the same as the population of the United Kingdom.⁸ The search for secure life fundamentals implicit in this movement will further push people to seek secure water, food, and energy, and thus drive more migration from interperate climate zones to temperate zones.

NATO's 'Classical' Threats

Is the Alliance sufficiently politically robust to undertake proper threat assessment and make reasoned strategic judgements in the face of more 'classical' threats?

NATO must not forget what might be deemed more traditional challenges and the need to deter and defend in the face of more 'classical' threats. Therefore, NATO must also pay close attention to the profound shift in the military balance away from Alliance members both within Europe and beyond, as well as how societal change will impact on the ability of the Alliance to conduct military operations. NATO is once again facing the need to generate sufficient military means, including the possible use of force in the emerging struggle between liberal and illiberal power. The primary challenge comes in the neo-classical shape of President Putin's Russia, albeit it with irregular twists as he applies hybrid warfare in its many hydra-headed forms both around Moscow's 'near abroad' and beyond. The seizure of Crimea from Ukraine and the robust use of force in Syria demonstrate the lengths Moscow is prepared to go to realise what it perceives as its strategic interests.

Direct challenge to the Alliance also comes in the completely novel and amorphous shape of ISIL and other Islamist groups, which are both a threat to Western values and societies and yet part of them. What kind of 'force' could be applicable to both types of threat and whether NATO can generate a sufficiency of both applicable and useable military capability and capacity will pose a fundamental question for the Alliance. Can a strategic juxtaposition be generated between a 360 Degree Approach and a credible Full Spectrum Capability in such an environment? Most forces of most Allied nations have for a long-time had the responsibility to support the civil authority in a time of emergency. However, with ISIL under intense pressure in Iraq and Syria, and the very real possibility that now exists of a terrorist counter-attack in Europe, and by extension the creation of an internal security front, would there be an enhanced role for NATO in 'homeland security'?

And then there is future shock? There are emerging technologies that could deny, thwart, or even defeat NATO. There seems to be somewhat of a conspiracy of silence in NATO about the possible deleterious impact that cyber and anti-space technologies in particular could have on NATO's ability to wage and prevail in high-intensity war. There is little or no effort to prepare, exercise and train for a kind of Russian follow-on-force cyber-attack against an Ally or partner far from a potential theatre of military conflict that could prevent NATO from acting. Why does no NATO exercise appear to address such scenarios? Should NATO play an offensive cyber/hybrid warfare role or should it be delegated to the Allies?

⁸ See "Unprecedented' 65 million people displaced by war and persecution in 2015 – UN". #UN4RefugeesMigrants <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/%E2%80%98unprecedented%E2%80%99-65-million-people-displaced-war-and-persecution-2015-%E2%80%93-un>

Therefore, whether it be creating a sufficiency of NATO defence and deterrence against Russia to NATO's east, committing legitimate force to the struggle to stabilise the Middle East and North Africa and thus deny political 'space' to ISIL and their like, or insuring against future shock, the need for an appropriate level of military means, applied sensibly over time and distance is paramount, i.e. grand strategy.

Harmel emphasised dialogue in parallel with defence. Grand strategy implies strategic judgement, and that in turn demands proper threat assessment. Russia today is not the Soviet Union and the new Cold War is unlikely. Whilst dialogue is difficult it is vital the Alliance, in tandem with the EU, the US and bilateral efforts, seeks to maintain some level of engagement with Russia, if not at the level envisaged when the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed back in 1997. It should also be recognised that Russia share many common interests with European and North American NATO Allies, and such interests must be both recognised and fostered. Therefore, whilst it is impossible to ignore what has taken place in Ukraine, what is taking place in Syria, nor either Moscow's use of cyber and hybrid coercion against Allied states, defence, deterrence and dialogue should form part of a balanced triple-track approach in dealing with Putin's Russia.

NATO's Internal Political Environment

What are the implications of a Trump presidency for the Alliance? What are the implications of Brexit for the Alliance? Does sufficient shared political vision and courage to maintain all-important Alliance strategic unity of purpose and effort? Are the Allies up to making such choices? Can the Alliance any longer generate sufficient political cohesion to craft strategic judgement? What would be the balance to strike as part of a new transatlantic burden-sharing compact?

The need for strategic judgement means there must be no illusions about the difficult internal political backdrop to NATO Adaptation. 'Strategy' implies choices and it is precisely those choices that is the purpose and indeed the challenge of NATO Adaptation. However, some of those choices will need to be tough ones demanding significant sacrifice on the part of the nations. These choices also in turn raise a series of questions which are themselves driven not just by external planning drivers imposed by the strategic environment, but internal political factors specific to the Alliance.

The specific political challenge concerns the willingness of NATO nations, buffeted by a series of political and economic challenges, to break free of the 'we recognise only as much threat as we can afford' culture that has permeated much of the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP), particularly in Europe, since at least the end of the Cold War.⁹ Will it even be possible to see a harder edge added to the soft power security and 'defence' culture now well-established in many European nations, and indeed Canada?

The Defence Investment Pledge (DIP) agreed at the September 2014 Wales Summit committed the Allies to 'move towards' 2% GDP on defence spending 'within a decade' of which 20% had to be committed to defence investment. The DIP is essentially an arbitrary input approach to defence expenditure. As such it is far from realising a NATO future force consequent upon a rigorous analysis of the strategic environment, let-alone worst-case defence planning seasoned by strategic judgement.

The need for strategic judgement also raises another challenge central to NATO Adaptation. There are several structural seams within the Alliance. There are those Allies who prioritise the threat to the East

⁹ In fact if one goes back to the 1953 'Lisbon Review' this problem was already apparent.

and insist on a strong force-on-force concept of defence and deterrence. There are those Allies who prioritise the struggle with ISIL and the ‘threat’ posed by the potential collapse of the entire Sykes-Picot state system in the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁰

Naturally, many of these questions are to a significant extent reliant on the choices the United States makes and the place of the Alliance in US grand strategy. Given that the Americans now provide some 70% of Alliance forces the old adage that if Washington catches a cold Europe sneezes has never been truer. With the November 2016 election of President Trump the Alliance will now almost undoubtedly face a series of jolts to the political assumptions that have underpinned NATO since at least the end of the Cold War. Will President Trump weaken the commitment to Article 5 defence? If not, the Trump administration will almost certainly demand more investment from the Allies in their own defence. Will this be reflected in an insistence by Washington that all the European Allies fulfil the Defence Investment Pledge agreed at the 2014 Wales Summit, or more? After all, US concerns about NATO are not simply party political, but strategy-structural. The US is a bit like Britain c. 1890; immensely powerful on paper but facing a widening range of potential and very different adversaries in vastly different places the world over, any one of which might gain temporary, local advantage and in the absence of capable allies force the US onto the strategic back foot.

If the American taxpayer is to be asked continue to pay for much of the credibility of NATO pressure on Europeans to undertake more equitable burden-sharing will grow. Would the Americans accept increased European influence over US policy that enhanced European military capabilities would undoubtedly imply? Given that the US is facing a \$19.8 trillion national debt burden-sharing is no longer an issue Europeans can elegantly explain away. It will be a pressing question for the new Administration.¹¹ The issue of US leadership of the Alliance begs one other fundamental question. Are Europeans willing to bow to American leadership given the rise of anti-Americanism in many European countries?

Europe is itself divided. The June 2016 democratic decision of the British people to leave the EU has reinforced the sense of a Europe divided. It is a sense further reinforced by the July 2016 August coup in Turkey and the stress this has caused on Ankara’s democracy in the wake of the failed ouster. Indeed, it is interesting the extent to which ‘Europe’ is facing a challenge from all three of its major peripheral powers – Britain, Russia, and Turkey. This may suggest that the centralisation of power on Berlin and Brussels may be itself a problem, as power is realigned around Europe’s strongest economic power Germany.

There are real dangers for NATO Adaptation from such tensions. Brexit threatens to become a major strategic distraction. Worse, if the Brexit negotiations are handled badly it could well lead an already fractious British people to either refuse to defend other Europeans because of anger over the positions taken by other EU member-states, or even lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom. Either way Europe’s strongest military power could be much reduced at a critical moment in NATO Adaptation. Equally, with the election of a sympathetic President Trump it could well be that London now has a new and powerful ally in its Brexit negotiations. At the same time, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has also warned that Europeans can no longer rely on the US to defend them and again called for steps towards the creation of a European Army. Could NATO be re-organised Harmel-like into two new pillars – the Anglosphere and the Eurosphere?

At the other end of Europe Turkey’s increasingly difficult relationship with other Europeans threatens to derail the developing and vital NATO-EU relationship. This is important. If the *360 Degree Approach* and a *Full Spectrum Capability* are to be given any credible meaning much will depend on the strength

¹⁰ In May 1916 British diplomat Sir Mark Sykes and French diplomat Francois Georges Picot met to carve up the Ottoman Empire in states that would in effect be protectorates of the two imperial powers post World War One.

¹¹ http://www.brillig.com/debt_clock/

of the NATO-EU relationship. However, the consensus/unanimity decision-making rules of both NATO and the EU suggest that a deepening of the strategic partnership is unlikely if relations between the UK, Turkey and the EU become steadily more fractious. Then of course there is the still as yet unresolved relationship between Cyprus, Greece and Turkey, not to mention various Balkan tensions that continue to play out in both the Alliance and the Union. Can NATO Adaptation survive such tensions?

It is the military future organisation of the Alliance that is perhaps most germane to NATO Adaptation, and which is most subject to the many political tensions. A post-Brexit NATO could see the Alliance evolve into two new pillars - an Anglosphere and a Eurosphere. Given that Secretary-General Stoltenberg recently pointed out that 80% of NATO defence expenditure is made by non-EU states the implications of such a structure would be profound.¹² An Anglosphere would tend (Canada excluded) to emphasise power projection and high-end capabilities built around more informal 'Five Eyes' US-centric type groupings, in which the role of strategic partners such as Australia and Japan might be at least as important as that of Allies. A Eurosphere would lean towards the EU's Common Security & Defence Policy (CSDP), German-centric, tend to emphasise soft power and be more legalistic and formal. At heart there would likely be two contending world views. One built around the idea of a balance of power and other other a community concept of geopolitics. Could the North Atlantic Council continue to function given such differing world views?

NATO Military Adaptation?

Given the very different 'strategic cultures' within the Alliance can NATO generate sufficient military capability and capacity to meet the many roles and tasks agreed at both the Wales and Warsaw summits? What level and kind of armed forces should the Alliance aspire to generate? Such a question also raises further issues over what platforms and systems might need to be Alliance-wide projects, what level of military mass and twenty-first century manoeuvre Alliance forces should aspire to, and what minimum level of interoperability should Alliance forces maintain?

Political cohesion implies military synergy. NATO Forces 2020, Smart Defence, the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI), and the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) were all designed to promote force synergy and are thus pivotal to NATO Adaptation. However, all three pre-suppose agreement over future force concepts and force levels.

The issue of strategic culture also raises fundamental questions about the future organisation of military power in Europe. What are the implications for the Alliance if post-Brexit there is a move towards an EU-centric common defence? Germany is already calling for some form of European Defence Union (EDU). Could NATO survive EDU or would such a structure be a natural fit for a revised Harmel-like EU pillar of NATO? After all, many European states could only strike a balance between economic security, social security and hard security via big economies of scale, and that could only be achieved by radical solutions, such as defence integration.

There is also a profound split between those Allies who are investing in power projection forces, most notably the US, UK and France, and those with forces able only to operate at the lower-to-mid end of the conflict spectrum, and only for a limited time. For example, much is made of the size of the NATO Force Structure and the fact that there are over one million personnel under arms in the Alliance. However, in a real emergency how much of that force would be able to move, move and fight, move, fight and rotate?

¹² http://www.otan.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_135453.htm

How long would it take between 'notice to move' and 'notice to effect' for such forces?

The issue of affordability is central to NATO Adaptation. First, are NATO members willing to afford a changing and challenging strategic environment if that environment demands ever more of national exchequers? What about operational funding? Is the current system of 'costs lie where they fall' sustainable over the medium-to-long term, or will there need to be at least some modicum of common funding?

These are challenging questions given that the current trends in the strategic environment suggest that if NATO is to defend and deter it will also need to develop and maintain a critical and coherent comparative military advantage with forces able to operate to effect across nine domains of security and defence; air, cyber, land, sea, space, information, knowledge, education and resiliency.

The Alliance will also need to consider carefully how best to legitimately modernise the NATO nuclear posture, and enhance the ability of the Alliance to overcome advanced defensive architectures such as Russian A2/AD. To what extent would such an effort require force integration and, if part of a comprehensive security approach, what level and degree of a whole-of-government/s approach will be needed to ensure nations bring all forms of state power into the fray? For example, enhanced intelligence-sharing will be vital, but do the Allies really trust each other over the use of sensitive information to share intelligence?

Perhaps NATO's most pressing immediate military challenge concerns force generation and command and control. Of late NATO has been used as a force generator for coalitions with the implicit assumption that the Alliance will never again act or deploy at 28 (soon-to-be 29) nations. However, over time coalitions destroy alliances as they reinforce factionalism. Can NATO meet twenty-first century force generation and command challenges? The Alliance will need to be able to command available forces and ensure they are in the right place, at the right time, properly configured, and in sufficient number. This will include both national forces and forces directly under NATO command such as the VJTF and eNRF. What about rest of NATO Force Structure? Can it really be used? What about transatlantic reinforcement? It is really there? After all, military power is relative not absolute, and depends on the capabilities and capacities of an adversary.

Given the ever-increasing unit cost of Western defence equipment (as expressed via defence cost inflation) there is an additional question as to whether NATO can be properly equipped with a full spectrum force credible across and around a 360 degree security and defence environment? After all, Russia and ISIL are simply two of the many risks and threats NATO must plan for and which may become critical either in isolation or in parallel. For example, there is also the defence of the High North to consider. What will full spectrum operations demand in such an environment in terms of military capability and capacity and new technologies. What impact will evolving concepts of nuclear deterrence, cyber, nanotechnology, and micro-biology have on the battlespace, and by extension Alliance force requirements, concepts and levels?

Dealing with NATO's Here and Now

What role if any does NATO have to play given the challenges posed in and by the Middle East are generational? Does NATO really deter Russia?

For all the many 'exotic' threats NATO Adaptation must consider it is the twin threats posed by Russia to the North and the East of the Alliance and a failed Middle East to NATO's South where the real challenge of the here and now is posed for the Alliance. Specifically, how those twin challenges might interact.

The paradox of the West is that whilst it has collectively failed in the Middle East, the West remains central to any resolution in the Middle East. Any 'resolution' that will demand from the collective West a long-term grand strategy that would need to work over generations. What grand strategy? Does the West have the strategic patience, coherence and consistency to make such strategy work? In particular, would NATO have a role in an all-important implementation plan that would certainly demand far more than training missions and advisory roles?

The state structure in NATO's 'near abroad' in the Middle East and Africa is in danger of collapse, with poor governance, endemic corruption and deep sectarian divisions across the Muslim world. The current conflict in Syria has created perhaps the greatest humanitarian conflict since 1945 and has led to migration flows into Europe which are not only changing the social fabric of Europe, but undermining European and Alliance unity of purpose.

ISIL, Al Qaeda and their many affiliates and wannabes are determined to eradicate the Western-style state from the Middle East. Worse, there are irreconcilable state forces at work in the Middle East that the current tragedy in Iraq and Syria are masking and which could presage a general Middle Eastern war. What role could there be for NATO in such a war? What role would the Alliance have, if any, in helping to resolve incompetent, non-inclusive government, predatory corruption, massive inequality, and aiding burgeoning young populations who lack education and economic prospects?

There is no suggestion that the Alliance would take the lead in such a crisis, but nor is NATO any longer (if it were ever) simply a tool of last military resort. NATO would clearly have a role to play to help stabilise the space in which stabilisation, reconstruction and development would take place. However, fourteen years of campaigning in Afghanistan revealed the challenge of creating such a space. And yet, the failure to act beyond Operation Unified Protector in Libya has left a political space adjacent to Europe open to exploitation by human traffickers, criminal networks, and terrorists.

At root, the West seems unable or unwilling to understand the causes posed by the many challenges posed by the Middle East and North Africa and to accept the long-term commitment needed to re-establish stability. This lack of resolve profoundly affects NATO which after all is a big politics, high politics device. For example, to stop the blood-letting in Syria might at the very least demand a no fly zone. Is the 'West' prepared to defy Russia in Syria and impose such a no fly zone? If so what role for NATO?

And then there is President Putin's Russia. To some Russia is a "Remains of the Day" issue, a remnant of Empire clinging on in the power-nostalgic Moscow elite mind dreaming of a return to some kind of bipolar US-USSR relationship. In fact, Russia today is more like Imperial Germany prior to World War One; arrogant, boisterous, insecure, temporarily and locally powerful...and weak. Yet is it really sound to dismiss the threat Putin poses to the Baltic States. That is certainly not the view in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and many of the Nordic States. Surely, it is at best as complacent for Southern European states to dismiss such concerns simply because Putin is 'not in my backyard', as it is for Central and Eastern Europeans to dismiss the threat posed by ISIL, migration, and a possible Middle Eastern war. After all, the ambition implicit in the Warsaw Adaptation commitment was that the Alliance prepare to credibly deter and defend against all such threats.

This challenge also begs a further question; does the Alliance still have the ambition to create a Europe whole and free and what does that now mean? It is clear the Alliance and its nations suffer from a certain enlargement fatigue. Is the Open Door to future enlargement still open and what role should future enlargements play in the grand strategy NATO is designed to fulfil?

Next Steps

The NATO Adaptation Project will publish the following between November 2016 and May 2017:

A Steering Committee Two-Pager which lays out the main recommendations of the Project leadership and which will be launched at the GLOBSEC Conference in late May 2017. **The Main Project Paper**, “NATO: Adapting to a New Strategic Reality” will also be launched at the Conference.

In the interim (and in addition to this paper) four supporting papers will be published on **Political NATO** (publication date 1 December 2016; lead author Dr Ian Brzezinski); **Military NATO**: (1 February 2017; lead author Dr Karl-Heinz Kamp); **Comprehensive NATO** (1 March 2017: lead author Stefano Stefanini); **and Affording and Equipping the Adapted Alliance** (1 April 2017; lead author Patrick Auroy (proposed)). The lead authors will be supported by members of the Steering Committee.

There will also be several short **Augmenting Papers** published under the auspices of the Project that will consider a range of supporting issues such as (inter alia); artificial intelligence, A2/AD, Mediterranean security, cyber, hybrid warfare, information warfare, space, strategic communications, transnational crime etc. These papers will be written by younger researchers at the recommendation of GLOBSEC.

The Challenge of NATO Strategic Adaptation

Basil Liddle Hart once wrote: “The higher level of grand strategy is that of conducting war with a far-sighted regard to the state of the peace that will follow”.¹³ The higher level of twenty-first century NATO grand strategy will demand the conducting of power with a far-sighted and shared appreciation of the collective effort on which all the members of the Alliance will need to invest to assure and secure all of their citizens. Adaptation must prepare NATO for the future, not return it to the past. The world today is very different from that of the 1970s and 1980s. The key adaptation thus concerns the role and missions of the Alliance in a contemporary global security environment of which Europe’s security is an integral part. Indeed, there can be no concept of a military-based defence without a clear understanding of the drivers, responsibilities and implications of broader security.

Threats today are multifaceted, multi-dimensional and multi-oriented. Many such threats are unlikely to be susceptible to the forces and resources that NATO could bring to bear. And yet, the very interconnectedness of such risks and threats means that NATO cannot ignore them, simply because they are difficult to predict. In such a strategic environment if NATO and its political masters continue to recognise only as much threat as they believe they understand or can afford, or simply get away with, there is a good chance NATO could at some point fail.

Therefore, NATO cannot afford to simply do that which it has always done better. Whilst Article 5 collective defence remains the cornerstone of the Alliance it is by no means the entirety of what will need to be a re-designed Alliance edifice. That edifice would necessarily look a bit like Richard Rogers re-designed Bundestag in Berlin; a structure still rooted in its own history, but opened up and re-designed for a new age and a new country in a new Europe, in a new world.

It is a mission which calls for the biggest question of all; given NATO’s changing strategic environment

¹³ <http://www.thestrategybridge.com/the-bridge/2016/2/11/boots-on-the-ground-is-the-wrong-question-for-iraq-and-isis>

what should NATO Adaptation seek to adapt and to what end? And, what about future shock? Does the Alliance have any sense of known unknowns, or are the unknowns so unknown that NATO must simply wait...and hope.

G17 Steering Committee, November 2017

Supporting Sources

- Barr, James (2013) "A Line in the Sand: The Anglo-French Struggle for the Middle East 1914-1948" (New York: Norton)
- Bobbitt, Philip (2002) "The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History" (London: Penguin)
- Brady H, & Parkes R. (2015) "EU Home Affairs Diplomacy: Why, What, Where – and How", Chaillot Paper 135, July 2015 (Paris: EUISS)
- Coker, Christopher (2015) "Future War" (Cambridge: Polity)
- "The Concise Oxford English Dictionary" (7th Edition, 1982) (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Connable Ben & Libicki Martin C (2010) "How Insurgencies End" (Santa Monica: RAND)
- Freedman, Lawrence (2013) "Strategy: A History" (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Gaub F & Popescu N. (2015) "The EU Neighbours 1995-2015: Shades of Grey", Chaillot Paper 136, (Paris: EUISS)
- Gorka, Katharine C. & Sookdheo, Patrick (2013) "Fighting the Ideological War: Winning Strategies from Communism to Islamism" (Washington: Isaac)
- Gowing, Nik (2009) "'Skyful of Lies' and Black Swans; the New Tyranny of Information Power in Crises", (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism)
- Gray, Colin S. (2005) "Another Bloody Century: Future War" (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson)
- Haukkala H & Popescu N (Ed.) "Russian Futures: Horizon 2025" (Paris: EUISS)
- Harmon C, Pratt A. Gorka S, (2011) "Towards a Grand Strategy Against Terrorism" (New York: McGraw Hill)
- Herd, Graeme P. & Kriendler John (2013) "Understanding NATO in the 21st Century: Alliance Strategies, Security and Global Governance" (London: Routledge)
- International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) "The Military Balance 2015" (London: Routledge)
- Khalil J. & Zeuthen M. (2015) "Countering Violent Extremism & Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design & Evaluation", Whitehall Paper 2-16 (London: RUSI)
- Kilcullen, David (2016) "Blood Year: Islamic State and the Failures of the War on Terror" (Hurst: London)
- Kissinger, Henry (2014) "World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History" (London: Allen Lane)
- Lasconjaras G. & Larsen J.A. (2015) "NATO's Response to Hybrid Threats" (Rome: NDC)
- Liddell Hart, Basil (1967 Ed.) "Strategy" (London: Faber & Faber)
- Lindley-French, Julian (2015) "NATO: The Enduring Alliance" (London: Routledge)
- Lindley-French Julian (2008) "A Chronology of European Security and Defence 1945-2007" (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Lindley-French Julian and Boyer Yves (Ed.) (2014 Ed.) "The Oxford Handbook of War (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Myers, Steven Lee (2015) "The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign on Vladimir Putin" (New York: Knopf)
- Missiroli, A. (2015) "Towards an EU Global Strategy: Background, Process & References" (Paris: EUISS)
- Parkes, Roderick (2016) "People on the Move", Chaillot Paper 138, June 2016 (Paris: EUISS)
- Rapaport, Anatol Ed. (1968) "Carl von Clausewitz: On War" (London: Penguin)

- Reid, Walter (2013) "Empire of the Sand: How Britain Made the Modern Middle East" (Edinburgh: Birlin)
- Shirreff, Richard (2016) "2017: War with Russia: An Urgent Warning from Senior Military Command" (London: Hodder)
- Smith, Rupert. (2005) "The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World" (London: Allen Lane)
- Stansfield, Gareth (2013) "The Remaking of Syria, Iraq & the Wider Middle East: The End of the Sykes-Picot State System", Briefing Paper (London: RUSI)
- "The Oxford Concise Dictionary" (1982) (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- "The Report of the Iraq Inquiry: A Report of a Committee of Privy Councillors", 6 July, 2016 (London: Crown Copyright)
- Wells L, Hailes T.C., Davies M.C. (2013) "Changing Mindsets to Transform Security: Leader Development for an Unpredictable and Complex World" (Washington: NDU)

Institutional Partners



-
- Visegrad Fund
-
-



Strategic Partners





GLOBSEC
POLICY INSTITUTE

Klariská 14
811 03 Bratislava
Slovak Republic
Phone/Fax: +421 2 5441 06 09
info@globsec.org

www.globsec.org