

Comprehensive NATO

**GLOBSEC
NATO
ADAPTATION
INITIATIVE**
Supporting Paper



The GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Initiative, led by **General (Retd) John R. Allen**, is GLOBSEC's foremost contribution to debates about the future of the Alliance. Given the substantial changes within the global security environment, GLOBSEC has undertaken a year-long project, following its annual Spring conference and the July NATO Summit in Warsaw, to explore challenges faced by the Alliance in adapting to a very different strategic environment than that of any time since the end of the Cold War. The Initiative envisages a series of policy papers 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 in the transatlantic area. The policy papers published within the GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Initiative are authored by the Initiative's Steering Committee members: **General (Retd) John R. Allen, Admiral (Retd) Giampaolo di Paola, General (Retd) Wolf Langheld, Professor Julian Lindley-French, Ambassador Tomáš Valášek, Ambassador Alexander Vershbow** and other acclaimed authorities from the field of global security and strategy. The aim of the involvement of such a wide array of experts is to reinforce the unique partnership between policy-makers, military leaders and leading academics and commentators. These policy papers will prelude and result with the publication of the Initiative's Steering Committee Recommendation Two Pager and the Main Report to be launched in October 2017. The Interim Report will be released during the GLOBSEC 2017 Bratislava Forum.

These outputs will be augmented by shorter policy papers (on cybersecurity, A2/AD capability, intelligence, and threats emanating from the South) prepared by the GLOBSEC Policy Institute between January and October 2017.

www.cepolicy.org/projects/globsec-nato-adaptation-initiative

Comprehensive NATO

By

John R. Allen and Stefano Stefanini

Introduction

If comprehensive means “including or dealing with all or nearly all elements or aspects of something”¹ and that something is the international security environment, the Atlantic Alliance choice is not whether or not, but to what extent, to be comprehensive.

NATO exists today, and in the near future, at an inflection point. How it reacts to this “moment” in history will define the security of the Alliance and the stability and security of much of the rest of the world over the long term. The case for NATO to be a “comprehensive” alliance, politically as well as militarily, is based on its unique capacity to bring together countries whose values and interests are inextricably intertwined in confronting conventional threats from aggressive powers as well as transnational threats to citizens’ security. No single nation can meet these challenges on its own, thus NATO allows its members to do so together. But the geostrategic environment will not leave NATO alone to look inward. Or, to put it differently, NATO must look outward to deter aggression, to enhance partnerships, to expand relationships, and to export stability. The need for a more comprehensive NATO has never been greater, and with this need, so too the stakes for NATO have never been greater.

1 Oxford Dictionary.

“Contained” versus “comprehensive”

According to the prevailing school of thought, NATO should mainly limit itself to the conventional and territorial elements of Euro-Atlantic security. This conviction is shared by a substantial number of Allies who point to the Alliance’s previous successes in doing so and at its mixed results in dealing with more complex aspects and threats. This view cannot be dismissed out of hand as its advocates are a vital component of the Alliance.

The case against it is based on two counter-arguments. First, such limitations would set NATO apart from the issues that trigger insecurity in large bodies of public opinion and, increasingly, among political leadership: international terrorism, the spread of ISIL, increasing instability in the southern tier, and uncontrolled immigration. In addition, a “contained” NATO would be ill equipped to deal with the entire new body of threats emanating from cyberspace² and info-operations, new technologies (such as drones, artificial intelligence, electromagnetic pulse etc.). It is an area that requires enhanced strategic and operational awareness and faster decision-making within NATO. It cannot be confronted in isolation.

Second, if this philosophy is adopted, one would have to live with the consequences: the rest of the security sphere will have to be taken care of outside the structure of NATO. The Alliance would not be obsolete but limited in scope: only a partial security guarantor. Against the backdrop of Brexit and of the new American administration, the political impact on Atlantic solidarity and Western cohesion would be unpredictable.

If instead NATO chooses to be more, rather than less, comprehensive, it needs to look beyond the traditional European security horizon. This could be the main adaptation challenge with which NATO is confronted today. In the conventional area, the power balance is shifting in the Asia-Pacific region; China and India are rising military powers to be reckoned with. In the less conventional area, citizens’ threat perception has expanded to non-state actors and asymmetric attacks. As NATO adaptation moves forward, the need to address homeland security must become a key reality. International terrorism and state failures have ripple effects in exporting instability across borders and well beyond the crisis area. Refugee flows and uncontrolled immigration are a case in point and are having a strategic impact on Europe. Across the transatlantic space, the overall non-conventional impact has created strong public demand for security. It is up to the Alliance whether or not to respond to it.

Comprehensiveness starts at home, especially for a large family of 29 nations. There is clearly a need for enhanced intra-Alliance and cross-Atlantic political dialogue. NATO lives by consensus and consensus crumbles in the face of fissures within a large and increasing membership on out-of-area engagements or the handling of Russia. These differences can only be addressed by strengthening internal discussion and consultation.

A comprehensive NATO needs to have a global security outlook, but this does not inherently mean the Alliance must become a “global NATO”. The Alliance cannot and should not do everything. However, by engaging with the rest of the world, NATO would maximize available resources and share security burdens with other interested parties, either nations or international and regional organizations. Such engagement should be measured against the capacity of the Alliance to fulfill its core tasks: collective defense; crisis management; and cooperative security. None of these tasks can be pursued in isolation. Cooperative security requires defusing crises and projecting stability, actions that in turn reinforce the Alliance’s collective self-defense. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ways, means, tools – and limitations – that could render NATO truly comprehensive and thus capable of meeting its missions as it adapts to the new security environment.

2 At the Warsaw summit of July 2016 “the Allies recognised cyberspace as *an operational domain, joining land, air and sea*” (Warsaw Summit Key Decisions, NATO Fact Sheet, February 2017)

Why should NATO be comprehensive?

The Atlantic Alliance was not born in international isolation. On the contrary, the preamble of the Washington Treaty refers to the members as, “Parties reaffirming their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations”. NATO is thus a part of a wider multilateral system, which emerged after World War II - alongside the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the European Union - which has been responsible for assuring seven decades of peace, stability and prosperity, especially in the Atlantic and European space. The Treaty’s goals, collective defense and security and the preservation of peace, were envisaged to exist in connection with, not in isolation from, the rest of the world.

The issue of Alliance adaptation to the evolving international environment has been with NATO since the early days. It was the gist of the “Three Wise Men” report of December 13, 1956³. During its first forty years cold war dynamics forced NATO to concentrate on two strategic directions that involved minimal external outreach: solidarity among Allies and deterrence of the Soviet military threat in Europe. By containing the Soviet Union, NATO also made a positive contribution to European integration (the same rationale would subsequently apply to post-cold war enlargement). For the first time in its history Europe was not going to war with itself but lay protected behind NATO’s shield. And, the United States was no longer the ‘rescue force’ to stop continental war between the states of Western Europe.

During that period confrontation, crises and wars in other theaters (Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Middle East, Afghanistan) were not notably on NATO’s agenda as they were not perceived as threats to the collective security of Allies. The four nations that joined the 1949 founders of the Alliance, Greece and Turkey (1952), Germany (1955), Spain (1982) were inside the Western perimeter. What mattered was to preserve and strengthen inner solidarity and integration.

The scenario changed radically after 1989. With the crumbling of the Soviet Union, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the reunification of Germany, the center of gravity of the security threat to the Alliance shifted first from the Fulda Gap and the Luneburg Heath to the power vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe, and then to the Balkan wars, to instability and fundamentalism in the Mediterranean and in the Greater Middle East, to terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and, lastly (and most recently) cyber warfare. The threat shifted first from conventional to hybrid; more recently the ‘threat’ increasingly defies accurate description, detection, identification and attribution. For the first (and only) time in NATO’s history September 11 led to the triggering of Article 5 on September 12, 2001 and brought the bitter awareness that neither distance nor the isolation of oceans could provide a foolproof shield from the reach of terror.

Globalization does not spare security. In the new environment, NATO has had no option but engage the rest of the world, and engage it did. In more recent years, the resurgence of an aggressive Russia in the post-Soviet European space, China’s military expenditure and territorial claims in the South China Sea, the North Korean and Iranian challenges in the fields of nuclear and ballistic missile proliferation signal the return of more traditional challenges from states to the Alliance. This more complex picture does not, however, change the need for NATO to adopt an inclusive and far reaching approach to security. Outreach, political engagement, and military cooperation complement deterrence, military preparedness and capabilities. Therefore, to remain relevant in a global security environment NATO needs to adapt globally.

To this end, NATO has already developed a well-supplied toolbox which encompasses five main areas: enlargement; partnerships; the relationship with Russia; the strategic partnership with the EU; and building cooperation with other international and regional organizations. Rather than re-inventing itself the Alliance would be better advised to take a critical look at it each one of these ‘tools’ and make full use of their potential.

3 “The Report of the Committee of the Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO” by Foreign Ministers Halvard Lange (Norway), Lester B. Pearson (Canada) and Gaetano Martino (Italy). The report, which came also in response to the Suez crisis, stressed enhanced political and economic cooperation (Art. 2 and 4 of Washington Treaty) among Allies, in addition to the military alliance. The subtext was the NATO had to become less rigid in confronting new challenges already arising in the Mediterranean. The point was made that NATO had to adapt to remain relevant.

Enlargement

The “open door” policy became a central tenet of post-cold war NATO in the mid-90s. There is little doubting the success of the policy as thirteen countries, including Montenegro⁴, have joined the Alliance since 1999. NATO enlargement has been crucial in stabilizing Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The European Union followed in NATO’s footsteps, and together NATO and EU enlargements have helped forge the region’s transition to democratic accountability, the rule of law and the development of market economies [which has also been the gateway to their Euro-Atlantic integration].

Without the NATO and EU umbrellas the entire region would look very different than it does today: more fractured, more nationalistic, and less prosperous. The wars in former Yugoslavia abated only when NATO stepped in with military muscle first, and then with the promise of eventual membership. It is no coincidence that, in spite of potential rivalries and disputes, there are no frozen conflicts in the Balkan region. Or, for that matter, outside the area of the former Soviet Union. In joining NATO new members sought, and obtained, the ultimate security insurance policy and they willingly paid the price in reforms that then paved the way to more complex EU membership. In what has been a win-win process NATO and the EU have helped achieve stability on their borders. The results, albeit still incomplete in the Western Balkans, prove the wisdom of enlargement policies.

Has enlargement stalled? It is certainly facing a number of hurdles. It is clearly an unfinished job in the Western Balkans, where any addition to NATO or EU membership shifts the overall balance from instability to (more) stability. And yet a substantial number of countries (Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) have not yet reached either threshold. EU enlargement is in slow motion, whilst NATO is left with two problematic candidates; Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only the issue of the name of the state prevented NATO from inviting Skopje to join at the 2008 Bucharest summit. Since then Skopje has made no progress. In spite of maintaining a good and constructive relationship with the Alliance, Macedonia has been sliding backwards domestically accomplishing few reforms. BiH’s challenges are far more complex, and with its non-recognition of Kosovo it cannot be a partner, let alone a candidate to membership. Serbia, the center of gravity of the Western Balkans, is a lukewarm NATO partner with no aspiration to be a candidate in sight, whilst its prospects for future stability rely mainly on successfully completing EU membership.

The prospects for rapid future Balkan enlargements are therefore dim. The exception is Macedonia should there finally be the political will to find a compromise on the name. However, NATO simply cannot afford to close the Western Balkan door, nor the EU. In addition to smoldering fires of recent history, there is now an active anti-Western Russian turf war in the region, and to maintain stability NATO and the EU at the very least need to remain engaged in the Western Balkans. Where NATO membership is not a realistic option, the Alliance should envisage *ad hoc* relationships that reassure countries both in terms of military cooperation and political bonds.

There is no doubt that just by keeping membership on the table, NATO contributes to the stability of the Western Balkans. Does the same apply to the countries of the former Soviet Union? The region is a shared neighborhood between NATO and the EU to the West and South, and with Russia to the East and to the North. The region finds itself in a precarious geopolitical environment that has resulted in several frozen conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Transnistria) and, since 2014, in a full blown international crisis in Ukraine. By taking sides in these frozen conflicts, illegally annexing Crimea, and supporting rebels in Eastern Ukraine, Russia has and is trying to project and strengthen its influence in the region by fostering division, disputes and active local hostilities. NATO must thus aim at restoring and enhancing stability in spite of Russia disruptive policies.

Continuing engagement is key to NATO’s approach to the region through partnership and special relationships, most notably with Georgia and Ukraine, even if the prospect of NATO membership is not yet conducive to stability and peace. NATO should also take a deep breath and confront a bitter truth; the promise made at the 2008 Bucharest summit that Ukraine and Georgia “will be

⁴ Pending ratification.

NATO members”⁵ has become a recipe for paralysis, resistance and unfulfilled expectations. With the benefit of hindsight Bucharest had a triple negative effect: a) it is an unfulfilled prophecy that undermines NATO’s credibility; b) it has contributed to making both countries less, rather than more stable and secure; and c) it would import into the Alliance existing territorial disputes and frozen conflicts. Moreover there is no consensus among Allies over policy. Indeed, the opposition from a number of European countries to granting Kiev and Tbilisi the first concrete step toward membership (the Membership Action Plan – MAP⁶) is actually hardening. Taking membership *although not strong engagement* off the table for now would not be rewarding Russia’s opposition and active disruption, but simply recognizing the geopolitical reality of the region. This constraint cannot be ignored *in the interest of the region’s peace and stability*, or of the steadiness and security of the countries concerned.

The time has come to think out of the box⁷ with regard to Ukraine and Georgia. In the present circumstances NATO’s best approach is to build on and strengthen its existing ties⁸ with Tbilisi and Kiev, *short of beginning the membership process*⁹. Nor should NATO withdraw from engagement with the other countries of the former USSR that have maintained a more or less close relationship with the Alliance within the Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) – Azerbaijan and Moldova in particular come to mind. A healthy and strong relationship with Ukraine and Georgia will send a two-fold message to Moscow: while not seeking expansion per se, nor aiming at establishing a military presence toward the Russian border, the Alliance is not withdrawing from engagement or active cooperation with any willing partner.

Tension with Russia for NATO’s perceived encroachment in the “near abroad” will remain. It must not be exaggerated. Moscow, albeit unenthusiastically, accepted enlargement in 1999¹⁰, 2004¹¹ and 2009¹². At the time of the first enlargement, NATO¹³ and the Clinton administration took a lot of pains to explain the “projecting stability” rationale, and to balance it with parallel enhancement of the NATO-Russia relationship. This ‘dual track’ was maintained during the George W. Bush administration, although with little effort to further discuss enlargement with Moscow because of the “no Russian veto” mantra. The balance broke over Georgia and Ukraine and Moscow’s conduct in 2008 and 2014 opened a chasm with the Alliance. As a result, while Russia barely flinched over Albania’s and Croatia’s membership in 2008-9, in an identical geopolitical context it has strenuously opposed Montenegro’s incoming membership. Russia opposes enlargement because its relationship with NATO has shifted from uneasy partnership to adversarial relationship, bordering on hostility, not vice versa.

On the other hand, and irrespective of Russian opposition, enlargement cannot be an open-ended process. NATO is a Euro-Atlantic organization and membership carries an Article 5 guarantee that must be politically credible and militarily reliable. Therefore, NATO should acknowledge that its “Open Door” meets geographical and geopolitical boundaries. They apply to membership – not to threats and operations to counter them¹⁴. To reach out beyond those limits NATO must resort to other options in its toolbox.

5 At the time one of the authors convincingly supported it.

6 MAP was the bone of contention at the Bucharest summit. Only three Allies explicitly opposed the consensus: Germany, France and Spain. Nine years later their position is unchanged. Other Allies however might more be reluctant than they were to join consensus, while is far from clear what would be the position of the new American administration.

7 See for instance An Alternative to NATO Expansion That Won’t Antagonize Russia, Michael O’Hanlon, The Wall Street Journal, February 27, 2017.

8 In particular, the NATO-Georgia Council (NGC) and the NATO-Ukraine Council (NUC).

9 Reiterating a promise that *cannot be delivered* weakens NATO and its capacity to reassure Georgia and Ukraine. It makes both countries more not less vulnerable to destabilization. Even strong supporters of NATO engagement in Ukraine acknowledge that “NATO enlargement in the post-Soviet space is off the table for the foreseeable future” (Steve Pifer, A European security architecture that won’t work, Brookings, March 1, 2017).

10 Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland.

11 The big bang: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

12 Albania, Croatia.

13 Special credit must be given to then Secretary General Javier Solana.

14 Considering NATO’s three core missions a tentative line could be drawn between “collective defense” on one side, “crisis management” and “cooperative security” on the other. The former applies to members only and is territorially restricted; the second and third task require an out-of-area, potentially global reach. The distinction can often be blurred as by projecting stability out of area (crisis management and cooperative security) NATO also protects itself (collective defense) from threats that are either non-territorial in nature (terrorism) or can strike from strategic distance (weapons of mass destruction). Dealing with rogue States, as North Korea or “Non State actors with State-like capabilities and ambitions”, as ISIS, encompasses both projecting stability *and* collective defense. 7

Partnerships

The Alliance has developed a network of partnerships encompassing 40 countries¹⁵ in four groupings: Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council/Partnership for Peace (EAPC/PfP); Mediterranean Dialogue (MD); Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI); Partners across the globe¹⁶. It is actually a composite and diverse patchwork of relations that grew over the last quarter of a century, effectively epitomizing the Alliance's adaptation capacity to the new and changing security environment, challenges and tasks. Partnerships do not respond to a single rationale. At their roots four main interwoven threads are identifiable: security vacuums to fill (Central and Eastern Europe; Balkans; Mediterranean); the need for regional cooperation in areas of instability (Mediterranean, Gulf and Greater Middle East); participation in operations (Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya) to meet common challenges; and preparation for membership (EU and NATO).

Only the last is almost mission accomplished. Thirteen former partners have successfully made the transition to members. Others, like Finland or Sweden, could easily enter the Alliance if they choose to do so. The few remaining, as previously discussed, are in the Western Balkans. Security vacuums, regional instability, and operations are still there, both in Europe (see above regarding the former Soviet space) and in its Mediterranean and Middle Eastern periphery. They combine in maintaining and reinforcing partnerships' *raison d'être*. Out-of-area operations have temporarily declined in size and resources but will continue to provide the drive and glue to NATO-partners joint commitment and military co-operation. Beyond this common ground, when it occurs, partners share very little common denominator perspectives. Diversity prevails also within each one of the four groups, except the ICI and the Mediterranean Dialogue which are bound by a strong regional connotation. The EAPC, which includes Russia (to be discussed in a separate section), spreads its wings from Ireland to Kyrgyzstan, with levels of interaction from very intense (Sweden, Georgia) to next to nothing (Belarus, Tajikistan). "Partners across the globe" is simply a residual definition; it captures any individual relationship with NATO outside the three partnerships, from Afghanistan that is a beneficiary of NATO assistance to Australia that contributes to it.

There are political reasons for specificity in EAPC, MD, and ICI; partners are keen to maintain it; in each group agendas and procedures differ. The same applies to individual relationships with the Alliance. MD's and ICI's regional connotation is conducive to widening, for instance, to Libya in the Mediterranean, and to Saudi Arabia and Oman in the Gulf, witness the ongoing dialogue between NATO and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The *status quo* is functional and it is not going to change any time soon. However, that should not prevent the conceptualization of different "tiers" of partners, irrespective of the group to which they belong.

The first cluster should include ally-like partners, or in other words countries that have the *same background* of shared values (democracy, rule of law, human rights) and possess similar capabilities and resources¹⁷. These partners, irrespective of their geographical location, would aim at full political engagement and military interoperability with NATO in exchange for their willingness to contribute to the security environment, and to participate in operations. A second group would be based mainly on *regional cooperation* between NATO and partners, through political dialogue, defense capability-building, military training and, if necessary, operational support. MD and ICI partners would be prime candidates for this kind of reciprocal engagement to project stability and security in volatile and crisis-prone areas. Maximal individual flexibility should allow single partners to deepen the relationship to the extent both sides deem optimal.

The third tier would be most challenging. Some partners, currently Afghanistan and Iraq, Libya and Somalia, are fragile states teetering on the brink of fragmentation and/or collapse. NATO's assistance

15 Not counting Montenegro on its way to membership.

16 NATO's official documents list as partners also three international organizations: United Nations; European Union; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). However they should be separated from State partners, in a broader context of NATO's international outreach.

17 A similar approach is behind the "gold card" partners' definition. Whatever the terminology, it must be clear that it not a short-cut or substitute for membership, the more so for partners who could become members if they wanted to, nor does it establish a level of exclusivity in cooperating with NATO that other partners cannot attain. Rather, it defines a *relationship among equals* where NATO does for partners as much as partners do for NATO.

can make the difference between failure and recovery, but needs to have a critical mass and be sustained over the medium to long term. However, by being engaged in preventing their failure the Alliance simply protects itself from the consequence, be it new hotbeds of terrorism, resurgence of ISIS (or successor entities), massive refugee flows – or all of the above. Such partnerships fall squarely under the cooperative security tasks of the Alliance and, indirectly, contribute to its collective defense. They require readiness to undertake preventive and preemptive missions and sustained military assistance in counterinsurgency, as well as training and defense capacity building.

Partnering with NATO will always have a political and military dimension. The first tier operates mostly at the political level, with military cooperation as a mutually beneficial fallout. The balance shifts partly in the second group that includes some NATO-led security assistance, witness for instance the new training center in Kuwait within ICI. The third tier relies mostly on NATO's traditional military value. Therefore, it will require the Alliance's political willingness and military capacity to quickly move assets to locations across the globe to shore up security in distant countries, as it does today toward the Eastern or Northern Flank. NATO will have to start systematically planning for such contingencies.

Such tiers only prioritize needs and goals. They do not compartmentalize partners. Each one of three encompasses different shades of relationship and geopolitical situations. Countries such as Georgia and Ukraine will continue to develop their unique relationship with NATO. Others may, at times, require shoring-up preventively (or even preemptively) against the threat of terrorism and the risk of state failure. This three-tier prism further underlines diversity. Yet, there is also potential common ground within the overarching notions of countering terrorism, preventing WMD proliferation, upholding international law, and fostering regional and global order.

Trying to encompass all partnerships in a single framework would be impossible and probably counter-productive, but all partners could perhaps be given access to a basic NATO toolbox. This could include an Article 4-like mechanism to allow partners to request political consultations in case of a political or security emergency. In the present security environment, the Alliance could also proactively promote its partnership network as a primary forum for effective and operational counter-terrorism cooperation. After all, the sum of the 29 Allies and 40 partners represents a unique critical mass of political will, intelligence, expertise, military and non-military capabilities and assets.

Fighting terrorism matters because "self-defense" is, "...recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations", not just for international or regional stability. To all intents international terrorism is "an armed attack against one or more of" the Allies as indicated in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, as witnessed on September 11, 2001. If NATO does not take the lead against such terrorism other institutions or *ad hoc* arrangements will fill the security vacuum. In which case the Alliance would simply cease to be the main guarantor of collective defense. It would not be the end of NATO certainly, but it would see a downsizing of the Alliance's relevance and credibility in the security business.

Enhanced partnerships are NATO's best asset for confronting challenges and threats that originate "out of area" but impact security "inside the area", such as homeland and cyber security. However, consensus on partnerships is still evasive inside the Alliance. Three contentions, in particular, need to be dealt with. First, the idea, as discussed above, that "NATO should go back to basics" and that collective defense, cyber domain notwithstanding, remains almost exclusively territorial. It is a belief shared to different degrees by most Eastern Allies. The second contention is the resistance in some European quarters (France and Germany come to mind) to NATO's engagement in new "out of area" crises, especially in Africa. Other Allies, such as Italy, advocate a NATO Southern strategy, but hesitate to actually call on it to act, for example in the Mediterranean and Libya. The United States, together with a number of Allies and partners, has chosen to operate in Syria and Iraq against ISIS without the NATO brand. The third obstacle is financial. Budget caps put severe constraints on the resources available for defense capacity-building; a partial answer can be provided by encouraging Allies and partners to strengthen and widen the use of Trust Funds, such as the UK initiated Defense Capability Building Trust Fund. Commitments to Afghanistan (Operation Resolute Support) and Iraq (NATO training and capacity-building) and potential new similar engagements in Libya and Somalia require adequate funding.

These issues all call for an open and frank debate, both within the Alliance and with partners. There is a ‘trade off’ that needs to be discussed: “what NATO can do for partners” in exchange of “what partners can do for NATO”. The potential is enormous, but the terms must be clear to both sides. If NATO is indeed to be “flexible by design”, partnerships are themselves the most flexible tool available to the Alliance. It is up to Allies and partners do decide how and to what extent to use such partnerships.

Russia

Russia is an adversary to the extent that it chooses to be an adversary. Russian meddling in the democracies of Europe is alarming, its aggressive posture in Central Europe and its conduct in the Ukrainian crisis, including the illegal annexation of Crimea, have implications for Alliance security on the Eastern Flank that cannot be ignored. The High North is another area of potential confrontation. Moscow has also chosen competition over cooperation in Syria, and is beefing up its presence in the Mediterranean, and it not at all clear which role it intends to play in the Libyan crisis. Yet in confronting other urgent threats, such as terrorism, violent extremism, proliferation, Russia is on the receiving end of the threat as much as NATO.

Therefore, the real challenge of the Russian relationship is to avoid an adversary turning into an enemy, which means NATO must first deter Russia’s aggressive behavior in Europe. The measures adopted by the Alliance at the Wales and Warsaw summit, especially Enhanced Forward Presence, serve exactly that defensive purpose and need to be scrupulously implemented. Russia’s presence in the Middle East and the Mediterranean makes engagement necessary to solve the Syrian crisis and project stability in Libya. Finally, ISIS is a common threat against which efforts should, at the very least, be coordinated.

The balance of the NATO-Russia relationship shifts inevitably between deterrence and dialogue; NATO must actively seek that to establish and maintain that balance through a considered and incremental full reactivation of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). This paper does not intend to discuss the overall spectrum of NATO’s Russia policy, but rather to frame it in the context of the Alliance’s external outreach, suffice it to say that today deterrence is partly in place and partly a work in progress. Decisions made in the Wales and Warsaw 2014 and 2016 summits are being carried out as agreed and planned. However, in light of the Russian doctrine of increased reliance on nuclear tactical weapons, the Alliance should also consider reviewing and updating its nuclear deterrence posture to better link it to NATO’s conventional deterrence. NATO should also aim at articulating a fully integrated concept that links streamlined decision-making at a political level with conventional and nuclear capacity.

The Alliance has been long divided over Russia. In the wake of Russian aggression in Ukraine it has come together over deterrence, but not over dialogue with Russia. Allies, some halfheartedly, have agreed not to suspend the NRC, but it has at best faltered. The dramatic deterioration of the NATO-Russia relationship makes engagement all the more desirable and necessary¹⁸.

First, there is practical necessity to establish channels of communication between NATO and the Russian military to avoid incidents¹⁹ in Europe, and in any other place, such as Syria, where coalition and Russian forces operate at close quarters. The more adversarial the relationship, the more important is the communication. The political rationale is that, bilaterally and/or in other formats, negotiations with Moscow will occur with or without NATO involvement in the process. NATO’s relevance in shaping the West’s Russia policy thus depends on dialogue, rather than dialogue with Russia depending on NATO.

The majority of the Allies are keenly aware of the risk of being confronted with the *fait accompli* of a bilateral US-Russia “deal” over their heads²⁰. This awareness is particularly acute in the aftermath of

18 As former Israel’s President, Shimon Peres, used to say: “of course I talk to the ones who disagree with me; what would be the point of talking to the ones who already agree?”

19 For a convincing case: Managing Hazardous Incidents in the Euro-Atlantic Area: A New Plan of Action, Lukasz Kulesa, Thomas Frear, Denitsa Rayonova, European Leadership Network (http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/managing-hazardous-incidents-in-the-euro-atlantic-area-a-new-plan-of-action_4211.html)

20 Donald Trump seeks a grand bargain with Vladimir Putin – It is a terrible idea, The Economist, February 11, 2017.

the election of President Donald J. Trump who perceives himself uniquely positioned to create some form of special relationship with Vladimir Putin (though since the US cruise missile strike in Syria, US-Russian relations are again badly strained). The best way to prevent such exclusion is to maintain a parallel Russia-NATO open dialogue. For Moscow and Washington, or for small groups acting for example through the so-called Normandy format on the Ukrainian crisis, the NRC is not an alternative forum for real negotiations, but could be a way for the rest of the Allies to influence the ongoing process. After all, the NRC is the only room that accommodates the entire membership and Russia, and which could also act as a buffer against the consequences of “either a bargain or fall-out²¹” between the United States and Russia.

Second, initial goals should be realistic. NATO should thus aim at engaging Russia in a bottom-up approach focused on re-establishing military to military communication, transparency in military exercises, and rules of engagement and restraint²². It might be useful for the NRC to delegate practical work on these matters at a less structured *ad hoc* expert level where discussions could be strictly action-oriented and limit political grandstanding²³. The first task, though, must be to rebuild a minimum level of confidence and trust.

Finally, neither NATO nor Russia are ready to pursue the full goals the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 or of the 2002 Rome (Pratica di Mare) Declaration). Cooperative security in the Euro-Atlantic area remains the ultimate target, but dialogue will have to move carefully and progressively. A case could be made for joint efforts in the fight against terrorism and in finding common ground in stabilizing Syria and Libya. Such an approach would require that both NATO and Russia compartmentalize differences in Europe in order to cooperate in other areas. It is certainly a bridge that the Alliance should be prepared to cross, if and when the relationship reaches such a level of constructiveness. It would not mean avoiding disagreements, let alone appeasing Russian behavior in Ukraine, but simply keeping those areas separate from others where security interests converge. If the US and the international coalition against ISIS – which includes all NATO members and most EU members - are prepared to cooperate with Russia on the ground and, hopefully, in negotiating peace in Syria, NATO should not be put at a comparative disadvantage with its own national members, or indeed with other negotiating formats by a self-imposed constraint.

Obviously, it takes two to tango. Dialogue, and its effectiveness, will depend on Moscow’s willingness to engage NATO. If not, Russia’s preference for other *fora*, such as OSCE, or interlocutors, such as the EU or more restricted formats, such as the “Normandy group²⁴” or for simply bilateral talks, should be a cause for concern for NATO as whole. This is especially so for the Allies who would find themselves out of the room when deals are made.

China

Neither an adversary nor a partner China barely flickers on NATO’s screen. Yet it is a major actor in the international security environment and a growing military power. Moreover, disputes over the South China Sea have disruptive potential that would impact Europe and the Atlantic region as a whole. Beijing could also play a supportive role in stabilizing Afghanistan.

The Alliance stumbled in the Hindu Kush in 2001, and 16 years on it is no longer a stranger to the region. It knows that Afghanistan’s long-term stability depends also on its neighbors: Pakistan is already a NATO partner, though its role in Afghanistan has largely been problematic; Russia has been engaged (on and off), and fluctuates between support (in its own interest) and criticism; and Central

21 The Economist, as above.

22 “Small things....This might include arms control and stopping Russian and American forces coming to blows”, The Economist, as above. It does not specifically refer to NATO-Russia but rather to the Washington-Moscow bilateral relationship. But the rationale fully applies both to the Alliance and to the NRC.

23 For instance, Des Browne, Wolfgang Ishinger, Igor Ivanov and Sam Nunn have suggested the creation of a NATO-Russia Crisis Management Group (Ensuring Euro-Atlantic Security, Project Syndicate, February 16, 2017; <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/us-europe-russia-security-cooperation-by-des-browne-et-al-2017-02>)

24 Russia, Ukraine, Germany, France.

Asian countries have also been wavering. Unfortunately, an overall regional strategy that includes India, Iran and China has been missing and China could make a positive contribution to that effort. After all, Beijing has a vested interest in stabilizing Afghanistan and avoiding a failing or failed Muslim majority state on its border. And, China does not perceive NATO's residual presence in Afghanistan as a threat. While a fully comprehensive regional strategy is beyond NATO's scope, China is a major player and could make a positive contribution to it. Thus, the Alliance needs to be able at least to "talk" to the Chinese about it, a conversation could yet yield heretofore unexplored and unexpected opportunities. —

Out of the 5 trillion dollars' worth of commercial traffic that goes through the South China Sea²⁵, an estimated 1.1 trillion is trade between Europe and East and South East Asia. European Allies have a vested interest in maintaining freedom of navigation. China also has deep and growing ties in both Asia and Africa²⁶, which are home to many of the at-risk states NATO wants to stabilize. It would certainly make political and economic (resource-wise) sense to start thinking how NATO and China might cooperate at several levels in crisis areas across the Great Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. As Chinese economic and infrastructure initiatives continue to unfold across Asia; as in the One Belt, One Road initiative; a strategic EU-NATO should be attentive to the opportunities and challenges that will inevitably emerge.

An inward-focused NATO might consider Asia out-of-area. An outward-focused NATO, one which recognized the real world, would not view Asia as strictly out-of-area. China is nowhere a threat to the Euro-Atlantic space, but it is a growing presence. Would the Chinese be interested in connecting with NATO? Only Beijing can answer that, if asked. The prospect should at least be raised and handled with thoughtful diplomacy.

China is too important to be ignored. In any event the Alliance would be better off engaging Beijing before Beijing engages NATO, although it would need to make it clear that the intent of the Alliance is not to counter Russia. A NATO-China relationship carries its own logic and has a scope and dynamic of its own and should not be defined solely by the Russia factor. There is also fertile ground for NATO-Beijing dialogue on shared challenges and issues that do not affect the NATO-Russia relationship, although Moscow would certainly take note of a NATO-China dialogue. Nor would such a dialogue hurt NATO's standing in Moscow. Time will tell if there is space for a "NCC" (NATO-China Commission). It is not in the cards yet, but it should not be ruled out by an outward focused NATO if and when both parties are ready for it.

European Union

We approach the end of this study of a comprehensive NATO where it began: in Europe. The EU is NATO's fellow traveler on the international scene and its indispensable security partner. Although, a 'perfect match' has never quite happened despite the largely overlapping membership. It is sadly ironic that the Warsaw Joint Declaration²⁷ of July 8, 2016 raised the EU-NATO relationship to a new level just as the moment the British referendum opened a major fissure in the Union. The UK has often acted as a lynchpin between Europe and the Atlantic; the EU and NATO were coming together, while Europe was fracturing.

The two organizations have quickly moved from the declaration to the implementation phase by presenting a set of "pragmatic yet ambitious measures" to EU and NATO Ministers on December 6, 2016²⁸. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and High Representative Federica Mogherini deserve credit for proactively pushing forward what had hitherto been a lethargic NATO-EU cooperation agenda.

25 "Including more than half the world's annual merchant fleet tonnage and a third of all maritime traffic worldwide". \$ 5 Trillion Melt-down: What if China Shuts Down the South China Sea? Anthony Fensom, The National Interest, July 16, 2016 (<http://nationalinterest.org/blog/5-trillion-meltdown-what-if-china-shuts-down-the-south-china-16996>).

26 For instance, it is not well known that China peacefully and effectively evacuated tens of thousands of its nationals from Libya in 2011. It did this successfully but without wider international cooperation and on strict national perspective.

27 www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm

28 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_138829.htm

Conceptually the EU-NATO partnership rests on three interlocking pillars: synergies (joint undertakings); a division of responsibilities and labor (separate but coordinated operations); and burden sharing. The Joint Declaration both takes stock and looks forward. The innovative part concerns cyberspace which has become a centerpiece of NATO-EU cooperation²⁹ and ranges from actually countering cyber threats, building resilience, to disinformation campaigns and crises triggered by hybrid attacks.

The “interactive area” of cooperation could be taken one step further by positing the strategic partnership within the overall framework of homeland security and intelligence collaboration. Europe badly needs to enhance its capacity for internal defense against the increasing cyber warfare assaults taking place on critical civilian infrastructures or financial and commercial networks. More importantly, NATO and the EU should also consider what actions could be undertaken together to address overt and clandestine efforts to interfere in the democratic institutions and electoral processes of the member states. The rise of extremist terrorism in Europe, traditionally more in the domain of law enforcement, blurs the line between the safety of citizens traditionally entrusted to police forces and hard defense which has traditionally been the preserve of the armed forces. Does the EU and/or the individual nations have all the capacity they need?

For a long time NATO’s consolidated policy has been to stay clear of law enforcement and counterterrorism *inside Europe*. The Alliance is now confronted with a grey zone by hybrid warfare, used by state or non-state actors able to strike directly inside Europe without scratching the external frontier, and yet still cause enormous economic and human damage. This begs a serious question; what good is it to be defending the East or the South of the perimeter from external attack when the center remains vulnerable and under active attack? When an enemy, such as ISIS, in spite of being under coalition attack at some strategic distance from NATO, can claim credit for assaults in the heart of Europe or North America, as in London, Brussels, Paris, or San Bernardino? Therefore, if NATO is to adapt and to inject fresh thinking in its approach to both collective defense of its members and ways to partner with the EU, the hybrid internal threat area and the rise of extremist terrorism should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The second tier of NATO-EU partnership, a division of responsibilities, means first and foremost the early establishment of divisions of labor in out-of-area operations. The good news is that it is already happening. The EU has built-up considerable expertise in small-scale, flexible missions that mix military presence with civilian assistance. The EU cannot match NATO’s resources and capabilities in mounting and sustaining over time, large-scale operations in hostile environments, or the Alliance’s accumulated experience in training and interoperability. However, consideration might be given to a geographical division of responsibilities, with the EU possibly taking the lead in the Western Mediterranean and Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the EU’s capacity to project hard power remains limited for the foreseeable future, particularly with the departure of the United Kingdom (and the EU should be realistic about that). To assume full responsibility for selected geographical areas Europeans will still have to count on NATO support – if needs be. There is nothing new here. In many ways these ideas cast one back to the rarely³⁰ activated Berlin Plus agreement of December 16, 2002³¹. Since then the security environment has deteriorated and the transatlantic context has changed, but at least the Berlin Plus model still remains a valid model and precedent for effective EU-NATO cooperation. It would be useful to review and update the Berlin Plus arrangements to meet the challenges of the current situation.

In the traditional security sphere the EU remains the junior partner. Period. It could significantly contribute to prevent NATO being overloaded, but could not credibly undertake major tasks such as fighting ISIS or deterring Russia. The impending loss of the United Kingdom adds to the military imbalance between NATO and the EU. With the UK’s exit the EU loses between 25 and 30% of its military capabilities, whilst in NATO, the defense spending of the remaining EU countries will amount

29 On April 11, 2017, in Helsinki, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, France, Germany and the United States, with the participation of representatives of the European External Action Service and NATO, signed the Memorandum of Understanding for establishing the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats. (http://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/10616/eurooppalainen-hybridituhkien-osaamiskeskus-perustettiin-helsinkiin)

30 EU operations Concordia in Macedonia and Althea in Bosnia Herzegovina.

31 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Plus_agreement

to just one fifth of the total. There is no “European defense” ‘fantasy’ that can make up for such a loss.

Nevertheless, boosting EU military capabilities through the realization of European defense would still be important for two reasons. The first reason would be to tackle the third component of the NATO-EU relationship; the “burden sharing” stumbling block. The Trump administration has delivered a clear message to the European allies³². The 2% defense spending target is likely to be a central issue at the May special meeting of NATO leaders in Brussels. It is an issue of contention that will not go away thereafter. One problem is that a number of EU allies simply cannot meet the so-called Defence Investment Pledge any time soon without breaching the European Growth and Stability Pact (GSP) that sets a 3% budget deficit limit. Unless both sides find an acceptable compromise³³ the two rigidities could well be conflated into a train wreck. The consequences for the Atlantic Alliance could be disastrous³⁴.

The European contribution to Atlantic security cannot be measured solely in figures,³⁵ but figures do matter. The only way the EU (and Germany) may introduce some flexibility into the 3% budget cap would be to allow a waiver for expenditures allocated to the building up the EU European Defense initiative. The concern that it might become a competitor with NATO has all but disappeared, especially with Brexit. And, irrespective of American pressure, Europe will soon have to confront the current adverse trends in its military spending. The Trump administration has announced a 10% increase for the Pentagon budget. Other powers, like China and India, will not stand idly by. Even with the inclusion of the UK, Europe as a whole risks becoming a military dwarf among world powers.

Second, a NATO associated European defense could be an enticing option for the re-engagement of a post-Brexit UK in the EU security and defense loop. If Brexit is a major loss to EU military capabilities, isolation from the EU would leave London with limited options in operations other than those led by NATO. Outside of NATO or *ad hoc* American-led coalitions, such as the Counter-ISIS coalition, the UK would find itself forced to go it alone unless it remains part of the fabric of EU operations. If that happened both the UK and the EU stand to lose from Brexit, unless they manage to maintain security and military cooperation. The closer the EU-NATO partnership, the easier it would be for London to maintain defense and security engagement with the EU³⁶.

International organizations

NATO’s engagement with other international organizations has been slower than with individual countries. As opposed to 40 individual countries which are listed as partners, official documents list only three international organizations as partners: the United Nations; the European Union; and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Those three represent the Alliance’s natural anchorage, and, by extension, its dual global and regional nature, and yet exhaust neither the potential, nor the actual, network the Alliance can and should aim to develop.

The relationship with the EU is discussed above. At its very inception, as already discussed, the Atlantic Alliance was framed within the context of the UN Charter. With the exception of *Operation Allied Force* in 1999, NATO operations have always been specifically mandated by UN Security

32 “I owe it to you to give you clarity on the political reality in the United States, and to state the fair demand from my country’s people in concrete terms. America will meet its responsibilities, but if your nations do not want to see America moderate its commitment to this Alliance, each of your capitals needs to show support for our common defense.

.....We must adopt a plan this year, including milestone dates, to make steady progress toward meeting Warsaw and Wales commitments.

If your nation meets the two percent target, we need your help to get other allies there. If you have a plan to get there, our Alliance is counting on you to accelerate your efforts and show bottom-line results. And if you do not yet have a plan, it is important to establish one soon.” (Statement to media by US Defense Secretary James Mattis, February 15, 2017).

33 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Hans Binnendijk suggest reaching the 2% target in five rather than ten years (Our NATO Partners Should Engage Trump in Brussels, Newsweek, February 25, 2017; <http://www.newsweek.com/our-nato-partners-should-engage-trump-brussels-559632>), together with other “bold” steps to “reconstitute the Trans-Atlantic security bargain”. Reaching the 2% target in five years is a tall order, but the overall approach could be the only way out of the deadlock.

34 For a NATO epilogue scenario, see This is How NATO Ends, Jeremy Shapiro, Foreign Policy, February 15, 2017

35 Julianne Smith makes a convincing case in We need to talk about NATO, Politico, December 11, 2016. But it will not be enough.

36 On the eve of the Brexit negotiations, both the UK government and the EU negotiators are calling for future EU-UK cooperation on security and defense.

Council (UNSC) resolutions, and three NATO countries (US, France, UK) are permanent members of the UNSC. The two organizations should share common ground for cooperation in crisis management and cooperative security. However it was only in September 2008 that the then two secretaries general, Ban Ki Moon and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer for the UN and NATO respectively, were able to sign a Framework Declaration on UN-NATO cooperation. Within the general political constraints of the UN's large membership, and of the particular constraints of the other two UNSC permanent members (China and Russia), there is now some room for cooperation between the UN and NATO.

The OSCE is the natural complement to NATO in Europe. After all, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) membership basically mirrors that of the OSCE. Moreover, the two organizations have a good track record of teamwork and divisions of labor and shared responsibilities in the Balkans and Central Europe. Disputes with Russia limit cooperation in frozen conflicts and in the Ukrainian crisis, but channels of communication are always open and constructive.

NATO's other frontiers are the regional organizations *outside Europe*. There has already been some positive interaction, especially with the African Union (AU) and with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The rationale is the same that applies to NATO's other partnerships: political engagement; military-to-military dialogue; capacity-building; and countering common threats. Regional organizations, such as the AU have a primary role in preventing state failure and projecting stability in its own area, but often lack resources, expertise and capabilities. In Africa, NATO, the EU or individual Western countries, such as France in Mali, may have to act in response to emergencies and to counter terrorism, piracy and trafficking. But, on the whole, African stabilization is an African affair. NATO's strategy for Africa should thus aim at empowering the AU and making it the umbrella for international cooperative security efforts in that region. NATO, and/or the EU, may step in to support stabilization, for instance in Libya or Somalia, but the ownership remains and must remain African.

In the Mediterranean and the Middle East, in addition to the existing partnership networks (e.g. the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative) the Alliance can interact with the Arab League and with the GCC. Asia's landscape is quite different. It lacks an umbrella organization and a cooperative security architecture. In continental Asia thought might be given to NATO connecting with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)³⁷. The SCO would certainly confront the Alliance with a challenging, and even disruptive, environment³⁸. On the other hand, it could be beneficial both to NATO's partnership with Afghanistan and to improved atmospherics with Moscow. Meanwhile, NATO's reluctance to engage with the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)³⁹ is justified. The CSTO is a post-Soviet intergovernmental military alliance that is entirely capability-dependent on Russia. There is thus little rationale for any NATO-CSTO interaction, at least until the current status of NATO-Russia relations are clarified.

The Asia-Pacific region is established on a classical balance of power amongst a number of state actors with the US as the ultimate stability guarantor. The situation is in a state of flux: China has become far more militarily active and assertive, whilst the US has been oscillating between the "Pivot to Asia" and scaling back its commitment to the region. As yet it is not clear what will be the new administration's direction of travel. Meanwhile Salafi Jihadist terrorism continues to expand and ISIL offshoots can unexpectedly emerge anywhere. To that end, in East Asia, there is a growing and nearly universally-expressed concern over the growing "Arabization" of Islam in Southeast Asia and the radicalization this has spawned. For NATO, the obvious counterpart is ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and its Regional Forum (ARF, which is the closest entity to being an ASEAN security forum). The EU has for a long time been an observer, which is logical given its many composite interests in the region. Therefore, in light of the increasing security challenges it might be time for NATO to consider seeking a similar observer status in ASEAN.

37 Members: China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; observers: Mongolia, Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Iran.

38 Shimon Peres rule about talking to the ones who disagree would still apply.

39 Members: Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan; observers: Afghanistan, Serbia.

Conclusion

As a comprehensive NATO embraces the challenges of adaptation in this new geostrategic environment certain imperatives are clear: being comprehensive is far more than simply being about the membership of NATO. It is of course about that too, but it is also a great deal more. First of all it is about maintaining NATO's unique role in enhancing intra-Alliance, and above all, Trans-Atlantic political dialogue. However, to be relevant, inside the Alliance there has to be a dialogue as well about the world outside the Alliance.

Second, NATO is the indispensable connecting link between North America and Europe. Brexit notwithstanding, only the European Union can deliver Europe. As a start, NATO and the EU must redefine their fundamental relationship, not only to share key tasks and burdens, but on a more fundamental level. In other words, to bring the capacity of NATO to bear to protect the populations of Europe from the increasing threats that are eroding the internal security environment of the region, NATO and the EU must work in close partnership. Some of the threats are state sponsored, some are non-state entities, some are criminal in nature, and some emerge from the general deterioration of the nation-state beyond NATO's borders. *In toto*, they demand NATO and the EU reconsider and enhance their relationship.

Equally, NATO enlargement is not an end in itself; stability enlargement is. There are real sensitivities in some quarters to the continued expansion of NATO: the Alliance should certainly be circumspect in its plans for continued enlargement, but should continue with the Open Door policy. In the end NATO's enlargement has always been about enhancing stability while providing for greater security and, whilst it is right that NATO should be circumspect in managing the specifics of its enlargement, there should be no suggestion that Russia has been rewarded for its intimidation and its bad behavior by NATO's diverting from continued consideration of additional members.

NATO should also seek closer ties with, and explore areas and means for, cooperation with companion international organizations that are fellow travelers in the security environment of the 21st Century. Enhancing partnerships or creating relationships with such organizations as the OSCE, AU, the Arab League, the GCC, ASEAN/ARF, and even the SCO provide for a far more comprehensive NATO perspective on, and capacity to exert influence in, areas where additional cooperation could be useful, even vital.

NATO should strengthen and/or create bilateral partnerships with states which carry strategic significance for NATO and their respective regions, and must begin to think more broadly strategically, by reaching out to and prioritizing support to fragile and/or failing states, sometimes located well beyond NATO's periphery. NATO's approach, in league with the EU and other IOs, as well humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector should be to apply coordinated and judicious capacity-building and security assistance, alongside these development partners, to arrest the decline or collapse of these important states. This would help prevent the inevitable large scale flight or refugee movements that feed the vast reservoirs of recruits for the extremist networks ravaging the world today.

As regards Russia, while NATO must comprehensively deter Russia, it should seek ways to rehabilitate the NRC that does not signal in any way NATO's acceptance of its illegal aggression in Crimea and more broadly in Ukraine. Part of NATO's capacity to adapt and to remain relevant must be its confidence and strength to both deter and to talk to Russia simultaneously. Without the former, Russia's aggression is encouraged. Without the latter, both parties are subject to miscalculation and unintentional provocation. Both are necessary. Both are essential.

And finally, China. There is strategic logic in NATO seeking a relationship with China. It is time. China's reach into the developing world is substantial and growing, making China a potential partner for the careful stabilization campaign already addressed. Not only should NATO explore the efficacy of a NATO/China Commission (NCC), which could grow from the areas of common interest such as countering radicalization, countering terrorism, and state-level capacity-building, NATO should even consider the creation of a special relationship with the SCO.

All the points in this conclusion should be undertaken concurrently and comprehensively. And there will be costs associated with this approach, but the challenges of this era are so great that NATO has no alternative. A comprehensive NATO built on the strength of Atlantic Alliance carries with it unparalleled capacity not only to defend the Alliance, from without and within, in a period of growing uncertainty and instability, it also has the capacity to influence partners, nations, and events beyond its traditional ken, thereby positioning NATO as one of the principal proponents of peace and stability in this new, but violent and dangerous century.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following individuals whose inputs have greatly contributed to our work. The contributions we received from them may or may not be in agreement with our conclusions but have all greatly contributed to highlight the problems and issues a “Comprehensive NATO” would be confronted with and, most certainly, to sharpen our thinking.

Claudio Bisogniero, Ambassador of Italy to NATO; former NATO Deputy Secretary General.

Ivo Daalder, President, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs; former Ambassador of the United States to NATO.

Sorin Ducaru, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges; former Ambassador of Romania to NATO.

Rose Gottemoeller, NATO Deputy Secretary General.

Jim Hoagland, Washington Post, Opinions Contributor on foreign policy.

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, former NATO Secretary General.

Tacan Ildem, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy; former Ambassador of Turkey to NATO.

Bart Lammens, Deputy Chief of Mission, Belgium Mission to NATO.

Victoria Nuland, former Ambassador of the United States to NATO.

Igor Pokaz, former Ambassador of Croatia to NATO.

Thrasylvoulos (“Terry”) Stamatopoulos, former NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy; former Ambassador of Greece to NATO.

Adam Thomson, former Ambassador of the United Kingdom to NATO.

Kim Traavik, former Ambassador of Norway to NATO.

***John R. Allen** is a retired U.S. Marine Corps four-star general, former Commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, former Special Presidential Envoy for Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, and currently serves as a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution.*

*Ambassador **Stefano Stefanini** is the former Permanent Representative of Italy to NATO and a Non-Resident Senior Fellow with the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security at the Atlantic Council.*



GLOBSEC
POLICY INSTITUTE

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

www.globsec.org