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CONFERENCE

2020



POLICY BRIEF

**NATO RELEVANCE
ON BOTH SIDES OF
THE ATLANTIC**

Martin Svárovský

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2020

2020 began on a hopeful note, as all new years do. However, it soon changed to a year that brought us “the new normal” and a completely different understanding of “unusual times”.

Much has happened this year, beginning with the global pandemic, which affects all spheres of life – from healthcare, economy and politics to individual psychological aspects, not to mention the hectic U.S. presidential election campaign, unprecedented wildfires in Australia, the escalating conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the brutal and relentless suppression of peaceful protesters in Belarus in the wake of falsified presidential election, and all this against a backdrop where the international community also celebrated the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.

It has been estimated that a human brain processes about 70,000 thoughts daily, and 95% of them are the same as the day before. Small wonder that so many events are being framed in the context of Covid-19 this year, and thoughts are focused on it. However, this collection of Riga Conference Policy Briefs clearly demonstrates the complexity of international affairs and the fact that focusing on one of their facets is neither productive nor rational.

The influence of Covid-19 on international processes is quite considerable – starting from the questioning of World Health Organization’s operability and reputation, confusion in the European Union and the absence of resilience and solidarity, to an Infodemic, triggered by psychological factors and enabled by technology.

Meanwhile, the pandemic has not brought substantial changes to the Euro-Atlantic security policy in its classical sense. Russia has been pursuing large scale military exercises, developing its military capabilities and maintaining an active presence abroad. Strategic rivalry between the United States and China has spilled over from issues centering on the economy and international trade into an all-embracing ideological confrontation concerning values and technological dominance. The European Union has adopted its multiannual financial framework for 2021–2027 and approved a European Union Recovery Instrument; an intensive debate is underway on the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050, on digital issues, development of the Single Market, solutions to migration, as well as values and the rule of law.

I urge the reader to remain open and curious about a wide range of topics in international politics and pursue their broader interests. The desire to think critically about even the simplest of issues and tasks fosters the path towards both constructive and creative solutions. Let’s work for better times together!

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The modern world is globally interconnected, and citizens, goods, and services are constantly moving. Therefore it is obvious to observers that Europe and the World at large are exceptionally vulnerable to the consequences of the world-wide pandemic which cuts contacts, affects business, halts economic activity and endangers the world security and peace.

Frequently, people and governments underestimate the probability of negative scenarios. Almost nobody was ready to face the sudden challenge of Covid-19. Many of us hoped for the best and totally ignored good old Murphy's Law, which says "if it can go wrong, it will go wrong". The same applies to international security issues.

Of course, there are well-known excuses why security and defence issues were not a top priority for state institutions and the public. There are numerous other issues like employment, infrastructure, education which seems more important than investments in defence or military. Younger European generations, particularly in the Western European societies, are overconfident that security is eternal and granted them for free. No wonder that under such conditions and dominating public opinion many countries across Europe are still acting naively when it comes to decision making about security and defence matters.

In the meantime, international organizations, which in many ways have been upholding the peace and post-World War II order, are increasingly dismantling or dismantled. Under such circumstances, in international relations, the role of the nation-states increases, and they are ready to rely on their economic power or even military might to reach their political goals.

Post-Cold War multilateralism is slowly shifting from institutionalism to realpolitik. COVID-19 crisis is only speeding up these changes. As an example, The World Health Organisation and the European Union, both of whom should have been at the forefront of a comprehensive international response to this pandemic, have largely taken a backseat while individual nations have responded unilaterally.

What are the ways to deal with increasing threats to global security posed by the nationalization of international politics? How to evade the principle that "Might is Right"? How to re-establish the working world order based on mutual agreement, justice, and humanity reflecting the realities and necessities of 21st. Century? These are only a few questions I hope we can tackle in Riga Conference, taking into account the number of prestige thinkers taking part in this event.

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NATO RELEVANCE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

Martin Svárovský

INTRODUCTION

Over the last five years, NATO has undergone deep modernization of its command structure and force posture. Three consecutive summits have proven NATO's adaptability to the new security environment created by Russian aggression on Ukraine and the increased assertiveness of Putin's regime. Two important strategic documents: Political Guidance and Military Strategy, have been adopted. Preparation of a third one - defining deterrence and defense policy - is underway. Still, while the security environment is further evolving, the adaptive business is not finished.

NATO's challenges are manifold. The trans-Atlantic community face a security challenge posed by the growing military might of China. NATO member states' resilience in the cyber domain has become a more complex issue than any time before. Moreover, the West is witnessing a growing doctrinal gap between the USA and Europe with inevitable consequences for NATO.

Within this context, it is of paramount importance that the Alliance remains **relevant for the United States, credible for its members most exposed** external threats and **politically cohesive** at the same time. These three major tasks are interlinked. The basic assumption, elaborated in this contribution, is that the concept of "great-power competition" is not against the interests of the NATO Eastern Flank countries. On the contrary, if played right, the NATO Eastern Flank can gain from this new paradigm.

US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY - GROWING DOCTRINAL GAP BETWEEN EUROPE AND US

When Russia launched military operations in eastern Ukraine and illegally annexed Crimea in 2014, both sides of the Atlantic reacted by changes in force posture and economic sanctions.

“**Where the USA changed also its strategic doctrine, Europe has not.**”

The new National Security Strategy of the USA, published in December 2017, represents a **significant shift** in US strategic thinking and policymaking. The adversaries, rather than terrorism are the center of the NSS attention and the US is openly declaring a resolve to approach them from the position of strength. The new strategy also states that the US will **rethink the policy of engagement with rivals**. (Not only was the “engagement” a part of the US policy of the previous administration, it is also at the core of political or military doctrines of the most of European states.) Another remarkable characteristic of the NSS is that US does not see military force as only an instrument of urgent crisis management. **It attaches as significant role in pursuing the American national interest** to the military.

At the same time, the wording of the NSS, as well as of other partial strategies, such as the new US defense strategy, the new US nuclear posture or the US Iran Strategy clearly indicate that the US will seek to **cooperate with partners** while handling different security issues from the position of strength.

The situation on the European side of the Atlantic looks different. The Strategic Concept of NATO remains in place and the core document defining the defense and deterrence posture of the Alliance (“Defense and Deterrence

Posture Review”) is from 2012 and thus outdated.¹ Basic doctrinal documents of decisive European powers like Great Britain, France and Germany witnessed tactical rather than strategic shifts after 2014. They are still focused on terrorism (France) and keeping status quo of international order (Germany).

Last year, the Alliance adopted two new strategic documents: The “Political Guidance” that defines the level of ambition of NATO and the “Military strategy” that reflects upon a new character of threats. Both these documents are classified - a clear sign of a different European approach to the “messaging” role of the doctrine from the American one.

All new **US** doctrinal documents identify **Europe as a key partner**. Therefore we, as Europeans, do not only need a thorough analysis of these documents but also a frank political debate to determine whether the “post-Crimea” trend in the US foreign and security policy represents an opportunity for us or not. A profound political and expert debate on the consequences of the transatlantic doctrinal gap is thus necessary. The desired goal of such a debate must not be an adaptation of one side of the atlantic to the doctrine of the other. It would be hard to achieve such a harmony of thinking between Americans and Europeans. After all, “Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus”, as a former advisor to Senator John McCain and leading US intellectual Robert Kagan has put it. The **profound division of labor** between the USA and the NATO on new global threats seems to be a more feasible goal. If reflected in the NATO Strategic Concept, such transatlantic complementarity may form substantive contribution to the solution of the doctrinal gap problem.

¹ For instance, in the text of DDPR, the primary role assigned to the tactical nuclear weapons is in disarmament policy. This is in sharp contradiction to Russia’s strategy on tactical nukes. No country is considered as an adversary according to the DDPR and NATO seeks “cooperation on missile defense with Russia”

NATO RELEVANCE FOR THE UNITED STATES

The dichotomy between NATO collective defense tasks and out of area operations has been discussed for years. The proper balance between three main tasks i.e. collective defense, crisis management and collective security is an issue of a permanent character. If NATO wants to stay relevant for the United States, it must tackle the balance also from the perspective of the **“great-power competition”**.

No matter how **well-founded the conceptual disagreement with this concept** might be, we need to establish to what extent it offers opportunities for European NATO members. From the US perspective, the dual great-power challenges of China and Russia increase the necessity for an enormous boost to the NATO Eastern Flank’s resilience because the increasingly overstretched US military cannot be everywhere. ²

For Europe, the US necessary streamlining on Russia and China might be advantageous. While Washington will have to scale back its efforts in secondary and peripheral regions, the resilience of NATO Eastern Flank will remain a priority. Gradually reducing the US military’s exposure and engagement in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria – with the help of local proxies and a greater reliance on offshore forces – will free up further capabilities for contingencies relevant both for Europe and the Indo-Pacific region.

“**Both Russia and China apply a tactic based on “a fait accompli scenario”.**”

² David B. Larter, “With Iran tensions high, a US military command pushes a dubious carrier strategy,” Defense News, March 24, 2020; https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2020/03/24/with-iran-tensions-high-centcom-pushes-a-dubious-carrier-strategy/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2003.25.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief

They seek to employ their capabilities quickly to achieve limited objectives and forestall a response from Western allies and partners. Capabilities and tactics needed to counter “fait accompli” strategy are applicable in both cases.

NATO working hand-in-hand with the US needs to make adjustments in its force employment, crisis response, force structure, and strategy aimed to help address this critical challenge. This will impact not only the content of NATO strategic documents but the NATO Defense Planning Process as well. It will be accompanied by the need to change the very core strategy of the Alliance, as some leading strategist are already making clear.³ **NATO should see this as an opportunity to ensure its relevance for the USA in the longer perspective.**

THE NATURE OF THE CHINESE THREAT

China's security threat for the West is determined by its growing armament and evolving military strategy. Common wisdom says that if we want to defeat the enemy, we must also defeat its military strategy.

China, unlike Russia, does not have a comprehensive military strategy towards Europe at the moment. Even in the foreseeable future, it probably will not have one. Yet it already has the strategy to become the world's superpower in the long term. That is the reason why NATO must be concerned about China's fast-growing military power.

More than 2 million people serve in the Chinese armed forces (PLA) and its annual defense spending is \$225 billion. From submarines, to intercontinental ballistic missiles, and even nuclear weapons, China commands the same equipment as the United States or Russia, even though they are not as sophisticated. As for tanks, China already outnumbers both the USA and Russia. It has the most armored combat vehicles in the world.

3 Hans Binnendijk, Timo S. Koster, “NATO needs a new core task,” Defense News , July 22, 2020, <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2020/07/22/nato-needs-a-new-core-task/>

Chinese military, similarly to Russian one, still keeps significant limitations. One of them is the **low ability to project power over long distances**. PLA possess capable missiles and planes. Nevertheless, sending a substantial fighting force to the other side of the globe and keeping it there, is a different discipline. To do this, one needs the appropriate strategy, logistics, interoperability of forces, tracking capabilities, efficient and fast communication, well-placed military bases and a strong navy. China as well as Russia have a significant navy, one that can operate in coastal waters. The only naval force capable of operating globally in the deep waters of the oceans - a so-called "blue water navy"- is the American one.

Because of these shortcomings, **China, like Russia, focuses its strategy on the initial phase of a possible conflict and the "limited warfare" tactics**. The goal is to quickly inflict a strategic shock on the enemy, cover the conquered territory with A2/AD umbrella and then negotiate. Sometimes it is called a **"fait accompli strategy"**.

If longer warfare is expected, China can afford it primarily in areas adjacent to their own territory. ⁴Therefore, the use of force is expected mainly in the Indo-Pacific region. China's priority is to build a dominant military position in Asia by strengthening its military presence near Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Of course, the perimeter is growing, extending from Japan to The Philippines. It is no coincidence that Japan cooperates with the Philippines and send its ships patrol the Philippines with the strongest military garrison they can carry.

A strong North Atlantic alliance, capable of taking care of its own security on the border with Russia, will help an Indo-Pacific alliance of democracies to face down China's military threat. It can be an alliance composed of the USA, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, the Philippines or South Korea. Such a coalition could be a mixture of formal alliances (Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea come to mind), quasi alliances (Taiwan), and deepening partnerships that do not involve formal security guarantees (India and Vietnam).

⁴ Limited warfare can also be accompanied by long-range strikes with precision super- or even hyper-sonic weapons to hit more distant lands. But classic combat operations simply cannot be conducted by PLA in areas too far away.

RUSSIA IN THE GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

The Russian specific threat for the NATO Eastern Flank is the subject of chapter III. As for the global competition, Russia is problematic because **it surrounds NATO with its naval capabilities**. It is building up a military stronghold in the Black Sea, sending submarines through the Turkish straits to the Eastern Mediterranean, building up its Arctic fleet, and increasing its presence in the Indo-Pacific region. It has also taken mercenaries around the globe. All these activities, based on relatively cheap capabilities, suggest the renaissance of the Cold War strategy. **Given Russia's openly adversarial policy towards NATO and US, the NATO planners must react accordingly with some forward-looking planning.**

The Russian Navy's Black Sea Fleet has been deploying submarines to the Mediterranean. Thus, Russia is now able to reestablish a permanent submarine presence in the Mediterranean. It is deploying quiet, modern, diesel submarines capable of launching Kalibr cruise missiles. A Kilo-class submarine can go anywhere in European waters and strike any European or North African capital from under the waves.⁵

A similar pattern applies to the Arctic. Russia announced that it will not tolerate any vessels coming through the Northern Sea Route unless there is 45 days of notification. Other countries are forced to pay a fee to the Russian Federation for a passage. Russia continues to grow its military presence in former Soviet Arctic bases, with full battalions at some of the bases, as well as icebreakers outfitted with Kalibr cruise missiles and stand-by fighter aircrafts patrolling the waters.

As for the Indo-Pacific, Russia is re-establishing its military presence by regularly flying bomber and reconnaissance missions in the Sea of Japan and conducting operations as far east as Alaska and the west coast of the continental

5 H. I. Sutton, "Russian Black Sea Sub Deployments to Mediterranean Could Violate Treaty", USNI News, July 8, 2020, https://news.usni.org/2020/07/08/russian-black-sea-sub-deployments-to-mediterranean-could-violate-treaty?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2007.09.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief

United States. The Russian Navy has increased its operations and reach, with the Russian Pacific Fleet deploying ships to support operations in the Middle East and Europe, and the Russian Baltic and Black Sea Fleets deploying to the Indo-Pacific. Russian ballistic missile and attack submarines remain active in the region, while it is also undertaking efforts to modernize its conventional forces and nuclear strike capabilities there.

It is important to bear in mind that for NATO to gain ability to confront Russia at sea, it is **not just about freedom of navigation. It's about its own safety.** New naval activities help Russia to project power and hold remote territories at risk. Thus, Tripoli could become the next Crimea, where Russia can support ships and submarines carrying long-range land attack missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles from their Syrian hub.

There is no doubt that this state of affairs threatens European security. **This topic should be on the agenda of the next NATO summit.** While chiefs of general staff already know the risks, the European NATO states' political leaders, who allocate defense budgets, must understand the new map as well. With in the global competition, NATO's attention also need to be directed toward **space.**

“ Keeping NATO's military superiority will depend to some extent on the use of space capabilities.

Russia continues to bolster its military space assets. Specifically, it is working to expand its anti-access/area denial approach in outer space in the form of electronic warfare, increasing the sustainability of its communication systems and developing offensive capabilities against ground-based space infrastructure.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists' satellite database and space-launch reporting, there are more than 2,200 satellites in orbit, and over 1,000 of them belong to American companies, government services, and scientific

institutions, including 189 military satellites. Russia has more than 160 satellites, including 100 military spacecraft. This highlights that the Russian military is almost as dependent on space assets as the United States.

The biggest part of Russia's military satellite constellation involves 51 communication spacecraft, with 16 Earth-observation satellites. This differs from the American, Chinese, and European ones, where Earth-observation satellites dominate. For instance, the U.S. has 56 Earth-observation satellites and 49 communication satellites and China has 57 Earth-observation satellites and only three communication satellites. We can see that China and Russia have a different focus for their space operations, and the US and NATO must accordingly tailor their responses in space.

As in other domains, the West needs to focus on Russian vulnerabilities.

Russian state-owned factories are faced with sanctions that affect their technological capabilities. And in contrast to other space powers, Russia's armed forces cannot rely on commercial space systems because the domestic market of commercial space services is poorly developed. Furthermore, Moscow's focus on communication and navigation capabilities creates a gap in space intelligence capabilities.

Within this context, **concerted and coordinated technological sanctions could go a long way to hinder the further increase of Russia's military might in space.** Since dual use technologies play an important role in the space military capability development, an effective coordination mechanism on tailor-made sanctions between the USA and other NATO Allies would be welcomed. In any case, great power competition in the space domain requires increased intelligence sharing focused on the transfer of technologies.

The Russian anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities' task is to consolidate Russian territorial gains and create a much more difficult military problem for NATO to overcome. There are four components of these capabilities that present the most significant challenges: long-range precision strikes, integrated air defense systems; offensive and defensive capabilities in space, cyberspace, the electromagnetic spectrum, and massed artillery. Similarly, to

China's threat, Allied forces are needed that can deploy quickly enough to contest any Russian land grab from the outset. Given how many U.S. resources might be tied down in Asia, the European **NATO allies will need to augment their military ability to integrate with U.S. forces to deter or blunt a Russian assault.** Otherwise, the land and water theatre in the Euro-Atlantic region may be lost to Russian anti-access tactics and weapons.⁶

CREDIBILITY FOR MEMBERS MOST EXPOSED TO THE EXTERNAL THREAT

Russia represents the most tangible external threat for NATO. The Baltic is and will remain the most vulnerable point for NATO. Whatever scenario occurs in the Baltic Sea region, NATO will not have enough forces in the theatre. Therefore, the Alliance must focus on deterrence. There must be a unity of effort and a mutual understanding of how to achieve effective deterrence. That applies to the command structure all the way from SACEUR down to the tactical command and control structures.

The measures adopted by the Baltic states themselves and deployment of NATO eFP increased the resilience of NATO Eastern Flank. But the mission is not completed yet. More needs to be done by Member States most exposed to Russia's military threat, as well as by the entire Alliance.⁷

Not only a further increase of the number of combat units in the Baltics, but also an enhancement of the interoperability of the international forces, is needed. Effective deterrence requires **interoperability** of the Baltic armies with the remaining capabilities of the rest of NATO. Air policing serves Baltic States' resilience. However, they also need NATO air support and air defense.

6 Megan Eckstein, "Foggo: Russia Seeking More Control of Black Sea, Mediterranean, Arctic," USNI News, July 17, 2020, https://news.usni.org/2020/07/17/foggo-russia-seeking-more-control-of-black-sea-mediterranean-arctic?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2007.20.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief

7 Martin Svárovský, The Significance and Modalities of Deterrence: The Current Military and Strategic Situation in the Baltics, European Values, 2020. <https://www.europeanvalues.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Significance-and-Modalities-of-Deterrence.pdf>

If needed, well-motivated Baltic troops on the ground should get very rapid and quick NATO air support; the lack of it is currently a significant weakness.

There is also a need for **more advanced planning** on NATO's Eastern flank. This would allow a phased reaction and coordination of air, maritime, and land lines in which NATO would be engaged. MNC-NE in Szczecin and MND-NE HQ in Elbląg represent the backbone of the eFP brigades. They will be in forefront in case of contingency. As well, national contingency plans must be synchronized with NATO plans. Recently established NFIUS are the key sensors that provide information about the situation on the ground.

The US military presence in the region is welcomed by all states in the Eastern Flank. The NATO context of the new US troops and equipment in Poland is important. Improving **synchronization of the US plans with the NATO plans as well as interoperability** of NATO and US forces is of paramount importance for the Eastern Flank. While the NATO eFP battle groups and the US rotational brigade combat team both have warfighting capabilities, they lack a comprehensive and coordinated battle plan between NATO and the United States, as well as adequate enablers— including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets as well as air and missile defense, and long-range fires.

The recent decision made within U.S.-Poland Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement to reestablish the US Army's V Corps and to deploy its Corps Forward Deployed Headquarters to Poland will allow for much more flexible control and command of multiple divisions, including Marine and Army divisions and brigades. It can act as a multinational Land Component headquarter. This means the U.S. Army can prepare to command "Army, joint, and multinational forces engaged in crisis response, limited contingency operations, major operations, and campaigns."

ITG(R) Ben Hodges, former Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe, and CE-PA's Pershing Chair underlines: "The V Corps HQ (FWD) is another important manifestation of American commitment to our allies. This HQ will improve coordination between U.S. and other allied forces on NATO's eastern flank,

enhance intelligence cooperation, and greatly improve the logistical efforts, especially mobility, essential to effective deterrence.”

Upon arrival, the **V Corps can coordinate and integrate with the U.S. division forward deployed headquarters in Poznan and with NATO’s 9 other standing Land Corps around Europe - importantly with NATO’s MNCNE, Szczecin which is NATO’s Land Corps specifically focused on NATO’s northeastern region.** V Corps should integrate closely with Poland’s Operations Command, which includes Poland’s Land Component Command C2 capability – Poland’s “Corps-level” equivalent in Kraków. Additional coordination can be done with regional NATO Multinational Division Headquarters (MND): in Elbląg, in Latvia, in Romania, and the nascent MND-Central Europe. Finally, V Corps can help spur rapid establishment of the developing and vital, Multinational Corps Southeast (MNCSE) in Romania, responsible for NATO C2 in the vulnerable Black Sea region.⁸

POLITICAL COHESION OF NATO

The vast Russian military might is a matter of fact. Still, Russia is weaker than the Alliance. Therefore, if in a conflict with NATO, Russia must target the political cohesion of the Alliance at its initial phase. The topical task is to boost the political cohesion, NATO’s weakest point. The solution suggested is twofold. During peacetime, political cohesion needs to be cultivated and the period of extreme political vulnerability of NATO during the conflict needs to be shortened.

⁸ Ray Wojcik, “America’s “Kościuszko Corps,” is on the way to Poland”, www.Defence24.com, August 17, 2020, <https://defence24.com/americas-kosciuszko-corps-is-on-the-way-to-poland-opinion#.Xzq7-zEh70Q.twitter>

POLITICAL COHESION IN THE PEACETIME

We, central Europeans, need to find a way how to get our western European partners on board. We must accept the fact that French, German or Italian threat assessment is different from the countries on the Eastern flank of NATO, bordering with Russia. One of the reasons is that Russia is deliberately not threatening them on the same scale. Russia applies tactics that I called double-decoupling of the West.⁹ Because of the substantial difference in the threat assessment, we can appeal mainly to the European solidarity. However, this solidarity is not a one-way street.

The countries on the Eastern flank of NATO must have the ambition to shape the European strategic debate with the aim to find a consensus between the European and American narratives. At the same time the states of the Eastern flank of NATO must provide solidarity with the Western Europe, be it NATO or EU agenda. Only this will entitle them to demand the reciprocity.

Thorough debate on the US-Europe doctrinal gap would fit to this field as well. Formats like the Bucharest Nine are well-suited platform for such a debate. The debate must be free of any prejudice and its ultimate goal should be to comprehend the practical impact this dichotomy between both sides of Atlantic has. The well-known division on “new” and “old” Europe, as Donald Rumsfeld put it, does not serve the interest of the NATO political cohesion.

PERIOD OF EXTREME POLITICAL VULNERABILITY

NATO Defense Planning Process defines general forces in the form of capability targets according the current level of ambition. In case of crises, the mechanism of force generation process is applied, handled by the Allied Command Operations, Force Generation Branch, and National Military Representatives. At the Force Generation Conference, NATO and partner countries make formal

⁹ Martin Svárovský, “Not the defeat of the West but double decoupling is the strategic goal of Russia,” European Values, May 20, 2019, <https://www.europeanvalues.net/vyzkum/not-the-defeat-of-the-west-but-double-decoupling-is-the-strategic-goal-of-russi>

offers of personnel and equipment to support the operation or mission. This process might prove too slow in time of real crises. Taking into account the substantially boosted readiness of Russian forces, such crisis can start on extremely short notice and its very initial phase might be the decisive one. If the two commands most relevant to the Eastern Flank (i.e. Szczecin and Elbląg), **are “equipped”¹⁰ in peacetime with a substantial US and enhanced Allied enhanced presence** in Poland (i.e. US BCT plus national contribution from other Allies), it would grant the alliance robustness and high readiness – both necessary elements for responding to the nature of Russian threat. This should also be reflected in the graduated response plans -GRP's. Thus, the **NATO readiness would be increased by skipping the necessity of a standard force generation process in case of crisis.**

NECESSARY ADAPTATION OF NATO DOCTRINE AND CAPABILITIES

ROBUST NAVY AND RAPID PENETRATION OF THE A2/AD

As shown above, NATO, besides collective territorial defense, needs to focus on the deterrence of Russia in a broader perimeter¹¹ and on assistance US deterrence on China. The NATO Cold War doctrine put emphasis on rapidly gaining air superiority. After the Cold War, the crises in the Balkans and Libya have shown the limits of this tactic. Russia's A2/AD strategy adds further doubts about the calculation that NATO can count on quick air superiority in case of conflict. If NATO should be a player in global competition, it must invest more in **capabilities that are relevant for facing near-peer-adversary**. A **robust navy** is one of them and **rapid penetration** of the A2/AD bubble from longer distances is the other.

10 In a form of enhanced affiliation i.e. active cooperation during peacetime, including command post a live exercise.

11 The region where NATO directly encounters Russian strategy and capabilities covers Scandinavia, Baltics, the Black Sea, but also the Mediterranean and the Arctic.

For the Europeans, building a strong Navy that can effectively defend NATO's southern and northern flanks against potential Russian harassment is imperative especially in the context of the defense and deterrence at the NATO Eastern Flank and Russian **strategy of double decoupling combined with "fait accompli" scenario**. One of the elements of the strategy is to hold western Europe at risk to complicate the decision-making of the western European powers when they are determining a response to incursion. If combined, the European and the US naval assets are strong and capable enough to counter this Russian leverage at sea. Therefore, it is likely they will be more willing to participate in the defense of the Eastern flank. Their intention to do so could be also much more credibly communicated to Russia with a capable navy at hand, thus strengthening the NATO deterrence.

The resilience of NATO southern and northern flanks against the potential Russian harassment, when increased by a powerful navy, would be a remarkable contribution to the great-power competition. The US needs to have Europe safe to be able to focus on China.

At the moment, NATO's navy is more reactive than proactive. The last NATO Maritime Strategy was written in 2011. NATO should adopt a **new maritime strategy** – outside of the multi-domain strategies NATO has worked on since 2011 – to guide NATO allies and partners in making investments.¹² The aim would be to spare USA capacities in the Mediterranean and the Arctic for other tasks. Nowadays, the US leadership repeatedly faces the difficult decision whether to send vessels either to the Mediterranean, the Arctic, the Indo-Pacific region, or to the Middle East. For instance, US and NATO trips up to the Arctic, considered unnecessary for surface ships since the Cold War, need to be resumed. The U.S. technically has 11 carriers, but only 8 are available for tasking at any given time. Among these eight carriers, the fleet must provide under normal circumstances a carrier for the Middle East and a carrier for the Asia-Pacific region.

12 Megan Eckstein, "Foggo: Russia Seeking More Control of Black Sea, Mediterranean, Arctic," USNI News, July 17, 2020, https://news.usni.org/2020/07/17/foggo-russia-seeking-more-control-of-black-sea-mediterranean-arctic?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2007.20.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief

Under these circumstances, a new NATO maritime strategy will be **important for the burden-sharing agenda**. Planning increased investments ought to be guided by a strategy to successfully counter the most relevant adversaries. Specifically, NATO needs more mine-sweeping and mine-countermeasure capabilities; more intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, including unmanned ISR assets; and more interoperability, so that countries big and small can share information and collaborate at sea. Building maritime capacities in bilateral cooperation, like Poland does with Sweden or Norway, is a model for contribution to the NATO maritime strategy.¹³

In its National Defense Strategy, its 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, and through other public statements, the U.S. military has made clear that its overriding concern today is defending Taiwan against a potential Chinese attack, especially one based on a *fait accompli* strategy, which involves seizing vulnerable territory, digging in, and making any counter attack too costly to envisage. In anticipation of such attacks, the Pentagon is shifting from the playbook it has used ever since Operation Desert Storm three decades ago—slowly and methodically surging forces to a threatened area and only counterattacking after total dominance is assured—to a **force that can fend off Chinese (and Russian) attacks from the very beginning of hostilities**, even if it never attains the kind of dominance the United States was once able to gain in such places as Serbia and Iraq.

The Pentagon's **budget requests have slowly begun to shift accordingly**. Short-range fighter jets and bulky amphibious vessels, both vulnerable to enemy attacks, are making way for stealthier long-range bombers and submarines, unmanned ships and aircraft, long-range ground-based missiles and artillery, and large stocks of precise, penetrating munitions. The military is also experimenting with how to use this new hardware—what the new force should look like, how it should operate, and

¹³ Poland buys Swedish submarines and developed a mutual operation plan on closing the Barents Sea if necessary. Norwegian missiles launched from its vessels and Polish launching platforms test their ability to target Russian fleet in St. Petersburg.

where.¹⁴ The ability to rapidly penetrate the A2/AD umbrella from longer distance is key today. The NATO planners should follow this pattern and consider adjustment of the NATO Defense Planning Process so that **the economic strength of Europe complements US resolve.**

EUROPEAN LEVEL OF AMBITION WITHIN NATO; EU-NATO COMPLEMENTARITY

“**Another priority for NATO’s global role is an increase in the European level of ambition within NATO.**”

This is much more needed than any “strategic autonomy” of Europe. The reality is, that Europe has in NATO most of all the brigades, just it is not able to deploy them. What Europe lags most behind is combat support and especially combat support service - various logistics, life support, etc. This is the main problem.

Europeans are simply not able to send troops far beyond their borders and maintain them there in the battle. Therefore, both missions in Iraq are completely dependent on American logistics and life support, the same applies for Afghanistan.

Under a “new European” level of ambition, NATO defense planners could be instructed to develop European capabilities needed to conduct one MJO (major joint operation) and three SJOs (small joint operations) for crisis management **with limited or no American support.** Alternatively, NATO’s European members could commit to providing half the combat capabilities, including combat support and combat support service, needed to conduct an alliance wide MJO+. This would be best achieved by 2024, when European nations have committed to deliver on their 2 percent of GDP defense spending pledge. Creating this addi-

¹⁴ Elbridge A. Colby, A. Wess Mitchell, “The Age of Great-Power Competition,” Foreign Policy, January/February, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-12-10/age-great-power-competition>

tional burden-sharing goal might also make it easier for the United States to accept less than complete compliance with the 2 percent goal by 2024. Although the budget pledge deserves to be met, a new, ambitious sense of direction based on actual capabilities would be admirable and valuable.

NATO's "NATO first" approach as for collective defense must be kept. Still, the EU has its role in the **crisis management** that can be perceived as a kind of "forwarded" defense of Europe. There are 10 civilian EU Missions and 6 military EU Missions and Operations within EU CSDP with some 2,000 civilians and 3,300 military staff deployed in Europe, in the Middle East, and in Africa. The European approach to security and defense lies precisely in the unique mix between targeted civilian and military actions: this is what makes the European Union such a unique security player. At the same time, a sharp division line between civilian and military missions, especially in terms of planning and conduct, pose a number of practical limits. More civilian-military synergy and new financial mechanism is needed to increase efficiency of the entire system of CSDP crisis management.

If EU succeed with ongoing reform of the CSDP system, it has tangible potential of playing complementary role to the NATO and the United states. Being a relevant partner for other security providers, the EU needs to develop further its capabilities. Still, any duplication of the NATO Defense Planning Process (NDPP) and the EU Capability Development Plan (CDP) is not in our interest. Countries with a "NATO first" approach must do utmost to **mitigate the risk of the "EU strategic autonomy" becoming a guideline for the next version of the Capability Development Plan.** On contrary, CDP must focus exclusively on the capability's shortfalls identified in military and civilian CSDP missions, as it was the case in 2018's CDP edition. Collective defense capabilities is and must remain an exclusive agenda of the NATO.

CONCLUSION

The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has argued for making NATO a more global alliance to defend democratic values in a world of increasing global competition. Now the alliance must translate this vision into a new set of missions and find concrete ways to begin implementing them.

The assumption elaborated on in this contribution is, that the global geopolitical competition might well serve the interests of the NATO Eastern Flank countries. But only if the Alliance remains **relevant for the United States, credible for members most exposed to the external threat, and politically cohesive** at the same time.

The necessity to deal with near peer adversaries, Chinese and Russian, opens opportunities for NATO division of roles with the United States. If NATO opts for this path, it will require to change the very core strategy of the Alliance.

THE FOUR KEY NATO TASKS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED:

1. Substantially boosting the navy;
2. Enhancing the European level of ambition (including CS, CSS);
3. Streamlining the NDPP to technologies needed for near peer opponent with “fait accompli strategy” (rapid penetration from high-distance, long-range, stealth and unmanned capabilities);
4. Bolstering soft security/intelligence, hybrid capabilities, harmonizing the application of technological sanctions (including space).

Coping with Russia does not contradict coping with China. Capabilities and tactics needed to counter the “fait accompli” strategy are applicable in both cases. Key American strategists such as Ben Hodges, a former US commander in Europe, say this clearly and bluntly: “We need Europe to help us deter Russia.” This kind of thinking should be taken as a guarantee for the Alliance’s global relevance, no matter who is sitting in the White House.

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