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Foreword

VARGA Gergely, Editor

2019 marked not only the 70th anniversary of the NATO's founding, but the 30th anniversary of the first wave of its enlargement to the former Warsaw Pact territory. The accession to the Western alliance was a dream come true for the 1989 transformational changes in Central Europe, particularly in Hungary. Since then, Hungary has demonstrated its will to share the risks and costs of Euro-Atlantic security, among others, by supporting NATO's air-campaign against its Southern neighbour in 1999, during the Kosovo crisis; by contributing to various crisis management operations from the Balkans to the Hindukush; and by making efforts to strengthen NATO's deterrence posture in the Eastern flank. Referring to the latter task, in 2014, Russia's annexation of Crimea and launch of aggression against Eastern Ukraine were certainly pivotal moments in the alliance's history, as Article 5 and collective defence came into the centre of NATO's agenda.About NATO, two narratives can be heard these days. The rather pessimistic one describes the increasing transatlantic tensions about burden sharing, the shifting American geopolitical attention, the questions on the validity of core security guarantees, the diverging interests of allies in the Middle East, and whether all allies still represent the same set of core values. The rather optimistic one highlights a revitalised NATO, from intensified defence planning to military exercises, the positive impact of increasing European defence budgets, the growing US and NATO military presence in the Eastern Flank of the alliance, and the strengthening cooperation with the European Union.

Furthermore, NATO's relations with the European Union, along the latter's renascent strategic ambitions, have also become an issue with full of conflicting priorities and challenges. The Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade has been conducting an extensive research on the subject and organised two high-profile international conferences during 2019. However, the debate is far from over. Hence, which narrative captures the reality? Our aim was to present a collection of articles that tackles some of the most determining issues facing the alliance, and that could help to give a credible picture of its current state.In this volume, a set of articles covers the questions focusing on the basic strategic tensions, principles and tasks within NATO, such as the balance among the three core tasks, the deterrence efforts in the Eastern flank or the geopolitical and geo-economic pressures on

the alliance. A special attention is given to the United States' relationship with Central and Eastern Europe, examining the various aspects of bilateral and within-the-alliance relations as well as the prospects for further NATO enlargement. The emerging security challenges for NATO, especially cyber defence, are also a topic that deserved our devoted attention in the volume.We truly hope that the Foreign Policy Review 2019, dedicated to that double anniversary, will contribute to the timely debates on NATO's role in transatlantic security, European defence ambitions and transatlantic relationship, and will support the reader in answering where NATO's future lies.

Alliance for All Allies
Balance between NATO's Tasks – Convergence of its Members

Henning RIECKE

Abstract: This article looks at the supposed imbalance of NATO's political and military engagement regarding its core tasks. The alliance has often adapted to new challenges and taken up a number of tasks and strategies. That entailed conflicts among the allies about NATO's priorities. In the Strategic Concept of 2010, NATO listed its core tasks as collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. That grid is still valid. Currently, the alliance is investing heavily in its ability to deter and deflect the possible Russian aggressive moves against the Eastern allies. Defence along other flanks, as well as activities under the two other headlines fall behind on the priority list. That has raised concerns about the imperfect coherence, mostly read as an East-South divide within NATO. That is inaccurate, looking at the way how these tasks overlap and how the respective tools complement each other. NATO should build up capabilities in all sectors and apply them to meet challenges from all directions.

Keywords: NATO, alliance, collective defence, strategic concept, cooperative security

Introduction: Meeting Challenges from All Directions

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) seems to be in trouble. In the year of its 70th birthday, its cohesion is tested. An American President musing about withdrawal, a French President calling NATO "braindead", Turkey snubbing allies' concerns when waging war against the Kurds, and Europeans underfunding their military – all that looks as if the alliance has lost its value for its most powerful members. To be sure, NATO is far from being paralysed. It serves as a framework for security cooperation on multiple levels, with a plethora of activities. But the concern is fair that in a period when transatlantic ties are loosening, the alliance must prove that states profit from being a member and that it fulfills the tasks assigned to it.

The alliance has prevailed through profound changes of the strategic landscape and severe conflicts among the allies. The reason for its stability is its adaptability. The process of change has unintended consequences, though it does not replace

old functions with new ones, it expands the task list of the alliance. And for each of NATO's priorities, there are nations championing it, looking for ways how the alliance could serve their immediate security interests first. Such conflicting demands are NATO's everyday business. It is an irony that adaptability, a virtue of security organisations, creates problems of convergence, which might in turn weaken it.

The NATO allies used the occasion of the Strategic Concept in 2010 to sort out the balance between the alliance's core functions, listed under the rubrics of defence and deterrence, crisis management and cooperative security. That document was quickly outdated regarding the emerging strategic challenges - being issued before the Arab uprising, Russian aggression in Ukraine, hybrid warfare, a US President willing to withdraw from the alliance. The structure of the three core tasks is still used, however, to assess whether the members' conflicting demands are met in a balanced way.

In the meantime, NATO must face disruptive trends from the inside and the outside, developments that affect its role as a security organisation and might cause conflicts over perception and strategy among the allies. While defending against Russia is a task easily agreed upon, others are not. Great power competition might lead the strongest ally, the USA to look for a strategic positioning in the struggle with China or for ways to tilt regional dichotomies such as the one between Iran and Saudi-Arabia - and Washington might ask NATO for assistance. Control over new technologies is shifting the balance of power and enabling weaker states to become dangerous adversaries. Lasting civil wars in the Arab world create risks connected to instability on a new level of complexity. Threats are becoming more complex, intertwined and harder to foresee (Zandee, 2018; Ellehus, 2019; Mercier, 2019). The list of external pressures is longer but some of the most difficult challenges come from within, the reluctance of some Europeans to share the burden of NATO capabilities, a populist US president dreaming of leaving international organisations, or Turkey leaving the realm of democratic values. Liberal order is in jeopardy, not only because authoritarian states win power, but because many Western states have lost interest to support it.

But even in this complex and shifting security environment, NATO must be an alliance for all its members. Yet, the dynamic reorientation towards reassurance of the Eastern allies and towards deterrence of Russia on the one hand, and the fatigue to get engaged in complex stability missions similar to the Afghanistan operation as well as the low-profile meetings of the NATO-Russia Council indicate an imbalance towards the defence section of the task list since 2014. That makes some members unhappy. It is necessary for the alliance to understand if and how the new focus could undermine allies' cohesion and how a better balance might look like.

We want to sketch out how NATO added up functions and tasks, look at each function in turn to understand the interplay between them. We aim at the argument that investment in a strong NATO in living up to all its functions, but looking at the challenges from all directions, is the right strategy to make it beneficial to all the allies.

Adaptation Means Diffusion

Throughout its 70 years of history, NATO has changed character several times without abandoning its previous purpose. These changes come along with pressing demands by some allies, frustration, tension and lengthy consultation, so that NATO has often appeared to be an arena for strategic disputes rather than a consensus-based institution. Adaptation, however, has always been crucial for NATO's successful persistence (Yost, 2014).

There are four emanations of NATO that were created in specific historical conditions but coexist today. Designed first as alliance for collective defence in the beginning block confrontation, NATO never completely lost this function, even in times of relative peace. NATO changed, secondly, to a more inclusive security organisation after the end of the Cold war, offering partnership and accession (NATO, 1991), and has expanded its partnership networks globally. Thirdly, with 1994 NATO intervention in the war around the secession of Bosnia-Hercegovina, and the subsequent establishment of a stable presence in the conflict zone, NATO began to take up military operations to enforce and uphold peace outside its territory - the most complex mission being the one in Afghanistan. In the same time, looking at terrorism and emerging challenges, fourthly, some states asked that NATO should become a broader security organisation, a global instrument against instability and an array of transnational threats.

All these tasks are a priority for some member states that can act as champions for their salience in NATO's strategic outlook. Eastern European countries have reminded NATO not to forget its duties under Article 5. Germany has been eager to uphold dialogue and partnership approaches and pressed for a stronger role of NATO in arms control. The US have supported more robust roles of NATO and a functional and geographical expansion of NATOs engagement.

The frictions between its functions as well as the alliance's handling of new strategic challenges on the regional and global level did create disputes within NATO in the new millennium. There was a long-standing struggle on how much NATO should balance Russia's anger about enlargement or new missile defence with a special partnership on equal level. Russia became more critical of NATO, which, after enlargement in 2004, had become more "Eastern": That made relations with Russia more difficult. Afghanistan was an issue: The struggle to agree on a sense of unity of purpose among the states contributing to ISAF, with different priorities on reconstruction or counterterrorism could only be settled until 2008. The conflict over further accession negotiations with Ukraine and Georgia was also divisive. The Russia-Georgia war in 2008 achieved for Moscow that NATO put enlargement plans on hold. It also made the call of the Eastern allies for better deterrence more plausible.

NATO was working for the security of its members in several ways, was able to act despite al differences, but their agreement on the priority of the tasks was often contested (Yost, 2014, p. 18-23). That also describes the political necessity for a better coherence when NATO began the negotiation about a New Strategic Concept in 2009, with a new US President, Barack Obama, in office. NATO also undertook a series of workshops and conferences preparing the work on the strategic concept – or creating ownership in the community for a paper that was then put together in the office of the Secretary General.

The Strategic Concept of 2010 openly focused NATO's attention on a number of threats that are not defined regionally (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2011, p. 7). To be sure, conventional defence must be at the core, but defence is no longer directed against an armed attack of NATO territory alone. Security must be produced throughout the Euro-Atlantic area, since instabilities in the neighbouring regions create risks that affect the member states directly. Most of the new risks that the concept lists in connection to defence, such as proliferation, terror, or cyber threats, have a trans-border character. Their structures are globalised, and need to be understood and answered to on a global scale. And even if NATO is not an alliance operating everywhere, ISAF and global partnerships show that its reach is no longer limited to Europe and America.

The 2010 Strategic Concept announced that "the Alliance must and will continue fulfilling effectively three essential core tasks, all of which contribute to safeguarding Alliance members, and always in accordance with international law" (NATO, 2010, p. 7). This underlined the individual importance of each of these tasks, and their equal weight in the concept (Shea, 2011).

a) *Collective defence:* This task refers to the obligation of the members to assist any of them in the case of a military attack, laid down in the relatively flexible alliance clause in Art. 5. Collective defence is opening to new security threats, like cyberattacks.

b) *Crisis management:* NATO promises that it will uphold a mix of political-military tools to get engaged to manage crises outside its territory but affecting allies' security.

c) *Collective security:* This is an umbrella term embracing of the partnership programs NATO has with other countries and organisations, accession procedures for new members, dialogue formats, cooperation with other organisations as well as alliance support for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Triade of functions, although definitions are broad, is helpful to understand NATO's activities and see whether NATO does enough to be credible in each one of them and, at best, in all combined. Conflicts emerge when allies do not have

the feeling that their security needs are served in the distribution of attention, resources and engagement on that spectrum of tasks. That was the case when the new Eastern members understood that in times of NATO's Afghanistan Operation or its activities against pirates and terror networks at the Horn of Africa and the Mediterranean, classical defence was out of fashion. Currently, the debate is often seen as one between North-Eastern and Southern countries, who wish to see more of NATO's activities on the Southern flank while most attention goes to protect the Baltic states against Russian interference. It is true that NATO must play a tangible role in the South, but security in the Euro-American area is connected in numerous ways, and so are the tasks of the 2010 strategic concept. It is more important to see how these functions interact than to understand them separately.

Defence and Deterrence Reinvented

The defence and deterrence requirements for NATO differ profoundly from those of the Cold War -to talk of a revival of the original alliance purpose of collective defence is partly misleading. After 2014, the set of functions regarding the "Defence/ Deterrence" Section of NATOs task list have received a great attention. Defence and deterrence today must be effective in a broader spectrum between infiltration and nuclear war. The Ukraine crisis raised the possibility that Russia might seek vulnerabilities and start belligerent actions on the lower end of the spectrum, or like the hybrid strategies used in Ukraine, to shed light on NATO's lack of preparedness. Russia could also occupy parts of allies' territory to force the decision upon the alliance to either go to war or accept a status quo (Lanoszka, 2016, p. 176; Zapfe, 2017). NATO had to develop strategies for a new kind of defence against the new sorts of threats in a territory not yet part of NATO for a long time.

Conventional Defence and Deterrence

In 2014, after the Ukraine crisis, NATO's first impulse was to reassure the Eastern allies that it would stand in for them. NATO agreed on a Readiness Action Plan, directed to risks from all directions but clearly driven by new challenges in the East, with assurance measures including higher force presence and more exercises. A set of adaptation included a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, a brigade-size unit to be quickly deployed to NATO's borders, as part of strengthened NATO Response Force; pre-installed infrastructure for troops to be deployed and two multinational headquarters in Szczecin and Bucharest. The approach of high

readiness, rapidly deployed forces as deterrent, though, did not create the necessary level of reassurance - the Baltic states and Poland would have preferred a large-scale military deployment anyway. The new units would have to be deployed in a moment of escalation or when deterrence had already failed.

NATO geography has become complicated after the enlargement. The Baltic states have 1400 km of border with Russia but are connected with the rest of NATO only through the 65 km-wide Suwałki gap along the border between Poland and Lithuania, squeezed between the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad and Belarus. Force movement and supplies can easily be obstructed by Russia in the event of a crisis. In 2016, studies stated that NATO in its current set up could not keep Russia from quickly occupying territory in the Baltic states (Shaplack & Johnson, 2016; Clark, Luik, Ramms & Shireff, 2016). In 2016, at the Warsaw Summit, the member states agreed to post battalion-size multinational units in the Baltic states and Poland, as Enhanced Forward Presence of NATO (Zapfe & Vanaga, 2018). The function of these units is to work as a trip wire, to make sure to Russia that any intervention it might begin will be one against the whole alliance, thus changing the cost calculation of the attack (Leuprecht, Lanoszka, Derow & Muti, 2019; McGuire, 2019).

The bulk of adaptive measures now is related to building up enough forces and ensuring mobility, to guaranteeing immediate follow-on forces in times of crisis (Brauss, 2018). In the run-up summit of 2018, the United States made 'responsiveness' as the motto of the ongoing adaptation. The NATO Readiness Initiative approved in June 2018 outlined the goal that by 2020, NATO members would be able to field 30 battalions, 30 fighter squadrons and 30 combat naval vessels within 30 days (4x30). That will demand a lot of extra investment and reorganisation of many allies that have their forces not so rapidly deployable. Also in 2018, NATO allies decided to add two new Joint Commands to the command structure, a Joint Force Command in Norfolk, Va., to protect the maritime routes across the Atlantic, in line with the re-established 2nd fleet of the US navy, and the Joint Support and Enabling Command, to support force mobility and protection in Europe, located in Ulm (Bundeswehr, 2019; Lange, 2017).

It is not only in the northeast that NATO has to close an open flank: the littoral states of the Black Sea, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania are exposed to a more active Russian military presence (Horrell, 2016), and more access for the Russian navy to reach the Mediterranean. Since 2018, a "Hub for the South" is operative in Naples, with a staff of 70 to share information and consult with partners about the regional security challenges (NATO, 2019, p. 16). The NATO foreign ministers decided on a package of measures to increase "situational awareness" in May 2019, but the allies there are still waiting for a NATO strategy on the Black Sea.

Nuclear Deterrence

Because of the deteriorating relations between NATO and Russia, the nuclear aspect of deterrence has once again entered the strategic discourse, adding to the collective defence section of the task list and putting the arms control segments of cooperative security under stress (Rühle, 2019). The alliance has a nuclear component in its deterrence posture. The bulk of the nuclear deterrence-related capabilities is held by the United States, with the nuclear forces of France and Great Britain being considered as complementary. NATO had toned down language on the strategic role of nuclear weapons after the end of the Cold War, labelled them purely political, but has, in strategy documents throughout the years, made clear that it is a nuclear alliance willing to procure the means for a credible nuclear deterrent. There is reason to believe that the discussion will gain more prominence in the coming year, because Russia has made the nuclear threat part of its hybrid strategies when attacking Ukraine and has modernised its nuclear arsenal to outweigh Western technological superiority. Even more, the credibility of US-extended nuclear deterrence is an issue of concern, because of Donald Trump's bickering about allies' spending and the end of the INF treaty (Rudolf, 2018; Overhaus, 2019). The USA left the Treaty in April 2019, after plausible accusation that Russia has broken it first. Deliberations about keeping up nuclear deterrence without, as NATO proclaims, deploying nuclear missiles on Europe's soil, are currently ongoing (Kühn, 2019).

Hybrid Warfare and Cyberthreats

NATO has also to help its members to build up resilience against a set of non-military security challenge in the context of cyber and hybrid strategies. Cyberthreats are part of the strategic landscape for a long time. After a presumably Russian attack on Estonia in spring 2007, NATO had developed strategic guidelines on cyber defence, had opened a Cooperative Cyber Defence Center of Excellence in Talinn and included the issue prominently in connection with Art. 5 in the 2010 strategic concept. Cyber is a domain of operations, both in the sense of cyber as a theatre for operations and a higher alert for the cyber aspects of kinetic warfare and crisis missions. Currently, NATO develops doctrines and explores strategies of prevention, protection and offensive in cyberspace and builds up a Cyberspace Operations Centre in Mons, Belgium, as part of the command structure. In a Cyber Defence Pledge in July 2016, allies promised to strengthen their cyber defences (Brent, 2019; NATO, 2019, p. 24-26).

Hybrid warfare is more than just employing a mix of regular and irregular forces. Today, this concept entails a broader spectrum of propaganda, disinformation, espionage, agitation, cyberattacks, economic and military intervention that an

opponent can use to achieve his goals of destabilisation. That is nothing new, but the way Russia and others today exploit the openness of Western society as vulnerability and seek to undermine the credibility of Western societies has reached a new level of sophistication. An objective can be achieved to a large share by non-military means, thus creating uncertainty and minimising the use of regular means. It is a trait of hybrid strategies that they can allow deniability of military involvement, thus selling an operation to the society of the belligerent state and impeding political decision making on an alliance reaction (Caffey, 2019; Lanoszka, 2016; Rostoks, 2018). Yet, the Ukraine crisis has also shown that speedy troop deployment and nuclear deterrence are part of a hybrid strategy.

Counterterrorism

Counterterrorism (CT) is a cross-cutting task, primarily connected to defending allies' security against a new spectrum pf threats, but having a central space in all areas of activities of NATO (Bird, 2019). It is situated in the context of defence and deterrence, since many of its activities are based on NATO's decision of September 12 to see the terrorist acts in New York and Washington as an armed attack and to call out Art. 5. Its most demanding element is the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan that had incorporated until its termination by the end of 2014 an operation issued under the notion of self-defence, "Operation enduring Freedom". ISAF was a complex stability mission with partners, showing how the fight against terrorist networks has been a driver and a structuring priority of conflict management and partnerships too.

With the 2010 strategic concept, terrorism has been raised to be a direct threat to NATO. NATO has played a complementary and secondary role in that field, albeit an active one. In "NATO's policy guidelines on counterterrorism" of 2012, the alliance acknowledges the central role of national "civilian and judicial authorities" in that regard, thus limiting NATO's role while broadening the conceptual understanding of CT, including prevention and resilience. It does, though, connect terrorism with collective defence, stating in the last phrase that this is a question decided by the North Atlantic Council (NATO, 2012; NATO, 2019, p. 64-66; Santamato, 2012).

Next to the mission in Afghanistan, NATO is also a full member, with some delay, of the Coalition against ISIS since 2017, using AWACS planes to assist with a situational overview. Its activities include cooperative patterns like increasing awareness, strengthening exchange of intelligence, working with allies and partners on capability development and technology innovation to make useable in CT, and improvement and solidification of the practical cooperation with the EU and with the UN. NATO's activities in maritime surveillance include measures against extremist networks, trafficking, organised crime and piracy.

Crisis Management Fatigue

Peace Enforcement and Stability Missions

NATO had to build up its defence and deterrence capabilities on many levels. That was even more difficult because the alliance had for a long time been focusing on managing complex stability operation and other out of area missions for nearly two decades. It had to re-learn its old role while still holding up as a security provider outside the Europa-Atlantic space. With the stability missions in Balkans (Yost, 2014, p. 123-135), the one in Bosnia handed over to the EU, the one in Kosovo still under NATO command, and two subsequent complex operations in Afghanistan, NATO for two decades has had its focus on crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction.

In the Kosovo, KFOR marked its 20th anniversary, where it still holds a force of 3500 as the backbone of the countries security, complementing police and army. In two decades of relative peace, with Kosovo declaring independence in 2008, no peace agreement could be negotiated between Serbia and its former province. It is still possible (and examples show that) that the frictions between the ethnic Serbs and the Kosovo-Albanians can still heat up and involve Serbia (Sabbagh, 2019). A termination of the engagement is thus not sensible at the moment, and political conditions allowing NATO to exit are not to be expected.

NATO's largest and most complex mission was the one in Afghanistan when it took command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from August 2003 to December 2014. The goal was to create a secure environment in Afghanistan, to enable the build-up of state institutions, and ultimately build up national security and police forces, to take up security responsibilities themselves. The goal of upholding a democracy has been toned down during the course of the war (Yost, 2014, p. 135-62). ISAF has been mandated by the UN security council but has also been part of NATO's activities under Article five, announced after the terror attacks of September 11. Thus, its original objective was to ensure that never again would terrorist networks find a safe retreat in Afghanistan. ISAF and the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom worked alongside wand where combined under the NATO command in 2008. The mission contained tasks reconstruction and development (with numerous Provincial Reconstruction Teams convening civilian and military activities), capacity building, training and education, for soldiers and police, and later counterterrorism. ISAF had up to 130.000 troops from nations, NATO allies and partners combined. In 2011, NATO began a transition to hand over of security to the Afghan National Army and police forces. In 2015, ISAF was replaced by a smaller Resolute Support Mission (RSM) that is still in place, to train, advice and assist Afghan security forces in institutions. Currently this mission has around

17.000 forces from 39 countries. The mission is formally open-ended and tight to the conditions on the ground but is fully dependent on the US willingness to provide a bulk of the troops. That engagement might come to an end: Trump has been working to withdraw US forces from Afghanistan, connected with an attempted and failed peace deal with the Taliban - or without. US troops leave tacitly, already down to 12-13.000, with lower numbers under discussion. This move would force other coalition partners to follow and would bring NATO engagement to a halt (Gibbons-Neff & Mashal, 2019).

In the most recent operation of this kind, yet already eight years ago, NATO chose to attack Libya to enforce an arms embargo and uphold a no-flight zone to protect the civilian population in Libya - a war, which in the end made the fall of the dictator Colonel Muammar Gaddafi possible. NATO took over command of the mission "Unified Protector" soon after the first wave of by the French and British, with substantial support from American forces. The command was transferred to NATO at the end of March 2011, which also provided operational routines that made it easier to integrate regional partners. After a good six months, NATO ended the mission. The NATO members, still under the impression of an increasingly difficult situation in Afghanistan, were not prepared for an ongoing stabilisation mission in Libya. The situation in Libya has deteriorated since then, with a civil war thriving between two competing governments (Campbell, 2014; Kuperman, 2015). The civil war and the advance of Islamist terrorists in the aftermath of Gaddafi's downfall were not only a consequence of the international intervention cut short. Nor is it certain that the Alliance would have achieved an orderly transition with a prolonged presence.

The demanding mission in Afghanistan changed the military planning, force transformation, doctrine, procurement and training of NATO members, and was in the center of the operational experience of officers and soldiers. The Afghanistan operation has had a transforming effect on NATO's militaries, just as the Iraq mission had additionally on the coalition forces there.

All in or Fold - No Political Capital to Be Won

Yet, the preparedness to engage on crisis reaction operations elsewhere, in similar missions, has gone down. In Kosovo, NATO's help is welcome, but its presence alone has not pushed the local adversaries to create conditions for a stable peace. In Afghanistan, an intervention deemed legitimate and a sequence of sound decisions to help the country regain its statehood afterwards led to a situation in which NATO had moved itself into a corner: it cannot not leave the country without acknowledging failure. The long engagement of the USA in Iraq, resulting in a fragile country under

civil war, dominance of the rival Iran, and a new terrorist network gaining territory after a US retreat, had similar de-motivating effects on Western defence planning. The short-lived mission in Libya had an exit built-in, but although NATO could fulfill its original goal to stop atrocities, the mission opened the door for a protracted civil war, in which the alliance had little influence. This is a telling example how intervention fatigue might be limiting the alliance's list of options. Note, how little support the German Minister of Defence received, when she proposed such a NATO role to uphold peace in Northern Syria after the Turkish intervention against the Kurds in October 2019 to the NATO defence ministers (Brzozowski, 2019).

Cooperative Security as Strategic Routine

Partnerships

NATO has built up partnerships with neighbours, some of them seeking accession to the alliance, and with several contributors to missions in neighbouring regions on a global scale. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council, later Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, convened states between Central Europe and Central Asia and administered the Partnership for Peace (PfP), a cooperative network of states in and outside of NATO. PfP could equally be seen as preparing, organising or deferring NATO accession of aspirant countries, so it was no surprise it had support from all sides. Its demand for the political control of the military, the network character, the joint exercises did have a stabilising effect. With new tensions with Russia, enlargement is stalled and PfP has fallen victim to the ensuing geopolitical rivalry (Kaim, 2017; Wiklund, 2019).

NATO has special relations with Russia, Ukraine and Georgia. The NATO-Russia Council is the venue to organise Russia's elevated role as partner, a special treatment to outweigh its frustrations about NATO's firm foothold in Eastern Europe, its open door policy and missile defence ambitions. Topics for negotiations are peacekeeping, defence reform, non-proliferation, missile defence, and counterterrorism. Since 2002, it convenes in a format with all allies and Russia supposed to be equals. In reality, NATO members caucus and develop coordinated positions. The NRC dialogue has been for many allies interested in normal relations with Russia, among them Germany, an important complement to NATO activities seen by Russia as threatening - such as missile defence or enlargement. Allies also showed discontent with Russia's aggressive neighbourhood policy and cancelled meetings for several months after the 2008 war in Georgia, and stopped practical cooperation after the Ukraine crisis. The NRC does convene again, but negotiations seem to be terse: the recent

meeting in June 2019 covered issues such as Ukraine, the INF treaty and risk reduction - areas in which NATO and Russia have disparate views. Two other prominent council formats, the NATO-Ukraine Commission and the NATO-Georgia Council, are designed to uphold NATOs political support for the two countries that are NATO partners for over a quarter of a century and wish to become members. The special relations formats manage political and military cooperation but are also seen as vehicles to defer the decision to start an accession process that has not enough support among the allies.

NATO also has partnership programs with states the South, where NATO membership cannot be offered - and other incentives must be found. The earliest format was the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) with Arab states and Israel in the mid-1990s, at the request of some NATO Mediterranean member states, to provide a Southern counterpart to the Eastern partnerships. NATO had difficulties to deepen a dialogue on Islamist terrorism, while avoiding assistance for security policy transformation and modernisation on the same level as it did to the East. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) with states in the Persian Gulf More, launched in 2004, was designed to win partners for participation in NATO-led operations and to promote regional cooperation. The agenda also included the exchange of information on terrorism and proliferation. (Gaub, 2012; Aarøe, 2014). In the course of these partnerships, deeper working relations with some states have also become possible. With the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative, set on track in 2014, NATO agreed upon sets of measures with partners such as Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Moldova and Tunisia. Lately, NATO included also “Global Partners” Australia, Japan South Korea, also Afghanistan and Pakistan and others, that contributed to NATO-led missions. The driver behind this move was to move up the relationship with current and hopefully future contributors - it is no outreach to democracies.

All in all, the most important rationale for partnerships today is the capacity building and interoperability, with a hope that the partners contribute to joint operations (Leyden, 2016). We should keep in mind that these operations would be positioned in the realm of crisis management and not deterrence, in an area in which NATO is active with less and less enthusiasm.

Open Door

The alliance still is open to include new members, but is doing so with greater hesitance and only step by step. NATO can invite other European countries that are willing and able to defend its principles and contribute to security in the North Atlantic area. Such an invitation can only be made by consensus, which has never been easy among

the members. In the post-Cold War period, this accession possibility was an instrument to support democratic transitions and to create trust and a more stable value base for cooperation. With that rational NATO was rather tacit about the connection between enlargement and the growing defence responsibilities (Yost, 2014, p. 281-308). This is why the Open Door policy is listed under cooperative security.

A number of criteria for allowing new members in were developed in the 1995 Enlargement Study. These criteria include, for example, democratic and market development, political control over the military, and the over-all security for NATO (NATO, 1995). The criterion of NATO's preparedness to defend a new member was kept implicit. With the great enlargement round of 2004 with seven new members, the ambitious enlargement had come to an end. The dispute over the membership of Ukraine and Georgia has shown the higher importance of the risks to European security that must be taken into account in enlargement decisions. Ukraine and Georgia have received a promise at the Bucharest Summit in 2008 that they would eventually become NATO members - firm, but without operative consequences. Both have little chance to win consensual support in NATO as long as the territorial conflicts are still open. American conservatives do still promote membership at least of Georgia (Caffey, 2018; Hauer, 2019). Bosnia-Herzegovina and North Macedonia are also aspirants. The last country to join, Montenegro, certainly owed this success to the fact that NATO wanted to send a signal to Russia that it had no veto against the open door approach.

NATO as a Player in Multilateralism

NATO's relationship with other organisations is finally adding speed, and most impressively with the EU. After over a decade of icy relations over Greece's reluctance to involve the alliance (with Turkey) in matters of EU security policy, NATO opened a new chapter in 2016 with a joint declaration at the Warsaw Summit. In 74 joint projects, both sides cooperate closely, share information and align and harmonise procedures regarding arms procurement, resilience, hybrid warfare, cyber, mobility - mostly areas in the civilian realm, where NATO's capabilities as military organisation are limited. That is a substantive improvement, acknowledging that such a cooperation is key for the alliance to meet threats of a non-military character, without losing its military edge (Tardy, 2019).

NATO has deepened ties with United Nations Organisation, with civilian and a military liaison officers present in New York. The UN has to mandate NATO's operation, and NATO assisted in civilian and humanitarian missions the UN has sponsored. Practical cooperation covers many aspects of peacekeeping, training and stability missions, as well as countering terrorism.

The alliance puts a great emphasis on the importance of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in its portfolio - while keeping up the provision that it has to fulfill its tasks. NATO members have a long-standing commitment in such frameworks, but the alliance is not part of any such agreements. Thus, NATO can claim a commitment but cannot itself negotiate. It does support its members in achieving their disarmament goals, though, and contributes to a disarmament-friendly atmosphere in the Euro-Atlantic area. It also helps member states to develop a joint assessment of threats and opportunities and approximate their positions. It should be noted, though, that the USA did discuss the new intermediate missile threat from Russia in NATO; but did not seek approval before it decided to leave the INF-treaty. Such decisions lie in the hand of the member states part of the agreement.

NATO's Interdependent Functions and the Coherence Problem

NATO is currently more engaged in defence and deterrence than in any other field of activity. It is improving its defence and deterrence capabilities against a wide spectrum of possible threats, including against cyber and hybrid scenarios. It is rolling back its activities in the area of crisis management, which reflects the hesitance of the major allies to intervene in long and complex conflicts without a path out. The dialogues and partnerships under the rubric of cooperative security go on with a certain routine, with the notable exception of the NATO-EU Cooperation that has been deepened considerably. Enlargement has slowed down, which means that the rationale of the partnerships moves now more functionally to creating confidence, capacity building and interoperability - while, see above, NATO is not keen on starting such crisis missions. That means, currently and for the time to come, NATO has an imbalance regarding its functions.

Shifting priorities on NATO's task list is not per se bad. It might be necessary to meet a changing security environment or sensible to pragmatically cut down levels of ambition. Recalibrating the balance of functions can be part of a reasonable adaptation or the application of lessons learned. Yet, it might weaken NATO across the board. The concern is that this might reflect or lead to an incoherence and weakening of NATO in the triple sense: a) some partners' concerns are more important than others; b) that the alliance might unlearn certain capabilities and routines, lowering its responsiveness for new complex security challenges; c) that the functions are so independent that a lack of energy in the tasks with lower priority might weaken NATO's ability to take on tasks with higher priority.

NATO needs to take all allies' security concerns into account. With the improved readiness in the area of defence, NATO does a lot to send a message that this adaption is directed against threats along all the alliance's flanks, East and South. Yet, the 360-degree rhetoric cannot deflect from the fact that the true driver is the containment of Russia's aggressive policy. Countries to the South might not see this as a fair distribution of attention - especially since Russian forces are present not only in the Northeast, but also in the Black Sea region and on along the Southern flank of NATO. So the defence function has to be fulfilled in the way that makes it relevant for the Southern members as well. NATO is trying that, yet the greatest attention has been given to the force posture along the Eastern flank. Equally frustrating as for the southern members, that the Alliance is losing its edge in the crisis management field, when repercussions of the civil wars in the MENA region and the movement of migrants are the primary security concerns for those countries. Thus, the greater awareness to the challenges along the Mediterranean is fine, but it should become more operational (Marrone, 2016; Becker, 2018). The problem is to find the right partners, with for instance the government in Libya being contested, and the one in Egypt being authoritarian. To be sure, even the Southern understand that security undivided. A successful intervention of Russia in a Baltic state will weaken the credibility of Article 5 for the whole of NATO and affect the security situation of countries on the other end of Europe. That is why Spanish and Portuguese forces have been contributing to reassurance measures in the Baltic region.

NATO must able to act in all fields of activity. Looking at the security environment, the alliance must be able to quickly design activities and operations, must hold capabilities available, since events and sudden developments dictate the political agenda more than strategic planning. Just as there was little preparation, with the alliance bogged down in Afghanistan, for the heightened risk situation of the Baltic states after the conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine, the new NATO marked for collective defence could be surprised in the near future by a crisis development in a nearby country demanding a stability mission. The good thing here is, that although different tasks create specific demands as to the military equipment, capabilities can be designed in a way that they can be applied both for defence and expeditionary activities. Capabilities for strategic and tactical airlift, for C3I, for cyber protection would be needed in defence and crisis management scenarios. Both the training capabilities that NATO has created and the numerous centres of excellence, as information hubs to improve the allies' ability to cope with specific challenges in the security environment, would not apply to one of these functions only.

Tasks are interdependent. To assess NATO's strength, one must also analyse the cross-effects between the functions, how activities in one folder are strengthening the capabilities in another. Strategies can be attributed to more than one functional category, and they complement and strengthen each other (Yost, 2014, p. 13-16). Let us look at a few examples:

- The stability operations to create conditions in Afghanistan that make it less likely that a government might hosts jihadist terror groups was a post-conflict operation in the Article 5 context. Yet, it included enhancement elements, capacity build-up, elements of both sound post-conflict reconstruction and peacetime partnership programs, as well as equipping a complex mission through 18 years over a long distance. These capabilities might play a strong part in future Art. 5 scenarios, or in case NATO embarks on a more robust approach to support allies or partners in the coming power struggles with China.
- Capacity improvement, military and civilian, with partner and aspirant countries in the East could make these less vulnerable to infringement from a third party, adding dissuasion to an overall deterrence pattern along NATO's Eastern flank. If you take away the partnership with NATO, governments might become more receptive for Russian (or Chinese) influence. So partnerships remain a key element of NATO's portfolio.
- Partnership cooperation has the objective to win partners for NATO-led crisis missions, which also in the future might be useful for smaller operations in regional theatres, where partners can add credibility to a NATO-led mission. The other way round, reducing NATO's role in crisis missions will take away much of the rationale behind partnership programs.
- NATO's cooperation with other security organisations, a section of the cooperative security chapter, aims at improving NATO's abilities in the two other functional areas. The cooperation with the EU includes topics now related to collective defence and has been a recent success story. NATO's dialogue with the UNO is looking at demands in the area of conflict management.

A strong NATO would have to be living up to all its functions, keeping them up and running, looking at the challenges from all directions and defining strategies accordingly. It would be a good idea to convey the message that a complex and changing security environment demands responsiveness, and makes a bigger toolbox necessary. An opportunity for this could be the discussion of a New Strategic Concept, as soon as there is a US government trusted to discuss NATO's future.

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NATO Deterrence in the Eastern Flank What More Needs to be Done?

Wojciech LORENZ

Abstract: After the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, NATO began to adapt its collective defence mechanisms to Russian military threats directed towards the alliance. After the fall of USSR, Russia started to perceive EU and NATO as impediments, which limit its chances to regain a sphere of influence and a position of a major European and a world power. To enforce a change in a status quo, it used force against Georgia and Ukraine and started to demonstrate readiness to fight limited war with NATO. Credible deterrence is therefore necessary to neutralise Russian threat militarily and politically. The objective of the research was to determine credibility of NATO's deterrence and how it fits into a broader strategic bargaining between NATO and Russia over the security architecture in Europe. The author used deterrence theory to demonstrate how to asses credibility of deterrence strategy. A comparative analysis of NATO policy during the Cold War and after the fall of the USSR indicated that deterrence of Russia in Europe has to be based on multinational military presence on the eastern flank and viable strategy of reinforcement. To achieve this, NATO will have to develop i.e. capabilities necessary for neutralisation of Russian anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) systems, which can be used to block NATO's reinforcements. The author concludes that deterrence could be complemented both with incentives and the possibility of increased military pressure on Russia, for more effective defence of international security system.

Keywords: NATO, deterrence, military security, nuclear strategy

Introduction

International relations experts have described different aspects of a post-Cold War conflict situation between Russia and the West, also analysing options for deterring Kremlin from using military force against NATO and EU border states. Theorists and practitioners alike indicate that credible deterrence on the Eastern Flank of NATO has to include proper command and force structure adjusted to collective defence operations on the territory of the new member states (Zapfe, 2017; Paulauskas, 2016). There have been, however, few attempts to put

deterrence of Russia by the alliance in the broader context of strategic bargaining, in which deterrence has to be supplemented with both incentives and options for increased military pressure (Lorenz, 2017). Such pressure, which T.C. Schelling (1984) called compellence, may be necessary to enforce a change in the behavior of the opponent.[1]

The analysis of deterrence/incentives/compellence relationship has to be based on the sound assessment of major players' interests and their interpretation of the status quo. A mere statement that Russia is a revisionist power, trying to change a post-Cold War status quo is not enough to understand what the Kremlin's political goals are and what methods can it use to achieve them. It is necessary to diagnose the nature of the conflict situation between Russia and NATO, what are the military and political aspects of credibility of deterrence and how it could be used together with incentives and military pressure in support of a broader strategy. The assessment of all these variables is necessary to analyse whether and how NATO could strengthen its deterrence but also to determine whether adaptation to a threat is merely a political process or a part of broader strategy.

The analysis of deterrence has to be based on two major theoretical paradigms. Neither realism nor liberalism alone offer enough explanatory power, especially if the aim of a theory is to inform political and military decision-makers. A number of scholars, including the so-called classical realists, rightly indicated that human interactions both within a state and in international relations are based on both amity and enmity (Carr, 1981; Wolfers, 1991; Crick, 1993). International relations cannot be fully understood only in terms of a balance of power or an all-out struggle for survival (Wolfers, 1991). Analysis based on dogmatic approach to realist and liberal paradigms can easily become detached from strategic and political realities, turning towards utopia (Carr, 1981).

By applying both realist and liberal paradigms one can increase practical usefulness of the analysis. The main assumptions taken from those paradigms are: the international system is anarchical and states try to enhance their security, which can be achieved both through cooperation and ability to defend interests by force. Although norms and organisations bring some order to anarchical system and limit the risk of conflict among states, ultimately they have to rely on their own resources when confronted with a threat (self-help). Small and mid-size countries have limited options when threatened by major powers and try to improve their position through membership in alliances (Walt, 1987). To some extent, the political choices leading to conflict or cooperation are the result of narratives, which can shape social and political

1 According to Schelling (1984) both deterrence and compellence are forms of coercion. However, a number of experts do not make this distinction and use a term coercion to describe compellence.

attitudes (Wendt, 1992). However, it would be utopian to believe that all differences in interests can be removed by diplomatic and political means, without resorting to a more or less visible threat of force.

Deterrence theory, as any other theory, simplifies reality but when adjusted to real-life settings, which include a plethora of political and strategic complexities, can become a useful tool for political-decision-makers. It served as a foundation for U.S. and NATO strategy throughout the Cold War and has again grown in importance since the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. The aim of this paper is to indicate how deterrence was applied in the past and can be effectively used again by NATO in future. Applying the comparative method, it explains the continuity and change in Russia's and NATO's interests, strategies and policies during the Cold War and after the collapse of the USSR. It explains the nature of Russia-NATO conflict in Europe, defines Russia's possible goals regarding the change in security architecture and examines the credibility of NATO's deterrence. Finally, it indicates how deterrence fits into a broader strategic bargaining and what risks and political challenges NATO will face, while trying to strike a balance between deterrence, compellence and incentives.

Theory of Deterrence

The concept of deterrence takes its theoretical basis in a game theory, which originates from the rational choice theory. Both theories are based on the assumption that people and states are rational actors and make their decision on the assessment of possible gains, losses and risks associated with their own choices, as well as those of the opponent. Usually they try to maximise a gain, but when the risk of the best possible outcome is too high, they will be ready to accept a worse choice.

The idea of deterrence is simple. Its goal is to influence the calculus of the opponent regarding possible benefits, losses and risks. To deter is to discourage potential adversary from acting by means of fear or doubt regarding the costs and possible outcomes of his actions (Schelling, 2008). In international relations, deterrence is an attempt to convince the adversary that he will not achieve his goals by force and/or that the costs of aggression can outweigh potential benefits (Snyder, 1961; Freedman, 2008).

However, deterrence is only one element of a bargaining process between conflicting parties (Schelling, 1980). Both sides can apply deterrence to avoid aggression or a certain type of attack, but at the same time, they will have broader political goals regarding the resolution of a conflict on the best possible terms. The options of the players can be presented through simple formal models. In a zero-sum game model, a player perceives a gain of the adversary as his loss, just like in the

so-called chicken game, when two drivers are heading towards each other, trying to force the opponent to swerve. The one who yields - loses, the one that prevails – wins. If none of them swerves, they will both die in a crash. Although they would probably prefer to avoid such outcome, it is in their interest to persevere as long as possible, and convince the opponent that they are ready to die, defending their honor or some other values. Since the readiness to die might seem irrational, they can try to demonstrate irrationality (so-called rational irrationality) and determination for example by taking hands off the steering wheel.

However, players seldom have only conflicting interests. This can be illustrated by the so-called prisoners dilemma model, which includes both zero-sum and non-zero-sum game elements. In this model, players accused of felony are locked in separate cells and are given three options by the prosecutor. If both remain silent, they will spend a year in prison. If they both cooperate with authorities and accuse each other, they will spend two years behind bars. But if one accuses the other who remains silent, the one who cooperates will be set free, while the other will be sentenced for 10 years. Rational players will try to avoid the worst outcome and will cooperate with the prosecutor accusing another prisoner. True, if they cooperated and remained silent, they could spend only one year in prison. But since they cannot communicate, they have to assume that the opponent will accuse them, which could lead to a 10-year long prison term – a cost and risk unacceptably high. Hence, they are most likely to minimise this risk of such outcome by cooperating with the prosecutor and accusing the other prisoner. In such situation, if the other prisoner behaved in the same way, the maximum term would be two years. There is also additional bonus in a small chance that the opponent will remain silent, and the player who decided to cooperate will go free.

Game theory models, which can be much more complicated than chicken game and prisoners dilemma models, offer some interesting conclusions about possible strategies, which include deterrence, compellence and incentives. If players want to influence the cost-benefit and risk calculation of the opponent, they have to be able to inflict costs, which can be difficult to accept by the adversary. If players do not apply zero sum game logic to the game, they have a chance for a satisfying compromise. If there is a communication between the players, they are able to negotiate even better compromise. But even if they are able to agree on a common strategy, there is a certain level of trust required that they will stick to the terms of the agreement. As theory shows, if they agreed to remain silent and be sentenced only to one year in prison, there would still be an incentive to betray the opponent and go free instead of serving even this short term. In real life, instead of relying on trust, players can rely on verification measures (e.g. to support disarmament agreements) or can offer some incentives to the opponent, which will improve his cost-benefit calculation and limit the risk of betrayal. Incentives, however,

cannot be confused with appeasement, which will be interpreted as a sign of weakness, encouraging the rival to increase his demands and limiting chances for compromise.

There is at least one serious problem with deterrence in practice. It seems impossible to determine whether a conflict was avoided because the opponent was effectively deterred. He might not have had an intention to attack or it could be other calculations, not connected to the threats formulated by the deterring party, that changed his intentions. To overcome this limitation of deterrence analysis, A. L. George and R. Smoke (1974) analysed cases when deterrence failed to diagnose the mechanisms, which led to direct confrontation. They argue that rational decision-makers apply different strategies to assess the risk of military action before they decide to use force.

In a *fait accompli* strategy, the initiator performs a military attack to achieve limited goals, when he calculates that the defender of the status quo will not have time, political will or capability to block such a move. Once the defender is faced with facts on the ground, he faces a challenge of bringing the status quo ante (of which he can be now deterred) or accepting a new status quo, even if through face-saving negotiations.

The second strategy is called a *limited probe*. The potential aggressor violates the interests of the defender and provokes controlled crisis to gauge the defenders' commitment and determination. If the reaction is strong, he may withdraw, but when it is not forceful enough, he may estimate that there is an acceptable risk of applying fait accompli strategy.

In a *controlled pressure* strategy, the aggressor uses asymmetric, non-military means to complicate the military response of the defender. If the defender does not have proper means to credibly respond to non-military aggression, aggressors' actions may effectively undermine the status quo.

As George and Smoke (1974) indicate, the deterrence should be the part of a broader theory of influence. A player interested in enforcing a change in a status quo will usually look for some creative ways of achieving his strategic goals. That is why the aims of the defender should not be limited to effective deterrence. He should have a broader strategy in which deterrence is complemented with incentives and compellence to achieve resolution of the conflict without direct military confrontation.

The Cold War Conflict

The conflict situation between the West and the East during the Cold War resulted from the incompatibility of interests, which were difficult, if not impossible to overcome, but could be mitigated to the extent that coexistence of different systems

was achieved and a direct military conflict avoided. Both major powers - United States and the USSR - had completely different social, political and economic models, which led them to a rivalry in a global dimension. In the European theater, the conflict was reinforced by Soviet attempts to impose communist rule over the Central and Eastern European states and inability to agree with other members of the Big Three coalition (U.S. and the United Kingdom) the terms of reunification of Germany. The unresolved status of Germany and the divided Berlin on the territory of Soviet occupied sector became a root cause of Soviet insecurity. So was the status of the Polish-German border. During the Potsdam conference in 1945, a shift of Poland's borders to the west was approved but the ultimate determination of the German-Polish frontier was postponed until a later peace conference.

Leadership in Moscow was not only afraid of the U.S. military superiority but also of the possibility of reunification of Germany by political means or the threat of force. From the Soviet perspective, it was necessary to have a buffer zone to avoid surprise attack from the Western capitalist countries. A ring of satellite states also added political and economic strength to the Soviet Union. Bolshevik Russia tried to divide the West and weaken U.S. security commitment for Europe (decoupling), which could cripple Europe and offer USSR more options of achieving its political goals at a lower cost.

The Soviet Union relied on overwhelming conventional superiority over the Western European countries as both deterrent and a tool of intimidation and compellence. In case of nuclear attack on its territory, the USSR could launch a massive conventional offensive, defeating major European powers before the effects of nuclear weapons paralysed a state. During peacetime, approximately 30 heavy army divisions were maintained in a state of high readiness close to intra Germany border, contributing to credibility of defensive/offensive doctrine. When the Soviet military developed nuclear weapons, the basic tenets of strategy remained the same. Although there have been different interpretations of Soviet nuclear strategy, it seems that the overall goal was to deter U.S. from nuclear attack on the USSR and to maintain credible strategy to win a conventional war in Europe (Battilega, 2004). Even though USSR might have contemplated taking full control over divided Berlin, in general terms it can be perceived as a status quo power. Its ideology was based on the ultimate defeat of capitalism, but after the death of Stalin, Khruschev announced that this will be a political struggle (policy of coexistence). In Europe, the USSR was interested in maintaining a political grip over its satellites and eastern part of Germany, keeping a country, which started two world wars, divided and weak for as long as possible.

United States embarked on the containment strategy in a global dimension and deterrence in the European theater (Gaddis, 2005). Moral superiority and effective containment intended to increase the chances that there will be a change in the

Soviet political system (NSC, 1950). Nevertheless, the primary goal was to defend the status quo in the West and leave no room for Soviet political and military intimidation, limiting the risk that USSR will attack Europe. The U.S. offered security guarantees to its European allies through NATO, with the credibility of deterrence supported by the deployment of U.S. troops and nuclear weapons in Europe.

There were deep divisions over the deterrence strategy in NATO. Member states were constantly looking for a balance between military requirements of defence and deterrence, assurance and other political imperatives. In the 1960's, the attempt by the U.S. to introduce flexible response strategy and to limit the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence, provoked France to leave NATO military structures. Two measures helped to save the cohesion of the alliance: a mechanism of nuclear sharing, which gave allies some influence on nuclear deterrence policy, and the 1967 Harmel report, which sanctioned the policy of cooperation with communist bloc (détente).

In the conventional dimension, deterrence was based on a forward defence of NATO territory. Depending on how doctrine was interpreted, multinational troops had a role of a trip-wire - a mechanism, which could trigger the use of tactical nuclear weapons, with a risk of further nuclear escalation, or of a shield - which could defend against limited aggression and give time to assess the intentions of the adversary. Troops from the U.S., France and U.K. were stationed in West Berlin (outside NATO collective defence mechanisms) as a demonstration of major powers commitment to defend the city. U.S., British, Dutch, Belgian and Canadian troops were stationed across West Germany. Together with 12 German divisions committed for collective defence purposes, NATO aimed at having 30 divisions in a state of high readiness in the Central Front (a target barely met at the end of the Cold War) to balance Soviet offensive potential and neutralise militarily and politically a threat of a surprise attack. In 1960, NATO commander (SACEUR) also directed the development of multinational mobile brigade (so-called fire brigade), which could be quickly deployed to flank countries (Norway, Denmark, Italy, Greece, Turkey). Additionally, NATO allies had to maintain agreed number of troops on their territory to provide reinforcements during a conflict.

In the nuclear dimension, deterrence was based on two elements: U.S. tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe to balance Soviet conventional superiority and strategic weapons, which could threaten the existence of the USSR. The presence of tactical weapons was also to increase the risk of nuclear escalation, connecting European and U.S. security (coupling). NATO nuclear sharing mechanism allowed in times of war for transfer of nuclear weapons to the allies (Canada, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Turkey, U.K.[2]). The so-called dual key/double

2 This was in addition to British national nuclear deterrent.

veto mechanism on the one hand gave them control over potential use of nuclear weapons against their national interests, but on the other hand could increase the risk that weapons will be employed by the states faced with an existential threat. This in turn, increased the risk that a Soviet attack will trigger nuclear response, which will lead to further escalation, with the threat of U.S. strategic weapons being used against USSR.

This strategy and force posture was supported with NATO integrated military command structure of approximately 70 HQs. Their location and composition intended to enable coordinated collective defence operation by the SACEUR during war and to assure national control over the armed forces during peacetime. The alliance demonstrated the readiness to defend its territory through exercises, which were more numerous and bigger in scale than those of the Warsaw Pact.

U.S. nuclear strategy was to assure a wide range of options to the president in times of war (preemption, launch-on-warning and retaliation). The Soviets were particularly afraid of a surprise decapitating attack against command centers and strategic forces, which would leave them without credible options to respond and force them to capitulate. A similar threat perception influenced the U.S. doctrine and military investments. The ensuing arms race and potential incentive to perform a first strike seemed to convince both adversaries to accept the strategic balance based on the concept of mutually assured destruction (MAD) - the ability to launch counterattack. Both sides agreed to limit the growth of their arsenals (SALT) and signed Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty (ABM), which banned the development of strategic defence systems.

With the policy of détente, NATO members could offer numerous incentives for USSR to lower tensions and have bigger diplomatic room of maneuver. They included the economic cooperation and the development of pipeline system, which could deliver Russian oil to Western Europe giving Kremlin access to hard currency. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was organised, and in 1975, the Helsinki Final Act was signed, which recognised the inviolability of post-world war II frontiers in Europe. At the same time, détente also helped USSR to gain access to western technologies and improve mobility of forces and credibility of an offensive doctrine.

The deployment of Soviet SS 20 missiles in Europe at the end of 1970 caused one of the biggest crises in USSR-NATO relations. Although the USSR previously had a large number of land based missiles aimed at Western Europe, which concerned Europeans, their accuracy was measured in several kilometers and they could be rationally used only as additional deterrent against nuclear attack on the Soviet or Warsaw Pact territory. This time, however, mobile missiles, carrying three independently targetable warheads (MIRV), with accuracy measured in hundreds of meters could be used pre-emptively against nuclear weapons deployed in Europe,

increasing the credibility of Soviet offensive. If NATO was unable to respond to such a threat, this could undermine the credibility of tactical nuclear weapons and sever the link with U.S. strategic forces, leading to the decoupling of the U.S. and Europe. The missiles could also possibly be transformed into intercontinental (ICBM) missiles, threatening the United States territory, altering the strategic balance to the advantage of USSR. U.S. and NATO interest converged, and the allies decided to neutralise a threat. The allies agreed to deploy in Europe highly accurate Pershing II ballistic missiles and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM). Both mobile systems were difficult to destroy and shortened the time of attack against targets in the USSR, neutralising new Soviet capability, which could be in line with NATO defensive doctrine. But at the same time they also increased the credibility of a first strike, decapitation attack, which was against NATO doctrine. These measures were supported with new tactics (Follow on Forces Attack), which took advantage of technological developments (Revolution in Military Affairs). U.S. and European allies started to develop modern weapons to be able to attack moving targets from the long distances. The objective of NATO forces was to cut off the enemy from reinforcements. NATO strengthened air and missile defence capabilities, with U.S. providing Patriot air and missile defence systems to Bundeswehr. At the same time, U.S. announced Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), which could further enhance U.S. ability to undermine Soviet nuclear deterrent. The U.S. navy increased the number of exercises increasing military pressure on northern and southern flanks of the USSR, demonstrating ability to launch pre-emptive nuclear attack and the ability to fight a global war. All of these measures indicate that the U.S. and NATO moved from deterrence to compellence.

This significantly increased the Soviet sense of threat and almost led Moscow to overreaction (Adamsky, 2013; NSA, 2018). In 1981, KGB launched one of the biggest intelligence operations in history to detect U.S. preparations for a first strike. Under huge military pressure, the USSR in 1983 downed a civilian Korean aircraft, taking it for an American spy plane. Soviet military was fearful that NATO exercises Autumn Forge 83 and Able Archer 83 were a preparation for war. Soviet Defence Minister publicly warned that the USSR is unable to distinguish NATO exercises from actual attack.

The compellence started to bring effects already in 1982, when Brezhnev declared that Soviet nuclear weapons will not be used for the first strike purposes. In 1987, the Kremlin also declared that its military would only be used for defensive purposes on the territory of the USSR. In the same year, the Soviet Union and the U.S. signed the INF treaty eliminating intermediate-range (range 500-5500 km) nuclear weapons. Soviet leadership desperately tried to lower the defence expenditure and address economic and political tensions through reforms, but to no avail. In 1991, the USSR fell apart.

Trying to neutralise the Soviet threat, NATO was faced with massive public protests against deployments of the so-called Euromissiles and struggled to maintain political cohesion. The alliance was able to press forward because of a sensible strategy - the deployments were spread out in time, and sheer luck and coincidence - there was a strong political leadership in a number of NATO states and the USSR invaded Afghanistan, which increased a sense of threat across the alliance. Even though the intention was mainly to neutralise a threat, NATO and U.S. significantly influenced the threat perception of the USSR, increasing a risk of accidental nuclear conflict. The main goal was achieved, and the SS 20 and other missiles were removed, but in the longer term, the overall strategy could have contributed to the collapse of the USSR - clearly unintended consequence. Although the disappearance of the main threat was welcomed by the Western world, in the short term it brought chaos, with increased risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In the future, the prospect of a collapse of the adversary could play an important role in the calculations, of how to balance deterrence with compellence.

The Post-Cold War Conflict: Fait Accompli and Limited Probe

With a loss of 14 republics and the buffer zone formed by the satellite states, Russia was seriously weakened economically, militarily and politically. It did not have enough power to stop the democratisation of its satellites and reunification of Germany. But its identity as a major power, which has to be immune to external pressure, survived. At the beginning of 1990, a broad-based consensus emerged in Russian political elites to rebuild its sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space (Götz & Merlen, 2019). Russia has attempted to reintegrate former republics through Eurasian Economic Union and Common Security Treaty Organisation (Bugajski, 2004). It was also determined to maintain a military buffer zone on the territory on its former satellites, trying to block their integration with NATO. In 1993, the Kremlin published a new military doctrine, which revoked a no first use of nuclear weapons and reserved the right to intervene beyond the borders (FAS, 1993). Chief of Russian Security Council Valerij Manilov admitted that the aim of the doctrine was to discourage former satellite states from membership in NATO (Nowak Jeziorański, 2002). A change in the doctrine was probably also a driven by the decline in Russia's conventional capabilities, at a time when the U.S. demonstrated in the Gulf in 1991 the ability to project power and defeat 500 thousand strong Iraqi military - armed with the Soviet equipment.

After the fall of the USSR, the U.S. priority in the short term was to limit the new risks, including the spread of WMD. In the longer term, it wanted to overcome the divisions of Europe, which contributed to the Cold War, and build a stable security architecture without antagonising Russia.

Reunification of Germany was agreed on the condition that the FRG will remain in NATO, but the alliance will not move its infrastructure to former East Germany (Sarotte, 2019). In 1994, the Clinton administration decided to enlarge NATO as a part of broader changes in the security architecture in Europe. The new system was based on four elements: reformed NATO, European integration through EU, strengthened CSCE, which was transformed into permanent organisation (OSCE), and partnership of the West with Russia. Such an architecture could reconcile both liberal and realist paradigms of international relations. The U.S. did not accept Russia's sphere of influence through any legally binding commitments, but it also did not intend to exert negative influence on Russian threat perception by moving troops closer to Russia's border. The U.S. was becoming less concerned with deterrence of Russia and more of the lesser powers, such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea, with the latter testing ICBM in 1998.

The objective of a reformed NATO, instead of focusing on deterrence, was to develop the ability to act out of area and respond to new types of threats, such as terrorism, humanitarian crises and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this way, it could find new *raison d'être* and become relevant for all the members, for those who did not feel threatened by Russian offensive any longer, and also for the new ones, who looked at Russia with suspicion. NATO agreed to extend political security guarantees to new members but at the same, before they were invited, declared that it would not deploy troops on their territory as long as the security environment remains unchanged (NATO, 1997). NATO forward defence doctrine was replaced with a doctrine based on the ability to send reinforcements in times of crisis. Such a capability was to be provided by newly created NATO Response Force (NRF) - a 20.000 strong joint force, based on two land brigades. Such a limited capability could support the credibility of the new strategy based on collective defence and crisis management, without instigating fear of larger states. Since Russia was not perceived as a threat by the alliance, the command structure, readiness of troops, their equipment and exercises were adjusted mainly to out of area operations, with collective defence mission pushed into the background.

To make enlargement politically acceptable for Russia, it was offered a number of incentives. It was admitted to the G7 - a group of the most industrialised nations, and received a special mechanism of permanent political consultation with NATO (NATO-Russia Council). NATO even decided that new member states will be able to continue cooperation with Russia, to maintain their post-Soviet equipment. The alliance also tried to develop practical security cooperation with Russia, which would broaden the area of common interests.

Notwithstanding those incentives, completely opposite trends in NATO and Russia policies started to emerge after alliance's enlargement. Terrorist attacks against the U.S. in 2001, the financial crisis and the growing power of China put European

security lower on the U.S. agenda. United States decided to implement changes in its deterrence policy and adjust it to new threats such as terrorism and unpredictable states, developing weapons of mass destruction. The new strategy included aspiration to have the ability to conduct a conventional precision strike in any place of the world (Conventional Prompt Global Strike) and limited ability to defend itself against ballistic attack. In 2002 U.S., unable to agree to changes in the anti-ballistic missile treaty (ABM) with Russia, decided to withdraw from the agreement unilaterally. Washington cut down its strategic arsenal, withdrew the majority of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe (leaving app. 200 gravity bombs) and decreased number of troops in Europe from four divisions to two brigades. It discarded a doctrine based on the ability of fighting two major wars at the same time and replaced it with the capability to win a war in one region and to deter adversary in another (The White House, 2012). This had significant consequences for NATO, with European allies under increased pressure to develop capabilities necessary to collective defence missions, while they were unable to cope with requirements for crisis management.

The adjustments of U.S. strategy to new threats were presented by Russia as a threat. Russia argued that U.S. conventional precision strike capability could enable the destruction of the majority of land based nuclear weapons and the development of a missile defence would undermine the credibility of counterattack with the remaining force (Talbott, 2002; Acton, 2013). Just like during the Cold War, Russia was warried with the first strike capability of its major rival. Trying to discourage the U.S. from scrapping the ABM treaty, Moscow threatened to withdraw from INF, deploy intermediate range missiles in Europe, return to MIRV technology, offer such capability to China and put an end to arms control cooperation. The U.S. decision to deploy elements of a missile defence system in Poland and Czech Republic further infringed Russian interests. Russian arguments focused on the ability of the system to destroy ICBM and undermine Russian deterrence, but with limited capability of the system, other calculations seemed to be more relevant. U.S. ability to defend itself against attack from Iran or North Korea, could weaken Russia's ability to use its relations with both states as a leverage against the U.S. The installations in the new NATO member states could also limit Russian ability to institutionalise their status as a buffer zone in the future.

For a country, which wanted to regain a sphere of influence, new security architecture based on expanding NATO and the EU was a recipe for constant changes in the status quo and a threat for vital interest. NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 must have been just another proof after the Gulf war that the U.S. has the ability to project power, which could limit Russia's ability to use a threat of force to shape a sphere of influence. When Vladimir Putin came to power in 1999 and the Russian economy improved, Kremlin started to implement the new doctrine, in which NATO enlargement was defined as a threat (FAS, 1997). In 1999, Russian military

conducted strategic Zapad exercises based on a scenario of a conflict with NATO, and demonstrated that faced with overwhelming conventional power, it could use limited nuclear strike to de-escalate conflict. A doctrine approved a year later indicated that the armed forces have to be prepared to fight with such an adversary who tries to avoid direct contact (ACA, 2000). This was followed by the modernisation of nuclear arsenal. Despite cuts in NATO's tactical nuclear weapons, Russia retained more than 2000 tactical warheads for the European theater.

Russia strongly objected to limited rotational presence of U.S. troops in the new NATO member states. It also accused the West of supporting the so-called colored revolutions in the former republics (Kremlin, 2007). In 2008, after NATO declared that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of NATO, Russian troops concentrated for large scale exercises (Kavkaz, 2008) were used to attack Georgia. With such a move, Russia attempted to enforce a change in NATO policy of enlargement sending a clear message that military force can be used against former Soviet republics trying to join NATO (Dyomkin, 2011). Moscow's recognition of separatist regions in Georgia was supposed to institutionalise a frozen conflict and further limit the prospects of Georgia's NATO membership. At the same time, the Kremlin came up with the proposal of a new European security treaty, which would institutionalise new concert of powers in Europe, giving Russia a right to block sovereign choices of other states, including the decision to join NATO or EU (Fedorov, 2009). The Kremlin was not only defending the status quo (as it perceived it) but presented a blueprint for an alternative security architecture based on different norms and principles than the one promoted by NATO and EU. Apparently, understanding that to enforce its vision it has to be able to threaten the West with a quick, winnable, limited war, Russia launched a massive military modernisation program.

The U.S. and NATO ignored the new security treaty initiative but focused on the war in Afghanistan and offered Russia a number of incentives to decrease tensions in Europe. After a brief suspension of cooperation with Moscow, NATO returned to business as usual only nine months after the war in Georgia. New strategic concept adopted by NATO in 2010 called for a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia (NATO, 2010). The U.S. decided to review the plans of its missile defence. The base in Poland, instead of defending U.S. territory against attack from the Middle East, was now supposed to defend Europe, with the range of planned interceptors shortened. The radar in Czech Republic was cancelled. Important bilateral initiatives followed. In 2011, France agreed to sell Russia capable Mistral-class warships and Germany decided to build a state-of-the-art training center for the Russian army. Germany also proceeded with the development of the Nord Stream pipeline, which could deliver gas to Germany, bypassing Ukraine.

Despite such moves, Russia decided to further solidify the status quo by unilateral moves. In 2014, under the Kremlin's pressure pro-Russian president of Ukraine Vladimir Yanukovich declined to sign the association agreement with the EU but was faced with violent protests and escaped to Moscow. Russia responded with the annexation of Crimea and fermented insurgency in eastern Ukraine. Similarly to the aggression against Georgia, Russia used troops gathered in advance for a large scale exercises in the region (Norberg, 2014). Since then, Moscow has attempted to institutionalise its control over the status of Ukraine, demanding the constitutional reform, which would give the separatist regions autonomy and ability to block NATO and EU accession (Bowen, 2017). This policy was supported with the presence of Russian troops along Ukrainian borders to demonstrate a credible option of large scale invasion, which could lead to the establishment of Novorossyia (New Russia) on Ukrainian territory.

While experts try to determine whether Russia is a defensive or a revanchist power, it seems clear that it is trying to defend the status quo as it interprets it. It means that it also tries to enforce a change in the status quo as it is perceived by the West. It employs deterrence to stop the West from acting but it also uses compellence to enforce a change in Western policy based on NATO and EU enlargement and support for Georgia and Ukraine.

In Ukraine, Russia applied three different strategies at the same time: fait accompli, limited probe and controlled pressure. The annexation of Crimea was a playbook fait accompli case. As some experts indicate, it cannot be excluded that Kremlin's calculations regarding the risk of such operation were influenced by earlier concessions of the U.S. (Dueck, 2015). The U.S., NATO and individual European powers offered Russia incentives to deescalate tensions when they did not have political will nor resources to take a firm policy toward Russia. It is likely that such incentives were interpreted as appeasement, and a sign of weakness, which rather encouraged aggression. Russia decided to use troops without insignia to delay and weaken the response of the West, rather than to have a plausible deniability and withdraw, if things went badly.

In eastern Ukraine, Russia used limited probe strategy. It acted through the separatists to achieve plausible deniability, which would give her options to withdraw if she met a strong resistance. Both in Crimea and in Eastern Ukraine it also acted in line with controlled pressure. It used hybrid - asymmetrical means of warfare, to complicate calculations and delay the response.

The Eastern Ukraine case could also be analysed as fait accompli, since it is highly unlikely that Russia will give up control over separatist regions and will try to enforce a changed status quo through constitutional changes leading to federalisation of the state. It seems, however, that it is still measuring the long-term reaction of the West and calculates the costs that were imposed on Moscow.

Post Crimea Conflict: Brinkmanship vs Deterrence

The annexation of Crimea and the attempted federalisation of Ukraine was complemented with increased military pressure against the West. Russia started to manipulate with a threat perception of NATO by increasing the credibility of local conflict with the alliance. Russian military deployed air defences and short-range strike systems, including dual use (conventional or nuclear) ballistic missile Iskander systems, closer to NATO borders (Dalsjö, Berglund & Jonsson, 2019). The so-called anti-access area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities strengthened both deterrence and defence but also increased credibility of the offensive, surprise operation. After reforms of military districts in 2010, almost 40 percent of Russian offensive potential was concentrated in the Western part of the country. Around 40-50 battalion battle groups could be sent on a short notice to combat, blocking the so-called Suwalki Gap - a corridor along Polish-Lithuanian border, cutting off the Baltic States from reinforcements (Shlapak, 2018). Smaller Russian units (battalions and brigades) were reorganised into divisions, which indicated that army is being prepared for a conflict with another state or coalition. Military exercises close to NATO borders, which could provide cover for such operation, reached unprecedented scale. There were four large scale, unannounced exercises in 2013, eight in 2014 and twenty in 2015, organised in a non-transparent way (Kowalik & Jankowski, 2017). Russia has also intensified disinformation, political corruption, cyberattacks and covert action trying to influence politics in NATO and EU states, dividing both organisations. If Russia was able to undermine the territorial integrity of a NATO border state under any pretext, it could use defensive/offensive weapons, disinformation and a threat of escalation to delay or limit NATO's response and enforce negotiations on a new European security treaty.

In 2015, Russia further increased its military pressure, but also came up with the incentives. At the peak of migrant crisis in Europe, Russian military intervened in Syria, where the U.S.-led coalition was fighting the so-called Islamic State. Soon Putin made the West an offer of a joint coalition to combat terrorism and solve the migration crisis in exchange for a new Yalta type agreement and sphere of influence (Kremlin, 2015a; Kremlin, 2015b). At the same time, Russian military demonstrated that it could be able to hit targets across Europe at the distance of up to 2500 kilometers with long range, cruise missiles launched from surface vessels and submarines (not forbidden under the INF). Such missiles were difficult to detect and destroy, which could have serious military and political implications for NATO. They could be used for pre-emptive, conventional attack against the infrastructure supporting NATO nuclear deterrence. Dual conventional and nuclear capability of such missiles could also be used to instigate a sense of fear

across the Western Europe, to weaken the political will necessary for launching collective defence operation. Both measures could increase the credibility of Russian offensive and nuclear de-escalation doctrine.

The NATO response was a gradual movement from reassurance to deterrence based on the calculation of the offensive potential of the adversary. During the Wales Summit in 2014, the allies decided to improve the credibility of its reinforcement strategy. NATO Response Force, which never reached its planned capacity, was strengthened to three land brigades (each having five operational battalions) and the time of troops deployment was shortened. NATO border states were also offered reassurance. The exercises on their territories were increased, which allowed for almost continuous presence of troops from different NATO states. The units however did not have a combat role and could not be used by SACEUR in a time of crisis. These measures were supported with EU targeted sanctions against Russia. Their aim was to influence the calculations of the main decision-makers and business elites without destabilising the society.

At the 2016 Warsaw NATO Summit, allies decided to strengthen the deterrence with deployment of multinational troops to the border states. Battalion size combat groups were deployed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland with a mechanism of quick reinforcement set up for Romania. NATO was still not trying to balance 40-50 battalions Russia could master for a surprise attack but tried to raise the cost of any type of offensive. The presence of multinational troops indicated that in case of an aggression, be it a hybrid type operation or an open military incursion, the major Western powers will be automatically entangled in a conflict. Hence, the composition of units were important, with U.S., France, Germany and U.K. participating in the rotations. The role of the battalions was similar to a Cold War trip-wire mechanism, however, this time they were supposed to increase the risk of conventional, not nuclear escalation. As they were integrated into larger units of host nations, they also provided some first line of defence, which could blunt the offensive.

Additionally, the U.S. decided to deploy to Central and Eastern Europe a heavy brigade (Armored Brigade Combat Team). With two brigades already present in Germany and Italy, the U.S. could quickly support defence operation with a division size formation. It also started to improve stocks of equipment and armaments to have the ability to deploy another division to Europe.

NATO began to adjust its planning and exercises scenarios to collective defence missions. The number of NATO exercises did not exceed 300 a year, comparing to app. 4000 organised by Russia. Nevertheless, the alliance launched in 2018 a “high visibility” maneuvers to test the ability to conduct a large scale defence operation, provide reassurance of member states and strengthen deterrence (Lorenz, 2018).

At the 2018 Brussels Summit, NATO decided to further strengthen the credibility of its deterrence strategy based on ability to send reinforcements. NATO agreed that by 2020 it would be able to deploy 30 mechanised or heavy battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 large combat vessels in less than 30 days. Such forces could be used to balance Russian offensive force during a period of escalating crisis or to regain control over the NATO territory after attack. These measures were complemented with some important changes in the command structure, which would enable SACEUR to take command over troops stationing in NATO border states. The United States also decided to deploy a division HQ to Poland.

NATO implemented those changes but has not changed its strategy adopted in 2010, which calls for a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia. The process was gradual and adjusted to financial limitations but also different perceptions of threats across the alliance. It was also based on strategic calculations regarding possible Russian reaction. NATO tried not to exceed the level of substantial combat force (in practice one brigade in each of NATO border states) as the larger scale of deployment could be used by Russia as a pretext for further escalation or even aggression. The alliance also indicated that the presence of troops is rotational, not permanent. One school of thought represented by Poland and Baltic states suggested that permanent presence would send a clear signal to Russia that Central and Eastern Europe has exactly the same security status as Western Europe and will not become a buffer zone. Another school of thought claimed that permanent presence could provoke Russia to defend a status quo through military confrontation.

The issue was political but could have significant negative influence on the threat perception of the border states, which for historical reasons feared abandonment by the allies. To maintain political cohesion of the alliance, it was important to dispel such concerns. Trying to reconcile two conflicting perspectives, NATO decided to use a wording of "continuous" presence, without defining a time horizon of the deployment. The U.S. decision to increase military presence in Poland and establish there a division-level headquarters offered additional reassurance. Just like during the Cold War, the United States was establishing a parallel mechanism of defence in a coalition of the willing format, which could be used if Russia managed to intimidate and paralyse NATO.

Although the main elements of the new deterrence posture were in place, the credibility of strategy depended on the implementation of agreed decisions. NATO still had to resolve problems of quick reinforcements, with Russia being able to attack targets deep in allied territory and destroy majority of NATO's aircraft over the large part of the Baltic Sea and Black Sea regions. NATO in cooperation with the EU still had to solve legal and logistical challenges of large troops deployments across Europe. Member states in line with NATO defence

planning had to enhance their defence systems, increase investments in heavier capabilities and develop new technologies necessary for countering Russia's modern weapon systems.

There was also a new challenge looming on the horizon, which extended beyond the consensus agreed in Wales, Warsaw and Brussels. In 2018, NATO supported the findings of the U.S. that Russia was secretly developing a ground launched cruise missile with a range exceeding 550 kilometers, violating the INF treaty. Russia apparently worked covertly on this capability to use it as an ace card at the most convenient moment (Durkalec, 2019). New missile could have a serious military and political consequences for NATO. So far Russia could threaten NATO territory with cruise missiles launched from aircraft or surface ships, which could be easily tracked and destroyed. Now it had the capability, which was very hard to detect and defend against. Together with missiles carried by submarines, it enhanced its ability to launch a surprise first strike. During crisis or military conflict, Russia could threaten to use nuclear weapons to de-escalate conflict and at the same time threaten NATO with an attack on its nuclear forces, even only if they were put on a higher alert. The missiles could also be aimed at bridges, harbors, airports, railway junctions to impede or delay NATO reinforcements. They could also be used to create a threat that war will escalate to the point where Paris, Berlin and other Western capitals could be targeted, to undermine the political will to engage in collective defence mission. Although it is impossible to determine Russian intentions, the new capability increased the credibility of Russia's offensive doctrine and the risk that it could decide to fight a limited war against NATO.

Before NATO decided how to respond, major powers started to signal readiness to offer some incentives to Moscow. In 2019, the Council of Europe - an organisation of democratic states - reinstated Russia's voting rights. The U.S. president called for Russia's to rejoin the G8 forum. French president, Emmanuel Macron pushed for new relations with Moscow based on new security architecture. Germany was ready to proceed with strategic cooperation, including the transfer of technologies to Russia. There have also been constant signals from different capitals that sanctions implemented by the EU should be removed.

Conclusions

The described crisis is the result of different visions of the security system by Russia and the West, and conflicting interpretations of the status quo. Russia has clearly defined goals of regaining a sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space and maintaining a buffer zone along NATO and EU Eastern borders. Faced with NATO and EU enlargement, Russia decided to use force to defend the status quo as it

perceives it. Using limited probe and fait accompli in Georgia and Ukraine, it de facto blocked the accession of both states to Western economic, political and security organisations.

After the annexation of Crimea, Russia employed a strategy of brinkmanship against NATO. Armed with offensive doctrine and the necessary military capabilities developed when NATO was focused on crisis-management missions, it threatened NATO with a limited war, which could lead to the negotiations on the new security architecture in Europe Although it is impossible to determine the actual Russian intentions, the risk of conflict has increased. NATO has managed to improve the credibility of its deterrence, by deployment of troops to the border states and has plans to balance Russian offensive potential. However, the alliance will still have to solve the credibility problem of the reinforcement part of its strategy. This can only be exacerbated by the new Russian ground launched cruise missiles, which can pose additional threat for infrastructure and undermine the viability of NATO's nuclear deterrence. Confronted with a threat of Russian attack and without military and political ability to neutralise such threat, NATO could be divided and paralysed during crisis. In such a situation, an attempt to offer another round of concessions to Russia can rather encourage her to further increase the pressure.

It seems that U.S. and Europe do not have a plan on how to defend the European security system, applying deterrence, incentives and compellence. The reluctance to exert pressure on Russia, beyond limited EU sanctions, can be a reflection of a trauma, caused by the Euromissiles crisis in 1980's. NATO remains a defensive alliance and the manipulation with a perception of threat of its adversaries, will remain extremely controversial. Nevertheless, a strategy which will open the way for such manipulation may be only a question of time. The growing power of China and Chinese-Russian attempts to challenge the U.S.-led international liberal order may drive to the convergence of strategic interest of the U.S. and its European allies, leading to changes in NATO strategy.

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How to Revitalise the U.S.–Eastern European Relations

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Abstract: After the accession of the Central and Eastern European countries to NATO, there was a brief period of 'benevolent neglect' by the U.S. with regard to the region. However, U.S. policies towards Central and Eastern Europe shifted in the early 2000s, and the countries in the regions became important partners in issues such as, for instance, fighting against international terrorism. Security cooperation has remained the strongest bond between the U.S. and the Central and Eastern European states as the latter rely, first and foremost, on American security guarantees against such regional chellenges as a resurgent Russia. At the same time, energy security also serves as a strong link in this relationship, since American assistance in energy diversification helps to loosen the region's heavy dependence on Russian energy supply. On the other hand, political relations, primarily during the Obama administration, were far from being smooth. However, the Trump administration's decision to refrain from public criticism of real or perceived deficits in democratic standards in some Central and Eastern European countries has helped to strengthen the bilateral relations, and this approach may provide a blueprint for a balanced relationship between the U.S. and the countries in the region in the future.

Keywords: security cooperation; energy diversification; U.S interests in ECE; regional cooperation in ECE

Introduction

It has become almost a truism that Europe at large has been downgraded in the eyes of the majority of the foreign and security policy establishment in the U.S. in the past decades. U.S. core interests have shifted to other regions: primarily to the Asia-Pacific area and, secondly, to the greater Middle East, the territory stretching from Central Asia (Afghanistan) to North Africa (Lybia). Nevertheless, Europe, more precisely, the European members of NATO (with the countries admitted through the various waves of enlargement) have remained the single most important security-

political-diplomatic partners for Washington, despite growing differences on strategy and tactics between such members as, for instance France and Germany. Some U.S. officials, including Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld even made a distinction between the 'old' and the 'new' members of the alliance, the latter being more understanding towards such controversial American decisions as the invasion of Iraq in 2003 than some of the 'old' allies in the alliance. (See BBC News, 2003, the Leaders' Statement on Iraq (the Letter of Eight) with the Czech, Hungarian and Polish leaders among the signatories, and the Sofia News Agency, 2003, Statement of the Vilnius Group countries).

The 'new' Eastern and Central European members of the Atlantic Community put more trust into American security guarantees than the 'old' members for two reasons: one is a perceived lack of capabilities of the latter, the other one is the rather mixed historical experiences with their Western neighbors, especially with Germany, when it comes down to the existential threat provided by Russia (formerly the Soviet Union). In parallel with the Eastern and Central Europeans' continued reliance on U.S. deterrence against Russia's repeated attempts to regain, at least, some of its influence in the region, a number of Western European countries have been capitalising on having an entended strategic depth against potential Russian threats, and have shown skepticism and reluctance to follow the U.S. lead in a number of issues (for instance, regarding U.S. policies towards Iraq in 2002-2003, see CNN, 2003.)

If Europe has lost some of its importance and usefulness for the U.S. after the end of the Cold War, Central Europe has never been a primary interest for America. In fact, during World War II, the Cold War, and even in the post-Cold War years, U.S. policies towards the Central European countries were defined first and foremost within the context of the U.S.-Soviet/Russian relations. Even the largest country in the region, Poland was sacrificed for U.S. strategic interests during and after World War II; first, in order to curry favor with Joseph Stalin, and after 1945 in the name of recognising the Soviets' 'legitimate' security interests. U.S.-Central European relations were, for all intents and purposes, subordinated to the roller-coaster of U.S.-Soviet relationship - and this pattern continued to prevail after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the U.S.-Russian relations as well. Thus, the enlargement of NATO basically served four purposes: 1) to prevent the emergence of a security 'grey zone' in the Middle of Europe and a power vacuum; 2) to prevent Russia from reclaiming its influence in its former satellites; 3) to help to create 'A Europe whole and free'; (some of the relevant documents incorporate George H. W. Bush's speech in Mainz in May 1989 [U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany, 1989] or the National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement of the Clinton Administration in December 1996 [Homeland Security Digital Library, 1996]). This strategic objective, shared by the Central Europeans, has remained the strongest bond between the U.S. and the Central European states ever since then, although there are minor differences

among the Eastern European countries regarding the perspectives of the geopolitical environment; and 4) to make sure that the post-Soviet societies would adopt a parliamentary democracy and a market economy. The enlargement of NATO in Central and Eastern Europe was implemented in the face of a rather weak opposition from Russia. Washington took advantage of the political turmoil following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s despite the warnings of such believers in *Realpolitik* in the U.S. as, among others, George D. Kennan, Henry A. Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft or John Lewis Gaddis. (Kennan famously remarked that the expansion of NATO was "the most fateful error of American foreign policy in the entire post-Cold War era.") (O'Hanlon, 2017, p. 85) They feared that the enlargement, on the one hand, unnecessarily provoke the Russians and, consequently, would make it more difficult to integrate the country into the world order and, on the other one, that the U.S. would assume additional responsibilities, such as extending security guarantees, in a region that does not belong in American core strategic interests in the world.

The early 2000s brought about a remarkable shift in U.S. policies towards Central Europe. First, the terrorist attacks diverted American attention to the greater Middle East and to fighting transnational terrorism globally. The Central Europeans were able to play only a rather insignificant role in these endeavors; their support was primarily symbolic both in the military contribution and diplomatic support. Second, in connection with the shifting American priorities – besides fighting transnational terrorism, a potentially existential challenge emerged in the Asia-Pacific region with the rising China –, Central Europe was neglected, 'ticked off.' And, third, when Vladimir Putin succeeded Boris Yeltsin, Russia started to pursue an increasingly assertive foreign and security policy in the former Soviet republics and Central Europe alike (see for example: Bugajski, 2004). The Europeans perceived the Obama administration's 'pivot or rebalance to Asia' as the reinforcement of this benevolent – or not – neglect of Europe in general, and Central Europe, in particular.

In parallel with this rather hazily defined shift of interest, the White House and the Pentagon started to demand a larger contribution to the common defence of the Atlantic Community from the European members (Secretary of Defence Robert Gates's speech in Brussels in June 2011) and, at the same time, expected the European allies to take charge of the security and stability of their neighborhood, especially in North Africa, on their own (with the often misinterpreted 'leading from behind' rhetoric). Though the Central Europeans promised to meet the required level of defence spending (2 percent of the GDP) at the Wales Summit of NATO in 2014 (NATO, 2014), and they were doing their best to contribute to the common efforts in places such as Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Western Balkans, they found themselves publicly criticised by Obama-administration officials for their perceived shortcomings in democratic values. The disputes in public and behind the scenes concerning the various interpretations of these values poisoned the atmosphere

between the U.S. and Hungary and, to a lesser degree, Poland, which – after all – is treated more leniently by Washington by definition because of its important geopolitical and geostrategic position primarily because of its intransigent anti-Russian behavior (and the relatively large number of Polish-American voters in some swing states in the U.S.). The rather bad-tempered relations could also be attributed to the fact that the U.S. had a left-of-center administration between 2009-2017, while in three out of the four Central European countries (the Visegrad 4), right-of-center governments were in office, which are ideologically much closer to the Republicans than to the Democrats in the U.S. (Sherman, 2018, p. 156).

This situation changed overnight with the election of Donald Trump. He repeatedly expressed on the campaign trail that he would not want to lecture other countries about democratic values; instead, he would conduct foreign affairs on the basis of mutually shared interests in the first place. As president, he wished symbolically to improve relations with the Central European allies, as his first official visit as President of the U.S. led to Warsaw, where he emphasised the importance of regional cooperation, endorsed the so-called Three Seas Initiative (whose first summit was held in Dubrovnik in 2016, and which is reminiscent of the Intermarium concept [Montagu, 2019] as championed, among others, by Marshall Józef Piłsudski in the interwar years). The prospects of a revitalised U.S.-Central European relations certainly look good during the third year of the Trump administration, they led to: the two sides' agreement on the broad outlines of the threat perception; the security challenges the Central European countries are facing and the U.S.'s willingness to address these issues to the satisfaction of the local governments; enhanced cooperation in the defence sector; the commitment by Washington to help to diversify energy supply to these countries (that is, to alleviate the one-sided dependence of Russian fossil energy supply); growing American presence in investment and technology transfer; possibly political support in the V4's struggle to resist further attempts by Brussels to create a federal Europe (a United States of Europe); as well as restraint by the Americans to try to impose their value system on countries with different historical experiences, different traditions, different social profiles, and different cultural background.

Security Cooperation

The single most important area where U.S. and Central European interests meet is security cooperation. Ironically, one of the challenges posed to this shared interest is coming from Western Europe, more specifically from the advocates of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), a European security policy without U.S. input. In 2000, a 60,000 strong Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) was announced within the ESDP (McCray, 2014). These attempts met almost universal rejection in the U.S.; both

Democratic and Republican politicians warned against any 'duplication' of the existing structures. Then Secretary of Defence William Cohen went as far as saying that "if the EU created a defence capability outside of NATO, the alliance would become 'a relic of the past'". Later U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns branded the effort as 'one of the greatest dangers to the transatlantic community'" (Carpenter, 2018). Washington, instead, lobbied for a military response force within NATO, and put pressure primarily on the new members of NATO in Central and Eastern Europe, which were – on the whole - receptive to the U.S. concerns because they strongly believed that the only country that was able to provide hard security guarantees for them was the U.S. The underlying issue is a struggle between Western European leaders, such as Emmanuel Macron, and the U.S. about the future role that America might or should play in Europe. Washington is vary of a federalised Europe with an independent defence and security capability because the present disagreements between the U.S. and the EU might degenerate into open hostilities, which – in turn – would weaken American positions in the world. NATO is the only official institution that makes the U.S. 'a European power,' and it obviously enhances America's opportunities to counter the Russian and Chinese influence in Europe, and even elsewhere. Moreover, the U.S. can legitimately press within NATO its allies to assume a larger share of the burdens of the Atlantic Community and thus, at least theoretically, it offers an opportunity for Washington to concentrate larger forces to combat the newly emerging military challenges elsewhere in the world, first and foremost in the Asia-Pacific region - the Obama administration's 'pivot to Asia' was intended to address this issue by shifting naval assets from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean - (Thompson, 2012). From a Central European point of view, a relatively strong American military, political and economic presence in Europe can be a sort of counterbalance to the centralising tendencies of the so-called core countries of Europe - which would mean, in essence, further loss of national sovereignty over a number of areas. Therefore, the countries of 'new Europe' have tended to support the U.S. even if they had misgivings about the latter's policies, and a similar pattern is likely to remain in place in the foreeseable future too.

The Central European countries, practically the moment when they became independent with the collapse of Soviet rule in the region, decided that the only country that would be able to provide 'hard' security for them against any future potential attempt by Moscow to regain its former influence in the region was the United States. Though the extension of security guarantees to the Central European states through NATO was not a universally popular idea within the American national security establishment, the rationale for assuming such a commitment was stronger than the contrary opinions. The appearance of NATO ever closer to the Russian border, to some extent, has generated a sort of vicious circle in the form of

the so-called security dilemma. In other words, the increase of NATO presence in Central and Eastern Europe has triggered countermeasures by Russia, and the situation may ultimately degenerate an even less secure environment than before.

Repeated U.S. attempts (such as, for example, the 'reset') to establish a strategic partnership with Russia have failed: the two countries are strategic competitors for all intents and purposes. (The National Security Strategy of the United States [White House, 2017, p. 2] acknowledges it when it identifies Russia and China as the major threat to the U.S.: China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity".) Putin's Russia operates on the principle of balance-of-power politics, and grabs every opportunity to improve its geopolitical and geostrategic position in a zero-sum game with the West in general. Thus, it took the opportunity to occupy Crimea and to start a quasi war with Ukraine after NATO decided against granting a Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Ukraine (and Georgia) in 2008 (NATO, 2008), while the EU pursued only half-heartedly its Eastern Partnership program. Moscow also capitalised on the fact that NATO's expeditionary force capabilities were strengthened for out-of-area operations, while territorial defence capabilities declined (including massive withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe), coupled with the neglect of the U.S. of (Central and Eastern) Europe until 2014 (Doran, Bugajski & Brown, 2017, p. 9, 17). The worries of Central and Eastern Europeans, especially Poland's and the Baltic states' about deterring Russian military build-up along its western borders, its occasional provocations or 'revisionist probings' (such as repeated violations of the airspace of the Baltic states), and its nuclear posture (especially after the termination of the INF Treaty) are exacerbated by the fact that large European NATO members (Germany, Spain, Italy, among others) are unwilling to spend more on defence, while the public opinion in the U.S. is very skeptical about further defence commitments in areas which are not considered to be of vital interest for the country. However, the U.S. plays a pivotal role in preserving the region's geopolitical status quo, where the U.S. and Russia are locked in a mutually asymmetrical strategic situation. On one hand, "Russia can threaten U.S. allies in (Eastern) Europe without threatening the U.S.," while the U.S. can use Central and Eastern Europe for "threatening the Russian homeland because of Moscow's strategic solitude" (Doran et al., 2017, p. 45).

The U.S.-Central European security cooperation is defined by the different threat perceptions to a large extent. The geopolitical position of Poland and the Baltic states make them exceptionally sensitive to any - real or imagined - indication of Russian assertiveness towards the regions, no matter whether it is the increasingly intimate German-Russian cooperation in energy supplies or the termination of the INF Treaty or Moscow's repeated testing of NATO's resolve and preparadness to defend the Baltics. At the same time, other countries in Central Europe which do not have such exposed geopolitical and geostrategic position as the Poles and

the Baltics, namely, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia sometimes tend to discount the seriousness of Russian threat to their, and the region's security. Moscow is doing its best to capitalise on this division of perception, and is courting, at times rather heavy-handedly, the latter group by offering short- and medium-term lucrative business deals - with the underlying strategic goal of maintaining a presence in its Western neighbourhood with a view of possibly converting it into political influence if it is needed to be. If Washington really wants to strengthen its ties with the Central Europeans, then it should address the security concerns of the individual countries separately, and as a first practical step, should increase its economic and financial presence in the region. Industrial cooperation and R&D programs offer good opportunities modelled on the U.S.-Polish Innovation Program (PLUS-IP) or the public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (US-Polish Trade Council, 2014).

NATO - the U.S. - seems to be reviving the Cold War era 'tripwire' operational principle in the eastern flank of the alliance; in other words, opting for reassurance in opposition to deterrence. The latter option is, of course, still on the table, especially with regard to President Trump's decision to abandon the INF Treaty of 1987. Russia has been working on a new generation of intermediate range land-based missiles since 2000, and deployed them in 2017 - most likely with a view to the concept of 'escalate to de-escalate' - (O'Hanlon, 2017, p. 8). The U.S. has not committed itself to deploying INF-weapons yet (avoiding an arms race for the time being) and, in fact, none of the NATO allies would like to see them on their soil. On the other hand, Moscow has accused Washington of making preparations for deploying such weapons in Poland and Romania, and, possibly, neither of them would oppose vehemently such an American decision because the Russians have gained advantage over the NATO/U.S. forces on the eastern frontline of the Atlantic alliance (Szőcs, 2019). The recent defence cooperation agreements with countries such as Poland, Romania or the Baltic states amount effectively a forward deployment of various U.S. military assets. The countries most vulnerable to Russian threats are obviously Estonia, Latvia, and Lithunia. Nevertheless, their defence under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty of 1949 is the most problematic and cost-intensive. According to a RAND estimate "seven brigades, tanks, artillery and planes" would be needed in the Baltics "indefinitely" to deter Russia (Grover, 2019, p. 4). (As a brigade is made up of 3,000-5,000 troops, some 30,000 U.S. [NATO] soldiers should be permanently deployed with appropriate equipment, infrastructure etc.)

The U.S. has recently stepped up its defence technology cooperation with the Central and Eastern Europeans. The most intensive one for obvious geostrategic reasons is with Poland. Thus, Poland purchases U.S.-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket System for $414 million, which complements the acquisition of Patriots in 2018

in the value of $4.8 billion; in addition, Warsaw is considering the purchase of F-35s as well (for some $6.6 billion) (Mehta, 2019). Vice President Mike Pence on a visit to Poland in September 2019 signed an agreeement with his hosts about cooperation on 5G technology - as one of the steps in which Washington would like to prevent its European allies from signing up to 5G technology provided by the Chinese Huawai. Besides technology transfer and arms sales, the U.S. has repeatedly deployed the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team in Poland since Russia's occupation of Crimea in 2014 (EUCOM, 2019; Defense 24, 2016), while in August 2018, five F-22 Raptors and 40 airmen were sent to Poland to reinforce American military presence, and to send a message to Moscow that the U.S. intends to live up to its commitments under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

The Baltic states practically place no limits (within their own capabilities) to provide host nation support for NATO, especially U.S. forces; as Estonian Defence Minister Jüri Luik at one point declared: Estonia would welcome 'any increase' of U.S. forces in the region. One of the major obstacles is, however, the lack of military infrastructure in the Baltic countries at a time when 'a permanent rotational presence,' was accepted as the *modus operandi* at the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016 in the form of the so-called Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) with four battalion-sized battlegroups (about 1,600 troops) to be stationed in Poland and the Baltic states (Braw, 2016, p. 1-2). (Some analysts claim that eFP battlegroups are more than just tripwires; they may as well be leading elements of the deterrence-by-denial strategy (Moller, 2019). There was some doubt about the legality of the 'permanent' presence of NATO troops in the area, but the position taken by the alliance was that as Russia had violated the NATO-Russian Framework Agreement by invading Georgia and part of Ukraine, NATO [was] free to position military forces in the eastern part of NATO territory. In addition, only permanent U.S. presence convinces Poland and Russia that the U.S. is truly committed to the defence of the region.

The real problem for the Baltic countries from a strategic point of view is the so-called Suwalki Gap, "the 65km Lithuanian-Polish border strip between Kaliningrad and Russian-allied Belarus that is the Balts' only land link to the rest of Europe and could be cut off fast if Russia doubted NATO's willingness to defend its members" (The Economist, 2018). Therefore, rhetoric coming from the White House about 'strategic autonomy" scares the Baltic leaders. In fact, proper infrastructure for NATO/U.S. troops and vehicles is a problem in other countries in the region as well; the recently signed Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) between the U.S. and Hungary is intended, in part, to remedy this situation. (It came into force on 21 August 2019.) In general, the U.S. should support the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities in Central Europe, such as anti-tank missiles (ATGMs), surface-to-air (SAM) missiles, and anti-ship missiles for the littoral states. Overall, however, geopolitical realities defy the efforts by Poland and the Baltic states, in the first place,

to solve a problem that cannot be solved with military measures. In other words, no amount of U.S. troops can change the neighbourhood of Russia for these countries (see more in Moller, 2019).

All these military sales, deployments, and technology transfers, however, should be part of a cohesive NATO/U.S. strategy in collective defence. On one hand, they should be implemented with a constant (re)evaluation of Russian pushback and, on the other one, should not be perceived as a zero-sum game within the U.S. military presence in Europe. More precisely, NATO-infrastructure in a broad sense should not be scaled back in Western Europe, specifically in Germany. (It is another question whether an increased U.S. military presence in Europe could be realised without decreasing U.S. military presence elsewhere in the world; neither the American public, nor the U.S. Congress is in a mood to increase American military commitments in areas which are not deemed vitally important for the country.) Nevertheless, Central and Eastern Europe have received a small chunk of the increased defence budget of the U.S., including $1.4 billion for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) (Pellerin, 2018) as well as slight increases in areas such as prepositioning, building partner capacity, improving infrastructure, and exercises and training.

However, relatively substantial efforts by the Central and Eastern European countries are needed to contribute to common defence, otherwise they may fall into the trap of the West Europeans' dependency culture on U.S. security guarantees without contributing to common defence in harmony with their financial, economic, and technological capabilities. The much-touted two percent of the GDP spent on defence-related issues may not be enough in itself; the question is whether the amount is spent smartly and in accordance to the needs of the alliance, especially in the area of the so-called niche capabilities (for example, fighting chemical warfare etc.) While NATO/U.S. military presence in Central and Eastern Europe should primarily be gauged in response to Russian challenges, the other major country in the broader region 'to watch' carefully is Germany, which has always been rather uncomfortable with the American military presence and strategies even during the Cold War (one outstanding example was the question of the deployment of the Pershing IIs and the cruise missiles in response to the Soviet intermediate range nuclear missiles in the 1980s), and in the post-Cold War years has become more and more critical of U.S. foreign and security policies. There are influential members of the foreign and security establishments in Berlin, Brussels and Paris who talk about 'post-Atlanticist' policies (The Economist, 2018), while the number of '*Russlandverstehers*' has increased in the unified Germany in the past decades, and the majority of the population believe that the U.S. poses a greater danger to world peace than, for instance, Russia or China (Carpenter, 2018). In fact, one underlying rationale for increased U.S. presence in Central and Eastern Europe might be to discourage a too intimate relationship (*rapproachement*) between Berlin and Moscow.

Despite Russian conventional threats along the eastern borders of NATO, Moscow has deployed a wide range of non-traditional weapons in its grand strategy to regain some of its influence in Central and Eastern Europe, to undermine the unity of the European Union, and to drive a wedge between the U.S. and her NATO allies in Europe. In fact, a conventional, or a nuclear, military confrontation does not seem to be likely in the foreseeable future. Therefore, NATO/U.S. had better prepare for such challenges posed by Russia as hybrid warfare and cyber warfare. Intelligence, economic, or financial penetration into the Central and Eastern European NATO members (at times with the help of front organisations), disinformation campaigns are imminent and real threats to the national security of the countries targeted, and to the cohesion of NATO alliance as well. Hybrid warfare has already been used by Moscow against Ukraine in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, and the experiences gained in these conflicts are bound to be carefully studied by the Russian strategists as to their potential application in future conflicts in the neighbourhood. What is a 'clear and present danger' for the U.S. and its allies in NATO is Russia's cyber warfare which was used influencing the U.S. presidential elections in 2016, possibly the French and German parliamentary elections in the past few years, and definitely deployed against Estonia and Latvia in the Baltics (The Straits Times, 2017), as well as against international organisations, such as, for instance, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (Brunsden, 2018). The wide range of Russian cyber warfare activity is, without question, one of the most pressing chellenges NATO, and especially its Central and Eastern European members are facing. Given the immense Russian capabilities in this area, it is stating the obvious, that the individual members of NATO cannot successfully defend themselves; it is their existential interest to work together with the other members of the Atlantic Community, first and foremost with the U.S. Moreover, cybersecurity threats to the Europeans (and the U.S.) are not only posed by Russia. The debate over the role of the Chinese Huawei in establishing the 5G mobile network in Europe, or in some countries in Europe, relates in reality to national security in a broader sense.

Energy

Energy security is a longstanding issue for the Central and Eastern Europeans; specifically, their total, or near total dependence on Russian oil and gas exports. Although weak attempts have been made in the past decades to weaken this one-sided dependency, which potentially goes hand in hand with "Russian leverage over domestics politics and business" (Szőke, 2018, p. 4), no real alternative suppliers and routes of supply have been found or created – to a large extent because of the divergent interests of the large European states. The single most

important matter in this respect is the construction of Nordstream 1, and now the Nordstream 2 pipeline by Germany and Russia, though some companies from other countries are also taking part in the enterprise. Angela Merkel's government steered itself into a difficult position when, after the accident at the Fukushima power plant in Japan in March 2011, it decided to gradually shut down the nuclear power plants in Germany, and thus to base energy supply on fossil and renewable energy (Knight, 2011; Dickel, 2014). As the latter is far from adequate, Berlin has had to rely on gas imports to a large extent. Russia's Gazprom became the single largest supplier of natural gas to Germany, and its share in the German energy mix may reach 30 percent or so with the completion of Nordstream 2 National Gas Consumption in Germany in 2018 reached 88.3 billion cubic meter (bcm) that is, a little less than 15 percent of the total energy consumption, while Nord Stream 2 is expected to carry some 55 bcm annually to Germany (Statista, 2019).

The strategic and energy security implications for the Central and Eastern Europeans are substantial. As for the former, the Central and Eastern European transit routes will be rendered redundant to a large extent, which means the loss of transit fees, as well as the loss of a portion of their bargaining positions vis-á-vis the Russians. The strong cooperation of the Germans and the Russians in this strategically important area also contributes to fears of a *rapproachement* between Berlin and Moscow at the expense of countries between them. The specter of such relationship runs against the interests of the U.S. too. Therefore, one of the single most important areas for a close cooperation between the U.S. and the Central and Eastern Europeans is American assistance for the diversification of energy supplies to the latter. The U.S. is on its way to become one of the largest (liquified) natural gas exporters in the world; as for production, it leads with an output of 27 trillion cubic feet daily compared to Russia's 22 trillion (Alexiev, 2018). So far, three 'beachheads' for receiving American LNG and its regasification have been established in Poland, Lithuania and Greece, and another one is under construction in Croatia, while in the U.S. the first so-called micro terminal supplying LNG in containers has been opened at Elba Lake Island, GA. Poland's largest energy company, PGNiG signed a contract with two American corporations in October 2018, which will deliver LNG to Poland in the next 20 years (Alexiev, 2018). Mention should be made about an intended cooperation by ExxonMobil and OMV to drill natural gas in the Black Sea off Romania (Pataky, 2019a). If realised, the enterprise will efficiently weaken the dependence on Russian gas of countries like, for example, Hungary. (Its impact on the bilateral U.S.-Hungarian political relations should not be overlooked either, likewise that of the Defence Cooperation Agreement.) (Pataky, 2019b) The future complementary north-south energy corridors (to the existing east-west ones) will make it a real possibility for Central and Eastern European countries to diversify their gas exports in the medium term or so (currently, American LNG is not competitive enough with gas supplied by Gazprom).

What is more important from the strategic point of view, the north-south energy corridors will likely strenghten the political cooperation among the countries in the region; in other words, they will potentially help the realisation of stronger cooperation within the framework of the Three Seas Iniative (Bielan, 2019). Besides exporting LNG to Central Europe, the U.S. can help the diversification of the energy mix of the countries in the region with technology transfer in two different areas. One, nuclear power plant technology (General Electric, Westinghouse), which can directly reduce the Russian (Rosatom) technology transfer in this field. Nuclear technology is an exceptionally sensitive matter for national security as well; the choice between American and Russian technologies transcends the purely technological and economic considerations. Two, technology transfer in alternative, clean energy, especially solar power, in which U.S. technology is among the most advanced in the world (for more details see Kramer, Lyman & Carstei, 2010, p. 2-3).

The Politics of U.S.-Central European Relations

While the defence and security cooperation between the U.S. and the Central European states has been, on the whole, satisfactory despite occasional American dissatisfaction because of low defence spending levels, inadequate military infrastructures or military hardware procurements by some countries in the region, Washington always appreciated the efforts of the Central Europeans' contribution to peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan, Iraq or in the Western Balkans. These problems seem to be efficiently addressed now by the Central European allies in NATO: real efforts are being made to increase defence spending, to improve military indrastructure (for instance, within the framework of the U.S.-Hungarian DCA), and each Central and Eastern European country, from the Poles through the Hungarians to the Romanians, have recently concluded arms sales of relatively high value with the U.S. The most problematic area of cooperation has become the political one, to a large extent because of the 'shallow understanding' (Fried, Wisniewski, Forsthuber & Kudzko, 2019, p. 10) of Central Europe in the U.S., mainly because the region is considered to be of secondary importance, and was treated, in fact, as an object in the great power game for a long time. (Daniel Fried [2019] warns that "the U.S. should never again treat Central Europe as an object to be traded".). This approach has not gone altogether: whatever interest it attracts in America, it is invariably in the context of U.S.-Russian, U.S.-German, U.S.-EU, and recently U.S.-China relations. Thus, the successive U.S. administrations, in the context of a global containment policy against China, have put pressure on the Central and Eastern Europeans to go slow with the 16+1 framework with China, the participation in the Road and Belt Initiative (RBI), to stay away from the Asian Infrastructure Investment

Bank (AIIB), and to rebuff Huawai. Tomáš Valášek (2019) even ventured that the U.S. "regards Central Europe [minus Poland] as enemy beachhead" (not only for China, but for Russia as well). The author further claims that the U.S. "has come to believe that weak governance and corruption is what allows China and Russia to gain undue influence" in the region. The Russian and Chinese inroads into Central Europe, however, are facilitated to a larger extent by the EU's patronising attitudes, double-standards, and the European Commission's overstepping its original job description - a.k.a. its power grab - (Salazar, 2018).

As for the EU, a gradual 'widening of the Atlantic Ocean' cannot be excluded from the strategic considerations. Policy statements and public opinion show that a 'post-Atlanticist' idea has gained ground in Western Europe, especially in Germany, while 'Atlanticism' is still stronger in Central and Eastern Europe. (In a recent survey conducted in 14 European countries, the majority of the 60,000 respondents would not take sides in a U.S.-Russian or a U.S.-China conflict; as for the possibility in the latter case, it is only 10 percent of the Germans who expressed pro-U.S. sentiments [Carpenter, 2019].) In short, the U.S.-German strategic debate has centered around three issues: NATO and its mission in the post-Cold War era; the relations with Russia; and the U.S.'s leadership role in the world. Germany has become a free-rider "in both security and economic terms" (Kundnani & Puglierin, 2018, p. 2). With reference to NATO and Russia, as Samuel Charap is quoted by Stephen F. Szabo (2015, p. 119), "Germany had a blame America first" posture, and, on the whole, German political, economic, and financial elites are especially understanding towards Russia. Finally, German leaders have become incresingly critical of U.S. foreign and security policies after the collapse of the Soviet Union when the existential threat posed by the Warsaw Pact disappeared. (One outstanding example is Gerhard Schroeder's public opposition to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 in the company of Jacques Chirac and Vladimir Putin.)

This 'post-Atlanticism' in Western Europe upgrades Central and Eastern Europe for the U.S., and that is one of the reasons why President Trump's first European visit started in Warsaw, where he attended a meeting of the 'Three Seas Initiative,' which - on one level - can be construed "as a counterweight to the Franco-German-dominated E.U" (Lipman, 2017). Washington is watching very carefully the Russian and Chinese activities in the region as well. A sort of ambivalence can also be detected in the U.S. with regard to the European integration, while – at least – the Trump administration with its public support of the Brexit seems to ideologically get closer to the Central Europeans' concept of a 'Europe of nations' instead of a federal Europe. The U.S. should also take the perceived increased influence of the V4 countries inside the European Union into consideration. However, Fried et al. (2019, p. 10) warn that Washington "should never" force the Central Europeans "to choose between European integration and partnership with the U.S.," mainly because an integrated Europe is a benefit for the U.S.

Occasional American insenitiveness to individual Central European countries stems from a dogmatic application of American experiences in political, social and economic history in Washington's dealings with the governments in the region, and the tendency to apply universalist 'one size fits all' solutions to problems, instead of 'targeted engagement,' in countries with sometimes markedly different political, social, economic and ethnic realities. It has led, quite frequently, to the U.S.'s involvement in partisan politics in a few Central European countries (sometimes indirectly, through the State Department's rather subjective annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices), which did not enhance the popularity of America in the states affected. Some see in Washington specific Central and Eastern European countries as convenient 'soft spots' to promote the values which are shared predominantly by the liberal political establishment in the U.S. Moreover, there has been a relative decline of U.S. power in the world as a result of the emergence of new power centers, and there is a growing awareness in America that the country is not capable to play the role of a 'global sheriff' or to make good on such liberal ideas as 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) all over the world. As Douglas Hurd, the former British Foreign Secretary aptly remarks in his *Memoirs* (2003, p. 542) with regard to the doctrine of humanitarian intervention, "universal rhetoric, however generously meant, is unconvincing".

There has been a visible shift in U.S. policies towards the Central European countries recently. In general geopolitical context, the region has been upgraded by the Trump administration as one of the'unquiet frontiers' important for U.S. interests in the world (Grygiel & Mitchell, 2016). Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has placed emphasis on "engaging Central Europe… as allies, as partners, as countries one and all in NATO, and members of the European Union", while Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Ambassador Philip T. Reeker declared that "there is recognition that ignoring Central Europe was not something that was accomplishing anything on either side…" (Wemer, 2019). It is stating the obvious that it is the U.S. that ultimately defines the dynamics of the relations with the Central European countries. Therefore, future relationship between America and the region is primarily depending on Washington's choice of treating Central Europe as a geopolitically important region or as a periphery which does not deserve too much attention. If Central Europeans are seen as being capable to render useful assistance for the U.S. to fight its global strategic competitors, primarily Russia because of their geographic proximity, secondarily China, then the links are bound to be stronger.

An important factor in the short-and medium-term future of the relations between the U.S. and Central Europe is Washington's intentions regarding Ukraine. In case the U.S. commits itself to keeping Ukraine out of Russia's sphere of interest, which is in the vital interest of the Central Europeans, it should, at the same time, address some policies of the governments in Kyiv, which discriminate national minorities

in Ukraine, even if they pursue anti-Russian policies (at least publicly). Turning a blind eye to violations of human rights and civil rights there, might contribute to the further decline of U.S. prestige in the region and belief in its claim of 'an exceptional nation.' It is also a matter of choice what Europe the U.S. would like to see; if a less centralised, 'Europe of nations' is Washington's strategic goal, then the Central Europeans may play a useful role in the attempts to prevent the emergence of a United States of Europe. If the above are the overall strategic intentions of the U.S., then it should enhance its security, economic, and financial presence in Central Europe (from defence industry cooperation through energy diversification to technological trasfer), and should show more understanding towards local political, social and even cultural trends which may not meet all the criteria of a perfect 'Jeffersonian democracy'.

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NATO in the Grips of Geopolitics and Geo-Economics

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Abstract: During the two decades after the end of the Cold War, it was perceived that, instead of geopolitics, geo-economics became the determining feature of the international system, where the importance of military power was giving way to economic power. This obviously had an impact on NATO as a military alliance, which struggled to find new missions and meaning in the post-Cold War era. However, in the past decade, the international relations literature has been overwhelmed with pieces on the return of geopolitics. American hegemony has been shaken, revisionist powers, such as China and Russia, have been pursuing their interests much more assertively, with the latter's aggressive behavior leading to a revitalisation of NATO's core purpose, collective defence. At the same time, the geopolitical or geo-economic logic in the new international environment prevails to a different degree on the two sides of the Atlantic. This is a major source of tension in NATO which will likely not disappear in the near future.

Keywords: NATO, geopolitics, geo-economics, transatlantic relations, European security

Introduction

With the emergence of "the Rest" - non-Western states - in the past two decades, the international system has become more multipolar and multi-centric. The power shift from the West towards the East is obvious in light of the changes within the global distribution of material sources of power: economic strength, military might, technological development (van der Putten, Rood & Meijnders, 2016). Unsurprisingly, these changes have had a profound impact on how emerging states behave in the international arena, becoming more assertive and even aggressive in their pursuit of their interests. The growing material strength has allowed revisionist powers to increasingly rely on their military power in conducting foreign policy, including coercing other nations through military

threats as well as the use of force (Morris, Mazarr, Hornung, Pezard, Binnendijk, Kepe, 2019). These developments have led to an increasingly shared view that geopolitics is back and is overshadowing the relevance of peaceful economic interactions in the international system. However, the impact of the revival of geopolitics and the present dynamics between geo-economics and geopolitics in describing the current international system needs more nuanced examination. A more accurate picture on the question would allow a better understanding of the impact of this power-transition on the security relationship among Western countries, especially its premier alliance, NATO.

According to the main thesis of the paper, the United States has a predominantly geopolitical approach to the challenge posed by Russia and China and acts accordingly, while the dominant characteristic of the European approach is geo-economic. The paper argues that this has significant implications for the political cohesion of NATO and pose limits for unified allied action. The paper will first revolve around the concepts of geopolitics and geo-economics. It will proceed with an overview of how initially geo-economics and then geopolitics prevailed in the international system since the end of the Cold War. The paper will then examine whether the geopolitical or the geo-economic approach is dominant in the strategy of European NATO members and the United States with respect to the challenges posed by the revisionist powers and the nature of some of the emerging security threats. Within this context, the paper will point out how these different approaches impact NATO's cohesion and decisions.

IR Theories on the Role of Economics

The connection between politics and economics in international relations (IR) has always been strong, the question whether politics defines economics, or the other way around, is as old as political thought itself. Classical international relations theories, which emerged in the middle of the 20th century, all realised the importance of economics in the international system. According to realist theories, the international system is defined by the constant power competition and conflicts of states, and the power of a state, not least its military might, largely rests on its economic resources (Dunne, 2013, pp. 59-66). The emergence of China as a great power through astonishing economic development with increasing military might and ambitions clearly resembles this concept. Liberal theorists highlight the importance of commerce in international relations, believing that nations ultimately strive for greater wealth, which is supported by increasing trade and economic interactions (Dunne, 2013, pp. 94-98). From a

liberal perspective, the economic interests of nations thus drive states towards a more cooperative behavior, in the end, enhancing peace. While popular during the 1990's, this liberal optimism seems to have faded in recent years in light of the increasing power competition and set-backs in globalisation (Bergesen, 2018). Still, the relevance of the theory and the role of economic relations continue to be relevant.

Neorealists and neoliberals both emphasise the importance of economic gains of nations, which to a large extent define their position in the international system. While neoliberals think international actors - in our case, considering the US, China, EU - are interested in absolute economic gains, neorealists – with a more pessimistic and competitive world view - say these competitors are looking for relative gains in relation to other states. Another structural approach, world system theory considers the economic division of labor between different countries and regions as a central organising feature of international relations (Weber, 2014).

The post-modern theory of constructivism questions the role of economic and material elements in international relations, and highlights the importance of ideas, norms and identities of nations (Dunne, 2013, pp. 77-79, 114, 120). In this context, actions of states are not defined by their quest to maximise their power, but according to their subject preferences defined by their norms and values. However, even within the constructivist approach, economics play a role, as the economic circumstances of a nation gives considerable influence on its political culture and identity. American exceptionalism would be unimaginable without the economic success of the United States, post-war German pacifism, moralism and liberalism in its foreign relations was underpinned by its "Wirtschaftswunder", while in the case of revisionist Russia or China, economic strength is a crucial factor in their view of themselves as sovereign great powers distinct of the West (Hopf, 1998). Thus, it seems undisputable from a theoretical perspective that economic relations and economic strength play a crucial role in shaping the international environment.

This proposition is underpinned by empirical observations of present international relations. The US-Chinese trade war, the use of energy policy in statecraft, the competition of major transcontinental investment initiatives (Belt and Road Initiative, BRI), the extensive use of economic sanctions all point toward the continued relevance of economic tools in the hands of international stakeholders. However, if the question is, which is the leading arranging principle in today's international system, whether economic factors are primarily just instruments under geopolitical objectives or the ends in themselves, the answer becomes more complicated. In order to examine the above-highlighted questions, there needs to be a clarification on the concepts of geopolitics and geo-economics.

Concepts for Geopolitics and Geo-Economics

Although politics and economics are closely interconnected, as it has been highlighted above, it is important to make a distinction between political and economic objectives in the context of international relations. We frame this difference with the terms of geopolitics and geo-economics. Geopolitics, as it was first described in the late 19th century, was initially related to interstate conflict, a practice of states controlling and competing for territory. As the number and quality of actors and the nature of the sources of conflict has changed significantly, geopolitical thought changed as well. According to the author, contemporary geopolitics can be best explained as sources, practices, and representations that allow for the control of territory and the extraction of resources (Flint, 2006, p. 16). Although there are various approaches to geopolitics (Flint, 2006, pp. 17-24), states and their quest for political control or influence over geographical space is still at the core of geopolitics. In this regard, geopolitics seeks security and military advantages, alongside the promotion and defence of national values and prestige.

As with geopolitics, there are different approaches to the understanding of geo-economics. According to Edward Luttwak (1990, p. 19), "*geo-economics' is the best term I can think of to describe the admixture of the logic of conflict with the methods of commerce.*" Luttwak was giving a forecast of the post-Cold War era, in which competition among states will be fought through economic means. Another description was given by Kenichi Ohmae (1991), who argued that the relevance of nation states are diminished by globalisation, and the new international system is organised primarily by the transnational interactions and interests of companies, individuals and NGO's. In his understanding, geo-economics describes the emerging integrated globalised world system. Sanjaya Baru (2012) gives two different understandings of geo-economics. Geo-economics can either be understood as the relationship between economic policy and changes in national power and geopolitics, or as the economic consequences of trends in geopolitics and national power. According to this description, geo-economics can be either understood as the objectives of politics or the means of politics. In connection to the latter description, the author understands geo-economics as a policy where economic objectives are given a priority in state's grand strategy, and both political and economic means are being used to reach this objective.

As states strive to strengthen their geopolitical and geo-economic power parallel in the long run, they often develop hand-in-hand. However, in the anarchic international system filled with various forms of competition and conflict, it is sometimes difficult to enhance both of these objectives with the same emphasis,

and one of them becomes the primary framework of a state's grand strategy. At the same time, geopolitical and geo-economic considerations generally are not pursued exclusively, states usually calculate that by preferring to give priority to one objective, the decision will in the long run also help to advance the other objective. Therefore, geopolitics and geo-economics as a conceptual basis for grand strategy of states can rarely be completely separated from each other, it is more precise to talk about differing emphasis and priorities between the two concepts.

The Emergence of Geo-Economics in the Post-Cold War Era

As we have outlined above, geopolitics and geo-economics are both shaping the international environment, and neither of them prevails exclusively in any given time. However, one or the other seems to be a more important factor in shaping international relations at a given timeframe. During the Cold War, when bipolarity and the tension between NATO and the Warsaw Pact was the main organising principle of the international system, geopolitical considerations – balance of military power, securing sphere of influence – usually trumped geo-economic ones in the strategy of major powers (Bisley 2011). As the threat was clear and existential in nature, Western nations formed their grand strategy through the lens of geopolitics, even post-war West Germany, which had to give up part of its sovereignty and its geopolitical ambitions but was integrated into Western political and military structures. NATO, as a defence alliance, was a vital geopolitical instrument in the hands of Western powers in the era.

During the post-Cold War period, from the early 1990's until the great economic crisis of 2008, globalisation received a big push under the umbrella of US leadership and its unquestioned primacy (Bergesen 2018). In the early 1990's, this was coupled with a wave of democratisation, which further helped to press political and ideological conflicts alongside the issue of geographical spheres of influence into the background in international politics. As Edward Luttwak wrote in 1990 (p. 19) about the forthcoming era, "*Everyone, it appears, now agrees that the methods of commerce are displacing military methods… States, as spatial entities structured to jealously delimit their own territories, will not disappear but reorient themselves toward geo-economics in order to compensate for their decaying geopolitical roles*."

Although the September 11th attacks and the subsequent war on terror seemed to have brought back the significance of geopolitics into international affairs. The implications were felt in NATO as well. On the one hand, it found its new mission in the form of crisis management operations and fighting terrorism,

on the other hand, it almost caused irreparable damage to the alliance during the Iraq war, as key European members of NATO openly objected to US strategy in the Middle East.

However, the conflicts in the Middle East and against jihadism fought by the United States and its allies were not the crucial story which primarily shaped the international system itself, and which will be ultimately decisive for NATO's future. Rather, it was the "rise of the Rest", the significant economic growth of emerging nations such as the "BRICS",[1] foremost that of China, and a series of crisis impacting the West and its weak responses, that were the most important trends shaping international system (Zakaria, 2008).

At the beginning of the post-Cold War era, the United States enjoyed a considerable economic and military advantage ahead of all its competitors, and China's emergence as a peer competitor of the United States seemed to be in the distant future. Russia was occupied with rebuilding its economy and its state structure and institutions after its rapid decline during the 1990's because of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The West was economically deeply interested in cooperation with the emerging markets, and in light of its overall military and economic advantages, the faster growth of emerging powers did not seem threatening for their geopolitical position (Mead, 2014). It looked as if the Western dominated, rule-based international institutions and democratic peace underlined by the West's military power would not have an alternative in the foreseeable future. This notion was further strengthened by the expansion of the NATO and the EU into Central and Eastern Europe, incorporating countries into Western institutions which were previously in the orbit of exclusive Soviet influence.

Within this era of historically relative geopolitical stability and considerable global economic growth, the primacy of the pursuit of economic objectives were at the center of international relations. Although political and economic tensions were present among the major power centers of the World, those did not considerably affect the overall political and economic cooperation of the major powers. Global trade and investments grew significantly in this period even among would be great power competitors.[2] As a sign of a more integrated world economy, Russia was let in to the G8 club in 1998 and China was allowed to join the WTO in 2001 (Grant, 2012).

Although relations between Russia and the West gradually deteriorated from 2003, trade and investments grew significantly in this period, especially between the EU and Russia. Even Russia's war with Georgia in 2008 had only minor effects

1 Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

2 Between 1990 and 2008, the gowth of global trade was about 2,5 times greater than the expansion of the global economy (IMF, 2012).

on its political and economic relations with the West. Western nations did not impose any sanctions on Russia because of the war against Georgia, and in the subsequent year, the "reset policy" was launched by the US and NATO, though as it turned out not long after, the rapprochement ultimately failed (Turkowski, 2007).

German-Russian and US-Chinese relations during the post-cold war era until the 2014 war with Ukraine also reflect this geo-economic driven strategy.[3] Subsequent German governments gave priority to establish close economic cooperation with Russia, while placing geopolitical considerations - the increase of Russian military spending since President Putin came to power, the Russia-Georgian war in 2008, or the state of democracy in Russia - into the background (Green, Hough & Miskimmon, 2007). According to the German position, this did not mean that they were abandoning geopolitical interests or political principles. In their calculation at the time, deepening economic cooperation would eventually lead to a more cooperative Russia on the international stage and a more open Russian political system favorable to the West.

The United Sates was seeking to integrate China into the international system and offered it a unique strategic dialogue on managing their relations. The US pursued this strategy for a long time in the hope that China might eventually become a "responsible international stakeholder". However, as China grew stronger economically, it became more powerful politically and militarily, opening up the gates for increased competition with other great powers, in the back-yard of Western Europe, including in NATO and EU member Central and Eastern European states. Meanwhile, Western economies were largely driven by competitive pressures and the prospect of gaining access to the World's fastest growing market – geo-economic considerations -, bringing first technology and know-how to China and helping its economic rise, then, as China developed economically, allowing Chinese investments and technology into strategic sectors. The cumulative effect of the above described trend was the gradual erosion of Western competitive economic advantage, while NATO lost sight of the strategic big picture with respect to these emerging geopolitical challenges (Suri, 2014).

The Return of Geopolitics

As the two most powerful emerging nations, China and Russia expanded economically in the previous decade, for different reasons, but they both began to translate their power into a more assertive foreign policy in the recent years, not the least by significantly investing in their military capabilities. In the case of

3 Between 2000 and 2010, the volume of trade between the EU and Russia grew by 185 percent (Eurostat, 2011).

China, its growing military power, nationalism and increased interests and stakes in regional and global affairs are the key driving factors of its evolving foreign policy (Yasuhiro, 2014). Although the basic tenets of China's strategy have not changed, China has been much more assertive in advancing its economic and security interests in its vicinity, often sidestepping international law and taking confrontational unilateral steps, not least through its increasingly powerful military. It has come close to low intensity maritime confrontation with a host of its neighbors in recent years, including Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and also with the United States, which has an active maritime and areal presence in the region (Brady, 2014). China is also expanding its military presence in the Indian Ocean through basing arrangements with partner countries in order to secure its access to vital maritime routes to and from South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Chinese expansion in the latter regions is causing increasing concerns especially in France, which has extensive geopolitical interests in the MENA and sub-Saharan region. The United States is viewing China's rise with increasing concerns and begun to adjust its grand strategy accordingly with implications for NATO as well, as the paper will explore later on.

Russia, the other revisionist, but much weaker power, has confronted the Western order even more openly, and with direct consequences on NATO. Signs of increasing Russian revisionism and its will to use military force were made clear already in the Russia-Georgia war in 2008. However, the political and economic consequences were limited back then, as the issues at stake - South Ossetia and Abkhazia - were not as significant in a geopolitical sense, the question of the aggressor was more complicated, and the political environment was different in the West (Hamilton, 2018). The stakes in Ukraine became much bigger for NATO in 2014. The ouster of President Yanukovich by pro-Western political forces in early 2014 and the Russian response of the annexation of the Crimea and its military intervention in Eastern Ukraine led to the largest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the Cold War (Chivvis, 2015, p. 33). Russian behavior has brought back such security concerns to Europe which were unknown in the past twenty-five years in the region.

Although describing the new geopolitical reality as a new Cold War would be misleading,[4] the current confrontation will likely have a lasting negative impact on the relations between Russia and the West. Since Russia is facing increasing challenges concerning its economy and demography, the current regime is investing heavily in its military, which it sees as one of the few tools – along with

4 The main arguments for this notion is the difference between pure size, the political, economic and military weight of today's Russia in comparison to the former Soviet Union. As the Soviet Union could be labelled as a super power in the same category as the United States, today's Russia is just a regional power.

its vast energy resources - which it can use effectively to coerce its adversaries and to promote and defend its interests. Russia's intervention in Syria in 2015 and its continued military presence there as well as its pursuit to build new political and security bridge-heads in the MENA region and Africa underscores this strategy. While some EU members seem open to the idea of reengagement with Russia, this would probably take some time due to the stalemate in the implementation of the Minsk Agreement (Klijn, 2019). Furthermore, the United States is likely to uphold its new containment policy against Russia and press its European allies to maintain the EU sanctions regime. Since the Wales Summit of 2014, NATO's reassurance, deterrence and adaptation measures have reflected to a certain extent in this new geopolitical reality. Increasing the military presence in the Baltics in Poland and the Black Sea and the readiness of NATO forces demonstrated the military awareness in the changes of the geopolitical environment (NATO, 2019).

Another development which needs to be taken into consideration is the nature of the geopolitical threats. The line between economic and national security relevant activities of adversaries is increasingly blurred, the threshold for article five relevant attacks in multiple economic related domains is extremely difficult to define, demonstrated by the extremely complex challenge of creating an efficient defence in hybrid warfare (Valasek, 2019). Energy security, cyber domain, communication networks, artificial intelligence (AI), strategic infrastructure are all areas where economic and security factors appear parallel, leading to an intertexture of geo-economic and geopolitical interests. In this context, while Russia is actively using its leverage against European NATO members especially in the energy domain, China is becoming a key stakeholder in investments in communication networks - especially 5G network - and strategic infrastructure.

NATO has undeniably taken notice and has partly recognised the potential security implications of these economic and technological developments. Among others, it has established Emerging Security Challenges Division with responsibilities in the aforementioned areas, set up or supported new Centers of Excellence dealing with these issues, recognised cyberspace as a domain of military operations and has paid more attention to protection of critical energy infrastructure (Szőke, 2019). However, these steps either focus on the direct defence and military aspects of a given threat or challenge or they are too general in their approach. They are not strategic with respect to the scope and the fundamental sources of the threats. In some cases, NATO allies fail to come to a common understanding on whether there is a threat in relation to certain economic activities, and there is clearly no consensus among NATO members in defining the proper unified response (Szőke, 2018, p. 7). The difference between the geopolitical and geo-economic approaches on these challenges is a major source of tensions within the alliance.

The Continued Dominance of Geo-Economics in Europe

While the geo-political challenge increased in the 2008-2014 period, Europe a was occupied with internal problems, the fallout of the 2008-2009 economic crisis. The great recession had initially hit the United States and Europe much harder than China and other emerging economies. While the United States had shown signs of a strong recovery by 2011, the EU economy was stagnating fell into a series of economic and currency crisis. The euro crisis of 2009-2011 nearly meant the end of the monetary union. From a geopolitical perspective, two major implications on Europe must to be emphasised. Most European NATO members continued to slash defence budgets, further weakening its military potential and readiness to tackle security threats and increasing the gap with the United States (Csiki, 2014). Furthermore, it strengthened the centrality of geo-economic thinking in the European leadership, sidelining the significance of the future geopolitical challenges.

The 2014 Ukrainian developments as well as the deteriorating conflicts in the MENA region, especially with the emergence of ISIS and the migration crisis, were certainly a turning point in Europe. European NATO members at least began to take defence more seriously emphasised first by the increasing defence budgets and from 2016, a wave of new initiatives within and outside of the EU on security and defence (Varga, 2019). European consensus in the adaptation of NATO's reassurance and deterrence package after the annexation of Crimea – especially the leading German role in its preparation and implementation – was noteworthy. However, with nearly 30 years of under-investment in defence capabilities, as well as the related political challenges of transatlantic relationship and the institutional obstacles in front of a more cohesive EU security and defence policy, Europe's (lack of) strategic posture has not changed considerably.

So far, Europeans, in general, pursued a geo-economic approach when it came to China. This meant that increasing trade and mutual investments were seen as priorities in forming European strategy, security considerations were generally sidelined (Taneja, 2010). The 16+1 format between China and Central and Eastern European states, Italy joining the Belt and Road Initiative, the openness towards welcoming Chinese investments concerning strategic infrastructure – like major ports –, France's and Germany's deep economic engagement with and political overtures toward China are a few notable examples of this approach (Benner, Gaspers, Ohlberg, Poggetti & Shi-Kupfer, 2018). Many European NATO members have resisted US pressure to formulate a more visible posture against China within the NATO framework. Although not a major power and outside of

the scope of our paper, but Iran must be mentioned in this context as well. The European objective to keep the JCPOA alive despite US withdrawal from the nuclear agreement is also primarily driven by geo-economic considerations (Nejad, 2018).

On the other hand, there is undeniably a gradual shift taking place in the European political sphere, the concerns about the risks of China's various activities are increasing (Standish, 2019). This concern is demonstrated by certain EU resolution proposals condemning Chinese economic practices as well as the intensive debates about the risks of allowing Chinese telecommunication companies into 5G networks in many of the European NATO members (European Parliament, 2019). The recent decision in Germany by the ruling CDU party could well be a milestone in this process with likely ramifications for other European countries. However, based on consultations with experts, these European concerns are to a significant extent driven by economic instead of security consideration, namely, the fear of Chinese competition in an increasingly wide range of sectors.

One of the underlying reasons for the above-described development is the balance of power and the general threat perceptions in the European Union. While the two strongest European military powers, France and the UK have a robust strategic culture and a strong geopolitical outlook on the international environment, they have also become militarily relatively weak, as demonstrated by the 2011 Libya intervention (Keohane, 2017). Since the Brexit vote in 2016 and its preoccupation with Brexit, the UK's international and European clout has further decreased. While the prospect of Brexit gave France more political space to initiate a more robust strategic posture for the EU, it is also facing significant domestic challenges and its strategy is extremely divisive in NATO and in the EU, especially since the beginning of the Macron presidency (Varga & Nádudvari, 2019). Therefore, its leadership is met with a lack of confidence from many European capitals. Some NATO members, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, take the geopolitical challenge - including in the economic domain - emanating from Russia extremely seriously, however, their influence in the overall European strategic posture is very limited. Their pursuit for instance to pressure NATO to adapt a more forceful role in energy security was objected by many Western European allies (Binnendijk & Priebe, 2019).

Unsurprisingly, European strategy and international posture resembles the behavior of its strongest member the most, Germany. However, Germany is the most credible embodiment of a geo-economic power, with a relatively weak and passive strategic culture. Although German security and defence policy has come a long way in the past two decades in taking up international responsibilities, it is still far from being able and willing to adopt a leading role in European strategic affairs (Rathke, 2016). Furthermore, its fundamental approach with respect to Russia - despite its leading role in maintaining EU sanctions against Moscow – has remained geo-economic in such crucial domains as energy security, as the case of Nord Stream 2 demonstrates (Bros, Mitrova & Westphal, 2017).

Another element which is worth to mention is the likely increasing influence of the EU Commission on defence-related issues through new EU financial resources – primarily the European Defence Fund - and regulation connected to defence (Besch, 2019). Based on the organisational culture, the expertise and the overall approach of the Commission, it can be expected that geo-economic considerations will dominate the Commission's activity in the field. To conclude, while geopolitical awareness of European NATO members has certainly increased in recent years, Europe is still uncertain and divided on how it wants to deal with the security threats and challenges it is facing.

U.S. Geopolitics and the Trump-Factor

With the Trump presidency there has been an openly declared turn from the liberal internationalist world view towards an interest-based realist foreign policy, or "principled realism", as the administration put it. One of the first clear articulation of this shift was presented by an article op-ed authored by then national security advisor McMaster and economic advisor Gary Cohn, where they state that the world is "not a 'global community' but an arena where nations, nongovernmental actors and businesses engage and compete for advantage" (McMaster & Cohn, 2017). The US National Security Strategy unveiled in December 2017 describes the strategic environment as highly competitive with "rivals attempting to erode American security and prosperity" (The White House, 2017). Such wording unequivocally points to an international arena where the United States is in geopolitical competition with major revisionist powers.

There are certainly many concrete decisions of the Trump administration's foreign policy, which resembles this geopolitical outlook. Furthermore, this approach is not the exclusivity of the current White House, there is a growing consensus across party-lines on these issues. The significant increase in defence spending since 2017 is the clearest example. Concerning regional containment of revisionist powers, the increase of US troops presence in NATO's Eastern flank and the increase of funding for the European Deterrence Initiative is an obvious example (Department of Defence, 2019). Continued US support for NATO and even EU enlargement also sends a signal that geography and spheres of influence through institutions and economic power continue to play an important role in US strategy. The strong US military presence and force posture in Southeast and East Asia also underscore such a commitment towards defending American and allied security interests (Cordesman, 2019). The willingness of the use of force, as demonstrated in Syria, also intended to send a signal that the United States do not shy away from using its military

might to pursue its interest, though the overall US commitment towards Middle East seemed to have weakened, and whether the respective military action was successful, is a different matter (Hannah, 2019).

The geopolitical approach is also demonstrated through the strong US opposition and countermeasures taken against Nord Stream 2 and Turkish Stream in the energy domain, raising tensions not only with Russia, but even with some key NATO allies, such as Germany (Lohmann & Westphal, 2019). American efforts to prevent China from gaining a global leading role also in such sectors as 5G networks and the overall aim to securitise the implications of China's economic and technological expansion might be strategically potentially as relevant for NATO's the long-term future as the containment of Russia (Bechná & Thayer, 2016). The willingness of President Trump to initiate a trade war with China points to a prioritisation of national security concerns in relation to short-term economic gains. It was obvious also for the administration that the tariffs will in the short-term also hurt the US economy. On the other hand, the US administration perceived that there was no other way to pressure China into concessions in areas - intellectual property, forced technology transfer – which are vital for long-term national security interests as well as economic performance of the United States (Schneider-Petsinger, Wang, Jie & Crabtree, 2019). In this context, while the United States is pressing to place the China-question on NATO's agenda, the reception of this effort is so far lukewarm or mixed on the European side at best.

Many experts argue that President Trump's recent decision with regards to the troops withdrawal in Syria in September 2019 failed to grasp the geopolitical stakes in the country and the Middle East (NPR, 2019). The evaluation of Trump's Syria policy would certainly exceed the limits of this paper. However, a fair case could be made that in relation to the broader Russian and Chinese threats, reducing American military commitment in the country with no vital strategic interests at stake and finding a new modus vivendi with Turkey with respect to Northern Syria was a reasonable decision from a geopolitical lens, while the concrete mode of the announcement and the execution of the decision is another matter.

However, President Trump's transactional approach to foreign partners and his fixation on trade balances complicates the picture (Sinkkonen, 2018). NATO finds itself at the center of the implications of the US President's policy. Although many US presidents have criticised European allies for their lack of burden-sharing, no other President has questioned so openly the validity of US security guarantee in case an ally do not live up to its commitment, and the inclusion of trade disputes into the security and defence realm of NATO is also new (Shapiro, 2018). There are also signs that pressure against Russia and European NATO allies on energy issues is driven by American intentions to increase US energy exports.

A similar transactional approach is being played out by President Trump with regards to South Korea and Japan, where the US President is demanding a huge increase of financial compensation from the host nations (Seligman & Gramer, 2019). Attaching trade and financial conditions to US security guarantees in the transatlantic and Pacific context points to a prioritisation of economic interest ahead of security interests, resembling a geo-economic strategy. Furthermore, based on the past two years of US focus on trade disputes with regards to China or the centrality of the sanctions regime with respect to the Russia-policy, it seems that the geo-economic perspective is also decisive with respect to the would-be peer competitors. These factors raise valid questions with regards to our earlier presumption on the geopolitically driven US grand strategy.

A case can be made that while European geo-economic strategy is undermining its geopolitical position in the long-term, in the US case, it is reinforcing it. With regards to China, eliminating unfair trade practices and leveling the field for the US economy is certainly a central objective of the US strategy (Schneider-Petsinger et al, 2019). At the same time, the United States takes the strategic and military implications of China's economic strategy equally seriously. There are also signs that one of the long-term objectives of the US administration is to gradually decouple the US and Chinese economies to reduce the dependence and the vulnerability from Beijing, a clearly geopolitical intention. A similar geopolitical logic can be observed when it comes to Russia. This is reflected in US strategic documents, US force posture as well as the harsh economic and regulatory measures against certain Chinese and Russian companies or practices (Cordesman, 2019). With regards to NATO and the East Asian alliances, the underpinning presumption is more problematic, but still, there is strong evidence that it is valid.

President Trump's controversial statements on NATO and his transactionalist approach has weakened the political cohesion of the alliance (Sinkkonen, 2018). However, the main objective of this geo-economic approach is to strengthen the US position against the adversaries. The present political tensions are certainly straining NATO, but it is highly unlikely that they will result in a break-up, given the deeply vested interests in preserving the alliance on both sides of the Atlantic. Whether President Trump would be willing to go as far as to the alliance is a question, however, it would be another matter to implement it. At the same time, it is likely that Trump is using geo-economics against Europe as a bargaining chip, seeking to gain concessions both in the defence and in the trade dimensions. The earlier mentioned additional investments in European security certainly reinforce this notion, not to mention 70 years of experience of the geopolitical benefits of the alliance. The United States badly needs its European allies for geopolitical purposes, if for no other reason, then to prevent them from becoming neutral in the geopolitical competition between the US and the revisionist great powers. Furthermore, since for many European allies the US security

umbrella is perceived as vital, the US pressure might work. The stakes and the risks of the Trump-strategy are certainly higher, but the outcome – some minor concessions from the Europeans, while preserving the alliance, with continued erosion of political trust and cohesion - is still highly probable. Hence, while NATO will likely survive the current turbulence in the transatlantic relations, the tensions between the American geopolitical and the European geo-economic outlook will not be resolved anytime soon.

Conclusion

While the two decades of the post-Cold War era were shaped decisively by geo-economic forces, with the transition in the distribution of global power and the "rise of the rest", the international system is increasingly shaped by again geopolitical competition. This does not necessarily mean that geo-economic instruments are effaced into the background, but the fundamental logic behind the behavior of the leading great powers – United States, China, Russia – is geopolitical. A notable exception is the European Union, which is certainly a major geo-economic power, however, with its limited military potential and lack of political cohesion, it continues to fail to be a geopolitical one.

The different characteristic of American and European power is reflected in their strategy with regards to China and Russia. The US approach towards these revisionist powers is fundamentally geopolitical, prioritising national security interests to the expense of economic relations and short-term benefits, even if geo-economics and Trump's transactionalist approach to foreign relations plays a significant role in its strategy. At the same time, the dominant approach on the European side is geo-economic, placing an emphasis on economic gains instead of definitively responding to security threats. This difference is a source of tension within the transatlantic alliance, all the more so, since many of the challenges posed by Russia and China is being played out in areas where geopolitical and geo-economic factors could be hardly separated. The paper argued that while US geo-economic instruments ultimately reinforced geopolitical interests, in the European case, they seem to undermine them. These developments could lead to an increasing dependence of Europe on Russia and China in certain strategic domains at a time when the US is seeking to reduce its own and its allies' dependency from these powers. Such a development will make it more difficult to formulate a unified strategy in NATO. The underlying trends in the US and European politics imply that a sudden strategic turn with respect to the fundamental strategic view is unlikely. However, even if the strategic departing points and approaches differ, and the reasons are various why geo-economic conduct of Russia and China might be increasingly seen as a challenge, if Americans and Europeans come to similar conclusions on the necessity to tackle these issues, finding common ground within the alliance would be easier.

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Prospects for Further NATO Enlargement

Gábor MAROSFI

Abstract: NATO's Open Door policy has been one of the most successful policy frameworks of the alliance. Successive waves of enlargement have resulted in the accession of 13 new member states since 1999. The perspective of NATO membership remains a powerful incentive for aspirant countries. NATO and allies have an enduring common interest to preserve the credibility of the Open Door. This is challenging considering the dramatically changed geostrategic landscape and the internal dynamics within the alliance. Article 10 of the Washington Treaty still serves as a solid basis, however, the complex set of decisions and compromises reflecting short-term interests of allies have introduced incoherence into the policy over the past 20 years. NATO's Open Door policy must be adapted to changed realities. This paper examines how the alliance could reconcile its previous political pledges with reality and explores possible options concerning NATO's Membership Action Plan.

Keywords: NATO enlargement, Open Door policy, transatlantic relations, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, the Western Balkans

Introduction: The Burden of Success

Enlargement is widely recognised as one of NATO's most successful policies. Over its 70-year history, the alliance has grown from its initial 12 members to currently 29 - soon to be 30 with the oncoming accession of the Republic of North Macedonia. The successive waves of NATO's post-Cold War enlargement have strengthened the alliance and contributed to the Euro-Atlantic security and helped to make "Europe whole, free and at peace" (Hamilton & Spohr, 2019). Enlargement changed Europe and proved to be a driving factor in NATO's transformation and adaptation.

The basis for enlargement is enshrined in Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty (Washington Treaty) stating that:

> *"The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty."* (NATO, 1949, Article 10)

The brevity of Article 10 does not provide any detailed definition of a prospective member being *"in the position to further the principles of this Treaty*" or elaborate how "*the contribution to the security of the North Atlantic area*" could be carried out or measured. Nevertheless, Article 10 proved to be sufficient for NATO for its Cold War enlargement waves with Turkey and Greece (1952), the Federal Republic of Germany (1955), and Spain (1982). The alliance grew from its initial 12 to 16 members successfully, without going into details on one of its most fundamental policies.

This changed substantially with the end of the Cold War.

The First Twenty Years

At the beginning of the 1990s, in parallel with the internal debate about NATO's relevance and future role in the European security architecture, allies faced the growing interest of the new democracies and former Warsaw Pact member countries to anchor their countries in the West, including NATO (Kornblum, 2019). While NATO's Strategic Concept of 1991 (NATO, 1991) referred to "*strengthening of the security dimension in the process of European integration*", this was rather the statement of intent than a concrete policy. Following internal debates in 1991-1993, the 16 allies finally reached consensus about the need to open up NATO. NATO Heads of State and Government at their summit in January 1994 in Brussels, while reaffirming the basic principles of the Washington Treaty, already indicated NATO's willingness to "*welcome the accession of new members, as part of an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe*" (NATO, 1994). The summit also launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. NATO had to develop also the modalities of future enlargement.

Over the next 18 months, an overarching policy framework was developed and laid out in the Study on Enlargement, adopted finally in September 1995 (NATO, 1995b). The document provided - inter alia - a detailed description of NATO's motives in the new era, the principles and reasons for opening the alliance's doors for new members within "*the broad concept of security*", describing enlargement a "*gradual, deliberate, and transparent process*". The study strongly rejected the notion of "*spheres of influence*" and, while defining the expected level of commitment by new members, stated that "*there is no fixed or rigid list of criteria for inviting new member states to join the Alliance*" (NATO, 1995b, para 13 & 17.).

The Enlargement Study was instrumental in preparing the first wave[1] of NATO's post-Cold War enlargement, launched in July 1997 at the Madrid Summit. By that time, twelve countries indicated their formal interest in membership in NATO.

The accession process of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland between 1997-1999 proved to be a mutual learning process for both NATO and the invitees. The alliance gathered its first post-Cold War experience regarding the challenges of integrating new members, while also undergoing its own transformation. The experience was overwhelmingly positive and disproved many of the previous concerns about the extreme resource implications of enlargement and its negative impact on NATO's political-military effectiveness. Still, the integration of the three countries clearly demonstrated that the process could be improved with an emphasis on better supporting the internal preparations of future allies for membership, as well as providing NATO with ample time to properly integrate newcomers.

The Madrid Summit envisaged to "*review the process at our next meeting in 1999*". The review process led to the development, adoption and launch of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the Washington Summit in April 1999, which also celebrated NATO's 50th anniversary. MAP was designed to "*provide advice, assistance and practical support*", while also elaborating on NATO's expectations concerning performance and democratic values (NATO, 1999a). Aspirants (participating countries) were asked to submit their "*individual annual national programmes on their preparations for possible future membership, covering political, economic, defence, resource, security and legal aspects*", establishing "*a focused and candid feedback mechanism on aspirant countries' progress on their programmes that includes both political and technical advice*", including the annual joint assessment of progress with allies. Since membership/participation in the MAP was subject to a separate (and of course, unanimous) decision by allies, this new framework – while providing a positive reply to countries about their aspiration – also meant the introduction of a two-tier mechanism concerning membership, making a clear difference between a self-declared interest to become a member and a candidate status recognised by allies.[2]

1 The integration of the territory of the former East Germany (German Democratic Republic) into the united Germany, which undoubtedly enlarged the area covered by Article 6 of the Washington Treaty, cannot be considered 'enlargement' in the classical sense, since only sovereign nations are in the position to join the Alliance (i.e. legally accede to the North Atlantic Treaty).

2 MAP is using the terms "aspiring country" and "aspirant" interchangeably throughout its text, showing that there was no intention to establish pre-conditions for a candidate status. By 2008, this difference became highly political: a partner country "aspiring for membership" was considered differently than a country recognised as an "aspirant country", i.e. being a participant in the MAP.

MAP included practically all possible candidate countries in 1999. The general understanding, supported by the Washington Summit Communiqué (NATO, 1999b) "(*W)e will review the process at our next Summit meeting which will be held no later than 2002*" was that participation in MAP would take a relatively short time - maybe a couple of cycles (years) - before becoming a member, pending on the individual performance of the aspirant.[3] History turned out to be different for some of them.

Allied leaders at the Prague Summit in November 2002 invited seven countries, all participating in MAP: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, to begin accession talks with the alliance. This was the largest wave of enlargement ever, colloquially called "the Big Bang". Both Albania and the then "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (now North Macedonia), having been in the MAP for three years were commended for their significant reform progress, while Croatia was identified to be "*under consideration for future membership*" (NATO, 2002b) and invited to participate in MAP. The next NATO summit in Istanbul in 2004 welcomed the seven new members that had joined a couple of months earlier (some of them also joining the European Union in May), but did not issue any new invitations (NATO, 2004). Two years later, in 2006 in Riga the alliance indicated its willingness to extend further invitations at the 2008 summit (NATO, 2006).

The 2008 Bucharest Summit turned out to be the most controversial moment in the history of NATO's Open Door policy. The internal preparations for the summit included intense debates among allies concerning future membership, which was also reflected in the decisions taken by leaders, in some parts drafted at the highest political level. The difference between the Southern (Western Balkans) and Eastern directions also became visible. While Albania and Croatia were invited to start accession talks, the invitation to the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" was postponed "*until a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached*" (NATO, 2008a). Montenegro, which had gained independence only two years earlier, was promised to get an "early response" for its request to join MAP, while Bosnia and Herzegovina's similar request was only "acknowledged" (NATO, 2008a, para 25-26).

The most controversial issue at the summit was Georgia and Ukraine: allies could not reach consensus on inviting these countries to join MAP – so they agreed instead, as a "compromise', "*that these countries will become members of NATO*" (NATO, 2008a, para 23). This compromise also included that "*MAP is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct way to membership*", with

3 MAP also underlined that the *"list of issues identified for discussion does not constitute criteria for membership"*.

its modalities to be decided by foreign ministers later that year. This was the moment when MAP, designed primarily as a framework and tool to support and *accelerate* the preparations of aspirants became a highly sensitive political instrument: a control mechanism to actually *slow down enlargement*, if it was deemed necessary.

Allies in the following months had to find a way to fill the vague, indefinite pledge "*these countries will become members*" with substance without (re) entering an endless debate about MAP participation for Georgia and Ukraine, as a "next step" on the road. The debate within the alliance was greatly influenced by the Russian military actions against Georgia earlier in August 2008, resulting in the occupation and forceful separation of parts of the country, which put the Bucharest decision into the stark context of geopolitics. The solution, found by the end 2008, was to ask the two countries to develop their own "Annual National Programmes" (the original MAP of 1999 mentions "annual national programme", without capitalisation), a document previously submitted only by countries *within* MAP - under the auspices of the NATO-Ukraine Commission and the new NATO-Georgia Commission, respectively (NATO, 2008b).

NATO's 60th anniversary, celebrated in 2009 in Strasbourg-Kehl, reaffirmed all elements of the decision made in the previous year concerning Georgia and Ukraine, leaving the issue of MAP open (NATO, 2009). The summit also welcomed the progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina's cooperation with NATO and acknowledged the country's expressed intention to "*apply for MAP at an appropriate time*". Montenegro was encouraged to carry on with its reforms and the Council in Permanent Session, i.e. NATO Ambassadors, was instructed to keep the country's progress "*under active review*" and "*respond early to its request to participate in the Membership Action Plan (MAP)*" (NATO, 2009, para 25-26). This time NATO's "early reply" was indeed quick, and MAP was granted to Montenegro in December 2009, without doing the same for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ministers conducted an intense, divisive and fruitless debate about the nature of MAP: is it a "carrot" to award progress of reforms, or a "stick" to further encourage aspirants? If MAP is meant to help, then why setting preconditions?

Building on their December discussion, Foreign Ministers in Tallinn in April 2010 finally invited Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the Membership Action Plan, but they tied the acceptance of the country's first Annual National Programme under MAP to the official registration of *all* immovable defence properties in the country as state property, i.e. asking the country to demonstrate the strength of its state institutions and the domestic consensus on membership (NATO, 2010b). Thus the controversial Tallinn condition was created, halting Bosnia and Herzegovina for almost a decade, practically turning MAP/ANP into a means to control engagement rather than being a support mechanism for aspirants.

The Tallinn decision reflected the division between those allies (mostly from the region) who wanted to push forward with the Euro-Atlantic integration of the "strategically important Western Balkans region" and between those members who considered the pace of enlargement already too fast for their comfort (mostly, but not exclusively allies from Western Europe).

Meanwhile, following the change of power in Kyiv, President Yanukovich of Ukraine declared in May 2010 that "*Ukraine considers its relations with NATO as a partnership*" (Kyiv Post, 2010). This was followed by dropping the objective of NATO membership from the country's national security strategy but retaining the cooperation within the framework of the annual national programme. These developments were acknowledged by the alliance by stating at their next summit in Lisbon in 2010 "*we respect Ukraine's policy of 'non-bloc' status*" (NATO, 2010c).

The Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010 reconfirmed NATO's Open Door policy, "*keeping the door to membership in the Alliance open to all European democracies that meet NATO's standards*", placing it under the core task of cooperative security. Although the alliance had gathered a sizable amount of policy decisions concerning enlargement by 2010, the Strategic Concept kept its wording lean and very close to the text of the Washington Treaty (NATO, 2010a).

The next two NATO summits, in Chicago in 2012, and in Wales in 2014 did not give further impetus to enlargement or bring about any changes concerning Open Door policy. In Chicago, the alliance mostly focused on its Afghanistan engagement, its growing relationship with partners across the globe, and the follow-on to the operation over Libya the year before. By this time reiterating the 2008 Bucharest decisions (for Georgia and "FYROM", since Ukraine was no longer considered as an aspirant), and the 2010 Tallinn criteria (Bosnia and Herzegovina) became a ritual part of the Summit Communiqués/Declarations (NATO, 2012).

The pivotal moment of European security situation brought about by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea, the phenomenon of the "little green men" and hybrid warfare, "the return of history" prompted the launch of NATO's most profound adaptation process since the Cold War at the Wales Summit in 2014. Collective defence, defined as *one* of the three essential core tasks of the alliance in the 2010 Strategic Concept suddenly became NATO's most imperative and substantial mission. This implied, naturally, the rebalancing of the two other core tasks (cooperative security and crisis management), including their related policies.

The Wales Summit focused on Russia and the reassurance measures aimed at strengthening NATO's defence and deterrence posture. It also addressed the growing instability on the alliance's southern neighbourhood as well as

transnational, asymmetric and multi-dimensional threats, principally embodied by the rise of ISIL/Da'esh. Concerning Open Door NATO basically confirmed its previous policy lines. In the case of Georgia, however, the alliance went further this time noting "*that Georgia's relationship with the Alliance contains the tools necessary to continue moving Georgia forward towards eventual membership*" (NATO, 2014). MAP was not explicitly mentioned as the "next step on the way to membership". This balancing act, together with the adoption of a substantial support package aimed to develop Tbilisi's defence capacities, was intended to reinforce the country's Euro-Atlantic commitment in the face of aggressive and assertive Russian behaviour.[4] Concerning the Western Balkans, the alliance also agreed "*to open intensified and focused talks with Montenegro, and agreed that Foreign Ministers will assess Montenegro's progress no later than by the end of 2015 with a view to deciding on whether to invite Montenegro to join the Alliance*". "FYROM" remained in limbo. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO used first time the term "*activation of MAP*", a phrase adding further confusion and controversy to the original decision in Tallinn (NATO, 2014, para 85-87).

The next milestone, the invitation of Montenegro in December 2015, launched another round of enlargement, this time for one country and after seven years of pause (NATO, 2015b). The preceding internal debate showed deep fault lines between allies. The compromise, allowing the invitation of Montenegro included walking back on the language used since Chicago, and concluding that MAP was necessary ("*integral part of the process*") for Georgia on the road to membership. This was also expressed by a separate statement issued by Foreign Ministers on NATO's Open Door policy (NATO, 2015a) and echoed next year by the Warsaw Summit Communiqué in July 2016 (NATO, 2016). The May 2017 meeting of NATO Leaders (which was not called a regular summit) did not address enlargement. Since Montenegro joined the alliance a couple of weeks later, becoming its 29th member, the relevance of the Open Door policy was underpinned visibly.

The Prespa Agreement reached on 12 June 2018 between Greece and the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" resolved the long-standing dispute over the latter's name. NATO made good on its 2008 promise and the alliance, at the next summit, held again in Brussels in July 2018 invited the soon-to-be North Macedonia[5] to start accession talks. Concerning Georgia,

4 The international jury is still out on the "who lost Russia" debate, including whether NATO's April 2008 Bucharest decision concerning Georgia's and Ukraine's future membership was too little to deter (never meant to be) or too much to provoke direct Russian actions against these countries, first against Georgia only four months after the Bucharest Summit. For a detailed argumentation see Brands (2019).

5 Technically the invitation to start accession talks was extended to the "government in Skopje".

the text remained unchanged, while concerning Ukraine - which restated its aspirations for NATO membership again -, NATO recalled the decisions taken at the Bucharest Summit and subsequent summits (NATO, 2018a, para 65-66).

The Brussels Summit in 2018 was a missed opportunity concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the overwhelming majority of allies recognised by then that the country had not been able to fulfil the Tallinn criteria and register all of its defence properties because one of its entities had refused to do so and blocked effectively the entire process, there was no consensus to let the Tallinn criteria go and "activate" MAP (NATO, 2018, para 64). The arguments were repetitive: allies on the "pro" side pointed out - recalling North Macedonia's case - that letting Bosnia and Herzegovina start its MAP/ANP would be just the beginning of prospectively decade-long process, with membership invitation being subject to a separate political decision - so all allies' stakes would be protected. Allies still unconvinced underlined the need for consistency in NATO's performance-based approach concerning Open Door: the Tallinn criteria remained unfulfilled, so reneging on it would risk NATO's overall credibility concerning the principle of individual performance. The debate was resolved in December 2018 when foreign ministers announced - without any fanfares and mentioning the word "MAP activation" to save face - that "*NATO is ready to accept the submission of Bosnia and Herzegovina's first Annual National Programme*". As part of the internal understanding, the Tallinn criteria remained valid but the registration of immovable defence property to the state was incorporated as a task in the ANP. Allies also pointed out that participation in the MAP would not prejudge any decision by the alliance on Bosnia and Herzegovina's future membership (NATO, 2018b). Thus NATO, after many years of internal debates, kicked the ball to Sarajevo's side.

The issue remained highly contested in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also in the context of the 2018 post-election developments and the forming of a federal government. As part of a wider political compromise with the appointment of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (effectively the country's prime minister), the so-called "Reform Programme of the Annual National Plan" was also accepted by the tripartite presidency of the country in November 2019. The "Reform Programme" was finally submitted to NATO on 31st December 2019.

Dilemmas and Perspectives: "Not Great, Not Terrible"[6]

As described in the previous section, NATO has developed a complex Open Door policy over the past two decades - always an instrument, not an end in itself. Decisions taken at various NATO summits and ministerial meetings concerning enlargement, including invitations to future members or setting their course for integration, required tough compromises by allies. Acting under political pressure to reach consensus *at all costs* to deliver tangible short-term results at high-level meetings, often without considering long-term implications, brought incoherence to Open Door - the most evident being the Bucharest decision made in 2008, and the Tallinn criteria established two years later. This caused fragmentation and incoherence in Open Door policy.

NATO's evolving overarching policies concerning Russia, the alliance's role in addressing instability along its periphery, partnership, and many others also made their impact on Open Door. Regardless of the undisputable success of Open Door policy in reaching the objectives defined in the Study on Enlargement, a number of factors became apparent by 2019, making enlargement less probable in the near future.

First of all, the lack of suitable, well-prepared, able *and* willing candidates - probably the most profound requirement of a process based on individual performance.

Currently there is only one country participating in the Membership Action Plan: Bosnia and Herzegovina. North Macedonia finished its *last* (eighteenth!) MAP-cycle with the invitation, however, continuation of reforms is still expected and remains closely monitored by the alliance. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been formally a participant in MAP since Tallinn 2010 - but the country still lacks the domestic consensus on seeking eventual NATO membership and must come to a decision to submit its Annual National Programme (ANP) to start its *first* MAP-cycle in order to implement reforms in practically every field.

Georgia and Ukraine have been submitting their respective ANPs since 2009. Both countries cemented the goal of NATO-membership in their constitutions. NATO - after some internal debate - has recently recognised Ukraine again as an aspirant country (cf. endnote 13). Yet, Georgia and Ukraine are not participating in MAP, which has been defined by NATO as an "integral part" of their path to membership. Since MAP has become highly politicised issue for allies, there is no timeline attached to a decision concerning MAP, seriously undermining the credibility of the 2008 Bucharest "*will become members*" pledge. Some member

6 As often quoted from Anatoly Dyatlov (Анатолий Дятлов), a major character in the 2019 HBO mini-series Chernobyl based on the actual deputy chief-engineer of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

states are uncomfortable with the perspective of these countries' eventual membership in NATO. Allies remain divided concerning the preparedness and maturity of the two countries, with serious concerns expressed regarding Ukraine's domestic reforms and their impacts on society, especially ethnic and national minorities (NATO, 2018a, para 66; NATO, 2019b, para 6).

There are other countries that are highly capable and suitable but have remained so far undecided concerning membership ("able but unwilling").

NATO's two Nordic partners, Finland and Sweden have developed unprecedentedly close relationship with the alliance. They have come as close to NATO as it is possible without benefiting from the collective defence provided by Article 5. They share NATO's values, they have reached a high degree of interoperability: both countries are NATO's "Enhanced Opportunities Partners", although this format is not connected with integration (NATO, 2017). There can be no doubts about their ability to "*further the principles*" of the Washington Treaty and "*to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area*" (NATO, 1949). There has been a varying and fluctuating degree of interest demonstrated by the two countries, depending on the colour of their governments, Finland publicly keeps its "NATO option open" (Prime Minister's Office, Finland, 2016). It is also widely recognised that the Art. 42.7 Mutual Assistance Clause of the European Union's Lisbon Treaty (European Union, 2012a) and the Art. 222 Solidarity Clause (European Union, 2012b) are not underpinned by credible defence and deterrence capabilities comparable to NATO.

So should either or both of these countries wish to cross the line and opt for joining NATO (a decision that could be accelerated by an immediate threat from Russia[7]) it is very unlikely that allies would insist on their participation in MAP first *before* inviting either or both to accede to the Treaty - so a "fast track" membership (meaning no MAP) would be the most likely outcome. Although there is absolutely no linkage between the two countries in terms of NATO membership, it is improbable that one of them would apply for membership without the other one. Moving together is the most plausible scenario, as suggested by the report commissioned by the Finnish government in 2016 (Prime Minister's Office, Finland, 2016).

Finally, on the other end of the compass and preparedness there is the unfinished business of the Western Balkans. Kosovo - not recognised as an independent state by four allies - has also indicated its long-term objective of membership in the alliance. Should there be a breakthrough in the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue

7 Russia has employed a wide range of hybrid measures, threatening military posture, exercises, active disinformation and harsh rhetoric to deter both countries to get closer to NATO. These efforts have failed so far to reach their intended effects and rather bolstered NATO's acceptance by the political elite and the public.

resulting in the recognition of Kosovo by all allies (membership in the United Nations and the OSCE would be helpful), the country could start its long path towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

The second factor is the geopolitics and the radically changed strategic environment - mainly the Russian aspect. For obvious reasons, geopolitics and NATO enlargement have always been intertwined ever since Article 10 was written, a self-evidence during the bipolar global order. The post-Cold War situation changed this narrative, offering a chance for NATO "*to provide increased stability and security for all in the Euro-Atlantic area, without recreating dividing lines*" (NATO, 1995b). Despite internal debates NATO refrained calling Russia openly a decisive factor in enlargement (Rifkind, 2019). Decisions, however, always indicated the existence of a parallel track, aimed at calming Russian concerns. NATO tried to place its relationship with Russia onto a qualitatively new level in advance of the 1997 (Madrid) and 2002 (Prague) invitations, encompassing a total of ten new members. The NATO-Russia Founding Act in May 1997 (NATO, 1997a) demonstrated NATO's keen awareness of Russian sensitivities and fears (the "three no" pledge)[8] and the alliance's willingness to reassure Moscow that enlargement would not imply hostility (Götz, 2019). The establishment of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 was another attempt by NATO to dispel Russian reservations and build trust (NATO, 2002a). President Putin's famous 2007 speech in Munich (President of Russia, 2007) gave the first serious indication – lost on many - about Moscow's continuing zero-sum "spheres of interest" approach and its implacable resentment towards NATO. Russia perceived NATO enlargement as part of a "hybrid tactic" by the West to encroach the country (in detail: Rumer, 2019)

As a result of the aggressive actions against Georgia and Ukraine, and with the breach of the territorial integrity of two sovereign countries, Russia now is exercising an effective control also over their eventual NATO membership. Even though NATO has reconfirmed several times that "*no third country has a say in membership deliberations*", it is hard to imagine how Article 6 of the Washington Treaty would be or could be applicable under these circumstances. Theoretically, these countries could sacrifice their territorial integrity (i.e. giving up demanding the return of their territories) for the vague promise of eventual NATO membership - undoubtedly a suicidal political move for any government.

Growing Russian influence in the Western Balkans, also in the context of NATO enlargement, became apparent in the case of the Republika Srpska's continuing refusal to register immovable defence properties at the state level, misusing

8 *"The member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy - and do not foresee any future need to do so."* (Founding Act 1997, Chapter IV.)

NATO's Tallinn condition and taking hostage of Bosnia and Herzegovina integration. The attempted coup in Montenegro in October 2016, involving Russian citizens with "state security background" demonstrated that Moscow not just simply condemns NATO integration in the Western Balkans but is also ready and willing to use its expertise and immense toolbox of "active measures" against it (BBC News, 2019).

The third major factor is the so-called "enlargement fatigue" setting in within the alliance.

The pace has been slowing down evidently, showing the steam escaping: as a devoted statistician in NATO's corridors jokingly observed, considering that the first post-Cold War invitation was made in 1997 in Madrid and 13 (14) new members has joined since then, the "speed of enlargement" has been roughly 0.64 new members per year.

Each wave of enlargement has enriched the collective knowledge and experience of the alliance. Allies with different visions about the "ideal" speed or geographic scope of enlargement have always been able to find ample evidence to support their own *pro* or *counter* arguments concerning NATO enlargement. The overall success of Open Door policy and its undisputable contribution to the "European Project" helped to mitigate concerns, however, many allies' disposition towards enlargement have remained fundamentally unchanged. The apparent low-key reluctance – usually demonstrated diplomatically by allies being among the last capitals ratifying the accession protocol(s) of newcomers - became open disagreement by 2015.

This reluctance is based on assumptions - some of them rooting in, or repeating the arguments of the nineties - that cannot be easily dismissed. The most pertinent is centred around the need for maintaining the credibility of collective defence and deterrence, including its conventional and nuclear pillars.

As long as the perspective of a collective defence situation triggered by armed attack was extremely unlikely and remote, military considerations of enlargement played a secondary role. (The argument "*West Berlin was also militarily indefensible*" was often heard at the time of the invitation of the three Baltic states). The post-Cold War enlargement, after all, was NATO's contribution to the European Project, unifying the continent, spreading democratic values, and expanding the zone of stability and prosperity etc.

Russia's aggressive actions against Georgia and Ukraine, the phenomenon of hybrid warfare and the widespread use of hybrid/cyber tools against NATO allies, blurring the lines and lowering the threshold between peace, crisis and armed conflict have brought the perspective of a potential Article 5 situation uncomfortably close to the realm of possibilities.[9]

9 NATO declared that hybrid or cyber actions (independently of each other) can trigger an Article 5 situation.

Allies fully share the view that without maintaining credible defence and deterrence *for all* NATO would lose its raison d'être. The indivisibility of security depends on the trust, commitment and solidarity among allies, underpinned by the contribution of military capabilities across the entire spectrum, including the extended nuclear deterrence provided by the United States (and capabilities provided by the UK). During the Cold War era, the proverbial "*are we ready to sacrifice Chicago for Hamburg (sometimes: Frankfurt)?*" question was answered beyond any doubts (there are some variations, see Blank, 1998). This time, as one Western diplomat put it bluntly during a debate: "*my country is not ready to fight for [name of aspirant country]*". Although there is no defined threshold of (armed) attack for invoking Article 5, the tacit understanding is that it should not be invoked unless it is absolutely necessary, raising the expectations concerning the political maturity of any newcomers who should enjoy the same rights as there can be no "second class membership".

After "geopolitics and history returned" in 2014, NATO heavily invested in reinforcing its posture and capabilities to establish a token presence of allied forces in the East, serving as a tripwire mechanism for collective defence and also as a visible symbol of solidarity.[10] This effort, although militarily not significant, still required investments by all allies, already under heavy pressure to live up to their 2014 Defence Investment Pledge and move speedily towards the 2 percent GDP defence spending target. The perspective of spending more in order to extend credibly collective defence to new members is fuelling scepticism towards any further Eastern enlargement, considering that these countries are either involved in an ongoing armed conflict on their territory (Ukraine), or are part of a "frozen conflict" (Georgia). Establishing even a similar tripwire presence in their territories would require not just a political commitment by allies but also military resources currently needed elsewhere. Enlargement should strengthen NATO.

In addition, the need for preserving NATO's effectiveness and agile decision-making is also often recalled - although it has never been proved that NATO's expanded membership would have impaired the effectiveness of consensus-building. It is often recalled that NATO is under pressure in this field by emerging and disruptive technologies, and the alliance is already challenged by adversaries with centralised, quick decision-making structures (NATO, 2019a).

The transatlantic unity has come under severe stretch-test over the past years over many issues, many of them unrelated to, but still affecting NATO. The coming period certainly looks no more promising. The alliance is heavily preoccupied

10 First the Assurance Measures and the Readiness Action Plan in 2014 and the establishment of Enhanced Forward Presence and Tailored Forward Presence in 2016, followed and supported by a number of additional concepts and measures.

with its threat-driven adaptation process and strengthening the credibility of its defence and deterrence posture in a post-INF security environment, while also facing the threat of terrorism, irregular migration and the challenge posed by China's global role and growing influence in NATO's neighbourhood. The burden-sharing debate and the issue of an autonomous European defence add further dimensions to this complexity.

Facing an unprecedentedly complex and dangerous security environment, a wide arc of instability ranging from the Arctic to the Sahel, with state and non-state actors presenting threats and challenges, NATO has committed itself to a "360-degree" approach. This reflects geopolitical uncertainties and the need for maintaining cohesion among allies ("the North and South"), having sometimes different security perceptions. Considering the perturbations of the transatlantic link, allies instinctively strive to reduce the potential points of frictions whenever possible. Open Door should not remain a divisive issue.

Enlargement needs championing by NATO's leading powers, first of all, the United States. With a sharpening focus on China and the Indo-Pacific region, the United States has been urging European allies not just to increase their defence budgets and capabilities but also to take a greater responsibility in their own neighbourhood, as part of the transatlantic burden-sharing. As Hunter (1995) described the concept of "projecting stability through NATO enlargement" has been around since the nineties. "*As NATO confronts its novel security requirements, nothing will be more important than its helping to project stability and confidence into the region of Central Europe…*". "Projecting stability" as a wider NATO concept was reinvented around 2016, as a comprehensive set of tools (Díaz-Plaja, 2018).

NATO and allies also have an enduring and widely recognised common interest to preserve the viability and the credibility of the Open Door policy. The perspective of NATO membership remains a powerful incentive, stabilising factor and driver for democratic reforms in aspirant countries to adopt Euro-Atlantic values.

As a side note, it is interesting to see how the European Union is responding to a similar challenge by expanding its horizontal cooperation with certain partners. While economic integration can have several layers, membership in NATO will remain a binary choice. Article 5 is an ultimate firewall separating the closest partner from a member state. Unlike other international organisations, there is no "associate" or "observer" status in NATO - nor should it be created. Partners are offered the possibility of consultation when they perceive a "*direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security*" (NATO, 1995a, para 8).

Conclusions

Open Door must remain instrumental in NATO's efforts to project stability on its periphery, in a period when the perspective of EU membership is diminishing, especially in the Western Balkans. Profound disappointment is already being skilfully exploited by external actors, pointing out the West's apparent "duplicity and untrustworthiness". Enlargement fatigue is certainly not restricted to NATO. It has become even stronger within the European Union, not surprisingly with very similar concerns regarding political effectiveness, resource implications and the concern of losing leverage over candidates to continue their reforms once they become members. This led to the conclusion by French President Macron that "the accession process is broken": no further enlargement until its overarching reform has been finished (L'Élysée, 2019). The potential spillover consequences of rejection - after so much effort and sacrifice by candidates - are enormous and will go beyond the Western Balkans, impacting NATO as well. Strengthening the alliance's commitment therefore would be instrumental to keep the perspective of integration alive.

Overcoming the "MAP debate" would greatly benefit NATO and aspirants alike. Open Door policy might not have to be fully reinvented but it certainly must be adapted to changed realities. Internally, this will require achieving a new understanding among member states about the direction of travel of Open Door and its place among other policies in the wider context (NATO-EU cooperation, NATO's adaptation, the network of partnerships etc.). It might be necessary to re-evaluate frameworks, toolboxes, or even revisiting previous decisions. The alliance, deeply rooted in its Anglo-Saxon traditions, is much more built around precedents and previous decisions than a well-defined set of regulations, or *acquis*. Coming to a new consensus would not make rewriting basic documents necessary.

NATO must reconcile its previous political pledges with reality. Although the 2008 Bucharest decision, that "*they will be members*", has been considered by many as "verging on irresponsibility", backpedalling on this pledge would be equally detrimental to NATO's interests and the countries affected. Still, a new interpretation is needed how this process could unfold. As a NATO Ambassador recently has noted: "*Their movement towards NATO membership is similar to Zeno's famous paradoxes about the illusion of motion: they are always halfway to membership, with ever shrinking distances, but never getting there*". How can NATO's credibility be preserved under these conditions? How can aspirants' commitment to reforms be preserved?

MAP has certainly fulfilled its role - but since membership remains ultimately a unanimous political decision by member states, based on the individual performance and merits of aspirants, does NATO need any self-constraints or

built-in checks and balances? Should not it be easier to return to the letter and spirit of Article 10 of the Washington Treaty? Should NATO redirect its efforts to concentrate on practical cooperation with aspirants?

Allies should consider whether continuing with the Membership Action Plan in its current form (practically unchanged since 1999), with all the heavy "political load" accumulated over its twenty years of existence, still serves NATO's best interests.

There are some possible policy options:
First, "muddling through" - i.e. carrying on with the current policy regardless its contradictions - is always an attractive option for allies, reflecting the political inertia within the alliance. Open Door, as some might argue, "*ain't broke, so ain't fix it*". NATO, after all, can always offer an additional practical support to aspirants and reconfirm the alliance's commitment at any occasions. NATO's successive support "packages" offered to Georgia and Ukraine already show this direction of thinking.[11] These packages provide valuable practical assistance, but they cannot be a replacement for the ultimate objective of these countries: membership in the alliance. An additional argument is that prospective results would not probably worth engaging in another divisive debate, while maintaining status quo would require minimal effort. This approach, however, would result in the further decline of Open Door policy, and risk losing results already achieved.

Second, the other extremity would be entirely abandoning MAP/ANP, and fully returning to the basics of Article 10 of the Washington Treaty (the "purists"). This would be an equally unattractive and damaging option - the proverbial "throwing out the baby with the bathwater" solution - with the least probability of success.

Third: adjusting MAP/ANP, with overlapping sub-options.
There is no easy way to circumvent a deep political problem with a technical solution. Yet, the conundrum concerning MAP perhaps could be mitigated without sacrificing principles, damaging NATO's credibility or losing face.

One possibility would be allowing *all* current aspirants to participate in MAP without any further preconditions, returning to the original spirit of the programme. Despite its simplicity, this would require a "leap of faith" by sceptic allies, while still reinforcing the notion that MAP is a kind of reward and the only way to membership.

11 The Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP) is a set of initiatives endorsed at the September 2014 Wales Summit. The Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine (CAP) was adopted at the 2016 Warsaw Summit. Both have been reinforced by subsequent measures.

Another possibility (not necessarily exclusive with the former) would be separating MAP officially from the ANP, i.e. getting the letter "M" (for membership) out of the annual MAP/ANP cycles of cooperation, leaving the issue of "end state" (membership) undefined (the possible solution found for Bosnia and Herzegovina). As described above, MAP and ANP have been *de facto* separate since the end of 2008 for Ukraine and Georgia (no MAP but ANPs), and the Tallinn decision (MAP yes, but no ANP) followed the same logic. ANP would be available to *all* interested. This would confirm that MAP is *not* a prerequisite for membership, which remains ultimately a political decision by members, but a tool.

This approach would ease political tensions within the alliance, reducing the burden of offering new deliverables and packages at every summit to compensate for *not giving* the MAP. Current aspirants would be relieved from domestic pressure: there is no underachievement concerning MAP, mitigating the vulnerability to external propaganda. It would make even more evident that Nordic partners would not need MAP first to become members.

As an additional consideration, it would benefit NATO's partnership. NATO, in parallel with the evolution of Open Door policy, has developed also a complex web of partnership frameworks, sometimes with overlapping programmes and tools - not a subject of present paper - reflecting the different level of ambition of its partners vis-à-vis the alliance. A likely "fresh starter" (prospectively Kosovo, after enjoying recognition by all allies) would be first confronted with the task of selecting a point of departure, i.e. the most suitable partnership framework for closer cooperation *towards* MAP/ANP. The elimination of unnecessary steps and making the "annual national program" (in small letters) available would help even *future* aspirants continue their preparations and enjoy the benefits or NATO assistance, while avoiding domestic questions and leaving future options open for all.

There are also a number of partner countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, all situated in a contested geography, which for various reasons might not be comfortable *at this stage* with advertising their interests in getting closer to the alliance. So countries, currently not on NATO's "ODP radar": Serbia, the Republic of Moldova or even Belarus might be interested in many of the advantages of running an annual program that offers more than the currently existing partnership tools without commitments. After all, the journey might be more useful and rewarding than the arrival itself…

Any amendment of the Open Door policy would require, as a precondition, the re-establishment of trust among allies and reaching a common understanding. On one hand, pro-enlargement allies must accept that advancing the Open Door agenda too enthusiastically generates suspicion in the eyes of other allies

having legitimate concerns over going too fast. On the other hand, members of the "sceptic club" must accept that assisting aspirants in their preparations should not be tied to preconditions. MAP was intended to be a tool to support aspirants, not too keep them at bay. The ultimate political decision about membership will always rest with allies, so the process will remain reversible, should they deem it necessary.

NATO's existing debates and the perception that the alliance should engage in a "reflection process" - as expressed by the French President in his interview to The Economist (2019) - make membership decisions for the near future highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the "reflection process", yet to be elaborated in its parameters by early 2020, might provide an opportunity for allies to discuss also the issues related to Open Door policy.

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The U.S. and the Eastern European Defence Cooperation Agreements: Impacts, Geopolitics and the Hungarian Case

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Abstract: In the recent years, an increasing number of bilateral defence cooperations has been concluded between the US and the key Eastern European NATO allies. Although Defence Cooperation Agreements (DCAs) are mainly perceived as simple legal umbrellas establishing a framework for further cooperation, their constructive elements do not only challenge the traditional foundations of state sovereignty but highlight the geopolitical importance of the region from a security perspective. From a broader perspective, the combination of the concluded agreements essentially forms a logistical network stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. This network does not only pave the way for a greater flexibility in military terms but eases the bureaucratic obstacles that hindered a stronger military cooperation among parties in the past. It is evident that DCAs play a central role in setting the stage for the future of the region's security perception and complexity. The study examines both the constructive and the geopolitical elements of these agreements. It addresses, compares and analyses the key points of six different defence cooperations of the US which were signed with Central European and Baltic countries. It places a special emphasis on their influence on state sovereignty. The study further highlights the distinctiveness of the Hungarian case and reflects on the impact of the agreement from a practical perspective.

Keywords: defence, Central Europe, Baltics, military cooperation, United States, Defence Cooperation Agreements (DCAs)

Introduction

In the recent years, bilateral defence cooperation agreements, otherwise known as DCAs, have become a widely and commonly used form of broad defence-related legal frameworks. These novel agreements have been gaining a foothold in the United States' (US) bilateral relationships, especially concerning the

Baltic and the Central and Eastern European states. Although DCAs are applied globally, they have been scarcely studied or analysed in the academic literature. Since 2017, the United States have signed DCAs from the Baltic to the Black Sea with Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, and renewed previous agreements regarding the status of US forces[1] with Hungary, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. Negotiations are still ongoing with Slovakia, however, it is uncertain whether they will be concluded in the near future.[2]

The realm of defence agreements is wide in nature and differ in scope depending on their purpose. These agreements are not unique to the United States, as nowadays they are used more frequently by several other countries. A repeatedly raised question is how such increased cooperation and peace time basing arrangement could potentially affect the traditional concept of sovereignty (Schmidt, 2014) of the receiving state in this rapidly changing multipolar world and whether they could have a possible hidden nature of impacting the global or regional security environment.

Three general categories serve as the central focus of these framework agreements, and essentially effect the arrangement among parties: scope and purpose, accessibility and jurisdiction. These three do not only reflect on the nature of agreements but have an impact on the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the receiving state. The differences among the respected states within these categories, both qualitatively and quantitatively, would signal how much a state is willing to trade-off from its sovereignty to establish such an agreement. In order to better comprehend the nature of these agreements, one must be able to interpret the legal framework behind it, which is the agreement itself. Therefore, to undertake a comprehensive analysis, one needs to look at their dual impact on sovereignty and geopolitics. Only then it is possible to make predictions on how Baltic and Central European DCAs could influence the future of security and politics in the region. Throughout the analysis, three aspects of these agreements will be covered. The first part will define DCAs, their purposes and introduce the legal framework behind them. Building upon this base, the second part will analyse the texts from the perspective of the accessibility of forces in the host state, the jurisdiction of the receiving state and property ownership, based on published agreements and exchange of notes. The third part will focus on the possible impacts these agreements have on the sovereignty of the

1 The definition of "force" for the purpose of clarity will follow the official definition outlined by NATO SOFA agreement stated under Article I (1a): "personnel belonging to the land, sea or air armed services of one Contracting Party when in the territory of another Contracting Party in the North Atlantic Treaty area" (Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty regarding the Status of their Forces, 1951).

2 In May 2019, the Slovak prime minister visited the US and a joint statement was issued reflecting on the importance of concluding a DCA between the two countries (The White House, 2019).

receiving states and the possible geopolitical consequences. Finally, the study will analyse the uniqueness of the US - Hungarian agreement reflecting on the important basis it sets for future military cooperation and exercises between the two countries.

Purpose and Legality of DCAs

Generally speaking, the type and scope of defence agreements are wide-ranging, while DCA's are also believed to encourage substantive cooperation in defence-related areas. One of the novelties of the Baltic and Central European agreements is derived from their uniqueness compared to other defence-related treaties.

In most cases, DCAs - as summarised by Kinne - put emphasis on day to day interactions such as: defence-related research and development, joint exercises, training and education or weapons procurement (Kinne, 2018). To simply put it, they are basically bilateral agreements or legal umbrellas establishing - though not in all cases - an institutional framework that involves relatively symmetrical and long-term commitments from both sides. However, the Baltic and Central European agreements are quite different cases. According to Article 1 of the DCAs, conducted between the aforementioned parties, *"The Agreement sets forth the framework for enhanced partnership and defence and security cooperation between…",* the US and contracting parties (Latvia (17-405), 2019). While this may not instigate much, almost in all the agreements signed with these countries, there appears a thematic uniformity with a primary focus on the status of armed forces and on the access of the respective forces to agreed facilities and areas. These DCAs appear to be quite general and one could argue that their purpose is to establish the basis for a much more substantive confidential agreement in the future by taking the first step towards the harmonisation of different military institutions.

A general difference is weather these DCAs establish the legal basis of new cooperation or renew/modify an already existing similar agreement. In the case of both US-Polish and US-Hungarian DCAs, it is supposedly a renewal of previous agreements signed almost two decades ago. Poland has two types of DCAs with the United States. The original agreement, which entered into force in 2010 regarding the status of armed forces of the US in Poland, was amended by an exchange of diplomatic notes in 2015, whereby the agreed facilities and areas were modified and outlined (Poland (15-715), 2015). Further changes were made regarding their use, including the proposal that concerned the prepositioned

materials[3] by the US forces. The 2018 negotiations and exchange of notes removed two previously mentioned areas and included the notification of Polish authorities regarding the removal of prepositioned materials in advance (Poland (18-1221), 2018). Thus, modifying the 2010 agreement and essentially creating a DCA similar to the ones conducted by the US with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Building on an already existing legal framework, in June 2010, Poland signed a different type of DCA that concerned the cooperation on information assurance and computer network defence - which is qualitatively different from the previous agreement. The Baltic states, on the other hand, had no previous explicit agreements and legal frameworks, regarding the status of US armed forces in Latvia, Estonia or Lithuania. Although the 2017 Baltic DCAs were already established by an exchange of diplomatic notes in 2015 laying the groundwork for the comprehensive agreement to be signed. The content of these diplomatic notes again focused on certain areas and facilities on the territory of the respective states, and on the unimpeded access to them. The agreements outlined in the notes were valid for only two years and the signing of the agreements on defence cooperation of Baltic countries were the final phase of their implementation.

In terms of legal interpretation, the DCA can be identified both as an agreement regarding the status of visiting forces and as a basic framework treaty. In international public law, framework agreements are legally binding international agreements that outline broad commitments for its parties, and establish a general system of governance (Matz-Lück, 2012). These types of framework agreements for enhanced partnership on defence open up numerous options and set the basis for defence-related cooperation for the next decade or more. Thus, enabling the US to reassure its commitments in Central Europe and in the Baltic region, and to maintain its strong influence in this historical buffer zone. The legality of the status of armed forces and the law of visiting forces are all based on the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Regarding the Status of their Forces (NATO SOFA) signed in 1951 (NATO, 1951). However, SOFA arrangements only define the legal status of visiting forces and the best practices which are ought to be applied in certain cases. Due to its broad interpretation, specifics are left to be defined by separate bilateral agreements, such as DCAs, depending on the request of either the sending or receiving state. In 1997 Hungary, even adopted a national legislature with regard to the Status of US Armed Forces in the Republic of Hungary (aka. Omnibus law) to define the legal status of visiting forces at an early stage (1997. évi XLIX. Törvény, 1997). Accordingly, the DCA signed between Hungary

3 Meaning the storage and preposition of property, equipment, supplies and materials.

and the US in April 2019 attempted to redefine and update the agreement in a more comprehensive manner. Instead of amending the old agreement, it was completely overhauled and replaced by the new one.

Therefore, the recent DCAs conducted by the US survey have the primary purpose of setting a legal framework for future defence cooperation, securing important aspects of US global military power projection, such as mobility, access to bases and at the same time to boost and motivate military infrastructural development of allies. All this does not necessarily mean that such DCAs are tailored to benefit the US only. The signing of these agreements brings about both financial and strategic benefits. The increased presence of US troops could serve as deterrence in relation to external threats, and in countries that are focusing on the modernisation of their domestic forces' valuable military-to-military cooperation - including training and exercises - and higher interoperability could be achieved.

Accessibility, Jurisdiction and Ownership

It is without a doubt that the presence of foreign armed forces in a state during peace time essentially challenges the *jus ad praesentiam* (the right to be there) concept resulting in the dual clash of sovereignty and control (Fleck, 2018). It is natural that sending states have a desire to ensure the doctrine of the law of the flag (exclusive jurisdiction of the sending state), while receiving states attempt to counter this restriction on their territorial sovereignty (Hartov, 2003). Therefore, it is imperative for both sides to establish a symmetry when it comes to issues such as criminal jurisdiction, taxation or movement of troops. Without such balance, no mutual security benefits could be achieved.

Since the Iron Age, strategic mobility defined the ability of a military force to project power and the influence over a given geographical area. To this day, the ability of an army to move and deploy rapidly remains an important cornerstone of military strategy. The approval of access is key for the ability to perform these manoeuvres, that in today's bureaucratic system can be challenging. The question is, in what way it is provided by the receiving state, which, for example in the case of Hungary, was a paramount factor in the negotiations on the DCA.

The exchange of diplomatic notes conducted between the US and the Baltic States imply that unimpeded access shall mean the unrestricted right of US forces to access the agreed facilities and areas, stage and deploy forces and material, refuelling of aircraft among others. While in the case of both Estonia and Latvia this term is used when it comes to Article III (1) regarding the Access

to and the Use of Agreed Facilities and Areas, it is missing from the Lithuanian DCA and only appears in Article IV (3) relating to the unimpeded access of US forces and contractors to prepositioning of defence equipment, supplies and materials.

The 2010 agreement on the Status of US Armed Forces in Poland had no mention of the unimpeded access and the contained explicit remarks on the supervisory role of Polish authorities over authorisation of US forces and contractors' access. In 2015, similarly to the Baltic situation, the agreement was amended by an exchange of notes authorising unimpeded access of US forces and contractors to agreed facilities and areas (Lithuania (15-618), 2015; Estonia (15-609), 2015; Latvia (15-751.1), 2015). The one consistency that stands out in all referred DCAs is the use of the adjective "unimpeded", systematically linked to the movement and access of US forces. Unimpeded means not blocking, slowing or interfering with something (Unimpeded, 2019). Therefore, by definition the term creates a broader interpretation of what constitutes as a violation of "unimpeded" allowing, in this case the US, greater flexibility. The question still remains whether the adjective "unimpeded" is just a mere formality in the military world and could be a political tool or its practical interoperation has bigger consequences than originally prescribed to it.

Undeniably, it is in the best interest of the sending state to prevent any hindrance to its ability to perform its tasks, but it is also in the interest of the receiving state to maintain its sovereign control over its territory. In practice, the wording "unimpeded access" might not have an effect on the ability of the sending state to move its troops as there are specific procedures already present and established in the system. Essentially, the phrase itself can also be interpreted as an important connotation with the harmonisation of foreign military access, while at the same time it allows a much greater flexibility pertaining to troop movements and access from the side of the sending state, and to slightly diminish the control of the receiving state.

The possible violation or limitation on sovereignty has become more of a deal breaker in DCA negotiations. In March 2019, Slovakia decided to suspend its talks with the US over the defence cooperation agreement. Slovakian Defence Minister, Peter Gajdoš underlined that *"every legal framework allowing foreign troops to permanently stay on the territory of the country for an undecided period, a threat or [at least] a limiting factor to the sovereignty of Slovakia"* (Istrate, 2019). A similar situation happened during the US-Hungarian negotiations when the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Péter Szíjjártó emphasised that *"one of the most important criteria was that Hungarian sovereignty cannot be impaired"* (MTI, 2019). The limiting factor that both countries try to highlight is the compromise between the sending state's greater flexibility and the receiving state's control. Although clear and

brief references are made in each treaty for the respect of sovereignty and the laws of the receiving state under Article III, the agreements maintain a broader interpretation of the unimpeded access.

Besides the conflictual relationship between the law of the flag and the territorial sovereignty, criminal jurisdiction of the receiving state is another factor which needs to be taken into consideration. In principle, a state has unlimited jurisdiction over its own territory, and this principle could bring the host nation into conflict with the sovereign rights of the sending state over its forces (Voetelink, 2013). Under Article 3 (a) of the NATO SOFA, military authorities of the sending state can exercise jurisdiction in case of offences against the property or security of the sending state and in case any of act or omission done during the performance of duty (NATO, 1951). In any other case, the receiving state shall have primary jurisdiction. However, in all cases, the state which has the primary jurisdiction can decide to waive its right and could also be requested the waiver of such right if it is in the particular interest of the other party. In the case of all Baltic DCAs, according to Article XII relating to Criminal Jurisdiction, each state exercises their right under Article 3 (c) of NATO SOFA to waive its primary right to exercise criminal jurisdiction (Agreement on Defence Cooperation – Estonia and US, 2017) at the request of the United States. In specific cases, which are particularly important for the receiving state, this could be withdrawn. A similar wording was already present in the 1997 Hungarian law regarding the status of US armed forces which is preserved under the new DCA. However, in the case of Poland, the wording reflects the primacy of the receiving state in such cases. In Article 13 (1) of the 2010 Polish-US agreement, Poland shall give *"expeditious and sympathetic consideration"* for the waiver of such request, which is a diplomatic way of saying both yes and no at the same time (Poland (10-331), 2010).

Another striking difference between the Baltic DCAs and the other agreements is the detail in which they outline criminal jurisdiction. In the case of the Baltic Agreements, we can only see a general outline with no more than 5-6 subparagraphs relating to the jurisdiction over dependents and the civilian component. At the same time, the Romanian agreement details to whom the request for the waiver of primary jurisdiction should be sent, its deadline for consideration, and a separate article for the determination of criminal jurisdiction in official duty cases. These subtle differences highlight the age-old stand of the US regarding its position on other nations' court's jurisdiction over their forces and the fact that certain Central European states, such as Poland and Hungary, take a more vocal stand on the criminal jurisdiction or taxation right, compared to their Baltic neighbours.

While the main goal of these DCAs is to set the legal framework for foreign forces in the territory of the above-mentioned countries, the US also needs facilities to base its troops, equipment and to have adequate training facilities.

In most cases, these facilities are existing but might need to be modernised, or in other case, the US constructs new facilities for this purpose.

This is an area where the receiving states' benefit considerably from the presence of US forces' presence on their territory, as it can lead to the modernisation of certain facilities, alongside the advantages gained from joint military training and exercises. However, this raises two questions: who will own the facilities and who will pay for them? Under Article V of the Baltic DCAs and Article 4 of the 2010 Romanian agreement, *"all buildings, non-relocatable structures, and assemblies affixed to the land in Agreed Facilities and Areas, including those altered or improved by U.S. forces, remain the property of"* the receiving states (Latvia (17-405), 2017; Lithuania (17-227), 2017; Agreement on Defence Cooperation-Estonia and US, 2017; Poland (10-331), 2010). The same principles apply to buildings and structures that were built by the US and are no longer used by them. It might be important to take the quality and the type of the constructed structure into consideration. According to the DCAs, the terms of return of ownership rights need to be consulted, including a compensation for the residual value of investments made by the United States. Therefore, it is possible that in case a facility would be still available for use upon the departure of the US from the receiving state, the receiving state would have to pay for the investment costs initially covered by the US, but most likely for a lower price than their real value. While these types of DCAs do not explicitly outline and allow the purchase of US forces' equipment, they imply such possibility. Under Article V (4) of the Baltic States' DCAs, "*The Parties or their designees may consult regarding the possible transfer or purchase of U.S. forces' equipment determined to be excess to the needs of the United States, as may be authorised by U.S. law and regulations"* - implying the possibility of US arms procurement based on these agreements (Latvia (17-405), 2017; Lithuania (17-227), 2017; Agreement on Defence Cooperation-Estonia and US, 2017). It has been highlighted that one consequential effect of the conclusion of a DCA is the rise of engagement between parties in arms trade and participation in joint military exercises (Kinne, 2018).

The Hungarian DCA

During the 2017-2019 period, the most interesting development regarding any DCA negotiations was the Hungarian case. The reason for this does not only lay in the circumstances and political debates surrounding the negotiations, but in the role the DCA plays in the overall US-HU bilateral military partnership compared to other similar US agreements in the region. Therefore, the chapter

attempts to highlight the distinctiveness of the Hungarian case and to reflect on the significance of the agreement from a practical perspective. To this end, it reflects on three important features and a clarification, all underlining the importance of this DCA.

The first is connected to tax exemptions of US armed forces in Hungary. As it was mentioned before, one key aspect of these agreements is to ensure a smoother and more flexible operation of American forces in the given country. This is usually hindered by administrative tasks which the US had to do in Hungary since 1997. According to the 1997 Hungarian national law regarding the status of US armed forces, the value-added tax (VAT) exemptions for purchases for or by US forces was not granted at the point of purchase, so a full price had to be paid. According to the first amendment of the aforementioned agreement, an extensive documentation –producing the original invoices and original certificates – had to be prepared in order for the reimbursement to take place, that actually placed additional administrative burdens on both countries' authorities (1997. évi XLIX. Törvény, 1997). The 2019 agreement essentially simplified and negated this part, and instead, it introduced such a simpler procedure that allows a greater flexibility and less control. According to Article XVI (1), tax exemption will only require a certificate to be issued by the Hungarian authorities and the exemption will be applied at the point of purchase, thereby reducing costs and bureaucratic red tape.

The second important feature of the agreement revolves around the agreed facilities and areas. Under the agreement, four agreed facilities and areas were designated to be used by US forces; Kecskemét Air Base, Pápa Air Base, Tata Garrison and Training Area and Várpalota Garrison and Training Area (2019. évi LI. Törvény, 2019). Out of these four areas, the two garrison and training areas are important for two reasons. Since Hungary is also a frequent host of international military exercises, often with US participation, certain standards are required to be met by the training and garrison areas. The Hungarian Defence Forces follow different standard operation procedures for range control than the US, which has very strict, extensive and concise regulations and safety measures for all types of ammunitions and combat vehicles. In Hungary, there are only two ranges which could host larger training operations and meet minimum US standards and safety regulations for battalion and brigade combat size manoeuvres, Tata and Várpalota. Despite the fact that they meet the minimum requirements, the maintenance and upgrading of these areas require significant investment in order to sustain a possible 10-year activity by US and other international forces. Although the current Hungarian government is investing a significant amount into its defence forces, the footing of these bills has to come from somewhere else to ensure economic viability. This is where the

third feature comes into play, the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI). The main objectives of the EDI are to enable the enhancement of infrastructure at U.S. airfields, bases and training ranges, to build partner capacity as well as to support the participation of US forces in international exercises (Shevin-Coetzee, 2019). Hungary has already benefitted from this initiative in the form of infrastructure-related modernisation efforts that helped to fund the Kecskemét Air Base development with an estimated amount of $55.4 million (Shevin-Coetzee, 2019). It is possible to presume that with the signing of the DCA and the increasing funding of the EDI, other infrastructure-related modernisations will continue in Hungary.[4]

Following the publication of the Hungarian DCA, certain news coverages began to fixate on an aspect of the agreement which needs to be clarified. A significance was attributed to a "legal loophole" within the agreement that was supposedly inserted due to the Hungarian opposition over the loss of sovereignty, and that while sacrificing sovereignty, the Hungarian government managed to insert this loophole. According to Article XII (1) of the Hungarian-US DCA, like in all previously highlighted agreements, Hungary waived its primary right to exercise criminal jurisdiction. The waiver of such right is an accepted practice when it comes to similar type of SOFA and DCA agreements, and it is important to take into consideration the usual US position regarding the acceptance of any jurisdiction besides their own. According to news outlets, the legal loophole is that in specific cases which are particularly important to the Hungarian government this waiver may be withdrawn (168 óra, 2019; Csuhaj, 2019; Szabolcs, 2019). This is not something unique in the Hungarian case since the Lithuanian, Estonian, Romanian and Latvian DCAs all contain these provisions as well. This sentence was not inserted because of the Hungarian backlash over possible infringement of sovereignty, it was probably present in the first draft of the agreement from the beginning.

At a period when Hungary is pushing for the reform, revitalisation and modernisation of its defence forces, the value-added of this DCA cannot be neglected. By the additional push it provides, the country could possibly define the future development of Hungary as a core Central European player in the realm of security and defence. Which of course is warmly welcomed by the current United States administration that would see its allies meeting certain goals in terms of equipment contribution and GDP share.

4 The EDI funds that could be used to support Hungarian military modernisation face complications by the ongoing US domestic debate on the border wall issue and the plans of the Trump administration to reallocate funds originally prescribed to EDI.

Impact on Geopolitics

The number and variety of Defence Cooperation Agreements have been increasing rapidly since the end of the Cold War (Kinne, 2019). The novelty of the DCAs analysed under the framework of this paper points toward much larger implications than just simple "status of armed forces" type of agreements. The geographical positioning and proximities of the selected countries show certain correlation with the events of the past five years which cannot be ignored.

The threat perception of the Baltic States and Poland after the 2014 events in Ukraine and Crimea toward Russia have deteriorated significantly. This explains the fact that these countries were faster to conclude DCAs compared to Hungary or Slovakia, who do not see the Russian threat similarly. If we look at the geographic position and proximity of these countries that conducted similar DCAs with the US (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria), their respective eastern borders are connected, drawing a unified line along the Central and Eastern European countries between Russia and Ukraine. One of the major significances of these agreements, among others, that is setting the basis for rotational US armed forces in the territory of the signature countries, raises some questions on the possible strategic implications of the agreements.

Neither texts explicitly state the number and type of US forces that could be stationed in the countries' territory, nor they define whether the US could increase its forces unilaterally when it wants to. Not to mention the fact that aircraft, vessels and vehicles operated by or exclusively for the US forces may enter, exit and move freely within the territory of these states. The only related issue, which is mentioned concerning the military exercises is hidden in the 2010 US-Polish agreement and is phrased in Article 5(1), reflects on forces that are not yet stationed in the territory of Poland (Poland (10-331), 2010). Military exercise conducted by forces that are not yet present in the territory of Poland shall require approval from the relevant Polish authorities. All things considered, this could mean that the US force stationed in Poland, with a relevant movement order, can enter into Lithuania or move down to Romania under more flexible circumstances, which gives the possibility for the US forces to move vertically between the Baltic and the Black Sea with unimpeded access. The only variable that needs to be addressed is the lack of transportation infrastructure that would enable the rapid and smooth military movement between these states. This radical logic of thought might not correspond with the reality and practicality behind troop movements and their process but paints a general picture of the circumstances. Consultation and prior approval would still be needed, but the DCA makes it possible to jump over the typical bureaucratic obstacles that would exist without these agreements.

Agreements on defence cooperation have a wider regional impact, where an adversarial power might perceive the DCA as an element of an aggressive posture by the signatory states. While DCAs could increase tensions with the power to the East of NATO's border, at the same time, they have a more cohesive effect between the parties. Brandon J. Kinne (2019) hypothesises that when states favour ties to "partners of partners", it results in a phenomenon that he refers to as the *triadic closure*. In terms of DCA networks, Kinne highlighted that this would mean that country A and B are more likely to cooperate with each other if they both sign a DCA with a common country C. Of course, this would require a high degree of trust between countries A and B in order to push for a closer defence cooperation. This is where the EDI comes into play as well. As a tool to reassure allies by the increasing US presence in these countries, it enables the US to indirectly increase military cooperation among countries, and to upgrade strategic airfields or forward basing infrastructure in these countries.

It is also important to mention that the DCAs are directly connected to the geographical and geopolitical position of a country. As it was mentioned before, these countries form an imaginary line of defence that is strengthened by their NATO membership and the bilateral agreement signed with the US. Since the Trump administration is a vocal advocate of increasing the share of defence-related contribution by allies, the DCAs could be an indirect tool to nudge them in the right direction. At the same time, it also means an increase in the US presence in Central and Eastern Europe that could be perceived as a threat to Russia. With more countries signing DCAs in the neighbourhood, the growing number of concerned states would also mean that eventually the upsetting peace and stability would increase in a region.

Conclusion

The aim of this analysis was to highlight the important aspects of DCAs in Central and Eastern Europe, and to introduce the uniqueness of the Hungarian-US agreement. Firstly, it aimed to interpret and highlight the subtle differences between the DCAs of the selected countries while it did seek to point out why sovereignty was a focal point in each of these negotiations. Secondly, it revealed the possible implications DCAs could have on the receiving states' sovereignty and on the geopolitics of the region.

Generally, there was no single framework under which these agreements could be placed since they lacked uniformity in their scope and purpose in a global context. However, the Baltic and Eastern European DCAs were commonly grounded on a thematic setting, by the creation of a legal framework for stationing US troops in

the countries' territory and for setting the stage for more detailed agreements. The similarity of the agreements stemmed from the objective that was here to set the framework for defence- and security-related bilateral cooperations. In all the examined agreements, the focal points, around which the debates revolved, were the movement and access, the criminal jurisdiction, the ownership, or in the Hungarian case, the tax exemptions. These are the essential variables that define the purpose of the treaty from different aspects. Each variable effects the sovereignty of the receiving states and could impose limitations on the sending states. At the same time, these variables introduce measures that dismantle bureaucratic roadblocks which could hinder future cooperation among the parties. The difference in the level of details between the Baltic and the Central European DCAs is more striking. The former ones are more general with less details regarding the taxation, the environmental safety or the administrative procedures, while the latter ones put a heavy emphasis on these issues, and even specify the administrative procedures, the military exercises and permits or licenses.

While these elusive differences are not easy to spot, a single adjective or phrase can inherently reflect what the receiving states prioritise on and regard important in case of foreign forces in their territory. With the conflict of right of jurisdiction on one's own territory and the law of flag, the agreements challenge the receiving states' sovereignty. Furthermore, these agreements are based more on the absolute than the relative gains. Both parties benefit from the cooperation separately in different ways. The US is able to enhance its military presence along the borders of Eastern Europe and to create a logistical network from the Baltic to the Black Sea, while sending a message of reassurance to its NATO allies in the region. The other parties also gain concerning their security in defence, including defence modernisation, cooperation through investments from the US, and through the increased number of trainings and exercises. The defensive posture of these countries is also strengthened. The increasing number of military exercises enable the harmonisation of European and US military standards and systems paving the way for a greater cooperation and deployment efficiency, as synchronisation and interoperability are becoming crucial factors.

However, the Defence Cooperation Agreements could pose challenges as well in a geopolitical and regional context. While such a cooperation might result in a *triadic closure* that enhances defence and security cooperation between the Baltic and the Central European states, it could also be a source of tension between the United States and those countries, who oppose the increased US military presence in the region, like primarily Russia. The benefits and costs of these agreements might not be evident yet, since a lot depends on how these framework agreements will be filled with substance and will be used. It can be

assumed that the strengthening of US-Baltic and US-Central European ties will follow, while they could also be an additional source for tension at the broader European security landscape.

Taking into consideration the possible implications, including costs and benefits, Defence Cooperation Agreements are becoming more and more important in the realm of defence and security policy. Although the academic literature pays relatively small attention to these agreements, their indirect effects on regional and geopolitical security are increasing. Their growing number also signals a trend towards the stronger bilateral rather than the multilateral cooperation formats. From the author's perspective, the DCAs play a central role in setting the stage for the future of the region's security perception and complexity. They create the base upon which the pillars of bilateral security cooperation will be implemented, which makes them even more important when it comes to the analysis of the quality of future security and defence-related cooperation among the United States, the Baltics and the Central European states.

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NATO's Evolving Approach to Cybersecurity

Diána SZŐKE

Abstract: The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is faced with an increasingly complex global threat environment. Cyberattacks are becoming ever more frequent and menacing. Recognising its growing importance, NATO designated cyberspace a domain of its operations at the Warsaw Summit in 2016. In the same year, member states adopted the Cyber Defence Pledge in order to strengthen their own cyber resilience. But how can a military alliance address a constantly shifting, non-military threat such as cyberattacks? NATO's approach to cybersecurity covers both the protection of the alliance's own computer systems, along with the networks of member states. This study aims to track the evolution of NATO's approach to cybersecurity from two perspectives. On the theoretical side, it will look at how the alliance reinterprets collective defence and deterrence in the context of cyberthreats; the applicability of international law in the cyber domain; and the role of NATO in global cyber governance. From a practical perspective, the article explains the main steps NATO has recently taken to shore up its cyber defences, including institutional reforms within the alliance, organising cyber exercises and trainings, deepening its cooperation with the European Union and partnering with the private sector.

Keywords: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation / NATO, cybersecurity, emerging security challenges, hybrid warfare

Introduction

Cybersecurity has undoubtedly dominated the news headlines in the recent years. From Russian disinformation campaigns and the role of social media in shaping electoral outcomes, to rising technological competition between the United States and China, there is a growing awareness that cyberspace is the newest domain of geopolitics.

As a fundamental pillar of cooperation between Western countries, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) must also meet this growing challenge. This includes the protection of the alliance's own computer systems in a stricter sense, along with responding to any cyberthreat that potentially endangers the peace and stability of member states in a broader dimension.

All this raises the question of how NATO - as a military and political alliance - can address an emerging security challenge that is essentially non-military in its nature. The article aims to assess the evolution of the alliance's approach to cyberthreats from both a theoretical as well as a practical, policy-related perspective. On the theoretical side, it will look at how the alliance defines cyberthreats and interprets its mandate for collective defence and deterrence in the cyber realm; the applicability of international law in cyberspace; and the potential role of NATO in global cyber governance. From the practical side, the article outlines the main steps NATO has taken in recent years to shore up its cyber defences, including institutional reforms within the alliance, cyber exercises and educational programs, deepening its cooperation with the European Union, and partnering with the private sector to address cyberthreats.

The Nature of Cyberthreats Faced by the Alliance

First off, it is important to assess the nature and the many faces of cybersecurity as pertaining to NATO in the "information age". Understanding the technical, economic and political / regulatory complexities of this challenge helps to explain the myriad theoretical dilemmas and practical difficulties the alliance faces in addressing it.

Cybersecurity is generally seen as a so-called new / emerging security challenge. This term refers to strategic threats that appeared on the global security agenda predominantly in the post-Cold War years, either because (1) they had previously been overshadowed by the "high politics" of the bipolar era (such as energy security, terrorism, migration, etc.), or (2) the problems themselves only became significant from the 1990s onwards (such as climate change, or of course, cybersecurity itself).

Cybersecurity is an incredibly multi-faceted issue. It ranges from the physical security of vital hardware and critical national infrastructure to the societal implications of using certain types of software or social media platforms. The term encompasses a variety of economic threats (i.e. industrial espionage) and political dangers (i.e. information warfare, disinformation campaigns), as well as specific technical issues (i.e. hacking, the use of ransomware or so-called "denial of service" – DOS – attacks). It is therefore vital to delineate the limits of the term for the purposes of this article. What type of cyberthreats fall within the responsibility of NATO? As will be pointed out later, narrowing down the specific cyber issues that could potentially affect the peace and stability of the alliance is quite difficult in practice. Nonetheless, it can generally be stated that NATO's key focus is on high-level political and economic cyberthreats that could undermine the security of member states or the alliance as a whole.

Overall, the dangers to the alliance from the cyber domain are becoming ever more "frequent, complex, destructive and coercive" (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2019a). Cyberattacks against NATO's IT (information technology) infrastructure are

also characterised by increasing sophistication. There have fortunately been no large-scale debilitating computer-based attacks against the alliance or its member states to date. However, the absence of a so-called "cyber-Pearl Harbor" does not mean that NATO should ease its vigilance. In fact, several consequential cyber cases have risen to prominence in the past few years. These include the cyberattack against Estonian government agencies with alleged Russian support in 2007, or the high-profile Stuxnet computer worm virus that damaged Iran's nuclear program in 2010. More recently, personal and commercial data were hacked from the film company Sony Pictures in 2014, supposedly by North Korean perpetrators in retaliation for the satirical movie "The Interview". Just two years ago, the Wannacry global ransomware attack severely undermined many online systems, including the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom.

There is a general consensus in the literature that the most dominant cyberthreat facing the alliance is that of state-based (or at least state-sponsored) cyberattacks (NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2019). The main potential culprits of state-based attacks against NATO and its member states are essentially a list of the "usual suspects", including China, Russia, North Korea and Iran (Kramer & Butler, 2019). According to data published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), more than 250 state-affiliated cyberattacks occurred between 2005 and 2018 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019, p. 15) - and that figure does not include any cyber operations that failed or went unnoticed. Apart from the cyberthreat posed by rogue states, dangerous non-state actors such as terrorist groups also abound in cyberspace (Bremmer & Kupchan, 2019).

The specific cyberthreats facing the alliance and its member states range from the theft of sensitive data to disinformation campaigns and the shutdown of essential online networks. In recent years, the relevant literature on the topic has increasingly highlighted the danger of attacks on critical infrastructure systems as well, be that transportation and telecommunication networks, banks, utility companies, or elements of national energy grids.

It is important to also draw attention to the possible divisions within NATO regarding the challenges of cybersecurity. Recent debates over burden-sharing and the global role of the alliance have highlighted that member states are far from unified in their assessment of security risks. While there is a general consensus that cybersecurity will be a key realm of warfare in the coming decades, there is a marked divide between countries on the two sides of the Atlantic. The United States approaches this question from the point of national security (as is most poignantly demonstrated by the attention surrounding the Huawei case and 5G networks), whereas European allies are generally more concerned with data safety issues (i.e. the General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR).

Cybersecurity on NATO's Agenda

This next section will present an overview of the process whereby the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation began to incorporate cybersecurity into its long-term vision and daily operations. The focus will be on the key summits and strategic documents adopted by the member states, as well as on the geopolitical factors that triggered a growing interest in, and concern regarding, the issue.

NATO's approach to cybersecurity can essentially be divided into three phases (Świątkowska, 2016, p. 5).

1. From the early 1990s onwards, cybersecurity was seen primarily as a technical problem of protecting the alliance's own IT infrastructure and the data it contained.
2. Cybersecurity emerged as a hot item on the political agenda after 2000, and became particularly pressing following the 2007 cyberattacks against Estonian government agencies, allegedly perpetrated by Russian-backed hackers.
3. We are currently in the third stage of this evolution, when NATO is attempting to address cybersecurity as a holistic, strategic challenge, one that is closely intertwined with the changing geopolitical reality. In the recent years, this process was greatly accelerated by the increased attention paid to so-called "hybrid warfare", particularly in the light of the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014, and its subsequent covert activities to destabilise eastern Ukraine. Nowadays, another potential cyber rival to member states has come to the fore, namely China. This was poignantly illustrated at the most recent high-level meeting of NATO heads of state in London in early December 2019, where the leaders jointly underscored the dangers posed by a rising China (Griffith, 2019).

In terms of the specific policy measures taken by NATO to address cyber issues, the topic first officially appeared on the alliance's agenda only at the 2002 summit held in Prague. Nonetheless, it was six years until the first cyber defence policy was adopted by member states. Also in 2008, NATO established its Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in the Estonian capital, Tallinn. NATO's most recent Strategic Concept, accepted in Lisbon in 2010, explicitly mentions the challenges posed by cyberthreats. NATO Action Plans on cybersecurity were agreed upon by member states in 2014 and 2017, respectively. An Enhanced NATO Cyber Defence Policy was drafted at the 2014 Wales Summit in reaction to the aforementioned events in Ukraine. Two years later at the Warsaw Summit, the alliance announced a landmark decision: it declared cyberspace to be its fourth so-called domain of operations, alongside land, sea and air. In addition, member states signed on to the Cyber Defence Pledge, which highlighted each country's individual responsibility to strengthen its cyber resilience. This was adopted because of a growing awareness of the dangers posed by (Russian) disinformation campaigns and hybrid warfare following the annexation

of Crimea in 2014 and the civil war in Ukraine. In the same year, NATO signed a Joint Declaration with the European Union (EU) on deepening the cooperation between the two organisations, with particular regard to cybersecurity. An even greater focus on cyber issues was decided at the NATO defence ministers' council in Brussels in 2017 (Birnbaum, 2017). At the alliance's summit in Brussels in 2018, NATO's members jointly approved the establishment of a Cyberspace Operations Centre. This will be located in Mons, Belgium, and is set to start operations in 2023.[1] As for the near future, NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is said to begin formulating a new cyber defence doctrine in 2020 (The Economist, 2019).

Theoretical Dilemmas

Based on the chronology above, it would almost seem as if NATO's attempts to incorporate cybersecurity into its daily operations were a simple, gradual task. In actual fact, the process is far from seamless, as the unique nature of cybersecurity presents several theoretical dilemmas for the alliance. The following section will look at four of these issues, namely:

- The problems of defining and identifying cyberthreats;
- The interpretation of NATO's mandate in cyberspace;
- The applicability of international law in the cyber domain;
- The potential role of NATO in global cyber governance.

The Problems of Defining and Identifying Cyberthreats

What exactly constitutes a cyberthreat or cyberattack is in itself a major conundrum for the alliance and scholars of international law alike. To date, there is no universally accepted definition of the term "cyberattack" (NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2019). The myriad of other terms used to describe the problem (such as "cyber exploitation", "cybercrime" or even "cyber-enabled information operations") poses further difficulties. In addition, the lines between "cybercrime", "cyber warfare" and "cyber terrorism" are blurred (Swain, 2013, p. 4). Another term closely related to the focus on cybersecurity - that of "hybrid warfare" is similarly difficult to pin down. All this means that NATO faces a profound challenge of delineating what the threat it faces is in the first place.

1 For a detailed timeline of NATO decisions and policies relating to cybersecurity, see the Appendix.

A further problem facing the alliance when it comes to defining and identifying cybersecurity issues is the difficulty of attribution. There are many nefarious actors - states and non-state players alike - bent on the subversion of Western political / economic systems, who benefit greatly from the anonymity afforded by cyberspace. Investigating and naming potential cyber culprits is therefore oftentimes akin to locating the proverbial needle in the haystack. Weaker opponents of the West (i.e. North Korea, Iran) may thus find the asymmetry of power inherent in cyber warfare "too tempting not to use" (Bremmer & Kupchan, 2019).

Another difficulty lies in setting thresholds for cyberthreats - when, for instance, can a "regular" type of hacking be considered a cyberattack against a given state? There are no clear "red lines" in cyberspace, so this is potentially always going to be a rather subjective distinction. This is further compounded by the rapid pace of technological development in the IT sector, which creates a constantly shifting landscape of cyber challenges. Artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, quantum computing and advances in data science will therefore present new opportunities, but also new dangers.

The Interpretation of NATO's Mandate in Cyberspace

NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept entitled "Active Engagement, Modern Defence" was adopted at the Lisbon Summit, and named the alliance's three core tasks. These are collective defence, crisis management, along with cooperative security. NATO interprets cybersecurity within its mandate of collective defence, but the precise nature of defence and deterrence in the cyber domain are quite muddled.

Given the frequency and wide-ranging nature of cyberattacks, the alliance itself cannot counter all such malicious threats. Instead, it focuses on cyber dangers that fall under the collective defence clause of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. This relates to threats that potentially endanger the "territorial integrity, political independence, or national security" of a member state (NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2019). This implies that a cyberattack could theoretically trigger Article 5 of the Washington Treaty (Oren, 2016, p. 65), as was recently publicly reaffirmed in an article by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (BBC News, 2019).

In practice, NATO stresses the primacy of national responsibility in dealing with dangers in cyberspace. Realising that every chain is only as strong as its weakest link, the alliance adopted the NATO Cyber Defence Pledge on the sidelines of the Warsaw Summit in 2016. Member states agreed to strengthen their domestic anti-hacking infrastructure, and to step up efforts to increase their own cyber resilience (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2016). States' individual responsibility is crucial given that NATO does not possess (nor does it plan to develop) its own

cyber capabilities for offensive purposes. Instead, it relies on voluntary contributions from member states, just as in the case of conventional warfare (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2019b). Unfortunately, this also raises the issue of trust between the Allies, which many feel is at a low point in light of the many divisions currently plaguing NATO (i.e. debates over burden-sharing, the role of Turkey, etc.).

Defining what constitutes deterrence in the case of cyberspace poses an additional theoretical dilemma (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2017, pp. 1-2). Traditional theories of collective defence (as articulated, for instance, during the Cold War with regards to the threat of nuclear annihilation) cannot be directly applied to cyberspace operations in the 21st century (Taddeo, 2018, p. 2). This means that the risk of escalation inherent in any military measure may become even more pronounced in the case of a cyberattack.

The Applicability of International Law in the Cyber Domain

A third theoretical challenge for NATO lies in the legal parameters of international military or political action against cyberthreats. The stereotypical view of cyberspace suggests it remains some form of lawless "wild west". Although there are no internationally codified and / or universally accepted norms in cyberspace, it is important to stress that it is not characterised by complete chaos (Gomez, 2018).

The North Atlantic Alliance has publicly stated that it considers international law applicable to cyberspace as well (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2019a). NATO's cyberspace operations also aim to be "defensive, proportionate and in line with international law" (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2019b). In practice, however, relatively few international legal institutions are universally accepted to regulate cyberspace.

The Potential Role of NATO in Global Cyber Governance

A long-term, strategic dilemma for the alliance is what possible future role it may play in shaping the global norms and institutions regulating cyberspace. This is a relatively new, flexible area of international law, in which much still needs to be codified. Western countries - or international organisations such as NATO or the EU - need to make strategic decisions on how they want to become involved in this codification process, and whether they could shape it to their own geopolitical advantage.

Practical Measures

The previous section examined some of the theoretical problems faced by NATO in addressing cyber challenges. These dilemmas, however, have not paralysed the alliance, which has undertaken several practical steps and institutional reforms over the recent decade. The most significant of these include:

- The establishment of cyber deterrence institutions within the alliance;
- Cyber exercises and training programs;
- The deepening of cooperation with the EU (and other external organisations);
- Partnering with the private sector.

The Establishment of Cyber Deterrence Institutions within the Alliance

From the mid-2000s onwards, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has undergone several institutional reforms to meet the growing dangers inherent in cyberthreats. To date, all high-level political decisions remain delegated to the North Atlantic Council (NAC). Specific cyber-related issues are discussed at the working level within the so-called Cyber Defence Committee (CDC) and the Cyber Defence Management Board (CDMB). Cyber issues are often addressed at the Science and Technology Committee (STC) of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly as well.

The protection of NATO's own internal computer network is delegated to the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC). This is located in Mons, Belgium, at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). Their task is far from simple, as the alliance's own computer system is spread out across over 60 different sites. In addition, NATO Cyber Rapid Reaction Teams are on stand-by to assist member states with national-level cyber crises.

A vital step in this institutional evolution was the foundation of a specified body to study the nature of cyberthreats. The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (NATO CCDCoE) was established in 2008, against the backdrop of major hacking attacks against Estonian government agencies the year before. It is therefore no coincidence that the Centre's headquarters are in Tallinn, Estonia. The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence follows an interdisciplinary approach to cyberthreats, focusing on four core areas: (1) technology, (2) strategy, (3) operations and (4) international law. It comprises of experts from 25 countries (not all of whom come from NATO member states), and undertakes vital research, cyber exercises, trainings and capacity-building programs (NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, n.d.).

Cyber Exercises and Training Programs

An important element of NATO's practical response to cyberthreats is its development of training programs and cyber exercises. For instance, the wide-ranging Exercise Cyber Coalition multinational simulation is held every year. The alliance actively encourages the sharing of information and best practices between member states, be that pertaining to particular technical / hardware issues or to combating information warfare and online disinformation campaigns (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2019a).

Furthermore, NATO has established a number of educational institutions with courses related to cybersecurity (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2019b). These include the NATO School (located in Oberammergau, Germany), the NATO Communications and Information Academy (Oeiras, Portugal), along with the NATO Defence College (Rome, Italy).

The Deepening of Cooperation with the EU (and Other External Organisations)

A key dynamic in the alliance over the past decade has been the strengthening of its cooperation with external partners. Its closest ties are with the European Union (EU). This is a natural development in a sense, given that 22 members states of the alliance are part of the EU as well.

The President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of NATO signed the Joint Declaration on EU-NATO cooperation in 2016. This named a total of seven core areas where the partnership between the two entities could be further deepened over the following years (European Union External Action Service, 2019). The list included:

- Hybrid warfare;
- Maritime patrols and migration;
- Cybersecurity;
- Defence capability development;
- Research and development (R+D) activities in the defence sector;
- Joint exercises;
- Capacity building in the East and the South.

With particular regard to cyberthreats, a NATO-EU Technical Arrangement on Cyber Defence was also agreed upon in 2016. This related to information-sharing on specific cyberthreats affecting the two entities, the joint

organisation of trainings and cyber exercises, along with a commitment to keep each other informed of any other important developments surrounding cybersecurity.

To date, the cooperation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union remains generally practical and working-level in nature. This may have to do with the fact that it is unfolding during a rather tumultuous period in transatlantic relations (i.e. the implications of Brexit, the new style brought by US President Donald Trump), and also at a time when the European Union itself strives towards the so-called "strategic autonomy" (Howorth, 2017). However, were diplomatic ties to improve, this partnership could potentially offer many synergies; the complementarity of NATO's "hard tools" and the EU's "soft power" could then be exploited more effectively.

Apart from the European Union, NATO also cooperates with the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on issues related to cybersecurity.

Partnering with the Private Sector

A fourth, and final aspect of the practical steps NATO has taken to promote cybersecurity is deepening its cooperation with representatives of the private sector. This was primarily achieved through the NATO Industry Cyber Partnership. The purpose of this initiative is to channel technological knowledge, innovation and professional experience from private companies into the day-to-day operations of the alliance. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation recently signed such agreements with Oracle (software), Everis (aerospace and defence) or Havelsan (defence and information technology), amongst others (NATO Communications and Information Agency, 2019). This cooperation is vital because businesses tend to react faster than large international organisations to technological advances and changes in the cybersecurity environment.

Conclusion

This articled has attempted to present an overview of the way in which NATO's approach to cybersecurity has evolved since the end of the Cold War. The alliance has moved from seeing cyberthreats primarily as an IT problem to embracing a holistic approach that also incorporates the political and societal effects of technological advances.

On the practical level, this evolution has manifested itself in the establishment of new institutions to deal with cybersecurity, the organisation of cyber trainings and exercises, along with a deepening cooperation with the European Union and with representatives of the private sector. On the theoretical side, however, a number of

dilemmas surrounding NATO's attitude to dealing with cybersecurity have yet to be resolved. This includes reaching a workable definition of cyberattacks, updating the concepts of deterrence and collective security to meet 21st century realities, and helping to create an adequate international legal framework. These problems clearly highlight the need for new kinds of thinking, a cognitive reconceptualisation of the role of the alliance in the face of cyberthreats. Any such process is therefore likely to unfold only over a longer time horizon.

Timeline - Major Milestones in NATO's Cybersecurity Efforts

Date	Event
2002	Cybersecurity first appears on NATO's agenda at the Prague Summit
2008	Adoption of the first official NATO Cyber Defence Policy
2008	Establishment of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, Estonia
2010	Publication of NATO's Strategic Concept at the Lisbon Summit
2014	Publication of the NATO Action Plan on Cyber Security
2014	Enhanced NATO Cyber Defence Policy presented at the Wales Summit
2016	The alliance declares cyberspace to be its fourth domain of operations, alongside land, sea and air at the Warsaw Summit
2016	Adoption of the Cyber Defence Pledge, requiring member states to strengthen their cyber resilience
2016	Signing of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration on deepening cooperation, including with regard to cyberthreats
2017	Publication of the revised NATO Action Plan on Cyber Security
2018	Decision on the establishment of a Cyberspace Operations Centre in Mons, Belgium, at the Brussels Summit (operation set to start in 2023)

List of Abbreviations

Organisations

Acronym	Official Name
EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
UN	United Nations

NATO terminology

Acronym	Official Name
ACT	Allied Command Transformation
CCDCoE	Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence
CDC	Cyber Defence Committee
CDMB	Cyber Defence Management Board
COC	Cyberspace Operations Centre
CRRT	Cyber Rapid Reaction Team
ICP	Industry Cyber Partnership
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NCIRC	NATO Computer Incident Response Capability
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
STC	Science and Technology Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

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The Cybersecurity of the Electric Grid: NATO and EU Responses to V4 Challenges, From Pipeline Politics to Grid Governance

Dorien VAN DAM

Abstract: The increasing electrification of our daily lives in addition to the ongoing phasing out of fossil fuels has placed a renewed focus on the safety and stability of our electric grids. The vitality of the stable functioning of our electricity systems was rushed to the forefront of the political agenda after the 2015 hack of the Ukrainian grid, leaving 230 thousand people in the dark (Zetter, 2016). Traditional energy security often centres around oil and gas from the perspective of the security pyramid of accessibility, affordability and sustainability (Szőke, 2018). The electric grid, on the other hand, is facing new challenges, questioning this traditional approach. This analysis intends to set out the new challenges to our electricity system stemming from the cyber domain. Based on an assessment of industry reports, the main challenges will be categorised into data-centred risks and cyber-physical risks. This brief will elaborate on the challenges and discuss their respective key EU and NATO responses. In conclusion, the main tasks that remain ahead are setting out with a specific focus on the V4 context, building towards a secure-by-design energy sector, further implementing the NIS Directive, and setting up (international) education and training programs.

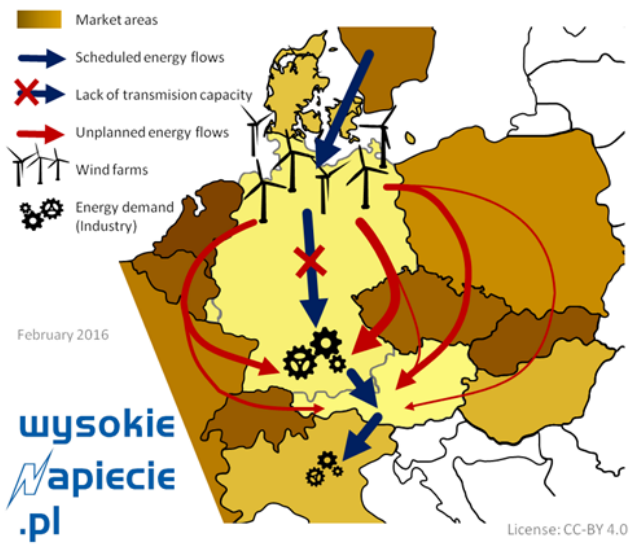
Keywords: cybersecurity, energy security, NATO, EU, Visegrad 4

Introduction

Over the last few years, European countries have witnessed an increase in the share of electricity in their total energy mix. In the name of efficiency, innovation and emission reductions, EU member states have started electrifying machines and vehicles, and reduced the share of fossil fuels in the total energy consumption (European Commission, 2014). Many of such efforts are consolidated on an EU level by establishing the Energy Union. The increased relevance of the functioning of the electricity grid has been accompanied by a broadened risk landscape. For example, new energy sources bring new complications: the intermittent production nature of renewable energy sources complicates the balancing of the grid by transmission

operators (European Technology & Innovation Platforms, 2018). Currently, the Central European electric grid is struggling to absorb German power loop flows, caused by overproduction of wind mills in its northern states (Morecroft, 2012). Other risks to the power grid are typical to our information societies. With big data being considered, the 'new oil' (The Economist, 2017) and an increasing sensitivity towards the value and security of this data, customer data privacy is crucial to be guaranteed. When smart meters enable the creation of highly detailed energy consumption profiles, such data can become very valuable.

Figure 1
Unplanned Energy Flows in the CEE Region (Derski, 2016)



Other risks are of a more 'physical' nature. In December 2015, hackers successfully shut down the systems of three energy distribution companies in Ukraine. This attack was considered as the first known successful cyberattack on a power grid. Perhaps the most terrifying aspect of the attack was that digital forensics provided evidence that the preparations had been taking place for over six months. The attack was carefully prepared and coordinated by a group of hackers that managed to conduct several attacks at the same time (Zetter, 2017). In the wake of this incident, evidence has also been found of cyberattacks to the electricity grids of India (Findlay & White, 2019), the UK (Cook, 2018), Estonia (Jewkes & Vukmanovic, 2016) and the US (Hay Newman, 2018). The increased digitisation of operation and information systems managing

the power grid has made the system vulnerable towards online attacks. Even though such innovations have been accredited for increasing efficiency and allowing the integration of irregular production methods, they appear to have affected the system's overall security (Marsh & McLennan Companies, 2014; Jarmakiewicz, Parobczak & Maslanka, 2017). Still, several factors complicate the efforts aimed at increasing cybersecurity of the electricity grid.

The transnational nature of electricity infrastructure requires international regulatory responses - which are hard to procure. Especially in the fields of energy and security, governments and companies tend to be wary of delegating too much authority to supranational bodies. The same goes for information sharing. In an ideal world, if a weakness in a system has been exploited and subsequently detected (a zero-day exploit[1]), companies would want to share the information on the weakness and possible countermeasures with their peers to ensure the same attack will not succeed again. However, the average time between identifying the weakness and developing a solution (a 'patch') is three to four months (Seals, 2015). If the company decides to share the vulnerability with its peers to make them aware of the risk, they also risk the specifics of the vulnerability leaking out to less benign actors. Trust and confidentiality are crucial in setting up secure information sharing platforms.

It is safe to conclude that the risks and subsequent challenges in addressing these risks have proliferated. This paper will provide an overview of the largest risks in the electricity sector originating from the cyber domain together with the corresponding action that has been taken at the EU and NATO level. The risks are drawn from a selection of industry reports[2] and have been categorised in data-centred risks and cyber-physical risks. In the data risks section, we find concerns surrounding customer data privacy, economic espionage, and data and software corruption. In the section concerning cyber-physical risks, the main issues are defined as a risk of loss of control and understanding of key equipment and an increase in entry points for potential cyber breaches. The paper will also seek to outline some specific recommendations in relation to these risks and threats. However, it is first necessary to briefly refer to some of the key perspectives and components of the EU's and NATO's approach to cyberthreat-related critical infrastructure protection. Finally, the last section will present recommendations towards enhancing the security environment, based on the broader risk and regulatory landscape with a specific focus on the V4 in a NATO context.

1 "A zero day exploit is a cyberattack that occurs on the same day a weakness is discovered in software. At that point, it's exploited before a fix becomes available from its creator." - Kapersky definitions (2019)

2 World Energy Council, 2016; Energy Expert Cyber Security Platform, 2017; Kapersky Lab, 2017; Kosciuszko Institute, 2017; European Technology & Innovation Platforms, 2018; Council of European Energy Regulators, 2018; IRENA, 2019.

Data Risks

Securing Customer Data Privacy

The digitisation of the grid has initiated a massive increase in data collection and data flows. This data is necessary to balance the electricity grid in real time, especially when integrating irregular production methods such as wind and solar energy. Additionally, smart metering, which gives users more insight and control into a costumer's energy use, requires substantial information gathering. Breaches in such information systems can give valuable insights into, for example, daily patterns of a household, or can indicate when they are away on holiday. Breaches at the company level could also compromise financial details.

Companies here have a dual concern, not just for guaranteeing the privacy of their customers as an end in itself, but also as a means of ensuring their compliance with relevant legislation. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018), adopted in 2016, is the core piece of legislation at the EU level that deals with this kind of breaches. It requires all organisations to report certain types of breaches within 72 hours to the relevant authorities. If the breach will affect an individual's rights and freedoms, these individuals must be informed without undue delay. The regulation also demands an internal procedure to be in place to handle detection, investigation and reporting. At its core, the GDPR is not necessarily aimed at increasing 'a priori' protection of data, but rather at guaranteeing an individual's rights after a breach has taken place by strengthening the protocols that organisations have in place in terms of incident response. The mandatory disclosure of a breach is indirectly intended to motivate companies from preventing breaches to occur in the first place - as the financial repercussions of such an incident becoming public can be severe.

Risk of Economic Espionage

Economic espionage can occur when an individual (outsider or insider) gains unauthorised access to data or makes unauthorised use of this data with the purpose of aiding the competition. This can come in the form of stealing software, business models or other intellectual property but can also take the form of stealing contact details of customers in order to attempt to poach clients. The protection of this data is crucial for a company to remain competitive. This risk is not new to the energy industry - or any other industry for that matter – but does have increased importance due to an increased reliance on digitalisation.

Data and Software Corruption

Information corruption, or in other words sabotage, shares many similarities with espionage. The purpose can be to weaken the functioning of the company as an end in itself or in order to strengthen its competition. Data can be falsified or software can be corrupted which ultimately causes the utility company to make mistakes in for example billing or technical operations. This can lead to dissatisfied customers, lawsuits or even mechanical failures. During the hack of the Ukrainian electricity grid, the hackers overwrote pieces of the firmware that was used to operate certain substations (Zetter, 2017). This left the substations inoperable and the original software was unrecoverable, forcing the company to switch to manual operations for months until the software was recreated. Attribution is often difficult in these cases as one's identity can be easily concealed in the cybersphere. However, strong access credential management can limit access to sensitive data to authorised personal only and can support the identification of transgressors (McCarthy, 2018). The next section will elaborate on the 'physical' aspect of data corruption.

Cyber-Physical Risks

Software Corruption

Data corruption can ultimately also cause physical risks. If software is corrupted, this can ultimately result in physical damage. In the US, a group of researchers managed to infiltrate the control systems of wind turbines all across the United States (Greenberg, 2017). One of their programs sent commands to the control systems to repeatedly slam the brakes. This would ultimate cause wear and damage with costs running up to millions of dollars. Physical damage to equipment is not the only risk that can follow out of software corruption. Manipulation of the turbines could potentially also result into over- or underproduction. Such a destabilisation of production could ultimately disturb the balancing of the grid and cause brown- or blackouts.

A key element of the EU response to such threats is the Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (European Commission, 2019c). It is aimed at increasing the overall level of EU cybersecurity and centres mainly around the critical national infrastructure. It requires national governments to officially designate certain elements of infrastructure as critical national infrastructure. The Directive has listed energy as one of the seven critical sectors. Some of its key requirements are the setting up of Computer Security Incident Response Teams

(CSIRTs) and coordinating networks of such CSIRTs to promote communication and cooperation. Such measures are intended to address the need of secure communication channels for handling sensitive information on vulnerabilities.

Loss of Control and Understanding of Key Equipment

The loss of control and understanding of key equipment has several causes. The high level of technological specialisation in the equipment used in the electricity sector requires the involvement of many different actors. The different types of appliances or software come from different companies, which come from different countries. The supply chain of electric grid management systems has become decentralised. Elements of software or hardware have possibly been developed outside of the 'end user' company. Authorisation settings may not have been adapted to grant the operational engineers access to edit or update software. They may consequently not be able to harmonise security settings or protocol throughout all the devices within the entire system. This decreases the level of control and the level of understanding that the engineers have of the final system and ultimately increases the level of risk. There is no clear-cut legislative response aimed directly at this problem. The setting of international standards could be a solution in tackling this issue but would be very hard to achieve, given the increasing complexity of technological products and the use of AI in security systems (Trakimavicius, 2018). Nevertheless, the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) is developing cybersecurity guidelines, defining cybersecurity as the "preservation of confidentiality, integrity and availability of information in the Cyberspace" (ISO/IEC 27032).

Increase in Entry Points for Potential Breaches

The increased digitisation of our grid makes the system more manageable, but also more vulnerable. An interconnected system is only as strong as its weakest link. The continuous addition of internet connections to the system opens up a range of new entry points. This is not necessarily a risk in itself, but rather a risk amplifier. To illustrate this, we return back to the wind turbine example. The researchers could, by accessing the control system of just one wind turbine, access and control the entire wind farm network. In this example, every single wind turbine is a potential breach point and the entire wind farm is at risk. This is a key security element of the decentralised nature of new renewable energy sources. According to one of the researchers, "[They] are more distributed. It's much easier to access one node and compromise the entire fleet" (Greenberg, 2017).

EU and NATO Responses

As highlighted above, cybersecurity threats affecting critical infrastructure have multiple dimensions, with implications for the civilian and the defence sphere alike. Therefore, both the European Union and NATO have responsibilities in terms of increasing the protection, security and resilience of critical infrastructure from the perspective of cyberthreats. Due to the nature, the level and the scope of the threats described above, they mostly fall into the scope of the civilian domain, where the European Union has much wider set of tools than NATO to address the related security challenges.

Critical infrastructure protection and resilience as well as cybersecurity cover various competencies of the EU including digital market, home affairs and even security and defence policy. Considering the protection of critical infrastructure, the European Programme of Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP) in 2006 and the 2008 Directive on European Critical Infrastructures were the first major steps taken by the EU (European Commission, 2019b). The primary objective of the EPCIP is to facilitate information sharing and provide a legal basis for the Commission to support national efforts in the field. With regards to cybersecurity, the EU has adopted a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy in 2013, which led to several significant outcomes in the following years, including the establishment of an EU cybersecurity agency, the ENISA (European Union Agency for Network and Information Security), the Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS Directive) and the EU Cybersecurity Act (European Council, 2013; European Commission, 2019a). The ENISA not only supports Member States but has been given a mandate to foster operational cooperation and crisis management in the EU with increased resources and tasks (European Commission, 2019d).

The increasing significance of cyberspace in defence is reflected by the fact that the cybersphere has officially been declared a domain of operations by NATO. As a relatively novel military domain, NATO is currently exploring its roles and responsibilities in the 'cyber dimension'. According to remarks delivered by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, a cyberattack can trigger Article 5: the collective defence clause (NATO, 2019). Already in 2008 - following the 2007 cyberattacks on Estonia - did the first NATO cyber initiative materialise in the form of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. More recent initiatives from NATO include the intention to establish a Cyberspace Operation Centre in Mons, a Cyber Defence Pledge and the official adoption of offensive cyber operations and missions.

Secretary General Stoltenberg acknowledges the importance of digital infrastructure to the functioning of our societies and calls for multi-stakeholder partnerships; 'engagement with industry will become more important as

technologies develop' (NATO, 2019). For an organisation that mainly focuses on the security and defence aspects of the topic, this is an interesting societal outreach (Pernik, 2014). Particularly in the face of a diverse risk landscaped, with multi-faceted threats such as cyberthreats to critical energy infrastructure, cooperation outside of the standard government structures is required. This means not just a diversification of actors, but considering the decentralised nature of modern energy production also cooperation between the international and the local levels.

A complicating factor is that critical infrastructure protection is a national competence - despite the fact that many of such infrastructure actually crosses borders. NATO facilitates such cooperation regarding the protection of critical infrastructure by enhancing strategic awareness. Energy security, for example, was included in the NATO Strategic Concept of 2010. The protection of critical energy infrastructure is currently a well-accepted strategic priority, including a range of standards and procedures to mitigate the threats. In recent documents, the security implications of the digitalisation of the energy industry are also addressed, referring to a changing threat landscape, complicated by cross-border connectivity and integration of new technologies (Melchiorre, 2018).

Recommendations

So in the face of such a broadened risk landscape and an evolving international landscape, what role is there for the V4? Some risks are being addressed in the NATO or EU context but a real integration of energy and cybersecurity concerns does not appear to take place. As will be outlined below, the implementation of cybersecurity measures in the energy sector lags behind. The highly technical nature and the sensitive international character of the topic at hand complicate the political debate, which appears to be stuck in the framework of traditional fossil fuel energy security. Still, some measures remain underexplored.

(1) 'Security by design ecosystem' approach

Security by design traditionally refers to an approach to both soft- and hardware developments that holds security concerns as its main priority throughout the entire development process. It mainly refers to principles such as continuous testing, updating possibilities, authentication standards etcetera. The central aim is to ultimately develop products that are more resilient towards cyberattacks. The V4 countries have a lot to gain by applying the concept both in the traditional way and additionally at the organisational level. This comprehensive approach can be considered a 'secure by design ecosystem' approach.

Security by design in the traditional interpretation has been complicated by decentralised supply chains. The import of soft- and hardware from third countries means that we integrate their security standards into our own systems. The discussion surrounding the involvement of Huawei in the development of 5G internet capacities throughout the European continent are an example of such high-profile security issues. In order to realise high security standards throughout the entirety of our information infrastructure, the same requirements and security protocols have to apply to all products equally. This requires industry-wide security standards, such as the ISO standards (Compliance Council, 2018), and a compliance system. Within the energy sector such a system can initially be introduced by implementing standards for specific devices or sub-systems that are common, such as ICS/SCADA systems or smart grids.

Applying the concept to the organisational level requires a dismissal of silo-thinking in the structure of public administration. Not only does this hinder national strategies, it also impedes international cooperation. Among the Visegrad countries, for example, each has a different approach to cybersecurity. The Czech Republic has installed an agency (NCISA) which is directly responsible to the prime minister. In Slovakia, the competencies are placed within the Ministry of Finance. In Hungary, several cybersecurity agencies are under the control of the coordination council in the Prime Minister's Office, and finally, Poland has established the Ministry of Digital and Administrative Affairs. 'Breaking through' the silos requires central competences that cover the breadth and depth of public administration. Additionally, awareness of cybersecurity, knowledge of basic cyberhygiene and representation of cybersecurity staff throughout all the different branches of government, are required to establish a sustainable foundation of a public administration that is secure by design.

These competences and representation should not only be implemented at the top but at all levels. The relevance of this was emphasised by the cyberattacks on Polish municipalities while they were hosting US troops for NATO operations. Municipalities are key actors of often undervalued importance. They are for example crucial in organising safe elections and conducting most administrative functions. Both ministerial and regional/provincial initiatives are highly recommended in realising a comprehensive strategy that targets both the breadth and depth of public administration. Cybersecurity maturity models are a good starting point for structurally integrating cyber capacities into organisational processes (IEEE, 2018).

Returning to the energy sector, European utilities can learn a lot from the Cybersecurity Capability Maturity Model (C2M2), which was developed by the United States Department of Energy for the use of power and utility companies (DoE). Cooperation with colleagues within the EU or across the Atlantic can

provide a rich source of best-practices and know-how of implementation. This would require a strong inter-institutional cooperation on different levels, from the local to the international. Setting up such trans-level institutional cooperation structures would be highly beneficial to enabling such cooperation between, for example, a Polish municipality and a NATO cybersecurity team. The NATO Centres of Excellence provide a useful place to start. These centres are 'international military organisations that train and educate leaders and specialists from NATO member and partner countries' (NATO, 2019). The range of these centres currently includes a Cooperative Cyber Defence centre and an Energy Security centre.

Horizontal collaboration – integration of cyber- and energy security technologies and knowhow – combined with vertical integration of security actors – from the international to the local level - would mark the start of the development of a secure-by-design ecosystem. In this regard, NATO, as the main international security actor connecting the V4 countries, is the ideal partner in realising this vision.

(2) Stronger implementation of the NIS Directive

One of the main pillars of the EU's response to the changing cybersecurity landscape was the adoption of the Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (the NIS Directive). The NIS Directive is mainly directed at protecting national critical infrastructure and came into force in 2018. The energy sector is recognised by the Directive as one of the seven essential service sectors. The Directive requires all member states to officially designate their Operators of Essential Services (OES) and registering their Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTS) in order to facilitate communication and to enable compliance monitoring. The registering and mapping of the CSIRTs is intended to enhance communication between the different teams. This refers back to the complexities of information sharing mentioned in the introduction. Whereas it is crucial to warn colleagues of any vulnerabilities they might have, it is still risky to share details about the own vulnerabilities before they are solved. The establishment of an official and secure information sharing platform is a great initiative.

Unfortunately, the slow pace of implementation of the NIS Directive is complicating matters. Even though the official transposition deadline has expired and all the V4 countries have officially implemented the Directive, actual operationalisation seems to lag behind. So far, only one CSIRT has been registered in the energy sector; the AEC in Austria (ENISA, 2019). The individual Visegrad countries are likely to have such teams in place, but do not appear to have registered them officially with the European Union Agency for Network and

Information Security, ENISA. In 2016, ENISA published a report on cybersecurity in the energy sector in which it argued that information sharing is often only addressed at the Member State level (ENISA, 2016). It appears that even after the official implementation of the NIS Directive, this is still the case. Yet, information sharing is crucial for ensuring appropriate incident responses. This leads to the second recommendation that the NIS Directive needs to be implemented more rigorously; relevant OES and CSIRTS should be made aware of their obligation to register and should be encouraged to fully participate in international information sharing efforts. A truly integrated energy market as envisioned by the European Energy Union needs equally integrated security mechanisms. Full support for the implementation of the NIS Directive is crucial in this endeavour.

(3) (International) education and training programs

Even in the case of full operationalisation of the NIS Directive, the matter of building international trust remains unaddressed. This, in combination with a worrying growing shortage of future cybersecurity professionals, can be addressed by setting up international education and training programs (NeSmith, 2018). Setting up such programs has, next to preparing our societies for future cyber-risks, a range of extra benefits. First of all, they are fit to prepare the workforce for a changing economy. Estimates about future shortages of cybersecurity specialists range from 2 to 3.5 million unfilled vacancies in 2021. A combination of full-time and part-time training programs should make a career in cybersecurity accessible to every section of society. Governments could target employees in sectors where jobs are threatened by digitalisation or globalisation. Secondly, extra training programs can enhance the basic cyber skills and cybersecurity awareness of 'regular' employees. This should enhance the overall cybersecurity of an organisation, which is in line with the development of a secure-by-design ecosystem approach. Thirdly, the international character of such programs does not only stimulate international trust building, or cultivate valuable international networks, it also allows for transnational sharing of knowledge and experience.

The Visegrad Group would provide a particularly suitable platform for such an initiative. The aims of the program fit within the Dynamic Visegrad Strategy, which seeks to prepare the V4 countries for the future, including its workforce (Visegrad Group, 2019). Next to that, the Visegrad Group has experience in developing and implementing international learning programs through the International Visegrad Fund program. The Visegrad Group has the structure, the funds and the experience to take the first steps into creating a region that is truly interconnected, that leads in cybersecurity and has a more competitive workforce. In this endeavour, it could ideally team up with the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), which has access to the technological

know-how, the training portfolio and didactic methodologies. The centre aims to identify and coordinate education and training solutions in cyber defence as of January 2018 (CCDCOE, 2019). The Dynamic Visegrad Strategy and the NATO CCDCOE mission provide an opportunity for collaboration that could only enhance V4 cybersecurity.

Conclusions

The modernisation of the electric grid has brought significant gains in terms of efficiency and (inter)operability. These developments are crucial in ensuring affordable access to electricity, but also to enable the integration of new production methods in the existing system. Unfortunately, the increased digitisation has come with a broadened risk landscape. Data risks and cyber-physical risks threaten the stable operating of the grid and require complex international solutions. To a certain extent, the EU has responded with initiatives such as the NIS Directive or the GDPR, but many challenges remain. Real steps in improving the cybersecurity of our electricity grid require (1) the application of the concept of security by design on an eco-system level, (2) further implementation of the NIS Directive and (3) international education and training programs. As a (sub-)regional entity, smaller and more flexible than the EU, the V4 is perfectly suited to operationalise these steps and become a front-runner in the field of cybersecurity. In many regards, the NATO appears to be an ideal partner in realising many of the steps outlined above. Such collaboration should move the V4 from a reactionary actor to pro-actively ensuring cyber stability and guaranteeing the safe functioning of the electric grid.

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