DYNAMIC CHANGE:
RETHINKING NATO'S CAPABILITIES, OPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

NATO Allied Command Transformation
Istituto affari internazionali (IAI)
Università di Bologna
Rome, 26-27/X/2012

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

Istituto Affari Internazionali

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE POLITICHE
"ROBERTO RUFFILLI"

DYNAMIC CHANGE

Rethinking NATO's Capabilities, Operations and Partnerships

International conference

in the framework of NATO Allied Command Transformation's Academic Outreach Effort
and
the Memorandum of Understanding between NATO ACT and the University of Bologna

October 26-27, 2012

Villa Guastavillani, University of Bologna

Organized by

Allied Command Transformation, Norfolk

Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

University of Bologna

Sponsored by

Allied Command Transformation, Norfolk

Hosted by

University of Bologna

CONFERENCE AGENDA

14:00 *Transfer to Villa Guastavillani*

14:30 *Registration*

15:00-15:30 *Welcome address and conference introduction*

Carla Salvaterra, Vice-Rector for International Relations, University of Bologna

Daniela Giannetti, President , School of Political Sciences, University of Bologna

Ettore Greco, Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

15:30-16:15 *Keynote speech*

Chair **Sonia Lucarelli**, Associate Professor of International Relations, University of Bologna

Peter C. Bayer, Jr, Deputy Chief of Staff, Strategic Plans and Policy, Headquarters - Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Norfolk (VA)

Q&A

16:15-16:30 *Coffee break*

16:30-18:30 *Plenary Session 1*

FROM ATLANTIC COMMUNITY TO GLOBAL ACTOR: TAKING STOCK OF NATO'S EVOLUTION

Chair: **Ettore Greco,** Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Panelists:
Tomas Valasek, Head, Central European Policy Institute, Slovak Atlantic Commission, Bratislava
Arto Räty, Permanent Secretary, Finnish Ministry of Defence, Helsinki
Peter Gray, Director, Centre for War Studies University of Birmingham
Sten Rynning, Head, Center for War Studies, University of Southern Denmark, Odense
Hanna Ojanen, Visiting Researcher, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki

Q&A

20:30 *Dinner*

Keynote speech

ITALY'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO'S MILITARY OPERATIONS

Speaker : **Piero Ignazi**, Professor of Political Sciences, University of Bologna

Saturday, October 27

9:00 *Transfer to Villa Guastavillani*

9.30-11.00 *Working Groups, first session*

WG1: SMART DEFENCE & THE CAPABILITY CHALLENGE

Workshop Room: **Room "Caccia"**, first floor

Chair: **Christian Mölling**, Associate Fellow, Research Division International Security, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin

Paper-givers: **Bastian Giegerich**, Senior Researcher, Bundeswehr Institute of Social Studies, Strausberg
Daniel Keohane, Head, Strategic Affairs, FRIDE, Madrid

Discussants: **Marcin Terlikowski**, Analyst, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Warsaw
Spyros Economides, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, London

Rapporteur: **Clara O'Donnell**, Nonresident Fellow, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, and Research Fellow, Centre for European Reform, UK

Open discussion

WG 2: AFGHANISTAN AND NATO AFTER 2014

Workshop Room: **Room "Progetto"**, first floor

Chair: **Filippo Andreatta**, Professor of International Relations, University of Bologna

Paper-giver: **Trine Flockart**, Senior Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen
Riccardo Alcaro, Senior Fellow, and **Alessandro Marrone**, Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Discussants: **Martine van Bijlert**, Co-director, Afghanistan Analyst Network, Kabul
Mungo Melvin, Senior Associate Fellow, Royal United Services Institute, London

Rapporteur: **Federico Catapano**, Concept Development Branch, Headquarters - Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Norfolk (VA)

Open discussion

WG3: NATO'S PARTNERSHIPS IN NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

Workshop Room: **Room "Affrescata"**, ground floor

Chair: **Alessandro Minuto Rizzo**, Former NATO Deputy Secretary-General, and Senior Advisor, Enel, Rome

Paper-giver: **Gulnur Aybet**, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of Kent
Jeffrey Reynolds and **Dick Bedford**, Strategic Issues and Engagements Branch, Headquarters - Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Norfolk (VA)

Discussants: **Memduh Karakullukcu,** Vice-Chairman and President, Global Relations Forum, Ankara
Silvia Colombo, Researcher, Mediterranean and Middle East Program, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Rapporteur: **Emiliano Alessandri**, Transatlantic Fellow, German Marshall Fund, Washington DC

Open discussion

11.00-11.15 *Coffee break*

11.15-12.45 *Working Groups, second session*

12:45-14:15 *Buffet Lunch*

14:15-16:15 *Plenary Session 2*

BEYOND THE ATLANTIC: NATO'S NEW HORIZONS

Chair: **Sonia Lucarelli**, Associate Professor of International Relations, University of Bologna

*Working Groups Reports**

Panelists: **Anthony Cordesman,** Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC
Camille Grand, Director, Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, Paris
Stefano Silvestri, President, Istituto Affari Internazionali
Stefani Weiss, Director, Europe's Future and International Governance Programs, Beterlsmann Stifftung, Brussels
Julian Lindley-French, Eisenhower Professor of Defense Strategy, Netherlands Defense Academy, The Hague

Final remarks: **Peter C. Bayer, Jr**, Deputy Chief of Staff, Strategic Plans and Policy, Headquarters - Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Norfolk (VA)

**This section will include 5 minutes for each rapporteur to outline few key issues discussed by working groups.*

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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SMART DEFENCE & THE CAPABILITY CHALLENGE

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AFGHANISTAN AND NATO AFTER 2014

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Lorenzo Zambernardi	Lecturer in International Relations, Università di Bologna

WORKING GROUP 3
NATO PARTNERSHIP IN NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

Emiliano Alessandri	Transatlantic Fellow, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMFUS), Washington, DC
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Dick Bedford	Strategic Issues and Engagement Branch, Headquarters-Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ-SACT), Norfolk (VA)
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Ruth Hanau Santini	Lecturer, Università L'Orientale, Naples
Peter Zenk	Military Cooperation Division, Headquarters-Supreme Allied Commander Transformation

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DRAFT – NOT TO BE QUOTED

Background paper for Working Group 1: Smart Defense and the Capability Challenge

SMART DEFENSE AND THE CAPABILITY CHALLENGE

By Bastian Giegerich

Bundeswehr Institute for Social Studies

Sizing-up the challenge

Defense spending by the European members of NATO fell 7% in real terms between 2006 and 2010. From 2010 and 2011, the last year for which reliable data is available, a further real term reduction of 2.8% took place.[1] At the same time, the US is rebalancing its defense commitments, also under pressure financially, towards the Asia-Pacific region, raising the specter of increasing responsibilities for Europe. The European picture has actually been very mixed. Measured in constant 2010 prices/exchange rates, the extremes between 2006 and 2010 ranged from defense cuts of 50% in Latvia to increases in defense spending of over 22% in Poland. Furthermore, it is astonishing to see how little money European governments invest together. A quick glance at basic spending data across Europe demonstrates the potential for doing much more: according to the European Defense Agency, some 77% of all defense equipment procurement spending by EU member states in 2010 was spent on national programs that do not involve international collaboration.[2]

The defense economics picture becomes even more alarming then these figures suggest if one considers that whatever countries do, most of them continue to do it in an uncoordinated fashion. Unilateral cuts, rarely discussed with partners, run the danger of undermining multinational security, both in NATO and the EU. Nick Witney, former head of the EDA, makes a similar point, arguing "what is worrying is not so much the scale of the cuts as the way they have been made: strictly on a national basis, without any attempt at consultation or co-ordination within either NATO or the EU, and with no regard to the overall defense capability which will result from the sum of these national decisions."[3] Theoretically, capability gaps created by cuts on the national level can be plugged by other allies, so that NATO as a whole would still have a chance to provide a balanced capability portfolio compared to its level of ambition. However, for this to work in practice there needs to be coordination and cooperation to an extent we are not seeing so far. At current trajectories it is therefore much more likely that uncoordinated national level attempts to manage available resources and obligations will produce unbalanced multinational capabilities, ultimately putting NATO's ability to do its job in jeopardy.

Some countries have already adjusted their levels of ambition. A study conducted by the US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has noted that "current defense reforms more often than not include the complete abandonment of some capabilities."[4] What NATO has come to call 'specialization by default' is thus already under way by means of such uncoordinated defense cuts. Specialization by default is likely to degrade the collective capability of the Alliance and might therefore diminish common security. Unilateral, uncoordinated cuts will, moreover, increase the burden on those countries that still possess the capabilities in question, thereby testing allied solidarity and conceptions of appropriate burden-sharing. To be clear: not all cuts are harmful. If governments were to use the financial pressure to retire obsolete equipment and balance cuts in a multinational and complementary framework, the crisis would be a blessing in disguise. Up to this point, however, the balance of evidence suggests that the usability and deployability of European armed forces has not improved over the past few years and is set to diminish further.[5]

Military planners always run the risk of building a force that is unable to meet future contingencies. To mitigate this risk, they have several strategies available. For example, they could choose to prepare for all contingencies or they could try to build a force optimized for a limited range of contingencies. A third strategy would be to be somewhat prepared for a broader range of tasks. The budget pressure sketched above will lead defense planners to look for specialization and

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[1] International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2012*, Abingdon, 2012: Routledge for the IISS.

[2] European Defense Agency, *Defense Data: EDA Participating Member States in 2010*, Brussels, 2012: EDA, http://www.eda.europa.eu/publications/12-03-07/National_Defense_Data_2010, p. 25.

[3] Nick Witney. *How to Stop the Demilitarisation of Europe*, European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief, London, 2011: ECFR, p. 2.

[4] Stephen J. Flanagan, T.J. Cipoletti, and Alessandro Scheffler, "Outlook for Defense: Doing Less with Less?", in S. Flanagan *et al.*, *A Diminishing Transatlantic Partnership? The Impact of the Financial Crisis on European Defense and Foreign Assistance Capabilities*, Washington, DC, May 2011: Center for Strategic and International Studies, pp. 15-28, specifically p. 24.

[5] John Gordon *et al.*, "NATO and the Challenge of Austerity", *Survival*, vol. 54 (4), 2012, pp. 121-142; F. Stephen Larrabee *et al.*, *NATO and the Challenges of Austerity*, Santa Monica, CA, 2012: RAND. It also has to be admitted that even a process in which cuts and austerity measures are closely coordinated in multinational frameworks might not turn this trend around, because it could turn into a framework to rationalize extensive defense cuts. Furthermore, some countries might be tempted to disinvest from frontline combat capabilities which would of course yet again raise a burden- and risk-sharing problem.

optimization strategies. However, the deep uncertainty of the international security environment, in which the only safe prediction seems to be that one cannot predict the shape and size of what is around the corner, makes this a high risk option to be avoided. In fact, uncertainty calls for a "prepare for everything" approach – exactly the kind of strategy that is not affordable. This tension is, and in fact has been for a long time, at the root of the long-term capability challenge. As the military historian Sir Michael Howard has argued almost forty years ago, the task of the strategist is "to not get it too far wrong"[6] so that adjustments can be made in light of new developments. It is this long-term challenge rather than 'just' the immediate context of austerity and fiscal constraints that smart defense will need to address.

Smart Defense: Ambition and Progress

At the NATO Summit held in Chicago on May 21-22, 2012, leaders committed to creating "modern, tightly connected forces equipped, trained, exercised and commanded so that they can operate together and with partners in any environment."[7] NATO will look to generate such forces, *NATO Forces 2020*, through the building blocks of smart defense. In Chicago it was suggested "smart defense is at the heart" of NATO Forces 2020 and represents "a changed outlook, the opportunity for a culture of cooperation in which mutual collaboration is given new prominence as an effective option for developing critical capability."[8] In short, the message was the three-pronged task of balancing budget austerity, on-going operational challenges, and a security environment characterized by deep uncertainty demands a response.

At the Chicago Summit, leaders adopted a defense package consisting of several specific smart defense projects. The package included some twenty projects covering, for example, the pooling of maritime patrol aircraft and improving the availability of precision weapons. With each project taken forward by a volunteering lead nation, the list of active projects is slowly growing as individual proposals in a pool of some 150 potential projects are maturing. Standing at twenty-four by October 2012, outgoing Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), General Stéphane Abrial, suggested that the total might grow to more than thirty by the end of 2012. He said "NATO must continue to provide the framework and be a catalyst for multinational projects, wherever nations wish it, but also serve as a promoter of coherence and a source of strategic advice, to help inform national decision-making."[9] On the capability side, NATO leaders pointed to an interim missile defense capability, progress on the Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) system, and an agreement to extend allied air policing in the Baltic member states as the three flagship projects of smart defense. While some of these do implement principles akin to what is being advanced under the smart defense headline, all of them have been in the works for a long time and are thus unlikely to serve as a lasting inspiration for smart defense as a whole. As one commentator suggested, "the story of NATO AGS is well known: a program characterized by delays, disagreements and budget cuts."[10]

In addition to smart defense, NATO will seek to improve the interoperability of its forces through the so-called Connected Forces Initiative. Then SACT Abrial explained that the initiative was designed to be "the framework for unified efforts to make sure [NATO] forces, and those of our partners, are optimized for working collectively and also that [NATO] forces maintain the strong coherence that they have developed during operations."[11] Thus in a post-ISAF environment, the Connected Forces Initiative is likely to concentrate on combat effectiveness, in particular by focusing on training and exercises.

The three components of smart defense are prioritization, cooperation, and specialization. *Prioritization* implies that NATO member states align their national capability priorities more closely with NATO's capability goals. *Cooperation* is in effect an attempt to induce the pooling of military capability among allies in order to generate economies of scale and

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[6] Michael Howard, "Military Science in an Age of Peace", *RUSI Journal*, vol. 119 (1), 1974, pp. 3-9.
[7] NATO, *Summit Declaration on Defense Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020*, Press Release (2012) 064, May 20, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87594.htm?mode=pressrelease, par. 5.
[8] Ibid., par. 7 and 8.
[9] NATO, *Press briefing by General Stéphane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)*, 12 September 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_89944.htm.
[10] Andrew D. James, *Smart Business Models: Industry's Role in Efficient Multinational Development and Procurement*, Paper for the Royal United Services Institute Briefing Document for the NATO ACT Industry Day, Riga, October 2012, p. 1.
[11] NATO, *Press briefing by General Stéphane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)*, cit.

improve interoperability. *Specialization* is by far the most difficult of the three elements because it directly impacts on member state sovereignty. It would entail member governments investing in existing areas of excellence and in turn giving up capability in other areas.

It is easy to criticize smart defense for being a fancy term for old ideas and an opportunity to repackage projects to create the illusion of progress. There are also plenty and severe obstacles for its successful implementation. While such criticism is valid in part, the challenge outlined above remains: how to make better use of scarce resources in the context of great uncertainty? This is, in fact, how NATO's Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, described the ambition on the eve of the October 2012 defense ministerial meeting: "More multinational teamwork can help us spend out scarce resources more effectively."[12]

The smart defense concept is not primarily about saving money, but rather about creating value in defense. Value can come in several guises: as costs savings, as capability and inter-operability increases; or even in more intangible forms, such as mutual trust and understanding. Achieving all of these benefits is possible as existing examples of cooperation prove. The European Air Transport Command (EATC),[13] to name one example, has increased effectiveness in multiple areas ranging from information exchange among participating countries to providing more options in terms of the type of available aircraft, in particular for smaller nations. Working together on a daily basis in EATC has increased mutual understanding and acceptance amongst national staffs. Officers and enlisted staff routinely solve joint problems together, which is a basic requirement for successful cooperation. Daily cooperation also facilitates the exchange of 'best-practices' between nations.

The EATC achieves efficiency through a reduced footprint in terms of personnel and infrastructure compared to the parallel national structures that would be needed in its absence. More impressive, however, is the increased performance a structure like EATC might generate at no extra cost. In this particular case, efficiency gains were achieved through the exchange of flight hours – this exchange increased by a factor of five from 2010, when the EATC started operating, to 2011. Three types of efficiency can be achieved through the exchange of flight hours. The first is the ability to better manage aircraft loads (i. e. fewer aircraft will fly with partial loads); between the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2012, the average load per EATC flight doubled (from about 3.5t to 7t). Additionally, the percentage of empty flights sunk from roughly 22 per cent to 14 per cent. Finally, the exchange of flight hours allowed for flights which would have otherwise only been possible on a national basis or not at all. It is difficult to put a price tag on these benefits, but the latter alone generates a sizeable annual value.

The aspiration behind smart defense is a positive step, independent of the immediate budget pressures and cuts. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that while smart defense might help protect existing capability and help spend – or rather allocate – money more wisely, it is unlikely to create new capabilities by itself. The hope was that smart defense would help allies to do more with less. The trends suggest that at the moment they are "doing less with less".[14] On paper, smart defense covers a potentially wide-ranging ambition: to change the way NATO members design, operate, maintain and discard military capabilities. This means playing a long game. The willingness of individual allies to take over lead nation status for concrete smart defense projects (so-called 'Tier 1 projects') is still the clearest sign of engagement. Without additional progress on this matter, smart defense is a pool of ideas that might never be dealt with strategically.

Smart defense as a shift in mindset has to penetrate thinking in all member states and thus NATO as a whole. In practice, however, smart defense projects will further strengthen the tendency for NATO member states to work together in small groups on specific problems, rather than mobilizing the Alliance as a whole. But NATO can still reduce

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[12] NATO, *Opening remarks by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the North Atlantic Council meeting in Defense Ministers session*, October 9, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-620B48E0-C560591F/natolive/opinions_90576.htm.

[13] For more on this case study see: Philipp Gallhöfer, Bastian Giegerich, Wolfgang Ischinger, *et al.*, *Smart Defense after the NATO Summit – Aspirations, Added Value, Implications for Europe*, Policy Brief 1/12, Berlin 2012: Stiftung Neue Verantwortung, www.stiftung-nv.de.

[14] Flanagan *et al*, *Doing Less with Less*?, cit.; Bastian Giegerich and Alexander Nicoll, "The Struggle for Value in European Defense", *Survival*, Vol. 54 (1), 2012, pp. 53-82.

the transaction costs of such variable intra-Alliance cooperation by acting as a facilitator, providing advice and establishing mechanisms to ensure transparency and realistic expectations. Another important element of NATO's role will be to stop member states from using smart defense as an excuse for further cuts. The Secretary General is already engaging accordingly: "We need smart spending. And even more, we need sufficient spending. I know that, right now, the priority for many countries is to balance their budgets. That's understandable. It is necessary. And it is a vital part of maintaining a healthy and secure economy. But we also need to prepare the ground for when our economies improve. Because security is the basis of prosperity."[15]

Persistent obstacles and thoughts on the way forward

Past experience provides plenty of material to analyze the many hurdles that have stood in the way of successful efforts to cooperate, prioritize and specialize. However, three obstacles stand out for being particularly problematic: national concerns about the loss of sovereignty; defense industrial concerns; and lack of trust.

Countries that implement the principle ideas behind smart defense will inevitably become more dependent on each other – obviously in military terms but ultimately also in political terms. It seems hardly possible to reap the benefits and the value of closer cooperation without accepting some of the associated costs in terms of reduced national autonomy. Countries that are mutually dependent on each other will always worry that they are being asked to provide, for example, a pooled or shared capability for operations that they do not want to conduct, or that they might be abandoned by their partners in an operational context.

Furthermore, several NATO member states have significant defense industrial concerns relating to smart defense. If resources are being used more efficiently and economies of scale are exploited, it is likely that it will lead to defense industrial consolidation in Europe. In other words, some jobs and skills in defense industry might be threatened – another risk that needs to be addressed among partners. Defense industry itself is an important stakeholder in the smart defense concept, and one that needs to be convinced of its benefits. Smart defense implies more collaboration on defense equipment programs, but experience has taught the defense industry to equate collaboration with program delays and the market-distorting *juste retour* (fair return) principle. If it is to play its part, industry will need to understand the business case for the smart-defense initiative. If smart defense contributed to increased harmonization of military requirements and made them stick throughout procurement projects, for example by freezing designs once they are agreed among participating governments, the benefits would be easy to see for industry.

Successfully implementing smart defense demands that NATO member states trust each other. In practical military terms, this means that all partners involved have to have high levels of certainty regarding the availability of any capability provided or generated through smart defense mechanisms. In short, access has to be guaranteed.

These three obstacles are real risks, political and military, for smart defense. No matter how creative the smart defense design ultimately turns out to be, they will not be eliminated completely for the foreseeable future. However, much can be done to mitigate their impact.

One dimension to consider in this regard is what could be termed the 'organizing principle'. There is widespread agreement among experts that when it comes to specific projects, cooperation in small groups of countries is more promising than an attempt at cooperating 'at 28'. The central idea behind the small group approach to smart defense would be to create several mutually supporting clusters of cooperation with varying, and often overlapping, circles of membership.[16]

Several ideas have been put forward regarding how such cooperation clusters should be constructed. The first approach would be to build clusters according to the regional approach. Neighboring countries, possibly benefiting from

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[15] NATO, *Press conference by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen following the first meeting of Ministers of Defense*, October 9, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-130E60B2-FD9E6AFA/natolive/opinions_90575.htm?selectedLocale=en.
[16] See for example: Tomas Valasek, *Surviving austerity. The case for a new approach to EU military collaboration.* London 2011: Centre for European Reform.

low language barriers and geographic connectedness, are assumed to share a sense of regional identity which in turn produces a higher level of trust, making shared autonomy and mutual dependency more acceptable. A second idea is to organize collaboration based on what has been termed 'strategic proximity'. Strategic proximity does not assume proximity in a geographic sense, but rather refers to countries having similar strategic cultures and therefore a similar outlook regarding the missions they are likely to conduct and the role they would like their armed forces to play in support of security policy priorities. A similar level of ambition and security policy orientation, in this logic, will be helpful to create stable and reliable expectations in relation to each other. A third option would be to group countries together that want to pursue similar benefits as a result of cooperation, in other words to focus on the intent. Do countries want to generate efficiencies (save money), create higher levels of effectiveness (improve interoperability and capabilities), or build confidence and trust (promote integration)?

Even if such clusters successfully form, there is likely to be a demand for mechanisms to provide assured access to capabilities in case of NATO operations.[17] The easiest way to give such guarantees is to allow for redundancies in those capabilities affected. In this way, the Alliance would still be able to provide needed capabilities even if certain countries opted out of a given engagement. To be sure, determining the minimum winning coalition within NATO while balancing assured access, redundancy and the need for greater efficiency in spending will be a huge challenge for planners. This balance can only be determined on a case-by case basis for individual capabilities.

A more difficult, but economically more efficient, way to guarantee access would be for countries to enter into legally binding agreements. The goal of assured access must be to provide a predetermined capability after receiving notice that it is required. This implies the availability of assets at a predetermined level of readiness, with fully trained personnel and support, mandated to conduct a predetermined range of missions for a defined period of time. In addition to rules regulating contribution, access and operation, a credible (ideally NATO-run) certification process to ensure the deployability and readiness of capabilities would be a good addition, because it would help generate transparency and trust.

Concluding remarks

Smart defense will not be a silver bullet and it would be dangerous to think it can be. It will not allow governments to avoid difficult political choices about capabilities. It will actually require political commitment and financial investment and will not simply be a vehicle for cost-cutting. From this long-term perspective several principles for the implementation of multinational initiatives under the smart defense heading suggest themselves.

For all new capability initiatives member states might want to adopt a "2+ principle". This would imply that options to involve at least one other ally are by default assessed before a national solution is even considered. In effect, this would be the comprehensive application of multinational force goals.

Multinational capability developments could be governed by a commitment to freeze designs and to ring-fence funding for such projects from future budget cuts. Any financial savings generated because of multinational cooperation need to be reinvested in defense. This is important to prevent cooperation from becoming an excuse for cuts, but also for those in charge of implementing and living cooperation on a daily basis to see a greater purpose than 'just' efficiency.

Industry cannot be expected to be altruistic, but can well be expected to make good business decisions based on allocated funds. To secure industry engagement, business leaders have to be shown that specific and funded projects exist – in other words, that there is a market that only exists because of smart defense. Then governments should encourage supplier consortia made up of complementary industrial partners rather than make direct competitors work together which ultimately only entrenches duplication and inefficiencies. This way the value-added of cooperation takes center stage and discussions about work-shares are mitigated.

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[17] The following points are examined at greater length in Bastian Giegerich, "NATO's Smart Defense: Who's Buying?", *Survival*, vol. 54 (3), 2012, pp. 69-77.

NATO as an organization should be empowered to reduce the transaction costs of cooperation by creating transparency and predictability. In practice this will be difficult to achieve because it would mean, among other things, more intrusive NATO defense planning and guaranteed access obligations. A small group, or mini-lateral, approach offers a fair chance to generate effective multilateralism in smart defense. The risk of fragmentation needs to be monitored constantly and coherence has to be ensured on the NATO level, however.

If smart defense is presented as the ultimate answer to the defense budget crunch, hopes will be dashed quickly. The need to save money is one compelling argument, but it is just as important for governments to show a clear and shared sense of what they are building capabilities for. A central element of the narrative behind smart defense is the promotion of transatlantic solidarity and common security in times of austerity. NATO member states will need to understand that smart defense is a tool to reorganize the way the Alliance produces common security.

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Background paper for Working Group 2: Afghanistan and NATO after 2014

NATO'S TRAINING MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN: ACHIEVING POSITIVE CHANGE

By Trine Flockhart

Danish Institute for International Studies

NATO's focus is currently set on one particular date – December 31, 2014. On that date NATO's long and challenging ISAF mission will come to an end and the security of Afghanistan will be in the hands of the Afghans themselves. This does not however mean that NATO's engagement with Afghanistan will be over, but merely the end of combat and that NATO from then on will be focusing on training, advising and assisting the Afghan government in their journey through the forthcoming 'Transformation Decade'.

Since the agreement at the 2010 Lisbon Summit to start the transition towards 'full Afghan security responsibility and leadership'[1], the international community has repeatedly declared continuing commitment to Afghanistan beyond 2014. At the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, the Alliance declared an Enduring Partnership with Afghanistan[2] and at the May 2012 Chicago Summit, allies agreed a shift from the combat mission to 'a new training, advising and assistance mission' of a different nature to the current ISAF mission.[3] The details of the new mission are not yet available although NATO endorsed a broad framework for the mission at the NATO Defense Minister meeting on October 10, 2012. Moreover, the US entered a bilateral agreement with Afghanistan in May 2012, which covers a broad range of issues and which allows US forces to remain in Afghanistan until 2024 to pursue two missions; train Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and target remnants of al-Qaeda[4].

However, although NATO and the international community's commitment to Afghanistan after 2014 is unquestionable at the declaratory level, it must also be acknowledged that ISAF countries are exhausted after a thirteen-year-long deeply challenging and costly engagement in Afghanistan.[5] A certain degree of 'a rush to exit' is therefore to be expected and as suggested by Sten Rynning 'a substantial and ambitious enduring partnership is unlikely'.[6] Moreover, even under the best of circumstances and with the best intentions in place, around 70 percent of all initiated programs for transformation are known to fail.[7] Therefore in the current environment of financial austerity and war weariness, it is more important than ever to approach Afghanistan's decade of transformation in a smart and cost effective way – ensuring positive change with the available resources and within the given environment.

In this article I draw on experience from change-management, socialization and on a newly developed framework for achieving agent-led positive change. My aim is to outline how to minimize the ever present risk of not achieving the intended change. In so doing, the article will focus on the initiatives undertaken by the Alliance to reach the goals for the ANSF expressed under the 'Inteqal' Framework. This scheme for managing the handover of responsibility from ISAF to Afghan authorities ('Inteqal' is the Dari and Pashtu word for 'transition') was laid out at the London and Kabul conferences on Afghanistan. It states in particular that the international community will support the government of Afghanistan in creating the conditions necessary to allow for transition and to continue to support the transition process to advance to the point where the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) supported by a well functioning public administration are fully capable of maintaining internal and external security, public order, law enforcement, the security of Afghanistan's borders and the preservation of the constitutional rights of Afghan citizens.[8]

The above would be a major undertaking in the best of circumstances, and even more so in a country facing multiple challenges such as the continued presence of insurgency, corruption and an illicit economy, high levels of illiteracy,

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[1] *Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the Nations contributing to the UN-mandated, NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan,* Lisbon, November 20, 2010.
[2] *Declaration* by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on an Enduring Partnership, Lisbon, November 20, 2010.
[3] *Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan,* § 13, May 21, 2012.
[4] *Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,* May 1, 2012, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012.06.01u.s.-afghanistanspasignedtext.pdf
[5] Sten Rynning, *After Combat, the Perils of Partnership: NATO and Afghanistan beyond 2014*, Research Paper No 80, Rome, July 2012: NATO Defense College.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Bernard Burnes, 'Getting Organizational Change Right in Public Services: The Case of European Higher Education, *Journal of Change Management*, vol.8, no 1, 2008, pp. 21-35; Mark Hughes, 'Do 70 Per Cent of All Organizational Change Initiatives Really Fail?', *Journal of Change Management*, vol. 11, No 4, 2011, pp. 451-464
[8] Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, *Communiqué: A Renewed Commitment by the Afghan Government to the Afghan People; A Renewed Commitment by the International Community to Afghanistan*, July 20, 2010, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/355350/publicationFile/51498/100720-Kommunique-Kabul.pdf

poverty and under development. Yet paradoxically the challenging situation in Afghanistan also offers a limited, but important number of opportunities for achieving positive change – as long as a few basic guidelines are followed. The remainder of the article will focus on outlining these guidelines.

Towards a 'Smart Approach' to Change

The undertaking of change is always challenging because human beings are 'hard wired' to value routine practices and a stable cognitive environment.[9] At the same time, and as any parent or teacher knows, human beings are also highly sensitive to their own failures and achievements. A perception of failure and under-achievement is likely to lead to shame and may result in withdrawal and paralysis of action, whereas success is likely to lead to pride and a 'can do' attitude and increased willingness to take action that may change established routines. This is referred to in the field of psychology as *ontological security* – a condition where the individual has a stable and comforting sense of self and where a sense of order and continuity in regard to the future, relationships and experiences is maintained.[10] Ontological security amongst the key actors in a change process is a precondition for a sustainable process of transformation to take place.

It is my argument in this article that a smart approach to change in the ANSF must be built on ensuring a high degree of 'ontological security' among those expected to effect the change. Without such a level of ontological security, individuals are likely to resist the necessary changes – and as seen in some of the recent cases of 'green on blue' attacks - may even assume the role of 'spoiler'.[11] The problem is of course that an approach to change which builds on the achievement and maintenance of individual's ontological security may be something that a primary teacher feels professionally comfortable with, but which may appear alien and inappropriate within a professional military environment. Hence the approach to change suggested here is itself a form of change that may well be resisted within a military structure bound by deeply embedded practices and symbolic routines and different understandings of what might constitute ontological security.[12]

Ontological security is strongly influenced by the individual's self-perception and ability to maintain a strong and positive narrative. Moreover, ontological security is reinforced through established routines. However, although individuals generally speaking prefer to stick with their routines, it stands to reason that any healthy individual or resilient organization will on occasion have to undertake action that lies outside its established routines. Such occasions arise regularly when events and structural change (either material or norm based) collide with routine practices and challenge existing identities and narratives. In such cases the existing narrative, identity and practice may no longer be appropriate and may have ceased to provide the intended results. Action therefore is required in all organizations in response to gradual or sudden change in the structural environment, and in response to haphazardly occurring events and unintended consequences arising as a result of other action. In the case of transformation in Afghanistan, it is clear that action is required continuously because of a mixture of all of the above. The question is how to support the establishment of individual and collective ontological security to ensure a sustainable and dynamic process of change.[13]

All change processes are faced with the tension between the urge to stick with tried and tested routines, and at the same time with having to respond to events and structural change with action that may replace the valued routines. The resilient organization is therefore an organization that is able to make necessary and continuous action in response to changed conditions, a part of embedded practices. A smart approach to change is therefore an approach that is always

[9] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age,* Cambridge 1991: Polity

[10] Jenifer Mitzen, 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State, Identity and the Security Dilemma', *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 12, No 3, 2006, pp. 341-370.

[11] Although most 'green-on-blue' attacks seem to be part of a Taleban strategy to undermine the trust between the partnered Afghan forces and ISAF forces. There is also a belief that some of these attacks have been caused by individuals who have felt insulted or in other ways aggrieved by members of ISAF. This suggests that NATO must pay more attention to intercultural communication, which is fully acknowledged (interview by the author with a NATO official).

[12] This is only a surface appearance, however. All military establishments are constructed in a way that ensures a high level of ontological security, right from the construction of a clear and positive group identity, the reliance on deeply internalized routine practice and the clearly displayed levels of personal achievement though rank and display of bars on dress uniforms.

[13] Such a process of sustained and dynamic change is similar to the process of spill-over identified by Ernst Haas in European integration.

mindful of achieving and maintaining the ontological security of key actors in the change process – the question is how to do that!

Strategies for Achieving Ontological Security

In a recently developed framework[14], I identify four strategies for establishing and maintaining ontological security. The four strategies can be divided into 'strategies of being' based on identity and narrative, and 'strategies of doing' based on practice and action. The identification of the four strategies is rooted in the observation that all forms of agency must have an ability 'to be and to do'. It therefore follows that all entities with agency – whether an individual, an organizational entity such as a state, an international organization or a much more loosely configured 'movement' or 'network' such as al-Qaeda or ethnic tribes, must necessarily have a 'self' defined by an identity and constituted through a narrative, and their 'doing' must be demonstrated through performance in routinized practice and intentional action, and narrated through the narrative and appropriate for their identity. In other words all four strategies are mutually constitutive and interdependent (see figure 1 in the Appendix).

So far empirical research suggests that in order to achieve dynamic change towards a desired goal, policy-makers should focus on encouraging successful outcomes in all four 'ontological security-seeking strategies'. Clearly this requires in the first instance that policy-makers and their change agents are aware of the four strategies and the need for a positive outcome in all four contributing factors to ontological security. Change agents must also be mindful that ontological security is a fragile condition that must be continuously re-constituted and reasserted – even though doing so may be both time-consuming and appear to involve rather mundane tasks or to be outside the scope of normal professional conduct. My initial research on this question suggests that a considerable percentage of the around 70 percent of failed processes of change, failed because all four strategies were not invoked. That this is so is however not surprising as most existing change management models focus on just one or two of the strategies suggested here.

The four 'ontological security'-seeking strategies are:

1. A *narrative strategy* to tell a positive story about the organization and to ensure biographical continuity through the construction of a 'strong narrative' about 'who we are' and 'what we do'. All organizational entities and individuals need a narrative that tells their story in as positive a light as possible and which can incorporate events and actions undertaken into a sense-making story that connects the present with the past and which supports and reinforces a specific identity.
2. An *identity strategy* to assert the collective and individual identity through maintenance of self-esteem and core identity signifiers such as religion, ethnicity or other characteristics of the social group to which the individual belongs. When the ANA proudly displays its six core values as 'integrity', 'honor', 'service', 'respect', 'courage' and 'loyalty', they are simultaneously constructing a strong narrative and an esteem enhancing self-identity. The 'identity strategy' is a strategy to 'imagine a positive self' and it is backed up with the narrative strategy 'to tell the story of the positive self'. However, both narrative and identity must be rooted in 'the real world' incorporating real events and real actions – both positive and negative - otherwise the individual will appear delusional or untruthful.
3. A *practice strategy*[15] to uphold a stable cognitive environment through the continuous performance of routinized practices that at once supports the identity and reinforces the narrative. A disconnect between practice and identity and/or narrative will sooner or later lead to cognitive dissonance and a need to change either practice or reconstruct narrative and identity. For example, in Afghanistan there is a clear disconnect between the narrative and identity of a country that is working to reduce corruption, and the actual reality of deeply embedded practices of corruption.

[14] Trine Flockhart, 'From a Practice of 'Talking' to a Practice of 'Doing': NATO and Sources of Change' *International Politics*, vol. 49 No 1, 2012, pp.78-97. The framework is further developed in 'Constructivist Neo-functionalism: Towards a theory for explaining agent-led change' (article currently under peer review).
[15] I understand 'practice' as 'competent performances that embody, act out and reify background knowledge' (see Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, 'International practices', *International Theory*, vol. 3, no. 1, February 2011, p. 6). In this understanding, practice is often unconscious or automatic activities that are embedded in taken-for-granted routines and which are based on social and culturally derived norms guiding appropriate behavior for particular groups with particular identities.

4. An *action strategy* to undertake necessary and required change through goal-oriented action whilst still maintaining a sense of individual integrity and pride. The problem is that action often leads to changed practice, which is likely to have adverse effects on ontological security. Moreover, action always has the potential for being unsuccessful. Unsuccessful action can have severely detrimental effects on narrative, identity and practice, which ultimately can lead to paralysis – or if the action cannot be stopped, such as an unsuccessful military campaign – a reverse form of spill-over may develop where a negative dynamic of undermining action carries on until ontological security is all but destroyed. On the other hand successful action holds a significant potential for reinforcing identity and narrative and add to the desired 'can-do' attitude that will result from a high level of ontological security.

The four ontological security-seeking strategies are illustrated in figure 1 (see Appendix), which also illustrates that the processes take place on the agent level and are voluntaristic in the sense that agents always have choices, albeit within certain deterministic constraints (both material, institutional and norm-based structures) and within a vexatious social world where the haphazard occurrence of 'events' and unpredicted consequences of previously undertaken action continuously require agents to react in all four strategies. The four strategies show that when planning for 'smart change' it is important to bear in mind that as action can be either reinforcing or undermining of ontological security – and as a dynamic and sustainable change process is only likely if it is supported by reinforcing action, change agents should prioritize small steps with a good potential for success that can reach a further afield strategic goal incrementally through generation of a dynamic change process.

The model has clear policy relevance to situations where agent-led change is desired because it provides a map for undertaking change, and for diagnosing why intended change sometimes cannot be achieved despite good intentions, clearly communicated goals and sufficient availability of resources. To be sure, the model is not a comforting map, because it shows that the 'road' to dynamic and sustainable transformation is long and bumpy – and without shortcuts. Yet the model is also comforting because it shows that although the road is long and bumpy, small adjustments in any of the four ontological security seeking strategies may add to agents' ontological security, and it clearly shows the importance of setting achievable goals that can be narrated as successes – even if it means that the change process may proceed through many small steps.

Positive change therefore is change that can be sustained through continuous and reinforcing action, and which endows agents with a sense of pride and a high level of self-esteem (a positive self) and which facilitates the construction of a strong narrative that continuously reinforces the identity. However, the achievement of ontological security among the key participants in a change process does not guarantee a successful outcome – all change processes must still be managed through the usual mantras of clearly identified goals, clear communication, benchmarking etc. The model is an addition to traditional change management by adding a specific framework for managing 'people issues'. The point to emphasize here is that unless ontological security is maintained at all times in the process, no matter how well communicated, how well resourced and how well planned the change process is, it is likely to end up as one of the 70 percent of failed change processes.

NATO's Training Mission in Afghanistan

NATO has been engaged in a training mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) since November 2009. The decision to change the existing mission was taken at the Strassburgh/Kehl Summit in April 2009, and the mission started in November 2009. The decision was a result of the acknowledgment that the security sector reform program initiated in 2002 had not delivered the necessary security forces for the Afghans to realistically take over responsibility for their own security within a foreseeable future. Moreover it was clear that the program initiated in 2002, in which Germany was the lead nation for the development of the ANP, with the EU also involved since 2007 through the EUPOL Afghanistan mission, and the US as the lead nation for the development of the ANA, was characterized by mutual recriminations, an unconstructive division of labor and reform efforts that were largely based on the superficial understanding of the local context that was available in 2002.[16] As a result, in mid-2009 at the time ISAF Commander General McChrystal's

[16] Mark Sedra, 'European Approaches to Security Sector Reform: Examining Trends through the Lens of Afghanistan', *European Security*, vol. 15, No 3, 2006, p. 334.

assessment of the situation in Afghanistan was that of a 'deteriorating situation', a 'growing insurgency' and a 'crisis of confidence among Afghans'.[17]

Since 2009, NATO has focused on building ANSF capacity towards the goal of 352,000 security forces (reduced at the Chicago Summit to 228,500) through embedded NATO Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams with Afghan formations. The aim of the training mission is that ANSF will be able to assume security lead across the whole country from the middle of 2013, thus leaving the necessary 18 months for the transition to embed before the ISAF mission ends on December 31, 2014.

The training mission is certainly achieving an impressive output of newly trained soldiers and police recruits. According to some estimates, it is currently churning out 6,000 newly minted soldiers and 4,000 police officers a month.[18] In addition the NTM-A has recently embarked on a program to train Afghan trainers and instructors, which is meant to generate a self-sustaining ANSF with Afghans training Afghans. There is no doubt that the NTM-A has been one of the success stories of NATO's engagement in Afghanistan with remarkable improvements in the ANSF[19], and that the experience over the past three years has contributed greatly to NATO's overall ability to construct a more positive narrative about the mission in Afghanistan.

It is not the aim of this short article to judge the quality of the ANSF produced by the NTM-A, although few will dispute that the achievements over the last three years are impressive. My aim here is restricted to focusing on ways and means of establishing ontological security among the main participants in the change process. In doing so I will focus on two aspects of NTM-A – the practice of partnering and literacy training.

Training through Partnering

On taking over the command of ISAF in June 2009, General McChrystal decided that the only way to overcome the serious shortcomings in ANA and to prepare the ANSF for taking over responsibility for their country's security was if they were actively involved in providing security. The approach forwarded by McChrystal was 'embedded partnering', and is a clear example of seeking ontological security through action. McCrystal specified that 'embedded partnering' meant ISAF troops merging with ANSF to form a single combined force in which 'ISAF will partner with ANSF at all levels – from government ministries down to platoon level' in order to 'live, train, plan, control and execute operations together'.[20] However, one thing is partnering with the reasonably disciplined ANA, quite another is partnering with the much less disciplined ANP police force. Nevertheless by mid 2010 it was recognized that the challenges in the ANP were of such a magnitude that progress would not be possible purely on the basis of courses through the Focused District Delivery Program (FDD). FDD is a program designed to improve the ANP rapidly by taking whole units away from their localities for eight weeks of training.[21] However, it was realized that improvements from the courses were not long-lasting, and certainly could not address the persistent issue of deeply embedded but highly inappropriate practices in the ANP. As a result partnering is also taking place between ISAF and ANP. Today 'embedded partnering' is an absolute key element in the transition strategy towards Afghan security lead and is a clear example of seeking to change identity, narrative and especially inappropriate practice though action.

It is difficult to imagine how else ANSF would acquire the necessary skills for eventually being able to provide Afghan security if they were not involved in actually 'doing' security operations through partnering. One can therefore only lament that this policy was not incorporated into Security Force Assistance and SSR planning at a much earlier stage. From the perspective of establishing ontological security among the ANSF, partnering appears to be a must, as it seems to be the only way to ensure the experience of reinforcing action, whilst at the same time instilling the appropriate

[17] General Stanley McChrystal, Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, *Commander's initial assessment*, August 30, 2009, p. 1

[18] Susan Sachs, 'Transition to Afghan Control is Bumpy', *The Globe and Mail*, August 24, 2012, http://m.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/transition-to-afghan-control-is-bumpy/article582209/?service=mobile.

[19] For details on the improvements in numbers and other parameters see the report by NATO Parliamentary Assembly (Rapporteur Sven Mikser), *Transition in Afghanistan: Assessing the Security Effort*, Brussels, October 2011.

[20] Quoted in Rudra Chaudhuri and Theo Farrell, 'Campaign disconnect: operational progress and strategic obstacles in Afghanistan, 2009-2011', *International Affairs*, vol. 87, No 2, 2011, pp. 271-296.

[21] Ibid, p. 278

routinized practices in recruits who have only benefitted from a short training course of eight weeks. Moreover from a socialization perspective, partnering is likely to be probably the best available method of transferring professional norms and values to Afghan security personnel. Having said that, partnering also brings with it a number of problems, not least that the trainers and fellow ISAF personnel clearly are vulnerable to insider attacks (the so-called 'green-on-blue' attacks), which constitute the hitherto most serious challenge to partnering as a reinforcing form of action. Moreover, effective socialization depends on the socializing agent (the ISAF personnel) being held in some degree of esteem by those being socialized. However, it appears that familiarity, which is a natural and desired function of partnering, has also given rise to the unintended consequence in the form of dislikes and personal – perhaps culturally founded – conflicts.[22] Not only do a number of the 'green-on-blue' attacks seem to be a result of personal grudges, but it also seems likely that unless a degree of affinity between the partners can be maintained, socialization of norms, values and professional practices will be compromised, as will the possibility of maintaining a positive identity and narrative.

To be fair NATO is doing the right things within a difficult environment. The motto of the NTM-A 'shohna ba shohna' (shoulder to shoulder) is also a good example of constructing a positive narrative about partnering. Apart from the obvious human tragedy, this is also why the 'green-on-blue' attacks are so damaging – because they go straight to the very basis of partnering by challenging the narrative about 'shohna ba shohna' and by undermining trust and a collective identity based on partnership. NATO is currently attempting to limit the damage through increased attention to intercultural communication and an understanding that training the trainers must be an absolute priority to minimize the inevitable cultural and language obstacles that unavoidably will occur between such different cultures. NATO has also announced increased levels of intelligence gathering and intensified observation of ANSF members to try to spot possible perpetrators of insider attacks. However, such a move would risk embedding the increasing mistrust between Afghans and ISAF and could give rise to an unhealthy atmosphere of suspicion. Instead NATO should consider stepping up their on-going evaluation process of all recruits to not only 'spot the bad apples', but also to find talent for promotion and for specific vocational functions, or for accelerated language, numeracy or literacy learning. Although such a process would be time-consuming, it would achieve several objectives at the same time, including increased safeguarding against insider attacks, an opportunity for ANSF partners to air possible grievances and concerns and to get feedback from their mentors. If such an increased monitoring system is seen as a route to a better position for the individual rather than an observation exercise grounded in distrust, it is likely to be welcomed by those being monitored.

Training Literacy Skills

When the NTM-A mission started in 2009, only 14 percent of new recruits achieved literacy at first grade level in a country where the national literacy level is only 28 percent. Through a concerted effort with more than a 100,000 ANSF recruits in literacy training at any one time, literacy levels have improved remarkably to around 80 percent of ANSF now having achieved literacy at grade one.[23] The literacy program employs nearly 2,800 Afghan teachers in 1,551 classrooms teaching about 4,100 classes in all provinces. The aim is that all members of ANSF achieve Functional Literacy Level 3, which is the level internationally recognized as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.[24] It goes without saying that trained, literate and reliable soldiers is not only a priority in its own right, but is also a precondition for everything else, and is likely to have a multiplier effect for the rest of Afghan society. Indeed one of the frequently stated reasons for signing up to the ANSF is precisely the opportunity to learn to read.

The literacy courses have turned out to have a very positive effect on ontological security, as it clearly is a positive identity signifier that increases the individual's own standing in society and with it self-esteem. As in the case of partnering, NATO is already doing the right thing by focusing on literacy training among the armed forces, and there seems to have been an evolving understanding that literacy is what will transform the country – and that NTM-A is in a unique position to reach an otherwise difficult to reach segment of the grown up population. However, NATO could signal even more clearly not just that basic literacy is a requirement, but also that literacy levels of more than basic literacy and numeracy can open up further possibilities for promotion to leadership positions or transfer into other

[22] See for example Jeffrey Bordin, *'A Crisis of Trust and Cultural Incompatibility: A Red Team Study of Mutual Perceptions of Afghan National Security Force Personnel and U.S. Soldiers in Understanding and Mitigating the Phenomena of ANSF - Committed Fratricide-Murders'*, 2011, http://www.michaelyon-online.com/images/pdf/trust-incompatibility.pdf

[23] Mikser, *Transition in Afghanistan: Assessing the Security Effort*, cit., p. 7

[24] NATO Allied Command Operations' homepage, http://www.aco.nato.int/page272701224.aspx

administrative positions either in the ANSF or elsewhere. At a minimum, special reading and numeracy courses of accelerated learning should be offered to those who are identified as especially gifted. The increased monitoring process suggested above could be used for these purposes too. The ANSFs might also consider awarding 'badges' to wear visibly on the uniform to display levels of achievement, and the impressive improvements in literacy should be incorporated into the narrative about the ANSF.

Although some of the suggestions here may appear small at some level and yet costly and time-consuming at another level, they are suggestions that can contribute to improvements in all four strategies for seeking ontological security. Moreover, they are initiatives that are likely to have positive secondary effects in the broader Afghan society.

Where to Go from Here

In the last three years NATO has come a long way from an SSR process that was deeply flawed in terms of including ontological security-seeking strategies and in terms of being able to prepare the Afghan security forces for eventually being able to provide security. However, the time line is tight, and it would be unrealistic to think that ANSFs will be fully trained at the end of 2014. This is recognized in the decision to continue the engagement with Afghanistan after 2014 in a new training, advising and assisting mission. Planners for the new mission will clearly be operating within financial and political constraints that are likely to mean that the new mission will be smaller than the current NTM-A. Within these constraints however, planners should bear in mind the source of the success of the last three years and seek to safeguard the exiting ontological security-enhancing aspects of the current mission.

By 2014 the ANSF should be at maximum capacity and at a level of near 100 percent literacy and hopefully with stabilized retention rates as natural attrition will have reduced the overall seize of the Afghan forces towards the envisaged 228,000. This is not a bad starting point for a new training, advising and assistance mission. From 2014 on the mission should therefore concentrate on consolidating achievements and continuing the successful literacy, numeracy and language training and vocational training, thereby producing suitable candidates for administrative posts and for promotion within the ANSF and eventually for the broader Afghan society. In addition the new mission should concentrate on two levels: developing the Afghan officer corps and preparing members of the armed forces for civilian life. On the former there are already extensive plans for both in-country and out of country officer training, but the latter could well be an issue that is overlooked. The latter is an area that the new training, assisting and advising mission should pay particular attention to by preparing those who do not wish to continue their military service for their return to civilian life. Military training will have given many useful skills, but also skills that could be a danger to the continued transition of Afghanistan. A planned and assisted return to civilian life with the opportunity to use the acquired intellectual and practical skills for the benefit of the broader Afghan society will therefore be one of the big challenges that the new mission should not overlook.

NATO has done very well over the last three years with a remarkable degree of positive change as a result, which so far has made the transition to Afghan security in three of the four Transition Tranches identified in the Inteqal possible. Moreover, the process has added tremendously to the ontological security in the ANSF, which developed into a sustained and dynamic process as the transition to more and more Afghan-led security forces. Yet, few will disagree that after eleven years since the fall of the Taliban and nine years since NATO took command of ISAF, Afghanistan remains a challenging operation with the prospects of an overall successful outcome still far from certain. Despite the impressive achievements over the last three years in NTM-A, serious concerns remain for how Afghanistan's decade of transition will evolve, and much depends on the occurrence of destabilizing events in the remaining time before the ISAF mission comes to an end and on the outcome of 'the other Afghan transition' – the presidential election in 2014.[25] As correctly observed by Michael O'Hanlon, should the Afghan people make a bad choice – or more likely – should a bad outcome be engineered through guile, patronage and election fraud, the entire project of moving towards a safe and stable Afghanistan will be in jeopardy.[26] Ironically, therefore, and despite the achievements in ANSF and the fact that the NTM-A seem to have done everything possible to establish ontological security in a difficult environment, other strategic factors may severely limit the effect of the otherwise smart approach to change adopted over the last three years.

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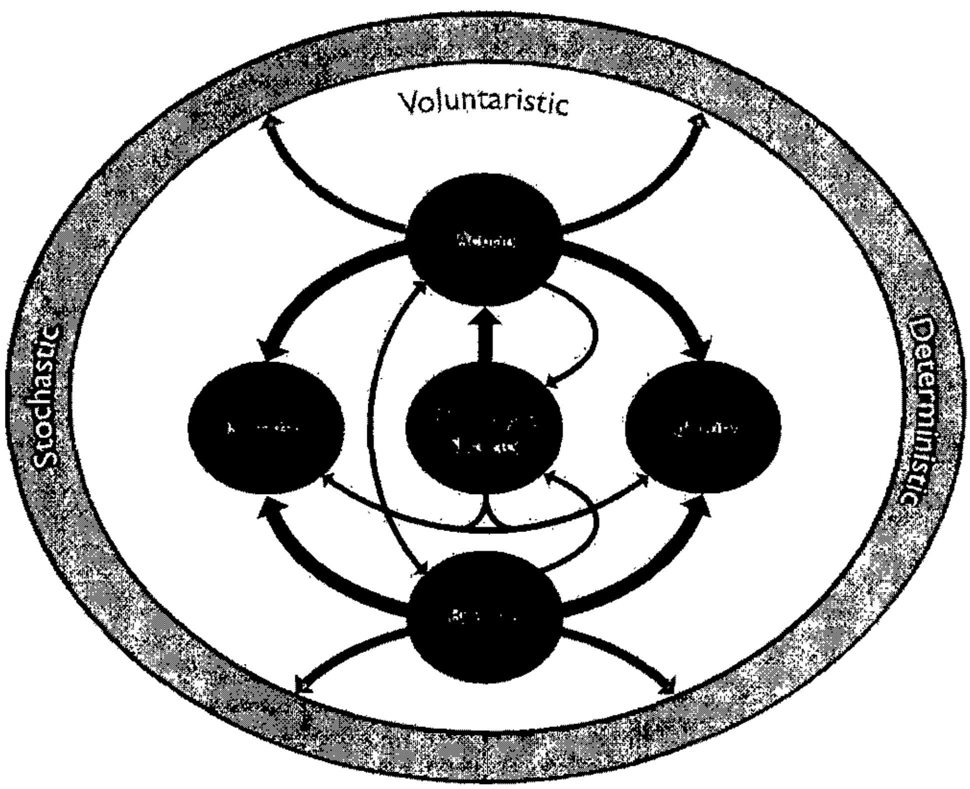
[25] Michael O'Hanlon, 'The Other Afghan Transition', *Survival*, vol. 54 No. 5, 2012, pp. 101-109.
[26] Ibid., p. 102

APPENDIX

Figure 1: *Ontological security-seeking strategies*



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DYNAMIC CHANGE

Rethinking NATO's Capabilities, Operations and Partnerships

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Background paper for Working Group 2: Afghanistan and NATO after 2014

NATO'S MULTIPLE BALANCING ACTS LESSONS FROM THE OPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN

By Riccardo Alcaro and Alessandro Marrone

Istituto Affari Internazionali

After ten years since the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan's future remains as uncertain as ever. This indisputable observation casts a long shadow over the performance of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the NATO-led military mission tasked with pacifying and stabilizing the country. What happens between now and 2014 will inevitably weigh heavily on any assessment of ISAF. Nevertheless, some important conclusions concerning the future of NATO in light of the Afghan experience can already be drawn. In this paper we focus first on the impact of ISAF on NATO's crisis management approach and then on its broader political-strategic implications.

ISAF's Impact on NATO's Crisis Management Approach[1]

The nine-year long experience in Afghanistan – NATO took command of ISAF in mid-2003 – has had several important effects on how the Atlantic Alliance thinks, plans and implements its crisis management approach, particularly as regards land intervention. These effects are likely to become a part of NATO's overall operational expertise, even though not all future operations are likely to be as large an undertaking as ISAF. This section assesses four implications of the ISAF experience for NATO's crisis management approach: transforming military capabilities; building training capacity; developing a comprehensive approach; involving partner countries.

The Transformation of Military Capabilities

When NATO launched its military transformation agenda in the early 2000s, it had yet to officially take over leadership of ISAF. Yet, there is little doubt that the intervention in Afghanistan, in which many allies were involved as of late 2001 in the framework of a US-led ad hoc coalition, provided NATO's strategic planners with much food for thought. In fact, many of the envisaged changes in the military capability structure[2] reflected specific challenges that Western forces were facing in Afghanistan.

The ISAF experience played an important role in accelerating, enhancing and shaping NATO's military transformation process, particularly in European member states. First and foremost, it fuelled the evolution of doctrine and tactics of armed forces from continental Europe toward the concept of expeditionary capability. ISAF has been the most prominent of NATO expeditions, as it is located at a great distance from the North Atlantic area, in a non-permissive environment, and within a truly multinational framework – namely the NATO military integrated command. For several years now, European countries have deployed between 25,000 and 30,000 troops per year to the Afghan theatre, which means – also because of turnover – several tens of thousands of European soldiers. This has led to substantial changes in the way European contingents deployed in Afghanistan have been trained and equipped, which in turn has influenced broader national defense planning. The involvement in Afghanistan has also increased expertise in working in multinational frameworks, exposing allied and non-allied officers to best practices and mutual learning. However, this does not mean that European armed forces have always been able to turn lessons learned on the ground in Afghanistan into a comprehensive national (let alone NATO-wide) doctrine on expeditionary capabilities.

Moreover, ISAF has exposed shortfalls in NATO equipment. The scarce availability of fixed-wing and rotary-wing air capabilities for both strategic and intra-theater airlift became dramatically evident in the earliest stages of the operation. Another area where capability shortcomings have impaired ISAF activities is force protection, a key requirement in a large-scale and land-based counter-insurgency operation. Allies have struggled to develop adequate capabilities – such as jamming systems, armored vehicles and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to improve situational awareness – to counter Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The interoperability capacity of member states' national equipment has also been a thorny issue. To provide just one example, French fighter aircraft in Afghanistan are unable to exchange data directly with allied aircraft because they do not use Datalink-16, the system generally used in NATO.

[1] This section is authored by Alessandro Marrone.

[2] It is important to stress that the concept of "capability" does not refer only to a certain platform but to the whole set of assets necessary to perform a military task, including equipment, procedures, tactics, doctrine, organizational and human elements.

Although this level of interaction has in no way blurred the dividing line between NATO members and non-members, it has established an important precedent and contributed to creating greater awareness within NATO of the many advantages to seeking the military and political involvement of partners in allied operations. This was reflected in the 2010 Strategic Concept, which made partnerships a pillar of NATO's strategy to meet one of its core tasks, "cooperative security". This approach to partner countries developed through ISAF was also partly applied to Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya in 2011. At the outset of the operation, it was pondered whether it would be possible to apply a kind of "ISAF format" to OUP to connect more effectively with non-NATO partners such as Jordan, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The debate bore fruit and resulted in a scheme regulating the participation of partners' air capabilities and facilitating coordination at the strategic level.

ISAF and Allied Solidarity[5]

The mission in Afghanistan has impacted not only on NATO's crisis management approach and capability agenda. It has had – and will continue to have – important implications for the evolution of the Alliance as a political organization. This section discusses the origin of inter-allied tensions over ISAF as well as the putative reason for which NATO has ensured the sustainability of the Afghan mission. Finally, using ISAF as a prism, it looks into the future and attempts to draw some long-term conclusions on the NATO of tomorrow.

ISAF and NATO's Internal Imbalances

Undoubtedly, ISAF has exacerbated NATO's internal imbalances. The problem of uneven burden-sharing may be as old as the Alliance itself, but rarely has it been felt as acutely as in Afghanistan. Faced with deteriorating security conditions, the US has incessantly called for greater support from NATO. However, only some have responded to the battle cry. Others have opted for maintaining their military commitment below a certain threshold, either by refusing to send in more troops or by barring them from combat operations. While there has been a recent effort towards convergence, these limitations – the so-called *caveats* – have strained inter-allied relations considerably and fuelled a sense of frustration on the western shore of the Atlantic. Former US Secretary of Defense Bob Gates could find no better way to take leave of his NATO counterparts than bluntly warn them that the imbalance in burden-sharing may one day lead NATO to inaction – and consequently irrelevance.[6]

US concerns about insufficient, and decreasing, defense spending in Europe reflect an objective state of affairs, but the accusation (implicit in Gates' words) that certain allies sit idly by while other fight and die is taking things a bit too far. The decision by a number of NATO European member states to set limits to their military commitment in Afghanistan must be traced back to more substantive reasons than opportunism.

One such reason is that most European allies feel that they do not really 'own' ISAF. To them, ISAF looks very much like an American mission. NATO has not been truly involved in strategic planning. US President Barack Obama's 'surge' – a broad strategy that involved not only more troops on the ground, but also a boost in civilian assistance and greater diplomatic outreach towards regional players – was discussed and approved in Washington without much consultation with NATO partners. As a result, ISAF was further 'Americanized': the majority of troops, including the force commander, come from the US, as does the bulk of international aid.[7] Coupled with the length of the mission, this scarce sense of ownership weakened Europe's post-9/11 solidarity with the US and contributed to engendering a demand for withdrawal in the public opinion. Also important in this regard is the fact that the European public generally deems ISAF excessively costly with respect to results. Even the US public, for years solidly supportive of the mission,

[5] This section is authored by Riccardo Alcaro.

[6] Thom Shanker, "Defense Secretary Warns NATO of 'Dim' Future", *The New York Times*, June 10, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/11/world/europe/11gates.html

[7] Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, Washington, DC, 2010: Simon & Schuster.

has gradually turned against it out of concern that better use could be made of the resources spent on Afghanistan on the domestic front.[8]

Another factor to take into account is the protean nature of the mission – in other words, the incessant multiplication of tasks which allies have been called on to perform. Initially, ISAF presented itself as a peace-keeping operation, different in size, but not in nature, from what the Alliance had been doing in the Balkans for years. As more and more of Afghan territory was handed over to ISAF, however, NATO was confronted with the need to carry out new and very diverse activities, ranging from support to reconstruction to the fight against drug trafficking. On top of that, the expansion of ISAF's territorial competencies – extended to the whole country in 2006 – has coincided with a sharp increase in insurgent activities.

Differences in threat perception have been a further reason for the *caveats*. The US has a natural interest in destroying al-Qaeda and preventing Afghanistan from becoming yet again a haven for hostile terrorist organizations. On balance, such an interest is shared by European countries, most notably the largest ones, such as Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Nevertheless, the nexus between national security and fighting the Afghan insurgency is felt less intensely in Europe than it is in America – in truth, in certain European states it is not felt at all. Consequently, most governments in Europe have only been ready to risk the lives of their troops – and the favor of their public – to a certain extent.

Caught between a disaffected public opinion and allied requests for more help, several NATO governments have chosen an uncertain middle path. They have resisted the temptation to pull troops out, but have only agreed to a limited increase in troop deployment and to the relaxation, not the lifting, of the *caveats*. This middle path may not have eliminated inter-allied frictions and has certainly affected ISAF's ability to tackle the insurgents. However, it has, arguably, been the only way for these 'reluctant' governments to keep thousands of troops in Afghanistan in the face of mounting popular discontent. Otherwise, an event of great public impact – such as the killing of a large number of civilians by mistake, or the loss of a considerable number of troops in a single attack – could have generated a public demand for early withdrawal that these governments would have found nearly impossible to resist.

When put into perspective, the dispute over the *caveats* contributes to casting NATO's decades-old burden-sharing problem in a new light.[9] During the Cold War, burden-sharing was easily quantifiable – it sufficed to look at the amount of GDP each member state allotted for defense (although some allies insisted that the availability of their territories for NATO facilities was also a critical factor). Partly due to the experience of ISAF, the debate has become more complex today. For some allies, the level of commitment to an operation like ISAF is as important a criterion for measuring burden-sharing as the GDP proportion absorbed by military expenditures. In light of this, they – implicitly or explicitly – claim that *risk*-sharing is a fundamental variable for evaluating an ally's service record. Again, this is nothing new, as risk-sharing was also a factor during the Cold War (particularly with regard to nuclear-sharing arrangements). Yet, assessing the level of burden-sharing has now become an exercise subject to a greater degree of arbitrariness. A NATO member state may allocate a relatively low GDP proportion to defense and yet put much energy in operations abroad, for instance by deploying a proportionally high number of troops. Taking ISAF as an example, Denmark and the Netherlands could be mentioned as cases in point. Alternatively, an allied country with a higher military spending ratio may turn out to be more reluctant to commit full-heartedly to a mission like ISAF, as shown by the cases of France, Turkey or pre-crisis Greece.

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[8] For a summary of ISAF's decreasing popularity see, among others, Charles E. Miller, *Endgame for the West in Afghanistan? Explaining the Decline in Support for the War in Afghanistan in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, France and Germany*, Carlisle (PA), July 2010: US Army War College.

[9] Jens Ringsmose, "NATO Burden-Sharing Redux: Continuity and Change after the Cold War", *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 31, no. 2, August 2010.

Reflecting this debate, there has been much talk about NATO evolving towards an alliance *à la carte*, to which allies contribute selectively according to their own convenience.[10] For the time being, they still seem capable of finding enough common ground to agree on a broad strategic platform. The adoption in Lisbon of the 2010 Strategic Concept attests to this. However, unlike in the past, when the imperative to check the Soviet threat was undisputable, today's inter-allied tensions derive from different strategic priorities – in short, the origin of tensions lies not only with the means, but with the ends of NATO themselves.[11] This is set to pose a serious problem of Alliance sustainability. While exposing this vulnerability, the ISAF experience also provides some encouraging lessons.

NATO and ISAF's Sustainability

In spite of inter-allied recriminations, ISAF has to date recorded no true defection. Contingent reductions have been rare and have, in any case, taken place in a coordinated fashion. The number of troops from a 'reluctant' country, Germany, actually peaked in mid-2011 – ten years after the first landing of Western forces in Afghanistan, and at a time when the mission had already lost popular support – which has not gone down significantly since then. In addition, several countries have relaxed the *caveats*. What to make of this apparent paradox?

For many European NATO countries, participation in ISAF is not really an issue of national security but rather an item in their cooperation agenda with the US. Their concern is not so much about a terrorist threat at home as about keeping the US committed to Europe. By supporting the US in Afghanistan, they aim to keep NATO – and its mutual defense clause – appealing to the US. Thus, NATO's global action (which is what the US is mainly interested in) is a function of its lingering regional role (which is what most Europeans are interested in).

This is the ultimate explanation of why NATO has been a more functional option in Afghanistan than the 'coalition of the willing' which was the US' first choice. Without NATO, keeping the Europeans in Afghanistan would have been significantly harder. As argued by Sarah Kreps, the political and security benefits accruing from NATO membership work as 'systemic incentives' for allied governments to take controversial and sometimes unpopular decisions – such as maintaining thousands of soldiers in a faraway country for over a decade.[12] Even though these systemic incentives are not strong enough to shield governments entirely from the effects of popular discontent (hence, the *caveats*), they are ultimately responsible for the sustainability of ISAF. In fact, a government that withdraws its troops from an ad hoc coalition – such as the one in Iraq – has much less to fear than an allied government that unilaterally leaves a NATO operation. In the first case, whatever cost the pullout decision implies might well be offset by the approval of the public opinion. In addition, the decision can be justified on the sole basis of the mission's objectives. This would not be possible in the case of a NATO mission, in which allies would also have to ponder the implications of their decisions for the Alliance, not only for the mission. The withdrawing state would risk paying a much higher price because it would weaken its credibility as a reliable ally and undermine the pact of reciprocal solidarity that underlies NATO itself.

Although it may appear paradoxical for a mission that has such strained inter-ally relations, ISAF has demonstrated the added value of an integrated organization like NATO with respect to a coalition of the willing.[13] The latter may be

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[10] See, among others, Theo Farrel and Sten Rynning, "NATO's Transformation Gaps: Transatlantic Differences and the War in Afganistan", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 33, no. 5, October 2010.

[11] Riccardo Alcaro, *Combining Vision with Realism. Options for NATO's new Strategic Concept*, Documenti IAI 10/07, Rome, May 2010: Istituto Affari Internazionali, http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iai1007.pdf.

[12] Sarah Kreps, "Elite Consensus as a Determinant of Alliance Cohesion: Why Public Opinion Hardly Matters for NATO-led Operations in Afghanistan", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 6, no. 3, July 2010, pp. 200-201.

[13] See, among others, Ellen Hallams, *The United States and NATO since 9/11. The transatlantic alliance renewed*, New York 2010: Routledge, and Daniel Hamilton *et al.*, *Alliance Reborn: An Atlantic Compact for 21st Century Security*, Washington, DC, February 2009: Atlantic Council of the United States, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Center for Technology and National Security (NDU), Center for Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University SAIS.

preferable in terms of flexibility and the rapidity of decision-making, but NATO offers more solid guarantees in terms of coalition cohesion and member commitment.

Lessons from ISAF for NATO's Future

ISAF has been an extreme experience in several respects, destined to leave its mark on the Alliance's future. Yet, predicting the path that NATO will take in the future as a result of it is an exercise just slightly less risky than divining, given NATO's record in proving soothsayers wrong.

Prior to the intervention in Libya, conventional wisdom had it that ISAF 'fatigue' would dampen NATO's zeal for out-of-area operations. Some saw ISAF as entirely determined by an extraordinary event – a massive terrorist attack against a NATO member – and concluded that it could hardly set a precedent.[14] Most agreed that the economic crisis in Europe would reduce the Alliance's range of action. There is certainly a good deal of truth in both arguments. For all the emphasis put on crisis management by the 2010 Strategic Concept, the troubled experience of ISAF has reduced the appeal of armed intervention in support of state-building,[15] while cuts to military spending are set to hamper the development of expeditionary capabilities, if only because they will make out-of-area operations proportionally more expensive.[16] That said, the notion that NATO can go back to its North Atlantic 'roots' jars with reality.

The US's residual interest in NATO lies with the Alliance's ability to contribute to American security interests, which are global in nature. Moreover, the evolution of the international security landscape makes it increasingly difficult to insulate regional crises from their global implications. The rise of new powers – first and foremost China, but also Russia, India, Brazil and regional players like Iran – will reduce Western influence on the international stage. No longer able to dictate the agenda as in the past, the West will need to seek support from third countries, notably those that share, at least in part, its interests, values, and worldviews. Thanks to its established cooperation mechanisms, NATO is an important instrument at the West's disposal for engaging these countries, particularly non-Western democracies.

Against this backdrop, the lessons from ISAF are the following. First, NATO's range of action cannot be artificially reduced in scope. Allies will therefore constantly face the challenge of striking a balance between the Alliance's regional and global dimensions. Second, the expansion and strengthening of NATO's partnerships with third countries or groups of countries will be an ever more important component of the Alliance's crisis management tool-kit. Third, the fact that some of the rising powers feature forms of government alternative to the Western model of liberal democracy is likely to push NATO countries to try to co-opt their 'natural' partners, i.e. non-western democracies, on a more structural basis. Should this trend consolidate, NATO will need to prevent the formation of this 'second ring' of non-member partners from leading to the re-emergence of a 'bloc' logic that would undermine the chances of cooperation with non-democratic or semi-democratic states such as China and Russia.

In ultimate analysis, the ISAF experience is important not so much because it has tipped the scale in favor of one of the two potential outcomes of NATO's evolution – 'back to the roots' or 'global NATO' – as because it has painfully exposed the difficulty, both political and military, in striking a balance between the two. Failing or failed states, intra-state conflicts and regional crises will continue to confront NATO members with the question of how they should best pursue their security interests. Such interests may have a regional scope (as in the case of Libya) or a more global one (as in the case of Afghanistan), but dealing with them will inevitably involve consistent crisis management and response. NATO strategic planners were aware of this challenge when they drafted the new Strategic Concept. The document indulges

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[14] Karl-Heinz Kamp, *NATO after Afghanistan*, US Naval Institute Proceedings, June 2010.

[15] See, among others, Rolf Schwarz, "NATO and Prevention of State Failure: an Idea Whose Time Will Come?", *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 31, no. 2, August 2010.

[16] Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *A Diminishing Transatlantic Partnership? The Impact of the Financial Crisis on European Defense and Foreign Assistance Capabilities*, Washington, DC, May 2011: Center for Strategic and International Studies, particularly pp. 15-28.

extensively in detailing a wide array of non-military options to deal with crises before they spiral out of control.[17] It goes without saying that preventing a conflict is always a better option than having to manage it. Yet, for all NATO's efforts, there will continue to be circumstances in which armed intervention will present itself as a practical option. The decision to take up arms against Libya's dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, is emblematic in this regard. The restraining effect of ISAF fatigue has turned out to be much less pervasive than anticipated.

Conclusions

NATO's operation in Afghanistan has yet to be completed and its assessment will require further analysis. Undoubtedly, it has been the most challenging mission undertaken by NATO in its long history, and has already had some effects on the Alliance's approach to both crisis management and inter-allied solidarity.

The ISAF experience has played a role in improving NATO's capacity to train local security forces. It has also tested the NATO's ability to perform new political, diplomatic and civilian tasks, thereby contributing to the formulation of the comprehensive approach concept. Third, it has set an important precedent in terms of non-NATO members' military and political involvement in NATO operations. Finally, the effects of their NATO commitment in Afghanistan have accelerated and fostered the transformation process of European armed forces, although they have been far less pervasive in European defense procurement.

ISAF's magnitude – a large-scale, lengthy operation in a country far removed from the North Atlantic Area – is such that the mission has also had broader political-strategic implications. ISAF has exposed NATO's internal imbalances and cast the decades-old problem of burden-sharing in a new and more ominous light. Today, NATO certainly suffers from an acute syndrome of multiple identities. In the post-Cold War period, no single task to which NATO has committed itself has ever taken on the all-dominating nature of the former deterrence and containment of the Soviet menace. NATO has instead pursued a wider set of objectives, where the priorities of one allied country have not always dovetailed with the priorities of the others. Inter-allied tensions are not only endemic (arguably a constitutive trait of any alliance), they have also grown more threatening to NATO's potential for collective action.

Nevertheless, the fact that allies, including the US, keep resorting to NATO demonstrates that the pact of reciprocal convenience and solidarity at its core is still solid enough to allow for the pursuit of partly different agendas. This structural imbalance can only be sustainable if, at the end of the day, NATO member states continue to believe that membership in NATO, in spite of the burdens and responsibilities that come with it, eventually produces a net gain. The lesson from Afghanistan (as well as from Libya) revolves not so much around the difficulty in managing partly diverging security agendas, as the ability to generate adequate resources for the plurality of tasks implied by those multiple agendas.

[17] Such as institutionalized political dialogue, close cooperation with relevant international institutions, coordination with local actors (including non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations), security and military assistance, training, logistic support (see NATO Heads of State and Government, *Strategic Concept – Active Engagement, Modern Defence*, cit., §§ 4c and 26-35.

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Background paper for Working Group 3: NATO's Partnership in North Africa and Middle East

THE FOUR STAGES OF NATO'S PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORKS: RETHINKING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

By Gülnur Aybet

University of Kent

Since NATO's first partnership initiative, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) which was extended to the former Warsaw Pact states in 1991, NATO partnership frameworks have evolved and transformed to meet specific challenges. The original NATO outreach of partnerships in the 1990s was based on a goal of 'projecting stability' in the post-Communist space by diffusing Western liberal norms through the inducement of institutions like NATO, leading to political and military reform, and subsequently absorption as full members into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Partnerships in the post-September 11, 2001, period focused more on functional and practical measures of crime and border control and collaboration in counterterrorism, as well as support for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. This period also saw the geographic extension of partnerships from 'global partners' like Australia and Japan, to new regional ones like the Istanbul Cooperation Council (ICI), launched in 2004, fostering a new channel of dialogue with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states. By 2004 it was evident that partnerships were no longer confined to the post-Communist space, and despite the 'unfinished business' of absorbing the Western Balkans into Euro-Atlantic institutions, the early Central and Eastern European partners had all become members of NATO.

With the geography, the purposes of partnerships also changed. Partnerships were no longer necessarily a pathway to membership. Nor were they solely the means to diffuse an international liberal world order, but instead were tailor-made initiatives focusing on specific issues of collaboration with each partner or group of partners. Within these tailor-made frameworks for collaboration, NATO was also able to offer a selection from its 'toolbox' – that is, its expertise in the areas of defense and security sector reform, defense planning, civil-military relations and partner contribution to NATO-led exercises and missions. In that sense, NATO's technical know-how was also a means to absorb these partner countries into a wider liberal democratic order. *However, partnership initiatives in the last decade have wavered between NATO's normative role in diffusing liberal values and its functional role as provider of defense reform and tailor-made cooperation packages to combat global security challenges.*

NATO's outreach to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) undoubtedly falls in the latter category. The two regional NATO partnership frameworks, the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the ICI, have become channels for practical cooperation, although the MD was initially created in 1994 to complement the normative outreach to Central and Eastern Europe. However, the Arab Spring has created new opportunities and challenges for NATO to establish its normative role in the region, just like it once reached out to the unstable post-Communist world over two decades ago, and used its technical know-how to absorb those countries into a system of Western democratic liberal norms. To this end, NATO has offered, on a 'case by case' basis, dialogue and cooperation to countries in the Middle East who are not participants of either MD or ICI.[1]

But the Middle East is not comparable to the experience in Central and Eastern Europe. Nor has NATO proved to be the champion of safeguarding regional stability through military intervention followed by state-building like it did in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. If anything, NATO's military intervention in Libya, Operation Unified Protector, has left many loose ends regarding NATO's footprint in the region as a guarantor of stability, since NATO has not followed its initial intervention with state-building practices. As Libya is still struggling a year after the end of Muammar Gaddafi's regime to establish a basic security environment essential for moving on with political reform and state-building, and as NATO distances itself from the perils of the Syrian conflict spilling over to neighboring countries like Turkey and Lebanon, its footprint in the region as a security guarantor is considerably different than that of its Balkans legacy. *Since NATO's image as a provider of stability has a significant impact on how NATO is perceived by other countries in the region, this also impacts how efficient regional partnerships can be.*

This paper explores the marginalization of NATO's outreach to the Mediterranean and the Middle East during the evolution of its partnership schemes in three phases. It then evaluates NATO's new partnership policy launched in April 2011 in light of global security challenges, as the *fourth stage* of NATO partnership initiatives. The paper ends with lessons learned from the Libya operation and how this impacts NATO's image in the region. It concludes with policy recommendations on how to make the partnership tools more efficient and flexible to meet these challenges and

[1] *Final Statement*, Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Foreign Ministers, NATO HQ Brussels, Press Release (2011) 145, December 7, 2011.

emphasizes the need to strike a better balance between NATO's normative and functional approach towards partnerships.

The MD and ICI within the First Three Stages of NATO's Partnership Initiatives

The evolution of NATO's partnership frameworks has been in three stages. Stage one took place from the early to late 1990s, where the purpose of partnership frameworks was to 'radiate' stability to the post-Communist space, and absorb the Central and East European states into Euro-Atlantic institutions through the diffusion of liberal democratic norms. Partnership initiatives from this period include the aforementioned NACC, extending to all the former Warsaw Pact countries, launched in 1991, and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program extended to all Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) member states in 1994. While the NACC was a framework that laid out a work plan between the North Atlantic Council and the former Warsaw Pact states, the PfP consisted of individually tailored partnership agreements. Both mechanisms were intended to form a pathway to eventual membership, although there are many states in PfP that have no intention to become NATO members. The NACC was eventually replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997.

The second stage took place from the mid-1990s onwards until the end of that decade and saw more practical cooperation with partners, notably by involving them in NATO-led operations. This stage legitimized NATO's role in collective security through the involvement of partners in humanitarian intervention, peace-building and peace-enforcement efforts in Bosnia and later in Kosovo. This did not just involve the 'membership track' Central and Eastern European states, but other partners such as Russia, Egypt, Ukraine and Malaysia, which all contributed to NATO's first post-Cold War peace-building operation, the Implementation Force (IFOR, later Stabilization Force, SFOR) in Bosnia in 1995. Although some mechanisms for partnerships were not yet in place, such as the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997, partners from a wide geography were already involved in NATO-led missions. *It is this 'practical' engagement of partnership that builds onto frameworks.*

The third stage of NATO's partnerships came after September 11, 2001. From here onwards, the functional value of partners in the war against terror saw NATO moving away from its normative role of engaging and absorbing countries within liberal democratic norms. In the third stage, partnerships had become an essential component of a new kind of collective defense function for NATO: a borderless collective defense.[2] The political goal behind the operations of the 1990s in the second stage of partnerships was not just to maintain stability on the European continent, but also to establish a system of legitimate collective security, one that would 'put right' violations of international norms held up by Euro-Atlantic institutions, through military intervention if necessary. This was the era of fighting off 'bad examples' that could de-legitimize the ownership of international norms by the West.[3] It was the 'norm-wars'. Bosnia was not an imperative of security but a 'bad example', which explains why it took so long to intervene.[4] But post-September 11, NATO was no longer just fighting off 'bad examples' but a tangible enemy, albeit one that was hard to detect, engage and predict, and more importantly not tied to a geographical boundary of a state. The war against terror therefore initiated the next wave of NATO out-of-area operations. But Afghanistan was not a humanitarian intervention, it was collective defense. NATO's traditional implementation of collective defense had been geographically bound by the limitations of article 6(1) which deems an attack on an alliance member's territory, vessels and aircraft in the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic area, north of the Tropic of Cancer.[5] Post-September 11, the borders of collective defense went beyond the limitations of originally envisaged in 1949. *For NATO to undertake 'borderless collective defense', cooperation with regional partners was essential.* This became the third phase of partnerships.

Most of the mechanisms for this more practical approach to partnerships were drawn out at NATO's Prague summit in 2002 and later at the Istanbul summit in 2004. The Prague summit launched the Individual Partnership Action Plan

[2] For a definition of the term 'borderless collective defense', see Gülnur Aybet 'The NATO Strategic Concept Revisited: Grand Strategy and Emerging Issues', in Gülnur Aybet and Rebecca Moore, *NATO in Search of a Vision*, Washington, 2010: Georgetown University Press.
[3] Dieter Mahnke, *Parameters of European Security*, Paris, Chaillot Paper No.10, WEU Institute for Security Studies, September 1993.
[4] On the legitimacy of military intervention and international norms, see Gülnur Aybet, *A European Security Architecture After the Cold War: Questions of Legitimacy*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000.
[5] The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C., 4 April 2012. Article 6(1). http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

(IPAP), with a view to intensifying country-specific assistance and advice between NATO and the Central Asian states. However, to date, the only Central Asian state participating in IPAP has been Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, since NATO assumed responsibility for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan in 2003, the five Central Asian members of PfP – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan – provided critical assistance to NATO's Afghan operation, including the use of bases, transit routes, re-fueling facilities and border security.[6] This focus on Central Asia was taken further at the Istanbul summit of 2004, when NATO appointed a special envoy to the region and began a new initiative, the Partnership Action Plan (PAP) aiming to assist these states in defense reform.[7]

In these first three stages of NATO partnerships, the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) which had been launched in 1994, did not assume a priority among NATO's many partnership initiatives, including the intensified PfP mechanisms with the Central Asian states, the launch of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002, and the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Initiative (EAPC) in 1997, not to mention the increased focus on the Central Asian PfP states after September 11. The launch of the MD in 1994, came at a time when NATO was establishing itself in the post-Cold War era as an institution wielding its military edge in comparison to other Euro-Atlantic institutions such as promoting and transferring its experience in operational procedures, defense reform, and military training and exercises. These were the niches that NATO excelled in and it was through these functions that NATO exercised its influence as a normative organization. Therefore, it is initially hard to see why NATO would involve itself with a politically weighted dialogue process with the Mediterranean and North African countries, while it sought to avoid involvement in ongoing regional crises such as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Perhaps it is the timing and the significance of the date when NATO decided to launch the MD that is important. The MD was decided upon by NATO in January 1994, at the same time as the creation of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. By January 1995, NATO commenced the MD with Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. In November, Jordan was also invited to participate. Unlike the PfP, MD consisted of an open dialogue on a case-by-case basis with the MD partners. To a large extent, the individual meetings of Dialogue countries with NATO consisted of 'executive briefings of NATO activities', although the MD hardly met on a multilateral basis.[8] NATO in turn was more interested to find out the views of the MD countries about NATO's role in terms of security and stability in the region, rather than their security concerns. This is what is referred to as a 'panoptical' effect.[9] In this sense, *NATO's initial foray into the Mediterranean Dialogue was to bolster NATO's normative image* vis-à-vis *its 'absorption' policies in Central and Eastern Europe*. Today, the matter is quite different, with NATO partnerships focused on practical cooperation on issue areas. But we must take a hard look at how much of this 'panoptical' legacy of the early 1990s is still prevalent in NATO's outreach activities.

Up until the revamping of the MD in 2002 and 2004, the MD consisted of a piecemeal process based on cooperation and dialogue with each individual country. Three MD states, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco, participated in SFOR in Bosnia, but their presence was not linked to a grander design for military cooperation between NATO and the MD countries, but as a token Muslim force, supporting Turkey's presence in SFOR, to demonstrate the true multinational and multicultural identity of the mission. *In this sense, partner contributions actually served the purpose of legitimizing NATO missions.* However, throughout this time, the content of the MD was restricted to 'low politics' and included science information, civil emergency planning and courses at NATO schools. In fact even after a Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MNG) was launched in 1997, to give the MD a more formal process, MD countries still preferred individual meetings with NATO, rather than as a group.

However, from 1997 onwards, the MD started to increasingly adapt more elements and activities of the PfP program, which included military cooperation and civil emergency planning. By the time of the Prague summit in 2002, a series of

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[6] See Rebecca Moore, 'Lisbon and the Evolution of NATO's New Partnership Policy', *Perceptions Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring 2012, p 59.

[7] Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building (PAP-DIB), Brussels, June 7, 2004 at http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/b040607e.htm

[8] Jette Nordam, 'The Mediterranean Dialogue: Dispelling Misconceptions and Building Confidence', *NATO Review*, No. 4, Vol 45 July-Aug 1997.

[9] This reflects a point made by Glenn Bowman that the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) in the former Yugoslavia were not so much there to *look at* what was going on, but to be *looked at*. This point was made at an Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) seminar on 'Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution', held in London on November 27-28, 1995.

political and practical measures were incorporated into the MD, including a tailor-made approach to cooperation with each Dialogue state. At the Istanbul summit in 2004, a more ambitious and expanded cooperative framework was adopted to transform the Dialogue into a genuine partnership.

Together with the re-launched MD, NATO also initiated the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative at the same summit in 2004. Although NATO initially intended the ICI for all six GCC states, the four countries that eventually joined the ICI in 2005 were Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia and Oman refrained from joining.[10] Through both the re-launched MD and the ICI, NATO has sought to have a widening functional approach to partnerships by incorporating many PfP activities into partnerships with the Middle East and North Africa region. Both initiatives were a reactive response necessitated by September 11 to work with partners in specific issue areas such as cooperation against international terrorism, including maritime cooperation. However, to this date, only two MD partners, Israel and Morocco, have participated in Operation Active Endeavor, which is NATO's main maritime counterterrorism response mission to September 11 and involves the monitoring of shipping in the Mediterranean to 'detect, deter and protect against terrorist activity'.[11] Although the enhanced MD included NATO's offer of an Individual Cooperation Program (ICP) to each Dialogue country, which involved cooperation in the fight against terrorism and joint military exercises in the Mediterranean, to this date only Israel, Egypt and Jordan have signed ICP agreements with NATO.

It is probably fair to say that the MD and ICI have been marginalized in the overall NATO partnership overreach activities during these three stages. This is due to three reasons:

i) Despite NATO's intention to intensify these partnerships by incorporating PfP mechanisms and deeper cooperation in issue areas such as counterterrorism, there has not been a strong interest to intensify participation from MD states, save but a few, and the ICI has largely remained on the level of a case-by-case dialogue with individual countries.

ii) Post September 11, NATO's focus on practical cooperation with the Central Asian states, particularly their support to NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan, created an imperative which overshadowed the partnership initiatives to the Middle East and North Africa. Similarly, the intensification of NATO-Russia partnership mechanisms with the creation of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in the same period also overtook outreach activities to the MENA region.

iii) NATO's emphasis on 'global partners' at the Riga summit of 2006 and the subsequent offering of Tailored Cooperation Packages (TCPs) to four of these global partners: Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea, at the Bucharest summit in 2008, led to a public debate about the Alliance's global normative role. The most significant proponents of this debate were Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier, who suggested a worldwide 'Alliance of Democracies' to eventually replace NATO. But this idea of a 'global NATO' which would involve an Alliance with 'like-minded states' in the Asia-Pacific region were cautioned by others, like François Heisbourg, because such a move would lead to an unwarranted friction with China.[12] The significance of this debate also overshadowed NATO's partnerships to the MENA region.

It seems that NATO partnerships have now entered a fourth stage, where normative engagement and practical cooperation have been replaced with the imperative of managing regional change after the Arab Spring.

The Imperative of Global Security Challenges: The Fourth Stage of NATO Partnerships and the New Partnership Policy

The requirement to adjust old partnership frameworks to meet new global security challenges was evident in the Group of Experts report, chaired by Madeleine Albright, which was intended as a guidance to the drafting of NATO's new Strategic Concept unveiled at the Lisbon summit in 2010. The Strategic Concept further emphasized the role of

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[10] NATO Elevates Mediterranean Dialogue to a Genuine Partnership, Launches Istanbul Cooperation Initiative," NATO Update, June 29, 2004 at http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/06-june/e0629d.htm
[11] Operation Active Endeavor, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_7932.htm

[12] Ivo H Daalder and James Goldgeier 'NATO: For Global Security, Expand the Alliance' *International Herald Tribune*, October 12, 2006 and Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay 'An Alliance of Democracies'*Washington Post,* May 23 2004 and Francois Heisbourg 'What NATO Needs is to be Less Ambitious' *Financial Times* November 22, 2006.

partnerships for NATO's next decade by making cooperative security one of the 'essential core tasks' of the Alliance, alongside collective defense and crisis management.[13] The Lisbon summit declaration tasked the Alliance to develop 'a more efficient and flexible partnership policy' by NATO's foreign ministers meeting in Berlin in April 2011. It was at this meeting that the new partnership policy was agreed to.

The main theme of the new partnership policy is 'efficiency' and 'flexibility'. It implies a new flexibility by using all of NATO's partnership tools and mechanisms and making these available to all existing and potential partners around the globe. The rationale behind this twofold process of 'deepening' and 'broadening' partnerships includes new strategic objectives such as 'international efforts to meet emerging security challenges', early warning and crisis prevention, and promotion of regional security and cooperation. New priority areas for dialogue, consultation and cooperation, include crisis management and prevention, counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and emerging security challenges such as cyber threats, energy security, maritime security and counter piracy. Enhancing the existing partnership frameworks of the MD, ICI, EAPC and PfP are also part of the new policy and include enhanced political consultation on security issues of common concern, further practical cooperation on non-proliferation, arms control, democratic reform and defense reform, and training and capacity-building in the area of NATO expertise such as education and training of military professionals.

The 'flexible' format includes the '28 + n' formula, which means that cooperation beyond existing frameworks can also be thematic-driven on a case-by-case basis. To achieve this, NATO will streamline its partnership tools by establishing a 'Single Partnership Cooperation Menu' and a tailor made Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program (IPCP). NATO have also decided to offer the existing Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAPs) and the Planning and Review Process (PARP) beyond the EAPC/PfP programs to any partner around the globe on a case-by-case basis.[14]

This is probably the most ambitious and far reaching restructuring of NATO's partnership program. This new partnership policy needs to be assessed on the basis of what purposes it serves, and whether these proposed mechanisms serve these purposes. In the first and second stages of NATO partnerships, the purpose was normative outreach to absorb partners as would-be members into a liberal democratic order, and to engage partners in NATO-led missions to increase the legitimacy of these missions. In the third stage, this purpose was overtaken by the imperative of September 11 and engaging partners on piecemeal, practical and issue based cooperation in the war against terror. *The problematic nature of the fourth stage is that it is not clear what the purpose behind the new partnership policy is.* Offering all kinds of NATO tools from defense planning to training and defense reform to any partner around the world is a new approach, signaling that NATO is ready to do business with partners that have common interests but may not necessarily share the same values. While global partners are still on the agenda, the debate surrounding global NATO as an Alliance of 'like-minded' democracies seems to have become irrelevant. While cooperation on the fight against terrorism continues with the piecemeal issue-based cooperation we saw in the third stage, new security challenges have been added to new areas of tailor-made practical cooperation, such as proliferation of WMD, cyber and energy security and counter piracy. Enhanced cooperation with existing partnership frameworks also see an intensification of piecemeal cooperation on security issues of common concern as well as NATO's offering of a wider range of its tools, from defense planning to training.

The imperative for this over-arching partnership policy stems from the original Group of Experts report, which apart from acknowledging existing global threats such as terrorism, the spread of WMD, and ethnic and religious regional rivalries, added the following global security challenges: vulnerable information systems, competition for energy and strategic resources, the need to establish maritime security, demographic changes that could aggravate global problems and climate change. On the Mediterranean and the Middle East, in particular, the report concluded that these regions will impact Alliance security as far as nuclear non-proliferation, counterterrorism, energy security and a 'peaceful international order' are concerned. The report stresses 'strategic patience' with the MD and ICI partners, and suggests

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[13] NATO Strategic Concept, *Active Engagement, Modern Defense*, Adopted by the Heads of State and Government, NATO Lisbon Summit, 19-20 November, 2010. http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat_Concept_web_en.pdf
NATO 2010: Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010.
[14] Active Engagement in Cooperative Security: A More Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy, April 15, 2011 at http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110415_110415-Partnership-Policy.pdf

'an agreed statement of shared interests based on new and broader concepts of security, taking into account conventional and unconventional dangers, as well as political, economic, social and cultural issues.'[15]

Judging from the new partnership policy's emphasis on offering NATO 'tools' to engage with the MD and ICI, it would seem that the new partnership policy has lost sight of the original purpose laid out in the guidance of the Group of Experts. It is precisely these megatrends in global security challenges that go beyond issue-based narrow areas of cooperation, that is the basis of the US National Intelligence Council's *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds* report. The report highlights the likelihood of a fragmented international system where the risks of interstate conflicts will increase due to spillover from regional conflicts and competition for resources. The best way to manage this fragmentation is a regionalization of the liberal world order, with rising economies taking greater global responsibilities. This means that the institutions at the core of the post-1945 liberal order: International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UN and NATO will have to reform or become marginalized.[16] All of this hints at different and flexible patterns of cooperation, which is reflected in the imperative behind the new NATO partnership policy.

Therefore, while functional and practical cooperation with partners endures, there is also a bigger picture at play behind this new partnership policy. The wider rationale is meeting existing and emerging global security challenges with partners around the globe, and managing regional change with regional partners. *The problem with the new partnership policy is how the tactical/functional aspects of cooperation and the overall strategic goals of the new partnership policy are presented to existing and potential partners.* It is just too confusing. Is NATO, at the end of the day, presenting its partners an offering of acronyms ranging from PARP, IPAP to PAP? Or is it trying to engage them in a wider strategic management of global and regional security challenges? Tackling existing and emerging global security challenges could be undertaken by enhancing existing mechanisms for practical cooperation on specific issue areas with specific partners, based on the same model as intensified cooperation with Central Asian partners in Afghanistan. However, managing regional change with existing and new partners, requires a different approach. It requires an intensified dialogue on regional perceptions of sustainable stability. And in no way should this dialogue be linked to what NATO can offer from its range of tools to these countries to make them more 'like-minded' or 'democratic'. The template of shaping regions through normative power and using institutional leverage to induce political and defense reform worked well in the case of Central and Eastern Europe. This template is no longer relevant in engaging global and regional partners to manage global security challenges and regional change. A much more proactive approach is needed – one that may not involve practical cooperation but strategic dialogue. The fact that there has been such a minimal input of MD and ICI countries into Operation Active Endeavor is perhaps a telling sign that practical cooperation is not the way forward in this region. *Perhaps a wider, broader strategic dialogue on common interests and visions for stability is needed first, before any practical cooperation takes place.*

Yet, the new partnership policy also establishes enhanced mechanisms to allow for partner participation in NATO-led missions. Perhaps the reason for this may be that the version endorsed by the NATO EAPC in 1999 is in need of updating. The new 'Political Military Framework (PMF) for Partner Involvement in NATO-led Operations' envisages more effective consultation mechanisms with partners, especially in pre-crisis and assessment of crisis situation stages.[17] While this is a very useful mechanism which will no doubt enhance NATO's crisis management capabilities as one of its essential core tasks, it is hard to see the relevance of this new mechanism for the MENA region. This is because, apart from the low track record of MD and ICI partner involvement in NATO-led missions, it is hard to envisage any NATO-led mission in the region after Libya for the foreseeable future.

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[15] *NATO 2010: Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement* Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010.

[16] The NIC report *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds* is not yet published. But there is an NIC sponsored website where a blog discussion on the draft report by a group of experts refers to the main points raised. http://gt2030.com/about/

[17] 'Political Military Framework for Partner Involvement in NATO-led Operations' 15 April 2011, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_04/20110415_110415-PMF.pdf

Lessons After Libya: NATO as a Functional and Normative Organization

NATO's involvement in Libya is a testament to the Alliance's capability to rapidly respond to a crisis. However, NATO's reaction was largely enabled by the convergence of several factors. NATO's initial involvement consisted of surveillance operations in the Mediterranean followed by its enforcement of the arms embargo on March 23, 2011. The next day, NATO took the decision to enforce the UN mandated no-fly-zone and on March 27 took over the entire military operation in Libya from a coalition led by the United States, France and the United Kingdom. Three things enabled the swift consensus within the North Atlantic Council for NATO to act rapidly: first, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973 gave the legal backing to the operation, which made it far easier for a unanimous decision to be reached by NATO allies. Second, the support of the Arab League gave the necessary regional political support and legitimacy to the operation. Third, operationally, even before NATO took over, the mission had already been driven by three NATO allies, which had the capabilities and the political will to intervene. *It is very unlikely that all three factors will converge and enable NATO to step in and lead a mission of this sort in the region for the foreseeable future.* However, despite the rapid response by NATO, and despite the support of all three converging factors, consensus within the Alliance was fragile throughout and before the operation. Publicly voiced dissent from Alliance members Germany, France and Turkey regarding reservations over NATO's role in the crisis, followed by reservations by Italy three months into the mission, did not help the public image of Alliance cohesion.[18]

Perhaps one of the success stories of the Libya mission was how NATO managed to engage regional partners. Although the Libya operation, Operation Unified Protector (OUP), came just before NATO adopted the new partnership policy, NATO was nevertheless able to make use of the existing MD and ICI channels to seek support and contributions. NATO also put into use the new 'flexible' format of partnership mechanisms to speed up the process.[19] This is a typical example of how 'practical' engagement with partners comes before the blueprints for partnership frameworks, just like partner contributions to IFOR in 1995. Two ICI countries, Qatar and the UAE contributed militarily to Operation Unified Protector. *However, it is the aftermath of the Libya operation that is likely to have a long term impact on how NATO's footprint is seen in the region.* Three outcomes of NATO's Libya operation in particular, will most likely have long term effects on how NATO is perceived in the region.

i) The first is NATO's non-involvement in Libya after Operation Unified Protector drew to a close. Since OUP ended in September 2011, NATO has not played any further role in Libya. This is a clear departure from NATO's footprint in the Balkans, as a leader and planner of successful military intervention to bring the conflict to an end, followed by immediate post-conflict security provision and a role in state-building, acting jointly with other international organizations. As the OUP was drawing to close, there was discussion in the Libya Contact Group that NATO might take over a narrow technical role, focusing only on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), while post-conflict reconstruction efforts would be driven under an over-arching UN mission. But there was no mention of a NATO peace-building force to provide security, as in Bosnia and Kosovo. It is hard to see how NATO can play a role in DDR or Security Sector Reform (SSR) when there is no UN authorization, an over-arching UN mission and a peace-building force as part of the package to provide a secure environment. The international consensus, fragile at best, during the NATO operation in Libya, severely broke down halfway through the operation. Russia, China and South Africa voiced concerns that NATO had overstepped the UN mandate which was just to protect the civilian population, and had gone far enough to tip the conflict in favor of the opposition, to enable regime change. In addition, Russia and China's refusal to become part of the Libya Contact Group also damaged any international consensus that was essential in getting an internationally coordinated post-conflict reconstruction effort in Libya. With the international community divided, post-conflict Libya was left to its own devices. This prevented NATO from playing any meaningful role. *But because NATO had undertaken the military action that had led to the regime change, and because NATO had a legacy as a 'security provider' in post-conflict settings in the Balkans, its non-involvement in post conflict Libya was a clear break with its post-Cold War track record.*[20] Moreover, an increasingly unstable security situation in Libya, which led to the death of the US ambassador on

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[18] Isabelle Francois, *NATO Partnerships and the Arab Spring: Achievements and Perspectives for the 2012 Chicago Summit*, Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Transatlantic Perspectives, No. 1, December 2011. http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/trans-perspectives/CTSS-TransPers-1.pdf

[19] Ibid.

[20] One of the findings of the British Academy funded project: *Assessing NATO and EU Conditionality on State Building in Bosnia and Herzegovina* was that all three groups to the conflict found NATO's normative role clearer than the EU's because of NATO's ability to stop the war and take charge of security provision in its aftermath. The author was principal investigator of this project.

September 11 of this year does nothing but question whether the NATO operation had indeed been a success.[21] As a worst-case scenario, a failed Libyan state could do serious damage to undermine NATO's agenda in the entire region, especially if the violence were to spill over to neighboring countries like Algeria.

ii) The second outcome, which is likely to impact NATO's role in the region, is the future of Responsibility to Protect (RtP) operations. This also has a bearing on the international paralysis over the conflict in Syria. The Libya operation is likely to be remembered as the ambivalent and reluctant intervention. One would have thought that with a clear-cut UNSCR, the support of the Arab League, and the abstentions of both China and Russia in the Security Council, that would not be the case. But here the West was caught between the tarnished image and embarrassment of Iraq 2003, and the inconsistency of ignoring the responsibility to protect doctrine. Add to this a reluctance of the US to lead the operation and refusal to commit to any ground troops. Then came the dissentions from inside the international community. In the past, Russian and Chinese objections to intervention were either ambivalent, inconsistent or ignored. Such was the case with the NATO intervention over Kosovo in 1999 – without a UN mandate. Yet, after the air campaign, Russia had no objections to the establishment of the NATO-led Kosovo force (KFOR) and even participated in it. After Libya, Russia and China have drawn a very clear red line from which there will be no backtracking – that they will not support a humanitarian intervention that leads to regime change. *The era of inconsistent objection is over.* But it is very hard to envisage a full-fledged operation to halt atrocities that does not lead to regime change, unless the intervention is to have a temporary effect, fuel a protracted civil war which it has no desire to end, or leave a conflict unresolved. This is why it is very hard to foresee another UNSCR that would endorse a Chapter 7 type military action in the region, or anywhere else for that matter, for the foreseeable future. NATO is unlikely to act without any UN authorization. This leaves another bad footprint for NATO in the region if the Syrian conflict deteriorates and even spills over to neighboring countries, and NATO as the once known 'security provider' does nothing.

iii) The third outcome of the Libyan conflict is the lessons NATO has learned about its own limitations in undertaking such an operation. A report compiled at the end of February this year by NATO's Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Center concluded that there were serious Alliance shortcomings in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) because NATO countries did not share targeting information effectively with each other. Targeting information was also flawed because of inadequately trained staff at NATO HQ in Naples. The report added that there was an overreliance on US assets when it came to ISR and air to air refueling. Perhaps more serious was the 'vacuum of responsibility' between a failed Libyan state and NATO operational guidelines which left distress calls by refugees trying to escape from the conflict in the Mediterranean, unanswered. This, according to a Human Rights Watch report, led to civilian casualties. Such unintended consequences also have an impact in tarnishing NATO's image as an efficient security provider.[22]

If these outcomes of the aftermath of the Libyan intervention have tarnished NATO's image as a security provider, NATO's passiveness in the escalating Syrian conflict is more likely to have more serious repercussions. While it is highly unlikely that the impasse in the UNSC due to Russia and China's objections for military intervention will be overcome, the situation has a further impact on NATO's role in the region because of neighboring Turkey. The insecurity along the border of a NATO ally inevitably concerns the Alliance. The impact of NATO's distance from the region after the Libya operation while attempting to launch ambitious partnerships with MD and ICI countries is somewhat of a paradox. NATO's normative role has traditionally been tied to its functional role as a security provider. When the two are severed it is hard to see how NATO's new normative legitimacy will be established. This is why it is very important to make a clear distinction between NATO's normative and functional roles. In partnerships, NATO can no longer exercise its normative role through its functional expertise such as defense reform, defense planning, and training. Nor can it rely on its normative power derived from its successful track record as a military intervention force providing post-conflict stability and security, as it did in the Balkans. NATO has to approach the Middle East and Mediterranean partnerships on the basis of the original recommendations of the Group of Expert's report: "an agreed statement of shared interests based on new and broader concepts of security.'

For more on the project see: http://intbosnia.wordpress.com/ For the report of the Sarajevo workshop which mentions this finding see: http://intbosnia.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/sarajevo_workshop_report1.pdf

[21] 'Benghazi Attack Throws Libya Gains into Question', *IISS Strategic Comments*, Vol. 18, Comment 35, October 2012.

[22] 'NATO Sees Flaws in Air Campaign Against Qaddafi' *New York Times*, April 14, 2012.

Policy Recommendations

1. NATO should initiate a wider, broader strategic dialogue on common interests and visions for stability before it engages in areas of practical cooperation. It should do so by initiating a strategic dialogue with MD and ICI partners and invite other states from the region to join in the process. The strategic dialogue should focus on management of regional change. This approach should be based on the original recommendations of the Group of Experts report.
2. NATO should be clear about the agenda of global and regional security challenges to be included in the strategic dialogue with regional partners. Perhaps a reference point could be some of the trends identified in the US National Intelligence Council's *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds* report, to establish areas of common concern.
3. The presentation of the new partnership policy and the 'flexible' mechanisms for cooperation to existing and potential partners needs to be simplified. The purposes of partnerships must be clearly identified. Is it to aid in democratic governance and political reform? To provide security for a stable environment? To provide expertise in defense reform and planning? Or is it to engage in strategic dialogue to come to a common understanding on shared concerns about global security challenges? It may be better to categorize different purposes for different partnership schemes rather than streamline them.
4. NATO has to establish a new normative role for itself as a negotiator in strategic dialogue with the region, and make it clear that its legitimacy as a party to strategic dialogue on common interests is not linked to its success as a regional security provider.
5. NATO can most probably engage in regional strategic dialogue more effectively if it acts together with other regional powers and institutions. To this end, NATO could add management of regional change and strategic dialogue with partners in the MENA region to the agenda of the NATO-Russia Council. Rather than treating Russia as a separate partner alongside many other partnership frameworks, NATO can engage Russia to be a joint partner in strategic dialogue with the MENA region.
6. NATO should avoid using the template of the 1990s: shaping regions through normative power and using institutional leverage to induce political and defense reform. Any practical issue based cooperation under the new partnership policy should not be presented under this pretext, especially to potential partners.
7. NATO should explore the unique role of Turkey as an ally who can influence regional strategic dialogue, similar to the role it plays in the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan.
8. NATO should make an effort to unblock the blocked areas of the NATO-EU partnership, and also engage the EU, alongside Russia, as a partner in initiating regional strategic dialogue.