TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY AND THE FUTURE OF NATO SERIES

SOLIDARITY UNDER STRESS IN THE TRANSATLANTIC REALM

EDITED BY ALEXANDRA DE HOOP SCHEFFER, MARTIN MICHELOT, AND MARTIN QUENCEZ

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STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

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On the cover: On the sidelines of the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales. © palinchak/depositphoto

Solidarity Under Stress in the Transatlantic Realm

Transatlantic Security and the Future of NATO Series

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1 Accompanying the Alliance from Assurance to Deterrence

Key Insights: NATO's credible deterrence requires a more robust political leadership, and a reaffirmation of transatlantic values.

Two years after the Wales NATO Summit, important steps have been taken to reassure NATO Allies, notably in Central and Eastern Europe. Progress in fulfilling the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) is noticeable and constitutes an encouraging sign toward bolstering the Alliance's credibility. NATO's February 2016 defense ministerial and the planned increase of the U.S. commitment to embattled Allies both signal a strong change in the Alliance's posture toward Russia and the threats of an unstable southern neighborhood. It however remains to be seen to which extent this will change the dynamics on the ground, both politically and militarily. New strategic surprises will continue to challenge the paradigms on which the transatlantic security partnership has been built, and the Warsaw Summit is expected to be critical in enacting the necessary adaptation of the Alliance, by showing progress in three complementary aspects: solidarity, credibility and flexibility.

The Right Approach to the Warsaw Summit: A Humble Look at NATO's Strategic Capacity

Solidarity

The lasting crises in Ukraine and Syria and their respective spillover effects have been a source of insecurity and instability for NATO partners. The Wales summit has been, first and foremost, a summit of "reassurance" toward Central and Eastern NATO member states and one of firm messaging vis-à-vis Russia. In Ukraine, transatlantic solidarity enabled the implementation of strong sanctions against Russia, but the military and political outcomes remain uncertain: Crimea has been annexed by Moscow, and the leadership of Russian President Vladimir Putin has been reinforced at domestic and international levels. In the Middle East, transatlantic partners have generally failed to agree on clear common goals, due to a lack of shared interests, and therefore to design and implement a coherent strategy. The Syrian conflict, which has become a main driver of international terrorism and mass migrations, has continuously deteriorated for the last two years. These crises have both directly or indirectly affected Europe's security, and challenged the ability of the transatlantic security partnership to foster peace and promote continued political integration on the continent. The Warsaw Summit will take place at a period of uncertainties in Europe, and all partners will have to show humility to draw the necessary conclusions from the current situation. This will also have to be accompanied by a concerted effort from all parties to identify useful lessons learned in terms of cooperation, information sharing, and mutual expectations in order to create the conditions for a better handling of any such future destabilizing situation.

Credibility

The Alliance's inability to anticipate and deter Russia's revisionist foreign policy should be a wake-up call for member states. Despite the experience of the Georgia crisis in 2008, the transatlantic strategic community seemed startled by Moscow's aggressive agenda and generally non-cooperative behavior. Since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, the Russian leadership has managed to keep transatlantic decision-makers in the dark about its intentions, and has created enough strategic surprises in order to destabilize the Alliance and preserve a veil of mystery over its next move. This has damaged NATO's image, and therefore its credibility both among transatlantic populations (and ruling politicians who were often quick to criticize NATO's inaction) and at the international level. The Warsaw Summit will only be transformational — and therefore successful — if a humble assessment of passed decisions is made, but also if

we are able to critically admit that strategic blind spots exist, work together to make up for them, and finally to provide real and lasting deterrence regarding the Alliance's known soft spots, such as the Baltic states.

Flexibility

Humility and flexibility will also be critical in defining NATO's scope of intervention. Indeed, embracing a "one size fits all" approach cannot work in the current strategic environment. The threats faced by the United States and its European partners have changed, and require new types of response and deterrence, which may or may not be provided by NATO, or alternatively by a reinforced U.S. presence. On the southern front especially, NATO's ability to act decisively is questionable, whether it be to achieve the lasting effects of a necessary political transition in Syria accompanying the defeat of the self-proclaimed Islamic State group (ISIS), or controlling the effects of the migration crisis. After the long intervention in Afghanistan, the Alliance has refocused on its collective defense pillar, but seems unfit to defend Europe from the terrorist threats on its soil or from the security implications of the refugee crisis, two top priorities in European capitals today. First, NATO constitutes only a small slice of the resilience continuum, which goes from social resilience (e.g. by diminishing the vulnerabilities of Russian-speaking minorities) to security and defense resilience (e.g. by reinforcing police and intelligence capacities in vulnerable countries). In this context, thinking outside the limits of NATO is a necessity — one process that NATO could perhaps drive, thus affirming a strong and necessary political role for the Alliance.

The importance of increased cooperation with the EU has been oft-repeated and now requires concrete action, such as symbolized by the signing of an agreement regarding cybersecurity in February 2016. At the same time, the relationship with the OSCE and the UN and increased interoperability with frontline states in the east and south (e.g. Jordan) should not be underestimated and constitute a priority for NATO leadership, in order to strengthen the continent's resilience continuum. Second, NATO's deterrence template can hardly be applied to non-state actors, and the threat of terrorism appears undeterrable from a purely military point-of-view. Transatlantic partners can anticipate and prevent the implications of these threats by strengthening both their political and socio-economic structures and the struggle against the roots of terrorism in their own societies, but they should not expect NATO to provide a solution to these issues. NATO can provide security measures by sharing relevant security assessments with partners who are better equipped to handle a given situation, such as the EU, the OSCE, or the UN. The Paris terrorist attacks should provide valuable lessons about the nature of the enemies: all perpetrators were European citizens, animated by the conflicts in the MENA region, whose actions have further blurred the lines between existing societal issues within European states and the foreign policy of these countries. In the current strategic context, NATO Allies have to acknowledge that, given NATO's obvious limitations in dealing with such threats, it cannot, and should not, be considered the sole guarantor of European security.

The Widening Gap Between NATO's Military Deterrence and Political Deterrence

The Ukrainian crisis has challenged the efficiency of transatlantic deterrence. Although Ukraine is not a NATO member-state, and as such cannot benefit from Article 5 guarantees, the Alliance was thought to provide a credible deterrent to any attempts at redefining the international borders and durably destabilizing a European state. Moscow has successfully gamed the red-lines of the transatlantic security partnership, and continues to test its reactions in Eastern Europe

and Syria. For NATO, the question is therefore to identify ways to reinforce its credibility as a deterrent toward potential revisionist actors. This means analyzing both the military and the political dimensions of its deterrence policy.

On the military side, NATO maintains an absolute conventional superiority, and is the sole security provider in Europe. The measures taken at the Wales Summit in 2014 have helped improve the readiness of NATO troops. However, the recent developments in Russian anti-access/area denial capabilities (A2/AD) have called into question NATO's ability to deploy such forces in zones of conflict. For instance, Moscow's strategic use of Kaliningrad and Crimea creates an anti-access bubble around the Baltic States and the Black Sea, which significantly undermines the maneuverability of transatlantic forces and adds pressure to the Suwalski gap area between Poland and Lithuania. Any symmetrical response to Russian aggression, especially in the Baltic States would require a fast deployment of troops, which NATO is currently not capable of given its positioning of forces, leaving the Baltic States vulnerable to a swift Russian attack on their territory. Therefore, a premium needs to be put on deterring this conventional threat, which includes heavy investments in missile defense and offensive capabilities and reinforcing nuclear deterrence, as well as finding solutions to the current reliance on space of intelligence, surveillance, and recognition (ISR) capacity. In addition, transatlantic powers can rely on their geo-economic superiority to respond asymmetrically and target Russian weaknesses. The Ukrainian crisis has shown the ability of the United States and its European partners to cooperate in order to implement sanctions to Moscow, which could serve as a model for handling future tensions.

Yet, the issue of A2/AD should not be overestimated, especially as the long experience of the Cold War gives the Alliance extra tools to address such military challenges. Overreacting to Russian capability developments could potentially trigger an arms race, and would also convey an image of fragility and doubt, weakening NATO's credibility.

Deterrence is a political construct: it is not only about projecting actual strength, but also about projecting messages of strength. This implies using economic and political foundations to sustain deterrence policy over time. It also implies building preemptive political will in order to avoid any delay in the decision-making process. NATO has a role to play, as a platform for dialogue between partners, to improve the political support for the Alliance's initiatives. Once a decision is taken, transatlantic powers face the risk of seeing the political will decrease rapidly, especially as the support of the population may quickly vary. For instance, the Paris attacks in November 2015 triggered a general wave of support for a military intervention against ISIS among European and U.S. public opinion, but one can assume that this support would rapidly drop if the first Western soldiers were to die during an operation. The apparent versatility of the transatlantic political willingness may be used by revisionist powers such as Russia in order to force NATO to avoid any confrontations that could lead to a high intensity conflict and severe human costs. This leaves the Alliance highly vulnerable to brinkmanship, and it is therefore essential to prove that transatlantic societies are willing to take losses to guarantee their security. Transatlantic public diplomacy should put its emphasis on communicating the human cost of a military intervention and non-intervention, as well as the implications for the credibility of transatlantic deterrence.

Democratic values should not be perceived as liabilities when addressing the challenges of more autocratic regimes, which do not have the same accountability toward their populations.

Some conversations should remain private, but the strength of the United States, Canada, and European countries lies in their open societies, which are able to freely discuss internal weaknesses, and make workable solutions emerge. In the context of hybrid warfare, transatlantic powers could be tempted to restraint their own domestic liberties in order to prevent enemies from using them against transatlantic unity. Freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and independence of the judiciary, among others transatlantic values, could be imposed new restrictions as part of the struggle against revisionist propaganda. But such policies would ultimately reinforce their revisionist agenda and weaken the credibility of NATO. On the contrary, transatlantic leaders should put an emphasis on strategic consistency, showing that the current challenges will not affect the fundamental values on which the Alliance has been built and that still keep it together, and which makes NATO first and foremost a political alliance, with a military arm.

2 Increasing Institutional Flexibility to Limit the Tensions Around Solidarity?

Key Insights: Using alternative models of transatlantic solidarity can serve NATO's objectives and improve the Alliance's flexibility.

The Difficult Balance Between Flexibility and Efficiency

The transatlantic security partnership is facing two simultaneous dynamics: the multiplicity of security challenges of various natures and scopes in the European neighborhoods, and the general budget and capability constraints that have affected all transatlantic partners since the onset of the economic crisis. As a result, the United States and its European allies are asked to do more with less, which heightens the tensions about strategic priorities and weakens the credibility of the Alliance. Increasing the flexibility and agility of transatlantic forces appears to be a necessity in order to be able to respond to a unique diversity of security threats with the limited military resources available. NATO in particular is expected to adapt its force structure and reconsider the way it uses its permanent presence in order to address this new strategic environment. In Warsaw, the key question will therefore lie in the balance between the need for enhanced flexibility, and the risk of losing power and efficiency.

Indeed, NATO partners should consider a few caveats in order to ensure that increasing the Alliance's flexibility and investing in more agile forces does not affect its ability to deliver security. First of all, adaptation will be a long and costly process that will certainly face important structural hurdles due to the size and history of the organization. The Warsaw Summit will result in reasonable reforms rather than fundamental transformations, and a realistic agenda should therefore include limited expectations in order to avoid more disappointment and frustration and make the transformation process manageable.

Moreover, frontline countries also request a reinforcement of the military permanent presence on their territories, which in theory reduces the prospect of an increased flexibility of the force structure. NATO cannot engage in a strategic adaptation that could potentially undermine its reassurance policy toward its most concerned member states. Finally, the temptation of flexibility should never overshadow the historical *raison d'être* of the Alliance. NATO may not be perfectly adapted to all contemporary security challenges, but its institutional and capability limits also define the scope of its mission. While reforms may be necessary, they should not be driven by new strategic ambitions at the expense of the traditional and conventional military objectives that NATO defends.

The need for flexibility will, pragmatically speaking, lead to an increased division of labor between transatlantic partners, and ultimately to a regionalization of security responsibilities. This process could weaken the cohesion of the Alliance and widen the perception gaps among Allied powers, but it is also an absolute necessity in order to overcome the current capability constraints. Despite a reaffirmation of the 2 percent pledge at the Wales Summit in 2014, European allies have overall not stopped the general decrease of their defense spending, despite encouraging figures coming from some Central and Eastern European countries, because of the necessity to invest in devising responses to the migration crisis. Besides, designing a more regional division of labor among partners could help bypass the culture of consensus in risk assessments, which currently prevails in NATO's decision-making and often ends up with the smallest common denominator. As the multiple threats on the eastern and the southern flanks create a growing divergence of priorities, the Alliance must be able to distribute security responsibilities without diluting transatlantic solidarity. The role of the existing regional

clusters and groupings could therefore be reinforced within NATO in order to implement various parallel responses. Similarly, continued investments in strategic partnerships will be increasingly crucial in order to accompany an efficient division of security labor. Indeed, the practicality of warfare requires thinking more about transportation and integration of allied forces, for which answers can be found with more success at a sub-regional level than at the Alliance level. In many ways, more institutional flexibility and regionalization therefore constitutes a practical necessity in the current strategic environment.

The Current Security Environment Modifies NATO's Role in Transatlantic Solidarity

The apparent divergence of strategic interests has been used by revisionist powers to highlight the decline of transatlantic solidarity. The role of NATO, and of its founding treaty, is to guarantee that differences of priorities between transatlantic powers do not affect the commitment of all allies to mutual defense. NATO's Article 5, in particular, continues to provide a credible deterrent to any conventional military aggression, regardless of the level of convergence at the strategic level. However, NATO is often unfit to address some of the most urgent challenges, and cannot play its role of guarantor of transatlantic solidarity. The refugee crisis highlights the need to reinforce mechanisms of transatlantic solidarity beyond NATO.

The French decision, following the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, to invoke the European Union's Article 42.7 rather than NATO's Article 5 is a remarkable illustration of the possibility to use other forms of solidarity. After the attacks, the French government looked for support to engage in its "war against terrorism." The United States, Canada, and Turkey were already, in different ways, involved in the conflict, and the objective was therefore to reaffirm the solidarity of European allies. The European response was unanimous, and paved the way for new talks about the division of security responsibilities, notably in the Sahel region. A few Eastern and Central European countries were actually relieved that France did not resort to NATO's Article 5, because they believe ISIS cannot be deterred in the same way that Russia can, and that NATO is not equipped to deal with this type of threat. The 2011 NATO military operation in Libya has been perceived as politically and financially costly for the organization. NATO should instead serve as a framework for military action, and not act as the main player in the region. NATO's limited training role in Iraq (2004-11) could potentially be replicated in Libya today, as a cooperative security mission and in close collaboration with international and regional partners and organizations. In parallel, the United States was also very responsive to the French needs, especially in terms of intelligence sharing, and increased its cooperation with Paris outside the NATO framework. The EU's Article 42.7 and NATO's Article 5 are not mutually exclusive, as they share different purposes: using the former also enabled France to avoid a difficult debate within NATO about its mission in the southern neighborhood, while the latter can trigger a military response that the EU has been unable and unwilling to consider so far. The two articles could also be invoked simultaneously, along with UN Article VII in order to define the most comprehensive response in situation of crisis.

NATO itself could benefit from alternative mechanisms of transatlantic solidarity in order to improve the legitimacy and efficiency of its own missions. After the decade-long operation in Afghanistan, the Alliance has strongly refocused on collective defense, openly neglecting the two pillars of cooperative security and crisis management. The EU, the OSCE, and the UN can provide complementary frameworks for

cooperation with which NATO could work to address these two other pillars. This would, however, require a real effort to improve cooperation between institutions as well as to force transatlantic powers to be consistent within these different formats. One country can indeed take two very different positions at the EU and NATO, which hinders the prospect for a coordinated approach. NATO's secretary general and the EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy cannot afford to limit their cooperation to joint declarations, and have the opportunity to show their willingness to cooperate in 2016 during the Warsaw Summit and the EU Global Strategy.

Finally, the evolution of the role of NATO in transatlantic solidarity reflects the evolution of the U.S. role in European security. Washington does not necessarily share the same priorities as its European allies, and challenges such as the refugee crisis have specific implications on European interests, but the United States continues to have a unique role to play to enhance solidarity on the other side of the Atlantic. First, U.S. military support remains essential to European security. The credibility of NATO's reassurance policy primarily relies on U.S. capabilities, and the widening technological gap between U.S. and European defense may even reinforce the current situation where Europe is unable to act as decisively as certain situations would dictate. Second, Washington can provide political leadership to help the necessary division of labor among partners while avoiding fragmentation, for example in the obvious case of the lack of dialogue between Baltic countries and Southern European countries, whose interactions need to be more strategic. Finally, Europeans still need the United States to define transatlantic interests vis-à-vis revisionist powers such as Russia. Reestablishing working relations with Moscow will only be possible with a strong U.S. diplomatic investment, supported by Europeans. The three roles of the United States are closely linked to NATO's adaptation to the contemporary strategic environment. Ultimately, the success of the Warsaw Summit and the credibility of transatlantic solidarity depend also on the U.S. ability to fulfill its responsibilities in European security.

3 Off-Setting NATO's "Anti Access" Challenge

Luis Simón

The United States and its main allies used to be the only actors with precision-guided munitions and certain advanced weapon systems, but this has changed in the past two decades.[1] With the global proliferation of these weapons, a number of countries have built up their so-called Anti-Access and Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities, i.e. by way of ballistic and cruise missiles, offensive cyber weapons, and electronic warfare.[2] A2/AD capabilities are used to prevent or constrain the deployment of opposing forces into a theater of operations, and reduce their freedom of maneuver once in a theater.

Many discussions about the growing A2/AD challenge in the U.S. revolve around China.[3] Beijing's A2/AD capabilities threaten the security of U.S. regional allies, close-in bases, and forwardly deployed air and naval assets in the Western Pacific Theater of Operations. This could challenge the long-held assumption that Washington can safely project military power into the Western Pacific, and undermines (conventional) deterrence in that region.

The growing A2/AD challenge is not confined to China. Countries like Russia and Iran have demonstrated significant advances in A2/AD in recent years. In particular, the fact that Eastern Europe is increasingly vulnerable to Russia's expanding A2/AD capabilities poses a number of operational problems for NATO. Thus, as it prepares for its July 2016 Summit in Warsaw, the Alliance should think harder about how to offset the impending A2/AD challenge on its eastern flank. To do that, it would do well to take stock of current developments in U.S. strategic thinking.

In order to overcome or, at least, mitigate the impending global A2/AD challenge, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) launched a so-called "third" offset strategy in late 2014.[4] This strategy will develop new operational concepts and capabilities that will allow the U.S. military to operate in increasingly "mature" A2/AD environments. The 2014 Defense Innovation Initiative will use U.S. advantages in technologies like big data, stealth, advanced manufacturing (e.g. 3-D printing), robotics, or directed energy to sustain and advance U.S. military superiority in the 21st century.[5]

Many of the concepts and capabilities the United States is developing in the context of its third offset strategy are relevant to the Alliance, which faces an increasingly serious "anti-access" problem on its eastern flank. To be sure, the eastern 'flank' presents its own geopolitical and operational challenges, which differ from those the United States faces in the Asia-Pacific. However, the fundamental problems concerning how to offset A2/AD are very similar indeed. Moreover, as NATO's leading member state, the United States remains deeply committed to the security of Eastern Europe, and is in fact increasingly worried about the development of A2/AD challenges there. Thus, Europeans can benefit greatly from the NATO framework to offset A2/AD challenges in their near (and farther) abroad.

1 See Thomas Mahnken, "Weapons: the Growth & Spread of the Precision-Strike Regime," Daedalus 140:3 (2011) 45-57

2 See, e.g., Andrew F. Krepinevich, Robert Work, and Barry Watts, *Meeting the Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenge* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2003)

3 See, e.g. Thomas Mahnken, *Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century: Theory, History and Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011)

4 Chuck Hagel, "Defense Innovation Days" Opening Keynote (Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance), Newport, R.I., September 3, 2014. See also Shawn W. Brimley, "The Third Offset Strategy: Securing America's Military-Technical Advantage," Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, December 2, 2014

5 *The Defense Innovation Initiative* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, November 15, 2014)

A2/AD on NATO's Eastern Flank

Russia's inroads into precision-guided, network-centric warfare have led to serious improvements in A2/AD in recent years. Moscow's integrated air-defense system and short range, land-attack missiles already cover the Baltic States and large swathes of Poland.[6] This problem is complicated by Russia's deployment of A2/AD capabilities in four geographically advanced locations alongside the eastern flank writ large: Murmansk, Kaliningrad, Sevastopol, and Latakia.

The presence of Russian S400 surface to air missiles in Kaliningrad can endanger NATO operations deep into Poland, and cover much of the southern and Central Baltic Sea.[7] S400 missiles, with a range of about 200 nautical miles (370 km), are the crown jewel of Russian A2/AD.

In addition to that, Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Philip M. Breedlove has warned that Russia's militarization of Sevastopol is leading to the emergence of an A2/AD "bubble" in the Black Sea area, one that extends as far as the eastern Mediterranean and the Levant.[8]

In the north, the rapid buildup of Russia's military arsenal in Murmansk — and the deployment of S400 missiles there — has led to the emergence of an A2/AD bubble that covers part of the Barents Sea and extends into Norwegian, Finish, and Swedish territory.[9]

Finally, the recent deployment of S400 missiles to Russia's airbase near Latakia, Syria, and the growing presence of Russian air and naval assets there allows Moscow to strike targets in an arc that takes in much of Israel and the eastern Mediterranean (including Cyprus), and also covers parts of Turkey, especially near the Syrian border.

Russia's growing A2/AD capabilities pose a concrete operational problem for NATO. In the case of a conflict or crisis, it might be risky for the Alliance to try to move aircraft and ships into the frontline states, whether in northeastern Europe, southeastern Europe, or the high north. As acknowledged by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow, any allied aircraft and vessels that head into the front-line states are highly vulnerable to Russian surface-to-air, anti-ship and land-attack missiles.[10] Moreover, the benefits afforded by A2/AD could further embolden Russia and lead it to behave more aggressively, including through so-called hybrid or non-linear ways of warfare.[11]

So far, most discussions about Russia's challenge in Eastern Europe have focused on the threat posed by "hybrid" or "non-linear" ways of warfare, such as the use of intelligence and special operations operatives for destabilization purposes; the threat of cutting off energy supplies; financial, political, and cyber penetration; the waging of information warfare, etc.[12] Less attention has been paid to the fact that hybrid and A2/AD tactics appear to be working

6 General Frank Gorenc, "USAFE-AFAFRICA Update," *Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition*, September 15, 2014, p. 2

7 Author's interview with U.S. defense official, October 20, 2015. See also Zachary Keck, "Watch Out, America: Russia Sends Super Advanced S-400s to NATO's Borders," *The National Interest*, June 26, 2015

8 "Top NATO general: Russians starting to build air defense bubble over Syria," *The Washington Post*, September 29, 2015

9 Author's interview with NATO official, October 20, 2015

10 Alexander Vershbow, "NATO Needs Strategy to Address Threats from the South and the East," *New Eastern Europe*, Issue 6 (XIV), November 8, 2015

11 Octavian Manea, "Protraction: A 21st Century Flavor of Deterrence," *Small Wars Journal*, September 11, 2015

12 For a good description of Russian hybrid warfare see, e.g., Dave Johnson, "Russia's Approach to Conflict – Implications for NATO's Defense and Deterrence," *NATO Defense College Research Paper* No. 111 (April 2015)

hand in glove in the context of Russian strategy.[13] Critically, the perception that A2/AD may give Russia escalation dominance at the conventional level could potentially serve to undermine NATO's credibility in front-line countries, leading to a decline in political morale there. This could, in turn, strengthen the voices of those stakeholders that are in favor of accommodation with Russia, and thus make front-line countries more vulnerable to hybrid means of penetration.

NATO should think harder about the need to offset the A2/AD challenge on its eastern flank. And some of the concepts and technologies the United States is experimenting with through its third offset strategy are most relevant in that context. In particular, in order to restore conventional deterrence in Eastern Europe, NATO should focus on strike capabilities that are A2/AD-proof. That means stealthy air-to-air and air-to-ground systems, submarines (which are becoming increasingly important in the context of land-strike missions), offensive cyber-weapons, and short-range missiles.

Finally, NATO should also advance toward intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities that are A2/AD proof. At present, the Alliance relies heavily on space-based assets for ISR purposes. However, the fact that satellites are large, fixed, and non-stealthy makes them particularly vulnerable to A2/AD threats. In this sense, Europeans should look into alternative ISR systems, by accelerating research and development on alternatives to space for precision navigation and timing, fielding a "high-low" mix of ISR Unmanned Aerial Vehicles with long mission endurance, and developing an "aerial layer" alternative to space for communications. Relatedly, Europeans should also think harder about capabilities and technologies that can defeat A2/AD. This underscores the potential of advanced missile defense systems, and the promise of directed-energy and electromagnetic rail guns, as well as anti-submarine warfare and counter-space capabilities. These are all key elements in the third U.S. offset strategy.

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13 For two notable exceptions, see Manea, "Protraction: A 21st Century Flavor of Deterrence"; and Diego Ruiz Palmer, "Back to the Future? Russia's Hybrid Warfare, Revolutions in Military Affairs, and Cold War Comparisons," Research Paper, NATO Defense College, Rome, No. 120, October 2015

4 Solidarity in the Face of Fluid Challenges

Ian Bond

Solidarity was simpler during the Cold War era. Western governments have not faced up to the new complexity of the concept of solidarity and the need for equally complex responses. And they have failed to make the case for solidarity to their publics.

In the Cold War, the West knew who the enemy was, who its allies were, and where the main battlefield was likely to be. That was conceptually and institutionally simple: facing up to Soviet tanks in Central Europe was a job for NATO; the United States would provide the best forces but the Europeans would provide the bulk of the forces; there might be trouble in other parts of the world, but it would essentially be an adjunct to what was happening in and around Europe. The European Community's role might extend to offering political support, but it had nothing to do with defense.

Western countries now face a much more diverse set of threats. They are military and non-military; they are geographically dispersed, so that what feels like an imminent threat in Estonia may feel impossibly remote from the things that Italian politicians have to worry about; and they may require responses not only from NATO but from the EU. Above all, the threats of today are ambiguous: does a terrorist attack by non-state actors constitute an armed attack? Does a state-sponsored cyber-attack, which paralyzes a country's government or its economy, or perhaps even damages a nuclear power station, merit a military response?

These uncertainties result in inconsistent responses to similar circumstances. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty says that "an armed attack against one or more of [the member states] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." The only time that it has been invoked was in September 2001, when terrorists used civilian airliners as weapons to attack the United States.

When terrorists attacked Paris in November 2015, however, French President François Hollande did not turn to NATO at all, but instead called on his EU partners, under Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union, which states that "If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power." Did he not want the support of the United States in fighting the self-proclaimed Islamic State group (ISIS) in their heartland in the Middle East? That would be curious, since France was already part of a U.S.-led coalition launching air strikes on ISIS. Did he need some other kind of solidarity from his EU partners? Perhaps — some of them subsequently volunteered to send forces to take over from French troops in Mali, allowing France to redeploy its own forces elsewhere. Did he think that it would be easier to work with the Russians in Syria against ISIS if NATO was not mentioned? Possibly — though all the signs are that working with the Russians will still be a challenge, the more so after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane that violated its airspace.

Ultimately, however, whether a country looks to its NATO or its EU partners for solidarity in the face of an attack, the problem of terrorism cannot be solved by military means alone; the contribution of allies has to go beyond providing military forces and into sensitive areas of intelligence co-operation, law enforcement, and dealing with radicalization at home and abroad. It requires a much broader definition of solidarity than the authors of either Article 5 or Article 42.7 conceived.

Russia's annexation of Crimea and its military intervention in Ukraine posed a different set of questions to the West. Ukraine was a country to which NATO had promised membership at the Bucharest Summit in 2008 (though without setting out a timetable or a procedure for obtaining it). Did the Alliance have any

obligations to such a country? In the absence of legally binding commitments, did NATO nonetheless have interests that warranted any military involvement? Some of NATO's Central European members pressed for NATO to supply lethal equipment or to provide training to Ukrainian armed forces; Ukraine has received some of the latter (for the most part aimed at better defense management, rather than improving combat effectiveness) but little of the former. And the West's main response to a military intervention in a European country has been non-military, through broadly similar packages of EU and U.S. economic and diplomatic sanctions. The sanctions may not be as far reaching as some would like, but they have been something more than a symbolic expression of solidarity with a partner of the EU and NATO.

But beyond the fate of Ukraine, members of NATO, particularly the Baltic States and Central European countries, were concerned that if Russia succeeded in coercing Ukraine into its orbit, it would next want to test the willingness of the Alliance to defend all of its members. They therefore sought, and received, military reassurance, in the form of deployments of additional naval and air forces and small contingents of troops from other countries in the Alliance, a stepped up program of exercises in their region and the establishment of small multinational headquarters to facilitate rapid reinforcement in a crisis. This so-called "Readiness Action Plan" involves all 28 allies: a remarkable show of solidarity, which parallels the EU's unity in imposing sanctions on Russia.

As the Ukraine crisis has effectively become another of Europe's frozen conflicts, however, divergences between allies and partners have grown. The unprecedented movement of thousands of people, many of them refugees, through southern and south-eastern Europe has strained relations between EU states. For years, Europeans have taken borderless travel throughout the Schengen area for granted. Now some countries are reimposing border controls, either for genuine security reasons (as in the case of France after the attacks in Paris) or simply to keep out refugees and migrants; others are building fences on their borders. Greece and Italy, the countries through which the majority of refugees and migrants first reach Europe, are unable to cope and sometimes seem happy to see people continue their journeys to other states without their cases for asylum being assessed; Germany and Sweden (in particular) are taking a disproportionate share of the refugees. The Commission has tried to deal with the problem by setting quotas of refugees for member-states to accept; this approach, though logical and fair, has been met with political hostility and public xenophobia in Central Europe.

Because the threats facing Western countries are now so diverse, it is no longer enough for a NATO member to see solidarity as a commitment to defend the territory of others in return for them defending one's own territory, or for EU members to think that solidarity means contributing to bail-out funds for Greece in the expectation that others will reciprocate in case of need. The West needs a comprehensive, over-arching concept of solidarity.

This concept has to start with shared values — democracy, human rights, the free market economy, and the liberal international order. These are the bedrock on which both the EU and NATO are built. The two organizations each have 28 members; 22 are common to both. Yet too often they allow inter-institutional rivalry to distract them from the overall goal of promoting values that all the members of both organizations claim to share.

The problems posed by the dispute between Cyprus (in the EU but not NATO) and Turkey (in NATO but not in the EU) are well-known. But even within a single country there can be

differences between officials who deal with the EU and those who deal with NATO: in the case of international efforts to tackle piracy in the Gulf of Aden, this contributed to both NATO and the EU mounting operations (with a separate U.S.-led multinational task force of both NATO and non-NATO ships adding to the confusion). There are good examples of co-operation in the field, and the fact that the NATO secretary general and the EU's high representative for foreign policy regularly attend ministerial meetings of the other organization shows that they understand the need to coordinate better. But the crises of the last two years have shown how much work still needs to be done.

The next step must be acceptance that the nature of the threat to shared values varies between member-states; and that each state is in principle best placed to judge the importance of particular threats and to call on others to help it face them. In other words, rather than having Central and Southern European members of the EU and NATO arguing about whether Russia poses a greater threat than ISIS or vice versa, all would accept that both were real threats for some allies and partners, and that any member-state could expect to receive some sort of help if it asked for it. If the greatest threat to the continued prosperity and stability of the Baltic States comes from Russia, then it is right for both the EU and NATO to use the tools they have to protect their members. If the greatest threat to liberal democracy in Italy is populism driven by mass migration, then Italy's allies should put common values into action and show that they are ready to take their fair share of the new arrivals and integrate them into their societies.

The final step is for Western leaders to start making the case to public opinion that (in the words of Benjamin Franklin) "We must, indeed, all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately." Populist parties are growing stronger in most European countries. They offer simplistic national solutions to complex international problems. The EU, in their view, is responsible for the migrant crisis because it has abolished internal borders, and NATO is responsible for tension with Russia because the Alliance took in new members. Their solution is for individual European states to "recover their sovereignty" and do whatever they decide is best for them — regardless of the impact on their neighbors.

The reality is that the West's problems would be immeasurably worse if the EU and NATO fragmented and Europe became once again a continent of nations pursuing their own interests at the expense of others. Refugees would still come to Europe, fleeing wars that the West would no longer be trying to end; and Russia's ability to coerce its neighbors would have grown considerably if they could not look to the EU and NATO for support. Solidarity — military, economic, and political — needs to be interpreted in a new and broader way. It has never been more important.

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5 Credible Deterrence in Europe Requires Greater U.S. Leadership and Investment

Lisa Sawyer Samp

How best to respond to Russian aggression continues to be a source of tension within the U.S. government and among its allies. The most expedient, if unappealing, solution is simply to compromise our values and move our so-called red lines. Allow Russian President Vladimir Putin his spheres of influence; concede that Ukraine and Georgia will never join NATO; accept some risk in Europe's east; and rewrite a few of the basic tenets of the post-Cold War order, allowing borders to be redrawn by force (Crimea), among other things. Russians are not threatening U.S. citizens, they are not putting ballistic missiles in Cuba, and they have not yet made an overt run on the Baltic States.

Moreover, some argue, the balance of interests remains in Moscow's favor. Russia maintains conventional military superiority along its periphery, making deterrence an expensive proposition. The West needs Russian cooperation on high priority issues like Syria, Iran, and countering terrorism. The United States should not be expected to care more about European security than the Europeans themselves and, so far, a number of the United States' closest allies in Europe do not seem too worried. While the expedient solution may be criticized as short-sighted — or even "un-American" — its natural pull as the path of least resistance can only be withstood through enhanced, proactive, and continuous steps in a different direction.

After a year-long review, the Obama administration settled on a Russia policy in spring 2015 that seeks to: counter and deter Russian aggression; reduce the vulnerability of allies and partners; cooperate with Russia on key global challenges; and preserve the potential for Russia's reintegration as a responsible global player. Some, including most vocally Senator John McCain, have criticized this policy as dangerously naïve and as sending such mixed messages that it amounts to having no policy at all. They also point out that it has done little to constrain or roll back Moscow's aggressive behaviors — including reckless brinksmanship in and around NATO territory, support to separatists in eastern Ukraine, and debilitating cyberattacks — and failed to prevent its brazen introduction of forces into Syria. Others, perhaps more fairly, contend that the enduring and arguably growing nature of the Russia threat is not the result of bad policy but rather weak implementation, combined with seemingly absent U.S. leadership at the highest levels within NATO.

In implementing its Russia strategy, the Obama administration has had the unenviable job of managing tradeoffs between emerging demands in Europe relative to the Middle East and Asia. Likewise, despite bipartisan concern over the situation in Ukraine, the U.S. Congress must also confront uneasy choices in resourcing a more robust response to Russia. For many members, any administration request to permanently redeploy U.S.-based forces for the purpose of deterring Russia would be considered politically untenable. When considering additional resources for European security, policymakers from across the political spectrum also cite the very real problem of inadequate burden-sharing between the United States and its NATO allies, frequently noting that the United States accounts for over 70 percent of aggregate Alliance defense spending while representing only half of combined GDP.

Admittedly, the global competition for discrete U.S. defense resources in the midst of multiple international crises is extremely fierce, and its zero-sum nature means more in one place will amount to less in another. Reassurance measures, in which too much presence is never enough, are now underway in three theaters: Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Against the backdrop of harmful budget cuts imposed under sequestration, force assignment and allocation decisions must rightfully come down to priorities.

In this context, the prioritization of threats posed by Iran, North Korea, and China, for example, over Russia is perhaps understandable. With the exception of a small hawkish minority, most would therefore agree that a balanced approach is needed, and that the United States should avoid turning its current rift with Russia into a larger ideological conflagration that precludes collaboration on issues of mutual importance. While such balance may have been found on paper, the United States can and should do more to implement this policy and actively avoid the inherent dangers of an overly-permissive relationship with an opportunistic Russia.

This is not to suggest the United States and its allies have done nothing in response to the events in Ukraine, nor that there are not policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic who recognize that more is needed to reach the threshold of credible deterrence. Beginning in early 2014, the United States and its European allies undertook targeted diplomatic, economic, and military efforts designed to punish Russia for its actions; compel compliance with the Minsk ceasefire agreements; reassure central and eastern allies of their Article 5 security guarantee; and warn Russia against pursuing similar actions in allied territory. The G8 Summit in Sochi became the G7 in Brussels. Working level communication ceased. The European Union joined the United States in applying tough economic sanctions. NATO established a persistent air, land, and sea presence in Central and Eastern Europe. President Obama announced a $1 billion European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) to bolster the U.S. military presence on the continent, adding rotational troops, prepositioned equipment, and reinforced infrastructure. In a hard won compromise, NATO leaders agreed at the Wales Summit in September 2014 to halt further reductions in defense spending and "aim to move toward" the Alliance's 2 percent of GDP spending target. They also adopted a Readiness Action Plan to institutionalize assurance efforts and further build NATO's capabilities, readiness, and responsiveness to the new threat environment.

While these early efforts were successful in rallying the transatlantic community around a unified course of action against Russia, they remain inadequate to address the full spectrum of challenges presented by a nuclear power and "near peer" military competitor with an increasingly comfortable reliance on the use of force. Moscow's sophisticated blend of conventional and non-conventional tactics – including the use of "little green men," political and media manipulation, and "snap" exercises across the span of its shared border with Europe – along with its demonstrated willingness to violate international norms, treaties, and borders represent what U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford has described as "the greatest threat to our national security," describing Russia's behavior as "nothing short of alarming."

Should a worst case scenario play out in the Baltic States, the United States and its allies will face significant military disadvantages in attempting to follow through on their Article 5 commitments. Without additional forces and prepositioned equipment in the region, the proximity of the Baltic States to Russia represents a nearly insurmountable time and space challenge for allies in delivering a quick and decisive response. Moscow's array of air defense, anti-ship, and surface-to-surface missiles in Kaliningrad, Belarus, Crimea, and now Syria have introduced additional complications by compromising NATO's ability to safely insert forces into Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean during a conflict. Meanwhile, the U.S. Defense Department's European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) and the U.S. Army's Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI) continue to chip away at the U.S. permanent force presence in Europe, which has steadily declined from approximately 400,000

active duty military personnel at the height of the Cold War to approximately 70,000 today. Furthermore, as Russia invests in a $700 billion defense modernization program, NATO's total defense spending fell in real terms in 2015, despite its commitment to reinvest. Allied leaders have yet to agree on the threat Russia poses to the Alliance and differing priorities among the 28-nation bloc continue to threaten the Alliance's cohesion and unity of effort. These challenges, combined with known allied capability gaps in areas such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), secure communications, strategic lift, maritime, and cyber, elevate the importance of fielding an effective deterrence so as to avoid fighting a war that NATO is not currently prepared to win.

There are a range of ideas across the diplomatic, economic, and military domains that offer conceivably effective, non-provocative solutions to create a more credible deterrence in Europe. Indeed, security analysts and military officials in the United States and Europe have already identified a menu of practical options. In addition to the previously mentioned need for more forces and equipment in Eastern Europe to enable faster reinforcement, other recommendations include additional long and short-range missile defense to counter Russia's Anti-Access/Area denial capabilities; more effective indicators and warnings to reduce Russia's time and space dominance along NATO's eastern flank; a targeted communications offensive to push back on Russian propaganda in vulnerable areas; and greater security assistance, including weapons, to build the resilience of eastern allies and partners and raise the costs of any Russian action. The biggest obstacles, then, to reaching a balanced approach is not a lack of meaningful solutions, but insufficient political will and resources.

In deciding whether to raise the priority level of the Russia threat and narrow the Article 5 credibility gap, it is important to recall the direct relationship between European stability and the United States' own security and prosperity. The European Union is the United States' largest trading partner, and their combined economies amount to nearly 50 percent of global GDP. European militaries remain the United States' most dependable and capable partners, and Europe is a primary basing hub enabling the U.S. military's global reach. The migration crisis and instability emanating from Europe's south; the rise of anti-EU populism; and democratic backsliding in places like Poland, Hungary, and Turkey are conspiring to make Europe a soft target for Russian meddling. Should Putin be allowed to act with impunity, the United States will be unable to avoid the profoundly detrimental effects.

Two opposing scenarios can be envisioned over the mid-term. In the first, the United States and its allies manage to find the so far elusive balance between provocation and permissiveness. Learning the lessons from the Ukraine crisis, NATO engages in a constructive rethinking of its force structure and political tools and strengthens transatlantic resilience to prevent political and societal destabilization. European security is bolstered as NATO's effective deterrence and competency in hybrid warfare reduces the risk of military escalation. Alternatively, the transatlantic security partnership could continue to resist the hard choices necessary to overcome institutional blockages and capability shortfalls. The existing political, social, and economic vulnerabilities will increasingly be exploited by Russia to weaken solidarity and cooperation, and bordering states will find themselves the target of hybrid tactics and escalating Russian territorial incursions. While the Warsaw Summit in July 2016 will be an important milestone for steeling allied resolve in favor of the first scenario, avoiding the second scenario altogether will require greater U.S. leadership and smart investment in Europe now.

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6 Not at All Quiet on the Southern Front

Manuel Lafont Rapnouil

Wake-Up Calls from the South

Major success stories from the Middle East are rare, but the successful conclusion of a nuclear deal between Iran and the E3+3 in 2015 was such an event. But even without this immediate ballistic and nuclear threat, the need for the transatlantic security partnership to look to the south is clear. With major crises in Syria, Yemen, and Libya (to name but a few) getting worse, and terrorist groups from the region having struck on European soil, last year's developments were clearly negative. Moreover, the social and ideological impacts of the subsequent refugee crisis threaten fragmentation between allies.

In parallel, Crimea and Donbas, after Abkhazia in 2008, have legitimately placed the eastern flank on the top of the transatlantic security agenda as well. Transatlantic partners seem to have some difficulties focusing on both regions simultaneously, not least because they carry very different risks and challenges, and therefore call for different responses and actions.

However, despite strong disagreements with Russia, the United States and its European partners appears to be more determined and has more ideas to address the challenges in the East than in the South. This may be explained by a difference of perceptions whether or not they are well-founded: what happens on the other side of the Mediterranean seems remote, and tensions and conflicts that have unfolded there will stay there as long as we do not meddle. But the past year's refugee crisis and the growing terrorist threat have made it clear that Europe cannot remain immune from this turmoil. And though Europe is nearest and most affected, a transatlantic partnership on security needs to begin with the realization that this is not a European issue alone.

Intervention: Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't?

Even those observers who are convinced of the need to look south are unable to present a clear plan of actions. The challenges for transatlantic security in this region are varied and complex, both in the short and long term. We face very diverse situations, all of them carrying multiple dimensions — from terrorism to sectarian or ethnic confrontations, to refugee and migration flows, to energy supplies, to regional leadership — and broader regional implications, with a serious potential for spill-over.

Caution is justified. Military action has consequences, as illustrated most recently by the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya. But non-intervention in Syria also came with a cost, and the U.S.-led coalition against the self-proclaimed Islamic State group (ISIS) proves that even a limited military goal — to undermine ISIS's capabilities, not to solve the broader Syrian crisis — is not easily achieved. For many commentators, the situation in the southern neighborhood seems so complex that whatever one does, or does not do, the outcome will be bad.

What should be clear, however, is that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is not only a source of threats, and that military responses are not the only answer. Transatlantic discussions about Europe's Southern neighborhood need to analyze the strategic, political, and economic sustainability of a direct intervention, as only a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution can produce results.

This does not imply that military action should be ruled out. Not all armed interventions fail. The French operation in Mali in 2013, since extended to the whole Sahel region, has produced significant success. But even with its success, it still requires a longer term and more comprehensive approach to stabilize the region,

to support the implementation of the peace agreement in Northern Mali and to promote inclusive political processes in the region, to fight organized crime and corruption, to foster development and assist the deployment of states' authority over their territory, and to reform security forces.

The lesson to be drawn from recent armed operations is not that we need to refrain from any military action. It is that we need to get better at determining when military action is appropriate and what it can achieve. For instance, the EU military operation in the Mediterranean, officially aimed at disrupting the business model of refugee smuggling networks, has actually been much more effective at saving refugees at sea. The impact of current coalition's air strikes in Syria, on the contrary, seems far from attaining its official goal to "destroy, not contain" ISIS, as stated by French President François Hollande in the wake of the Paris attacks. In the same spirit, there were certainly flaws and limitations with NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011, but the situation in 2012 (after the elections for a General National Congress in July) was not fated to evolve the way it did. Clearly, despite the Iraqi precedent, it was the post-intervention strategy that failed Libyans, and the rest of the international community. This example, among many others, stresses how we also need to get better at planning for "the aftermath" and sustaining the effort, preferably before the moment when military action becomes necessary.

Four Debates about the Broader Strategic Approach

Twenty years ago, Spain orchestrated the launch of the so-called Barcelona process, to foster political, economic, and social cooperation between Europe and its Mediterranean neighbors. In 2004, this policy was theoretically reinforced within the framework of a broader European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). In 2008, France pushed to rekindle this Euromed partnership: the resulting Union for the Mediterranean was set up to create concrete and visible projects with direct relevance for citizens and inhabitants of the region. At the onset of the Arab Spring in 2011, the G7 organized the Deauville partnership to support Arab countries in transition to "free, democratic, and tolerant societies." In the meantime, NATO had initiated its own Mediterranean dialogue back in 1994, and had added the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative with Gulf countries in 2004.

It would be unfair to say that all those initiatives produced nothing, but the situation nowadays speaks for itself. So far, they did not produce the kind of ability to influence and assist our southern neighborhood and its populations in the way that was meant initially. Our collective difficulty in supporting the fragile Tunisian democratic transition, which does not receive the kind of assistance its status as the lone remnant of the Arab Spring deserves, or to help Syria's neighbors, which have now received millions of refugees, are both self-inflicted wounds.

Despite these challenges, we need — and our neighbors' populations deserve — an ambitious, hard-headed approach that can foster reforms, support local ownership, and defend our long-term strategic interests. In order to get there, we must consider four central issues: reasonable expectations, consistency, patience, and our understanding of security.

Realistic Ambitions and Expectations

We (should) know that we cannot have demiurgic ambitions in foreign policy. In most situations, however, holding onto limited ambitions and defining clear limits for our objectives is easier said than done. We (should) also have learned the hard way that we cannot just let world politics happen to us.

One of the most common conclusions from Afghanistan is that transatlantic powers initially overreached and then were right to back-track. While the United Nations had started with a "light footprint" model in mind, NATO allies entered Afghanistan with a much more ambitious and heavy approach. Since then, we have evolved from having a nation-building agenda (including democratization, the fight against drugs, and local development) to looking for self-sustained stabilization and inclusive politics. Nowadays, even this limited objective is believed to be too ambitious, to the point that whatever might be good enough for our own national security will be good enough for some of us.

But is the "realistic" response to such situations really to have a security-only (or even a security-first) approach? Ultimately, most of the challenges for the transatlantic security partnership arising from the Mediterranean neighborhood are rooted in political or societal issues rather than in military or unconventional security threats. More generally, the very nature of conflicts and international crises since the end of the Cold War calls for a more comprehensive approach and sustained peace-building efforts. The realistic response is instead to identify the conditions to implement such an approach in the long term, and assess whether we have the political and economic ability to support it.

It seems obvious that ISIS could not have developed in Syria, Iraq, or Libya without the crises that have taken place there for more than a decade now, and that we cannot tackle the threat the group poses to our interests without having a local political response to those crises. Indeed, international peace efforts may result in a diplomatic agreement, but implementation will immediately face tremendous challenges at the local level in terms of rebuilding security and armed forces, managing economic resources, accompanying the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, building up inter-community cooperation, fighting ISIS, and overcoming persisting political divisions.

Consistency to Maintain Credibility

To answer the expectations question, the United States, Canada, and European powers may sometimes be tempted to outsource what it takes to ensure their security to local or regional players, if not on our eastern flank, then certainly in the southern neighborhood. There are currently a great number of active regional actors in the MENA region, but most of them have quite different approaches and perspectives. In Libya, the Arab League was supportive of NATO's 2011 military intervention while the African Union — which has some membership overlap with the League —insisted on havung more time for its own mediation. And the situation is even more complex today, as that clear divide has been replaced by various fragmentations, with countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, the UAE, Qatar, Chad, or Niger holding somewhat differing national views about the way forward.

Given those divisions, the outsourcing policy would seem to be a dead-end. In Yemen and Syria, transatlantic powers actually have very little influence on even their closest allies' actions, while the Iraqi central government actually works closely with Iranian and Russian forces. These examples do not mean that regional partnerships should not be fostered, but that it is essential to prepare for them in the long run so as to have a working relationship for the day when they are indispensable.

In this context, the United States and its European allies also need to work on their own consistency. The Turkish role in the Syrian crisis, U.S. attempts to find a political solution directly with Russia without including its European partners, U.S. and European attitudes regarding the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen, and the general passivity of European powers until the Paris attacks in November 2015 all illustrate

transatlantic divisions and lack of coordination. Under such conditions, it is hard to come to terms with our perception and credibility problem vis-à-vis local powers and partners, whether on a national basis, through NATO or the EU,or within the context of the United Nations.

Moreover, strengthening the U.N. credibility and capacities is, sadly, an overlooked priority for the transatlantic security partnership. An inclusive diplomatic format is all the more necessary in North Africa and the Middle East (not to mention sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia) as regional organizations and local powers have diverging priorities, and as other external powers — Russia first and foremost, but also China and others — increasingly assert their influence. We tend to overlook the price we pay, and will have to pay, if and when the UN's credibility is put at risk with regards to its record (quite often summed up as "our" record, for that matter) from Afghanistan to Syria and Libya, not to mention the Middle-East peace process. We obviously are the ones who have the most to lose from a decay of the United Nations as the underpinning institution of a rules-based world order.

Be Patient, not Faint-Hearted

Being cautious and partnering with others more effectively does not mean refusing to act directly. One of the key take-away messages from our management of post-2011 Libya is that too little external presence is also a bad option and that we should have been more forceful in our discussions with the newly established Libyan authorities to find a way to assist them and strengthen their authority throughout the country. But in the context of intervention fatigue, or Middle-East fatigue, transatlantic partners still seem to prefer short-term and minimal direct intervention.

Until recently, the debate about strategic patience was shaped in the following terms: can we sustain an "out-of-area" effort over time, especially in situations where it will take years to yield significant and stable results? Or will our opponents be able to play time against us? In the context of direct terrorist attacks and threats, this question morphed into a totally different one: are we strong and resilient enough to support the political efforts and reforms that will take time to produce results, or will the terrorist threat force us into immediate reaction, putting at risk this indispensable political process we claim to support, or jeopardizing the rules-based order we claim we want to uphold?

Libya is the most telling illustration. Civilian casualties remain limited there, and ISIS is still a rather subsidiary political force. But its apparent rise may lead transatlantic powers to resort to limited armed intervention (i.e. air strikes) against the terrorist groups' strongholds. Such an operation could ultimately endanger the fragile UN-led political process without any guarantee to actually destroy ISIS capabilities in a durable fashion, even less so if they are not accompanied by coordinated military action on the ground.

Yet, patience is not all. In Syria, time has a paramount humanitarian price for populations under siege or directly targeted with barrel bombs. In Yemen, ongoing military operations by the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis, with their subsequent international humanitarian law violations, have had one major beneficiary so far: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. We also need to draw the lessons from these experiences, and to be more forceful when needed. Strategic patience is consistency in strategy, not faint-heartedness.

A Broader Understanding of Security

Security is back to the fore, but military initiatives have shown their shortcomings on many occasions. Prevention is as often present in policy statements as it is absent from actual policy operations. There is a need to increase defense

budgets as well as diplomacy, development, and humanitarian assistance. We speak of having a broad understanding of security all the time, but we do not actually operationalize it as much as we should.

First of all, transatlantic powers need to think of military action more broadly. The threats and challenges facing our southern flank require specific military capabilities, such as mobility, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), and special forces, but they also require other security investments, such as security sector reform and military-to-military relations. The EU has actually proven quite engaged in that direction, for instance with its security sector reform missions in the Sahel.

Second, we need to be able to use a great variety of tools in order to prevent crises, or their deepening or expansion. In the fight against terrorism, intelligence, information-sharing, financial measures, border control, and counter-trafficking measures are just as important as strict military operations. Sanctions can also play a useful role, when they are targeted and fit within a broader strategic plan. Diplomacy — and not just mediation, which sometimes seems to be the smallest common denominator for diplomatic action — also remains critical, if only as a decisive asset for credibility and legitimacy when we need to resort to more coercive measures.

Finally, transatlantic powers must work to strengthen international security, and not just to protect their own national security. Indeed, we cannot afford to hold to a narrow national security perspective, especially if this implies losing sight of collective security. This is not only justified by the fact that we live in a world of growing interdependence, where the "threat against one is a threat against all" moto has evolved from a sometimes abstract political principle to being a daily experienced reality, but also — as exemplified by Russian military operations in Syria — because we cannot behave as if no other power will act. When facing the temptation of a minimal approach, transatlantic powers should remain wary so they are not lured into a threat-denial approach.

Intermediate Conclusions

The problem with developing proper strategies to strengthen and stabilize the MENA region is indeed less the diagnosis than the implementation of a solution. This blockage may stem from the fact that we have focused so much on institutions and less on policies. The United States and its European allies need to acknowledge two key lessons-learned in order to improve the functioning of the transatlantic security partnership. First, NATO is not always the most relevant answer to our common problems, even those with a direct security dimension. Second, even when we need to work together, NATO is not the only vehicle for transatlantic action. In Libya, the UN is likely to be the most appropriate forum to coordinate with regional stakeholders to create a sustainable political framework. In Iraq and Syria, the United States and key allies have set up an ad hoc coalition that was more palatable to regional partners. In the Sahel, European presence through the UN, EU, or national missions is instrumental. What we need is Europe and North America to be better at working together, on security matters as on other topics, whether through NATO or another body.

Cooperation probably includes more shared leadership. The way the United States pretends to find a solution to the crisis in Syria through dealing directly with Russia seems both preposterous, given the little control Moscow actually holds over the dynamics on the ground, and scornful of European interests in the parameters of any settlement. The way Europe has long pretended to avoid having a price to pay for the current crisis — trying to both contain

and outsource the crisis to neighboring countries — shows that it still needs to play its full role within the transatlantic security partnership.

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ECFR does not take collective positions, and this paper represents only the views of its author.

7 Ambiguous Expectations: Future Scenarios and Key Variables for the Transatlantic Relationship

Daniel Keohane

These are testing times for the transatlantic relationship. For a mix of reasons, on both sides of the Atlantic, current expectations of the other are ambiguous. Europeans are struggling to stick together in the face of a number of difficult domestic and external crises. Americans meanwhile are in the midst of a presidential campaign that is raising big questions about the role the United States should play in the world. But looking beyond current political difficulties, walking through different future scenarios for the transatlantic relationship can help identify the key variables that will affect the Euroatlantic alliance in the years to come. By understanding and debating these variables, both the United States and European governments can help ensure that the transatlantic relationship becomes healthier and stronger, despite the vast array of difficult current challenges.

Current Crises and Expectations

It has become obvious that NATO faces a number of security crises. The EU's extended neighborhood is currently very turbulent, and crises there, such as refugee movements and terrorist attacks, are causing a number of internal security challenges within the Union. Just as interesting is how this confluence of crises may evolve and how long-lasting the crises may be.

Russia, for example, is likely to remain a major security headache for many years to come. Beyond its annexation of Crimea, aggression in Eastern Ukraine, and enclaves in Moldova and Georgia, in many respects Russia is a declining power. Its population numbers are falling, and the Russian economy is much too dependent on energy exports; the combination of EU sanctions and low oil price has caused real economic difficulties for Moscow. Russian aggression in Eastern Europe is masking its structural fragility.

The Middle East and North Africa is experiencing a number of conflicts — in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Libya — against a backdrop of intensifying regional rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, Middle Eastern disorder is likely to continue for many years to come. The structural factors that contributed to the 2011 wave of protests known as the Arab Spring will likely intensify in the coming years. These factors include rapid demographic growth, economic stagnation, and resource shortages, the combination of which will likely cause more instability in the future. In addition, the broad space stretching from West Africa via the Sahel to the Gulf to Central Asia (including Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and North Africa) contains a majority of the world's fragile, failing, or failed states.

In other words, the transatlantic partners will have to tackle a wide range of evolving external security challenges across the EU's extended neighborhood well into the future. But the EU's neighborhood is not just a challenge for the EU. It is also the neighborhood of major powers like Russia, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Increasingly it is India and China's neighborhood too, in part due to their growing imports of Middle Eastern oil. A key change, however, has been increasing ambiguity over the U.S. role across the EU's neighborhood. Washington, understandably, has been more and more preoccupied with the rise of China, and unsure of how involved its wishes to be in the resolution of various conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Many Europeans are unhappy about what they perceive as a lack of engagement from the United States in European security, not only related to Russia but also in the Middle East and North Africa. This is especially true since they face a complex confluence of security challenges, and hesitant involvement by the United States can create real costs for Europeans. And rightly so, some Americans might be tempted to retort. Why should the United States put out all of Europe's

fires? After all, the United States accounts for over 70 percent of NATO defense spending, and most Europeans have not been pulling their weight in protecting their own security.

True, France has shown military leadership by intervening alone in Mali, the Central African Republic and elsewhere (and the United States has been its most dependable ally for those national operations, providing logistical and other forms of support). Germany has led the tough diplomatic effort to convince Russia to no longer use military force in Ukraine. But Europeans are often split, and some smaller countries tend to free-ride while wanting the United States to be more engaged. Further complicating matters is that leadership in the transatlantic relationship is increasingly decided on a case-by-case basis. The United States, for instance, is not directly relevant for managing the eurozone or refugee crises within the EU, even if it remains vital for global economic growth and resolving some of the external conflicts causing migrant flows to Europe such as in Syria.

Perhaps more importantly for transatlantic security cooperation, there have been growing fears that the United States has not done enough to deter the threat from Russia. The recent announcement by Ash Carter, the U.S. secretary of defense, that the Obama administration plans to quadruple its "European Reassurance Initiative" budget has been widely welcomed. But that amounts to less than 1 percent of the entire Pentagon budget. Looking toward the future — beyond the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July, and the start of a new presidential administration in Washington next year (along with elections in France and Germany) — walking through some scenarios may help reveal what expectations Europeans and Americans should have for sustaining the long-term strength of their relationship.

Positive and Negative Scenarios

Under a positive scenario, Europe would survive the various difficult challenges it currently faces, such as managing refugee flows and spurring more growth in the eurozone, tensions with Russia would dampen, and Britain would vote to stay in the EU. All this would imply deeper and more effective cooperation among EU governments, especially the "Big 3" of Berlin, London, and Paris. The United States, in turn, would perceive Europeans to be much more useful partners, and would be more willing to work through NATO and with the EU. The passing of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Pact (TTIP) would symbolize the renewal of the Euroatlantic partnership, and there would be renewed confidence (if not necessarily power) in the EU-US relationship.

But even in a positive scenario — and this is a very optimistic picture — much potential for transatlantic disagreements would remain. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), for example, the United States might become more engaged, but Europeans would likely want more parity of influence. Or the United States may prefer to focus more on the Asia-Pacific, leaving more of the MENA burden to Europeans. A lot would depend on the sources of economic growth — both internal and external — and reconciling transatlantic economic competition in other parts of the world.

The challenge of rising China perhaps best encapsulates the transatlantic dilemma. While both the United States and Europe may have renewed ambition for strengthening the liberal world order under a positive scenario, working with or against Beijing would remain an option on both sides of the Atlantic. Would all EU governments, for instance, automatically support Washington if tensions with China grew? A lot would also depend on how effectively Europeans

would organize themselves, bilaterally with the United States, and through NATO and the EU.

In contrast to the renewed transatlantic unity and sense of purpose under a positive scenario, under a negative scenario there would be more transatlantic fragmentation. The EU would continue to fray under the strain of the various crises, perhaps with national borders reimposed in many countries, the U.K. leaving the Union, and Greece having to exit the eurozone. In turn, nationalist politicians may benefit, perhaps with Marine Le Pen becoming president in France, and the departure of Angela Merkel as chancellor of Germany.

Under this very pessimistic scenario, the United States (which may elect Donald Trump as president) would become ever more disillusioned with its European allies. This could encourage more U.S. disengagement from European security and the Middle East, focusing more on the rise of China. NATO would be neglected and the EU would be ignored. The fragmentation of Europe would essentially mean the fragmentation of the West. All governments, therefore, would focus on bilateral deal-making on global economic and regional security issues with Beijing, Delhi, Moscow, and others.

The crucial point in this negative scenario would be the attitude of the United States, which would partly depend on its own economic performance. In a fragmenting and increasingly inward-looking Europe, many European governments may request more — not less — U.S. leadership and engagement. If the United States did not renew its engagement, this could open the way for China, Russia, and some Middle Eastern powers to increase their influence over European affairs. But if the United States is increasingly preoccupied with Asia-Pacific affairs, especially the military threat from China, it may not be in a position to re-engage adequately in Europe.

Key Variables and Recommendations

In reality, the future may hold a mix of the positive and negative scenarios outlined above. The transatlantic alliance may end up simply trying to muddle through various challenges rather than rebooting or fragmenting the relationship. Some might argue that this would be a success in itself given the current range of difficult challenges. What is clear from the scenarios is that there are at least four key variables that will determine the future success or failure of the transatlantic partnership.

The first variable is European unity. Whether or not the EU holds together or falls apart, in the face of a very complex confluence of crises, is crucial for the future transatlantic relationship. A weaker EU means a weaker NATO, since 22 European countries are members of both, and a much less attractive set of partners for the United States. And it is currently difficult to predict with any confidence how European cooperation will evolve.

The second variable is the attitude of the United States. Perhaps unfairly, many Europeans criticize the Obama administration for its hesitancy over its involvement in European and Middle Eastern conflicts. And different European governments have different priorities and expectations on the part of the United States. But based on the experiences of the last few years, in most future scenarios, a stronger U.S. leadership would be welcomed in Europe. Hints of isolationism, or ignoring European allies in favor of other powers — from U.S. presidential candidates for instance — worries European governments greatly.

The third variable is the evolution of external threats. This applies not only to Russia and disorder across the Middle East, which will likely remain challenging for a long time to come, but it also applies to China, which has the potential to divide the transatlantic alliance. China is not only a major source of badly needed global economic

growth, it is becoming more influential both economically and politically in Europe and across the EU's extended neighborhood.

All European governments want to trade with and attract investment from Beijing. In their modest efforts to contribute to Asia-Pacific security, Europeans have, so far, mainly focused on supporting multilateral institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, in contrast to the U.S. military presence and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade project. But it is less obvious to know which role Europeans would play, if any, if security tensions rise between the United States and China.

In part linked to the rise of China, the final variable is the sources of transatlantic economic growth, both internal and external. Adopting TTIP would help, but will unlikely be a major source of growth. Plus, in any scenario there will be commercial competition between U.S. and European businesses in other parts of the world. In particular, from a foreign policy perspective, the evolution of the global energy market will be crucial for the economic health of both sides of the Atlantic. The United States has become much less dependent on energy imports in recent years, whereas considering the current trends, the Europeans will need to import more energy in the future — mainly from the Middle East and Russia — than they do today. This could cause some foreign policy divergences between Europeans and Americans.

Bearing in mind these four future variables, there are three things the transatlantic partners should try to do today. First, the United States cannot ignore Europe, and should be more engaged in European security. A fragmenting, weaker EU is not in the U.S. interest, not least since it greatly damages the credibility and effectiveness of the U.S.-led liberal world order. Different Europeans may have different expectations of the U.S. leadership, but the United States cannot afford to *not* be more engaged in Europe.

Second, within Europe, the "big 3" of France, Germany, and the U.K. need to work much more closely together. For example, they collectively account for almost two-thirds of EU defense spending, so what they do has an enormous impact on the effectiveness of European foreign policies. The United States should encourage Berlin, London, and Paris to cooperate more closely, for instance by strongly and openly supporting continued U.K. membership in the EU.

Third, Europeans need to be prepared to do more to cope with security challenges in their neighborhood. The good news is that the decline in European defense spending has stopped. Indeed France, Germany, and the U.K. are all currently increasing their defense spending. But Europeans should step up their military contributions to NATO's efforts in deterring Russia, and they should take more responsibility regarding Mediterranean and African security, which is less a priority for the United States than for Europeans. Libya, for example, may eventually need European peacekeepers, and Tunisia may need more European assistance than it currently receives.

It is impossible to predict with any certainty how the transatlantic alliance will evolve in the coming years. But a combination of more European unity and a stronger U.S. leadership would help ensure that the transatlantic alliance not only survives, but also thrives well into the future.

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