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**TASK FORCE**

The Donald C. Hellmann Task Force Program



Towards a Strategic Concept:  
A NATO Strategy for Eurasia in the 2020s

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**Towards a Strategic Concept:  
A NATO Strategy for Eurasia in the 2020s**

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AA: Association Agreement  
AKP: Justice and Development Party (Turkey)  
AIIB: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank  
ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
BRI: Belt and Road Initiative (One Belt One Road Initiative)  
CCDCOE: Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence  
CCP: Chinese Communist Party  
Civilian-JTF: Civilian Joint Task Force  
CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
CTBT: Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty  
DCFTA: Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area  
DPR: Donetsk People's Republic  
DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea/North Korea  
EAPC: Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council  
EU: European Union  
FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas  
ICI: Istanbul Cooperation Initiative  
INF: Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty  
IS: Islamic State  
ISAF: International Security Assistance Force  
LNG: Liquefied Natural Gas  
LPR: Luhansk People's Republic  
MAP: Membership Action Plan  
MD: Mediterranean Dialogue  
MENA: Middle East and North Africa  
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NMI: NATO Mission Iraq  
NRC: NATO-Russia Council  
OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom  
OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
PESCO: Permanent Structured Cooperation  
PfP: Partnerships for Peace  
PRC: People's Republic of China  
R2P: Responsibility to Protect Civilians  
ROK: Republic of Korea/South Korea  
RSM: Resolute Support Mission  
UN: United Nations  
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme  
USA/US: United States of America  
SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization  
SIGAR: Special Inspector for Afghanistan Reconstruction

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# Executive Summary

Yean Kim

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an alliance in crisis, part of a larger, global crisis surrounding the credibility and survival of the American-led world order at a systemic level. NATO was originally created in 1949 to defend Europe against the Soviet threat, or in the words of Lord Ismay, to “keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” In other words, NATO’s main goal was collective defense, exemplified by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. However, after the end of the Cold War and the elimination of the Soviet threat, NATO’s responsibilities expanded to collective defense, crisis management, and collective security, taking on more out of area operations in new locations across the Eurasian super continent – such as in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

The title of this report, “Towards a Strategic Concept,” makes clear its objective. The 12 members of this Task Force have drawn on their own areas of interest and specialization to make a limited set of recommendations towards a new NATO strategic concept for the next decade. To tackle this broad issue, we have divided our report into three geographical areas that will have a significant impact on NATO in the coming decades (West Eurasia, Mid-Eurasia, and East Eurasia) with a final section dedicated to discussions of emerging issues affecting the globe – such as climate change and cybersecurity.

## Summary of Policy recommendations

### West Eurasia

Uphold NATO's values and work with Ukraine, the OSCE, and the EU to counter Russian aggression. With these goals in mind, NATO should

- Encourage recognition of the on-going importance of the Alliance at the Executive level of the U.S. government.
- Encourage the EU to implement new defense initiatives such as regularly internally assessing its defense capabilities, expanding the purview of PESCO, and identifying areas of potential specialization for individual states.
- Gain improved understanding of Russian hybrid warfare tactics and appropriate responses.
- Emphasize the Trust Fund program, invest in economic sector reforms, and combat corruption as ways to increase NATO-Ukraine relations without Ukrainian membership to the Alliance.
- Work with OSCE as complementary organizations, emphasizing collective security over collective defense, especially in relation to Ukraine.

### Mid-Eurasia

Account for past failures and have clear objectives for future action to improve security measures in the Mid-Eurasia region. Here, the Alliance should

- Account for U.S. and NATO failures in Afghanistan, leading with transparency and legitimacy.
- Have clear objectives and outcomes with all military intervention efforts, employing it as a last resort option.
- Prevent much of the fallout caused by migration by providing support to first asylum countries and constructing strong social safety nets in final countries of settling.
- Increase pressure on Pakistan to take action against jihadi terrorist groups within its borders.

### East Eurasia

Refocus and update NATO's partnerships, especially in East Eurasia, to be able to deal with a changing security environment. Therefore, it would in NATO's best interest to

- Tailor its partnerships with each partner country to their needs and goals, while also reaching out to multilateral institutions to cooperate on shared security challenges, such as a closer China-Russia partnership, migration, terrorism, and cybersecurity.
- Preserve international arms control agreements and adjust its nuclear and conventional posture to provide security, deterrence, and assurance to states in East and West Eurasia.
- Create a coherent strategy for East Eurasia, dealing with its goals for each partner country and the region as a whole.
- Not engage in a non-U.S. NATO military pivot to East Eurasia.

### Minority Opinion

In regard to the rise of China and the Belt and Road initiative, the majority of the task force members agree that this is a cause for concern that should be dealt with by refocusing the Alliance's partnerships. However, there is a minority argument held by one member of the Task Force that posits the rise of China presents an opportunity for NATO, instead of a challenge. The different views in this Task Force highlight the differences in opinion among its various members, and the international community in general.

### Emerging Issues

Develop policies to effectively deal with emerging issues in Eurasia such as cybersecurity and energy.

- Develop comprehensive cyber policies that allow NATO to confront the challenges of this new era and adequately address the threats posed by its competitors.
- Invest in technology to make allied countries less susceptible to cyberattacks, and to increase certainty of attribution.
- Take a collaborative approach to cyber defense and offense, using Stuxnet as a framework for cyber security offensive measures.
- Redefine defense spending to include things like counterterrorism and investment in cybersecurity partnerships with private companies
- Continue to push forward EU-centered regulations and standards in continued business with Russia, increase market access within vulnerable countries with suppliers such as the United States, and prioritize involving Turkey in its interconnectivity efforts, such as the Three Seas initiative, to solidify its involvement and commitment to the Alliance.

Thank you for taking the time to read our report. We hope you will carefully consider our recommendations, and that it will be beneficial in your policymaking.

# West Eurasia

## The Future of NATO in Europe

Nathan Sebree

### Introduction

Since the formal creation of the European Union (EU) in 1993, the organization has played an integral role in NATO's operations. As an organization for the defense of Europe, and with 22 European countries currently serving as both members of NATO and the EU, NATO decision making has become inextricably linked with the interests of the EU.

However, the relationships between NATO, its European member states, and the EU, as well as their potential utility for NATO's operations, have been hindered by several issues from within and without the alliance. Actions by successive U.S. administrations, and particularly the current Trump administration, have appeared to indicate a decline in American interest for continuing its preeminent role within the organization and in the protection of Europe. At the same time, there is growing recognition that Europe is not currently capable of defending itself against potential threats without the aid from across the Atlantic.

Given the challenges these issues pose to the continued success of the Alliance, it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO focus its efforts on addressing these problems by encouraging further recognition of the Alliance's strategic importance at the Executive level of the U.S. government. This could involve recognizing the on-going efforts being made by European states to increase their contributions to international security, while also providing evidence of the imperative for them to do more in a way that encourages, rather than discourages, further progress in this area. It could also involve encouraging the EU to implement new defense initiatives that are complimentary to NATO's, such as regularly internally assessing its defense capabilities, expanding the purview of PESCO, and identifying areas of potential specialization among its states that will allow them to contribute more efficiently to collective security.

In addition, there is clear inefficiency in the operational activities carried out by both the EU and NATO, particularly in relation to crisis response and management, where they often compete with, or replicate, the actions of the other organization when crises emerge. Given the difficulties of responding to the everchanging nature of the security environment in Europe, and how many security threats in the current era – such as cyber threats and terrorism – require rapid responses, there is an obvious need to address these inefficiencies, increase cooperation and coordination between the two organizations, and streamline operational activities between the two in order to respond more effectively to current and future challenges.

Thus, this Task Force argues that NATO must focus its efforts on increasing security and defense coordination and cooperation between NATO and the EU in crisis response and management. This could be established by creating an informal track for dialogue between the two that will allow experts from both organizations to directly cooperate in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, thereby mitigating the development of two separate strategies that are synthesized through formal dialogue, and allowing for increased efficiency and speed in responses. It is also suggested that the Alliance consider regularizing operational transitions between the two when a crisis does occur, allowing

NATO to focus on its greatest strength – crisis response – and the EU to work in its area of expertise – crisis management. By implementing these proposals, NATO will position itself to make greater use of its strategic relationship with the EU, while having a much greater chance at success in the current era.

### **Declining U.S. Leadership**

Criticisms of NATO from the U.S. perspective abound. As former U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates declared in his farewell address, “if current trends in the decline of European defense capabilities are not halted and reversed, future political leaders...may not consider the return on America’s investment in NATO worth the cost,” and this perception appears to have been manifest in recent years.<sup>1</sup>

Current U.S. President Donald Trump has been particularly critical of the organization, viewing it as an unnecessary drain on American resources, and has even expressed his desire to withdraw from it.<sup>2,3</sup> His criticisms stem largely from what he, and preceding administrations, view as the U.S.’s disproportionate contribution to the Alliance and European security. These criticisms are far from unfounded as European NATO members collectively spend only \$250 billion annually on defense, which represents one third of the spending of their American counterpart.<sup>4</sup> This criticism is further supported by the fact that the combined GDP of all EU member states is larger than that of the U.S., and therefore warrants them making a greater contribution to NATO.<sup>5</sup> However, what he and preceding administrations appear to have failed to recognize is that the U.S. gains tangible benefits from its membership in the Alliance, including unwavering support after 9/11 and key assistance in Afghanistan, as well as support in countering the rise of the Islamic State and addressing crises in the Balkans.<sup>6</sup>

Thankfully, European NATO member states have taken action to reassure the U.S. of their commitment to the organization, pledging at the Wales Summit in 2014 to increase individual defense spending to 2% of their GDPs by 2024.<sup>7</sup> While there have been mixed results in these efforts, with only seven member states currently meeting the 2% mark, many European states have taken clear steps towards achieving this goal, with nearly all European NATO members under the 2% mark having increased their defense spending between 2017 and 2018 in an obvious attempt to show the U.S. their recognition of NATO’s importance for Europe.<sup>8,9</sup> However, there also several states, including

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<sup>1</sup> Ramírez J. Martín, and Jerzy Biziewski. *Security and Defence in Europe*. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, Julian E., and Helene Cooper. “Trump Discussed Pulling U.S. From NATO, Aides Say Amid New Concerns Over Russia.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 15 Jan. 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ramírez J. Martín, and Jerzy Biziewski. *Security and Defence in Europe*. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), 251.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy.” (Harvard, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 2.

<sup>7</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy.” (Harvard, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, Adam. “Germany Finally Pledges to Increase Military Spending to NATO Levels, but Trump Still Won't Be Happy.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 8 Nov. 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Fiorentino, Michael-Ross. “NATO Pledge: Which European Countries Spend over 2% of GDP on Defence?” *Euronews*, 14 Mar. 2019.

Germany, that have yet to take significant steps towards meeting their pledges, allowing U.S. criticisms to persist in spite of the progress that has been made – although, Germany has now pledged to spend at least 1.5% of its GDP on defense by 2024.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the steps being taken, however incremental, indicate a clear desire among European members to maintain U.S. interest in NATO. If the Alliance hopes to be successful in the current era, it will be critical for the U.S., and particularly President Trump, to acknowledge the efforts being made by European member states to increase their defense spending, and reaffirm the U.S.’s commitment to the organization, so that they do not risk the disenfranchisement these states with the Alliance at this critical juncture.

The NATO Support Act passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on Jan. 22, 2019 represents one important action taken to show continued U.S. commitment, however, if the U.S. aspires to maintain the viability of the organization, recognition must also be made at the Executive level.<sup>11</sup> If their efforts are not adequately acknowledged and American interest is not sufficiently reaffirmed, European NATO members may begin to feel a sense of abandonment by the U.S., which could spell disaster for the Alliance in the near future. Thus, it is the recommendation of this Task Force that leaders within NATO and the U.S. government make concerted efforts to encourage affirmation of the Alliance’s continued strategic interest for the U.S. at the Executive level, as well as recognition of the on-going efforts by European member states to address the criticisms from across the Atlantic.

### **Increasing European Defense Capabilities**

Given the indications from the Trump administration of declining U.S. interest and support for NATO, there is a dire imperative for NATO to address another clear challenge to the future of the organization: Europe’s defense capabilities. To quote NATO General Secretary, Jens Stoltenberg, “the reality is that Europe cannot protect itself; NATO countries that do not belong to the EU play a fundamental role.”<sup>12</sup> Ironically, one of the most persistent barriers to European states developing the capacity to protect themselves comes from within the continent itself. Germany has repeatedly hindered efforts to develop the EU’s Permanent Structure Cooperation (PESCO) beyond its current limited scope of nonlethal projects aimed at enhancing the military capabilities of EU member states, and has continuously refused to increase its own defense spending in-line with Europe’s needs.<sup>13</sup> Being arguably the most significant power in Europe, Germany’s reluctance to focus more heavily on defense has cascading effects throughout NATO and the EU.<sup>14</sup> The irony of the situation is that Germany’s persistent refusal to increase its focus and spending on defense may eventually force it to do just that in the event of diminished U.S. involvement within NATO.

Admittedly, there is some need to re-assess how Alliance member defense capabilities are calculated as using percentage of GDP spent on defense as a measure can be misleading since 2% of Germany’s GDP is a vastly larger sum than 2% of Lithuania’s GDP, and spending in areas other than

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<sup>10</sup> Taylor, Adam. “Germany Finally Pledges to Increase Military Spending to NATO Levels, but Trump Still Won’t Be Happy.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 8 Nov. 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Rep. Panetta, Jimmy. “H.R.676 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): NATO Support Act.” *Congress.gov*, House of Representatives - Foreign Affairs Committee, 17 Jan. 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Ramírez J. Martín, and Jerzy Biziewski. *Security and Defence in Europe*. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), xxiv.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, xiv.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

those under the umbrella term ‘defense’ may also contribute indirectly to increasing European security – such as spending on cyber security and intelligence, as well as infrastructure spending on things like roads and bridges that increase the mobility of NATO forces and enable faster responses to emerging crises.<sup>15,16</sup> However, changing the way Europe’s defense capabilities are assessed alone will not alleviate the problem that Europe cannot currently protect itself. Indeed, following Brexit, “80% of NATO’s defense spending will come from allies outside the EU and the EU’s military capability will be greatly diminished, making NATO even more important,” – indicating that critical steps must still be taken if the EU and NATO’s European member states hope to be able to adequately respond to security threats in the event of diminished U.S. engagement in Europe.<sup>17</sup> Granted, as mentioned above, Germany has recently promised to take real action towards increasing its defense spending, but the incremental increases it has promised will not be nearly enough to cover the entirety of Europe if the U.S. chooses to decrease its engagement or withdraw from the organization completely.

Thus, in addition to continuing increases in European defense spending, it is the opinion of this Task Force that NATO should encourage the EU to implement new defense initiatives that are complimentary to NATO’s. These could include actions like regularly internally assessing the defense capabilities of the EU as a whole and identifying what capabilities it needs as NATO does.<sup>18</sup> This would enable the EU to have a better understanding of the steps it will have to take towards ensuring its own security should the U.S. choose to play a smaller role in NATO, and will also likely encourage it to focus more pointedly on ensuring that it can defend its member states, which, in turn, will benefit the Alliance. Potential initiatives could also involve expanding the purview of PESCO to include clear objectives for the enhanced capabilities it seeks to create, since, at present, the format is only dedicated to increasing the EU’s military capabilities and does not include any “concrete operational commitment” to the objectives of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy, which enables the EU to “intervene outside the Union to guarantee the maintenance of peace, the prevention of conflict and the strengthening of international security.”<sup>19</sup> Although this is a task that will inevitably require gaining Germany’s recognition of the value of such an endeavor, which may not be easily achieved since it has actively thwarted efforts by the French to develop PESCO “as a platform for a military intervention force,” it would greatly improve the utility of the PESCO format for both the EU and NATO, and pressure from outside the EU for it to do this could increase the likelihood this development taking place by making it more difficult for Germany to continue limiting its scope.<sup>20</sup> In addition, a further initiative that the Alliance could propose would involve internally reviewing output data from EU member states more carefully to see how and where inputs are used most efficiently in order to identify countries for increased specialization, particularly for smaller or neutral states who may be able to contribute more effectively to collective defense through specialization – such as arms

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<sup>15</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy.” (Harvard, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ramírez J. Martín, and Jerzy Biziewski. *Security and Defence in Europe*. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), 228.

<sup>17</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy.” (Harvard, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 18.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ramírez J. Martín, and Jerzy Biziewski. *Security and Defence in Europe*. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), 92-93.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, xiv.

manufacturing or infrastructure development – rather than through general contributions.<sup>21</sup> By implementing these recommendations, EU member states will be able to more efficiently and effectively contribute to collective defense and NATO operations, while simultaneously increasing their defense capabilities exponentially and appeasing the concerns of non-EU NATO members – thereby strengthening the partnership between NATO and the EU, and increasing the Alliance’s chances for success in the future.

### **Increasing Collaboration and Coordination Between NATO and the EU**

One key area where NATO continues to struggle in the current European and international security environment is related to its rapid military crisis response and management. As Claudia Fahren-Hussey notes in her very detailed book “Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU,” “it is puzzling that NATO and the EU overlap [in their operations] to the point that they are basically responsible for dealing with the same violent conflicts with the same means to the same ends.”<sup>22</sup> One large facet of this problem is that, due to the nature of both of these organizations and the structure under which their relations take place, military crisis response and management operations often lead to competition, rather than collaboration, between the two. As a result of the nature of emerging crises in the post-Cold War era, many of the operations undertaken by NATO are so-called ‘out-of-area’ operations (OAOs) that are aimed at addressing new, less immediate threats to European security, while simultaneously providing NATO with a new *raison d’être*.<sup>23,24</sup> In the EU, the 1992 ‘Petersberg Tasks,’ integrated into the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam, encourage military operations aimed at conflict prevention and crisis management.<sup>25,26</sup> The unfortunate result of the existence of these two separate prerogatives – OAOs and the Petersberg Tasks – is that they often lead to unnecessary overlap in crisis management operations, with the two undertaking “separate but similar...operations in the same country or region at the same time,” which waste the resources of both organizations and lead to inefficiencies in responding to unfolding crises.<sup>27</sup> Evidence of these inefficiencies can be seen in their missions to support the African Union Mission in Sudan and their counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa – Operation Ocean Shield on the part of NATO and European Union Naval Force Atalanta on the part of the EU.<sup>28</sup> In both instances, the organizations were active in the same area at the same time with parallel yet separate military crisis management operations. As operations of this nature become more frequent and complex, there is an obvious imperative to create a clear division of labor between the two organizations that encourages cooperation, avoids replication, and identifies who will be in charge of crisis operations and who will

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<sup>21</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy.” (Harvard, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 17.

<sup>22</sup> Fahren-Hussey, Claudia. *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU: The Decision-Making Process*. (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2019), 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Stapleton, Brad. “Out of Area Ops Are Out: Reassessing the NATO Mission.” *War on the Rocks*, 7 July 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Strategic Communications. “Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy.” *EEAS*, European External Action Service, 7 Aug. 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Fahren-Hussey, Claudia. *Military Crisis Management Operations by NATO and the EU: The Decision-Making Process*. (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2019), 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

take the lead on crisis management after the military operations have concluded, lest the current inefficiencies persist, creating a drag on the resources of both organizations.

At this point, there is a need to make clear that there is not overlap between the two when it comes to military deterrence and defense operations, or in regards to civilian crisis management operations: NATO is responsible for the collective defense of Europe through the right of first refusal outlined in the Berlin Plus agreement, and the EU has taken responsibility for conducting all civilian operations.<sup>29</sup> However, as the nature of the crises requiring responses from these organizations continue to evolve, the distinction between what is labeled an OAO and what is considered a direct threat to Europe is becoming less clear. As unconventional and hybrid threats, such as cyber-attacks and terrorism, continue to put the security of the two organizations at risk, there is a need to outline a clear division of labor for responding to future crises. Important steps have been taken by the two organizations to confront this dilemma, such as the 2016 Warsaw Joint Declaration that gave “new impetus and substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership” in order to improve cooperation and coordination in developing defense capabilities and responding to hybrid threats, but many of these agreements still take place at the organizations’s highest levels, and inefficiencies in their implementation persist, thereby allowing questions surrounding the continued utility of NATO to remain potent, particularly from the perspective of the U.S.<sup>30,31</sup>

Thus, this Task Force proposes that NATO create an informal track for dialogue between it and the EU and regularize operational transitions between the two in the post-crisis period. Establishing an informal track would allow experts in both organizations to collaborate on difficult issues and prepare recommendations for decision-makers ahead of time.<sup>32</sup> This would avoid any delays in responding to a crisis resulting from the current system that requires senior officials to meet and synthesize the strategies they have devised (if they cooperate or coordinate their responses at all), while also ensuring that the strategies they intend to pursue are complimentary to their goals and avoid replication. In addition, regularizing operational transitions in the post-crisis period would enable both organizations to focus their efforts on the areas they are best equipped to handle. The EU has been labeled a global leader in crisis management, and NATO is well-known for its effectiveness in responding to crises when they emerge.<sup>33</sup> By regularizing operational transitions, NATO would be able to focus its efforts on responding effectively to a crisis when it occurs while the EU is able to focus on developing and preparing a strategy for crisis management once NATO has finished its operation. This would effectively avoid any scrambling after the outbreak of a crisis over who will respond first and how, while also ensuring that any action taken by either organization is not inadvertently or unnecessarily replicated by the other, thereby increasing the efficiency of the responses – avoiding an unnecessary drag on the two organizations’s resources – and improving the effectiveness of their efforts – avoiding operational overlap and competition.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> Martín, Ramirez, and Jerzy Biziewski. *Security and Defence in Europe*. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), 225.

<sup>31</sup> NATO. “Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.” *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 8 July 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Stacey, Jeffrey A. “How to Take EU-NATO Relations from Words to Action.” *Defense News*. Defense News, December 2, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

The current era is marked by new and evolving threats to NATO's survival from within and without the organization. Issues including apparent declining U.S. interest and support for the Alliance and Europe's inability to adequately protect itself without aid from non-EU NATO member states place the organization at risk of collapse from internal instability. In order to address these issues, this Task Force has proposed that NATO reaffirm NATO's strategic importance to the U.S. – particularly at the Executive level – recognize the on-going efforts by European states to improve their defense capabilities – while admitting that there is still more to be done – and encourage the EU to implement new initiatives that will allow contribute to improving its defense capabilities – such as regularly internally assessing its capabilities and needs, expanding the purview of PESCO to define targets for its improved capabilities, and identifying states that could better contribute to collective defense through specialization. At the same time, existential threats from outside the organization – such as cyber-attacks, the outbreak of international crises, and terrorism – and inefficiencies in how NATO and the EU respond to them – often unnecessarily replicating or competing with one another in their operations – put a drag on their resources and prevent them from taking full advantage of their strategic partnership, thereby allowing questions surrounding the perceived utility of an organization like NATO in the current era to persist. To address these concerns, this Task Force has recommended establishing an informal track for dialogue between experts in both organizations that will allow for better and more efficient cooperation in responding to these threats, and regularizing operational transitions between the two when crises emerge that will enable NATO and the EU to focus their efforts on the areas of crisis response and management to which they are best suited. By implementing these recommendations, it is the belief of this Task Force that NATO will have a much greater chance of success in the current era.

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# NATO-Russia Relations: Calibrating Perceptions and Responses

Madeline Bennett

## Introduction

Within a Task Force paper focused on advancing priorities for a new, Eurasia-focused NATO Strategic Concept, the issue of relations with the Russian Federation must remain paramount. Since approximately 2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin appears to have decided that NATO's interactions with Russia "would be solely on Moscow's terms and based on its perceptions of its own interests."<sup>34</sup> This paper will therefore synthesize recent studies concerning Russia's perceptions of NATO and those that NATO member states have of Russia, followed by policy recommendations. The two parties differ in their perspectives on the limits of NATO expansion, their desires for loyalty to ideals, and the level of threat they each poses to the other. In deterring Russian imperialism, this Task Force recommends a "two-track" approach involving deterrence and dialogue in which the U.S. plays a key role. NATO is also advised to maintain partnerships between NATO members and non-member states threatened by Russia, reaffirm NATO's democratic values, and respond to Russian information warfare. This Task Force also contends that maintaining sanctions and military transparency requirements and addressing vulnerabilities to hybrid attacks are essential to an appropriate strategy of responding to Russia.

## Limits of NATO Expansion

### Differing Perceptions

NATO is uniquely poised to deal with the Russian security threat to Europe, and support for NATO activities, including military intervention, remains high among member states' populations.<sup>35</sup> Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger described NATO as the "implementation of the doctrine of collective security;" a broad mandate that holds great relevance as NATO contends with a Russia that has broken the Soviet mold.<sup>36</sup> Originally, NATO was predicated on containing the Soviet Union, an empire whose collapse prompted observers to both question NATO's relevance and dream anew of a "Europe whole and free, from Vancouver to Vladivostock."<sup>37</sup> In the early 2000's, Putin relied heavily on outside advisors for constructing foreign policy goals and capitalist markets.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, NATO policy cannot change the fact that the Soviet and post-Soviet political elite were, and continue to be dominated by individuals trained in an environment of risk and privation.<sup>39</sup> Perceptions formed within the Russian foreign policy establishment that are based on exchanges during the Cold War have proven difficult to shake.<sup>40</sup> Today, Putin believes that Russia is at war with the U.S., though

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<sup>34</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 317.

<sup>35</sup> Fagan, Moira and Jacob Poushter. *NATO Seen Favorably Across Member States* (Pew Research Center, 2020).

<sup>36</sup> Kissinger, Henry. *World Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 265.

<sup>37</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Stent, Angela. "Russia: Farewell to Empire? The New Russian Diplomacy; The End of Eurasia; Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization," *World Policy Journal* 19, no. 3 (2002), 87.

<sup>39</sup> Aliyev, Nurlan. "Determinants of Russia's Political Elite Security Thought: Similarities and Differences between the Soviet Union and Contemporary Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism* (2019), 1.

<sup>40</sup> Tsygankov, Andrei. "The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018), 102.

the U.S. does not share this view.<sup>41</sup> NATO's status as an established, values-based security alliance allows and obligates it to thwart Russian conflict escalation and revanchism.

Initially, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the potential for conciliatory relations between Russia and NATO existed. From the 1990's until 2012, Russian leaders appeared amenable to European integration.<sup>42</sup> Negotiations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe in 1990 and the Framework for Arms Control in Istanbul in 1999 were effective at presenting the European security structure as a system of interlocking institutions and reducing potential Russian objections to NATO expansion.<sup>43</sup> After the U.S. was attacked on 9/11, Russia even sent troops along with NATO to Afghanistan, presumably in an effort to cooperate with the U.S. and its allies on equal footing.<sup>44,45</sup> In 2002, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) met in Rome and established a new strategic relationship, yet, after this meeting, animosity between the U.S. and Russia continued to fester as negotiations to renew the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty fell through, NATO expanded without sufficient dialogue, and Russia initiated and maintained "frozen conflicts" on its borders.<sup>46,47</sup> When Russia invaded Georgia in 2008, the Russian political scientist Andrei Tsygankov claimed, a "securitized perception of political change was at the heart of the NATO-Russia conflict."<sup>48</sup> However, cooperation was still not out of the question; then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in Lisbon in 2010 that Russia could become a NATO member if NATO changed.<sup>49</sup> During the American "reset" with Russia, in 2012, Putin issued a speech that was somewhat in support of cooperation with NATO, though he did refuse former President Obama's invitation to attend the G-7/G-8 Summit, sending Medvedev instead.<sup>50</sup>

Relations with the West were far from perfect, but, as historian Timothy Snyder argues, after Putin's re-election in 2012, "the West was chosen as an enemy precisely because it represented no threat to Russia."<sup>51</sup> Domestic political struggles in Russia, a state missing the "spirit of the law" and mechanisms for political succession, pushed the Putin regime to frame the West as a "spiritual threat" and corrupting influence.<sup>52</sup> After the confrontations with Chechen separatists had subsided, Putin needed a new enemy to distract the Russian public from the worrisome findings reported by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) after observing Russian

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<sup>41</sup> Aleksashenko, et al. *Restoring Equilibrium: U.S. Policy Options for Countering and Engaging Russia* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 11.

<sup>42</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 386-387.

<sup>43</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 131.

<sup>44</sup> Stent, Angela. "Russia: Farewell to Empire? The New Russian Diplomacy; The End of Eurasia; Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization," *World Policy Journal* 19, no. 3 (2002), 87.

<sup>45</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 79.

<sup>46</sup> Tsygankov, Andrei. "The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018), 105.

<sup>47</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 181.

<sup>48</sup> Tsygankov, Andrei. "The Sources of Russia's Fear of NATO," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018), 105.

<sup>49</sup> Holas, Lukáš. "Prospects for Russia-NATO Relations: The SWOT Analysis," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2018), 155.

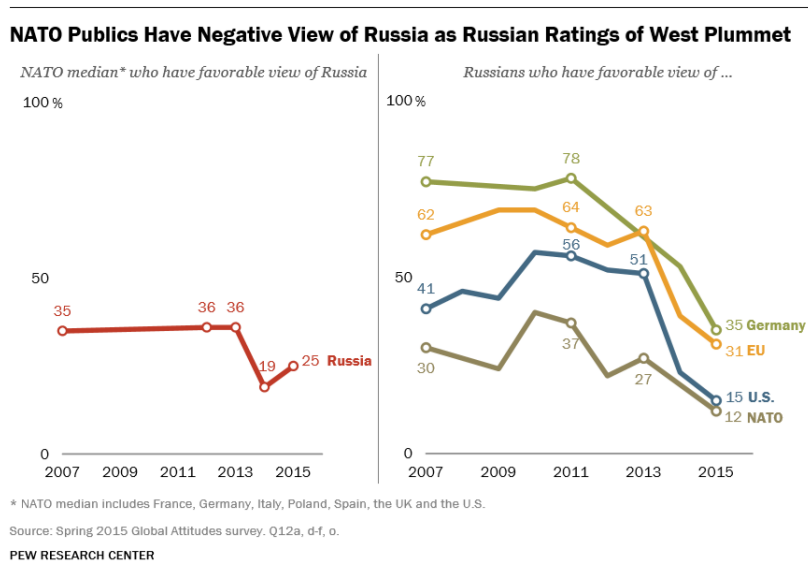
<sup>50</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 317.

<sup>51</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 54.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 139, 152, 33.

elections.<sup>53</sup> Russia’s failure to integrate Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) members into effective multilateral institutions, Western reproach for Russia’s ongoing human rights abuses and violations of sovereignty, and the diminishment of the OSCE’s relevance to security debates in relation to NATO and the EU constituted further developments that drove Russia to “leave the West” after Moscow resolved itself to see malicious intent in Western actions.<sup>54,55</sup>

Figure 1:



After the 1999 military intervention in Kosovo, unity between NATO and Russian foreign policy objectives became a distant memory. While aimed at bringing peace to a deadly conflict, this action was falsely perceived by the Russian elite and public as sheer humiliation of Russia and aggrandizement of the West; in 2008 Putin’s administration began to fear that recognizing Kosovo would set a precedent for separatist movements within the borders of the Russian Federation.<sup>56,57</sup> 2013 marked a precipitous decline in Russian poll respondents’s approval of Western powers (see Figure 1). The Pew Research Center also found that, in 2013, 29% of Russians expressed a “very favorable” opinion of Russia, whereas after unrest began in Ukraine in 2014, this number rose to 51%, and then to 63% in 2015.<sup>58</sup> As Snyder reported, the campaign to convince Russians to disapprove of the West and approve of their own country’s actions was a top-down campaign of aggressive nationalism.<sup>59</sup> While the invasion of Ukraine used innovative methods of disinformation to justify the conflict, the Russian

<sup>53</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 325.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 228-236, 291.

<sup>55</sup> Stronski, Paul, and Richard Sokolsky. *The Return of Global Russia: An Analytical Framework* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017), 7.

<sup>56</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 163, 257.

<sup>57</sup> Kanet, Roger and Maxime Henri André Larivé. "NATO and Russia: A Perpetual New Beginning," *Perceptions* 17, no. 1 (2012), 81.

<sup>58</sup> Simmons, et al. *NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid*. Pew Research Center, 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 165.

state's drive for imperialist expansion is very old.<sup>60</sup> NATO's current task with regard to Russia is to understand the antecedents and current realities of the Kremlin's foreign policy thought and implementation.

### Policy Recommendations

When engaging with Russia, this Task Force recommends a dual track of "deterrence and dialogue."<sup>61</sup> Deterrence of Russian adventurism should be emphasized in the new NATO Strategic Concept.<sup>62</sup> This can be done in a variety of ways, including maintaining current troop deployments in the Balkans, continuing to fund European defense initiatives, and reminding Putin that a nuclear strike on a NATO state would force NATO, the EU, and the U.S. to respond.<sup>63,64</sup> Dialogue, especially through existing institutions such as the NRC, also has a valuable role to play in NATO-Russia relations.<sup>65,66</sup> Issues of common interest, such as terrorism, piracy, and drug trafficking, would make logical topics of discussion on which to re-establish a basis of cooperation.<sup>67,68</sup> Yet, Russian scholar Dmitri Trenin points out that contentious issues such as missile defense should also be discussed in the NRC.<sup>69</sup> This Task Force advises American leadership to "call out Russian activities, but only when actions threaten U.S. and Allied interests, and when Washington has realistic, practical, and sustainable means to thwart Russian ambitions without making a given situation worse."<sup>70</sup> In any case, bilateral negotiations between Russia and individual NATO member states should be avoided, as they play directly into Russia's desire to divide the U.S., the EU, and NATO.<sup>71</sup>

Russia cannot be allowed to succeed in its aims of exercising veto power over NATO decisions and "delinking" the U.S. from NATO.<sup>72</sup> Multiple Western political scientists have made the argument that Russia should gain greater influence in NATO affairs, perhaps even by joining NATO.<sup>73,74</sup> Such an accommodation, beyond dialogue through existing channels, could be dangerous and risk

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<sup>60</sup> Stent, Angela. "Russia: Farewell to Empire? The New Russian Diplomacy; The End of Eurasia; Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization," *World Policy Journal* 19, no. 3 (2002), 87.

<sup>61</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. "NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis." (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 25.

<sup>62</sup> Sykes, Soleil. *Statesmen's Forum: Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General*. (2015), 1.

<sup>63</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. "NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis." (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 7, 18.

<sup>64</sup> Aleksashenko, et al. *Restoring Equilibrium: U.S. Policy Options for Countering and Engaging Russia* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 8.

<sup>65</sup> Klein, Margarete, and Claudia Major. *Perspectives for NATO-Russia Relations* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2015), 4.

<sup>66</sup> Trenin, Dmitri. "NATO and Russia: Partnership or Peril?" *Current History* 108, no. 720 (2009), 300.

<sup>67</sup> Kanet, Roger, and Maxime Henri André Larivé. "NATO and Russia: A Perpetual New Beginning," *Perceptions* 17, no. 1 (2012), 82.

<sup>68</sup> Trenin, Dmitri. "NATO and Russia: Partnership or Peril?" *Current History* 108, no. 720 (2009), 300.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>70</sup> Stronski, Paul, and Richard Sokolsky. *The Return of Global Russia: An Analytical Framework* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017), 32.

<sup>71</sup> Kanet, Roger, and Maxime Henri André Larivé, "NATO and Russia: A Perpetual New Beginning," *Perceptions* 17, no. 1 (2012), 84.

<sup>72</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 217.

<sup>73</sup> Kupchan, Charles. "NATO's Final Frontier: Why Russia Should Join the Atlantic Alliance," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2010).

<sup>74</sup> Holas, Lukáš. "Prospects for Russia-NATO Relations: The SWOT Analysis," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2018).

compromising NATO members's self-determination.<sup>75,76</sup> Russian attempts to exploit divisions within NATO and, ultimately, remove the United States from Western Eurasia are well-documented and of great concern to diplomats, including Henry Kissinger.<sup>77</sup> While burden-sharing with European partners will help counter Russian aggression, this Task Force affirms that U.S. presence within NATO and Europe remains critical to ensuring the continent's continued security and ability to promote a rules-based international order.<sup>78</sup>

## **Loyalty to Ideals**

### Differing Perceptions

Russia has a long record of violating international agreements, and it currently seeks to enable the survival of its own kleptocratic regime by transforming Europe from an integrated, democratic zone to a fragmented, unstable one characterized by competing spheres of influence.<sup>79,80,81</sup> Achieving such a goal would prevent the Russian public from seeing market democracies succeed—a phenomenon viewed by many in the Russian oligarchy as an existential threat.<sup>82,83</sup> Members of the Russian political and security establishments (and the myriad individuals who exist in both, the so-called “siloviki”) have diverse viewpoints, but, since Russia lacks adequate domestic institutions to ensure lawful transitions of power, its foreign policy appears to be largely motivated by the personal aims of Vladimir Putin and his associates.<sup>84,85</sup>

For Russian foreign policy actors, rhetoric about human rights is merely a tool in on-going information warfare. “Russian leaders and officials apparently have difficulty understanding and believing the importance that Western leaders attach to human rights standards and practices... and thus assume that Western criticisms must be based on ulterior political or economic motives,” writes professor emeritus William Hill in “No Place for Russia.”<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, Russia does have some basis for accusing NATO of hypocrisy. NATO members Poland, Hungary, and Turkey have witnessed the largest one-year declines in civil liberties among all 195 countries ranked in the 2019 Freedom

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<sup>75</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns, “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 7.

<sup>76</sup> Klein, Margarete, and Claudia Major. *Perspectives for NATO-Russia Relations* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2015).

<sup>77</sup> Kissinger, Henry. *World Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 94.

<sup>78</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019).

<sup>79</sup> Litzenberger, Lee. “Beyond Zapad 2017: Russia's Destabilizing Approach to Military Exercises.” Texas National Security Review, Last modified, February 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019).

<sup>81</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 195.

<sup>82</sup> Aleksashenko, et al. *Restoring Equilibrium: U.S. Policy Options for Countering and Engaging Russia* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 6.

<sup>83</sup> Connable, et al. *Russia's Hostile Measures: Combatting Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 14.

<sup>84</sup> Aliyev, Nurlan. “Determinants of Russia's Political Elite Security Thought: Similarities and Differences between the Soviet Union and Contemporary Russia,” *Problems of Post-Communism* (2019), 5.

<sup>85</sup> Aleksashenko, et al. *Restoring Equilibrium: U.S. Policy Options for Countering and Engaging Russia* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 23.

<sup>86</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 390.

House report.<sup>87</sup> In addition, NATO has justified admitting non-democracies such as Portugal and Greece to the Alliance for strategic reasons in previous years.<sup>88</sup> With its goal to “support and promote democracy” expressed in the 1991 Strategic Concept, perhaps NATO including post-Soviet Russia would have been logical.<sup>89</sup> Hill points out that, during this period, a Russian observer could have plausibly asked why NATO invested in promoting democracy in some countries but not others. Russian voices have, in fact, accused NATO of double standards on human rights issues, such as NATO’s alleged “indifference to the plight of Russian speakers in the Baltic states” and simultaneous criticism of Russia’s brutality against Chechen rebels.<sup>90</sup> Ultimately, however, Russian critiques of NATO are not meant to inspire the Alliance to improve or demonstrate a desire for partnership, but rather to exploit any perceived weakness within NATO.<sup>91</sup>

### Policy Recommendations

To counteract Russia’s disregard for, and manipulation of, the international norms-based order, this Task Force asserts that NATO must keep projecting soft power. On a practical level, this involves maintaining programs such as the European Neighborhood Policy and the Partnership for Peace.<sup>92</sup> More abstractly, NATO is advised to continue to make its values of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law known to members, partner states, and the international community.<sup>93,94</sup> With U.S. President Donald Trump proposing an American retreat from the world, it is more important than ever to reaffirm the Alliance’s goals and values. This Task Force recommends that NATO express its concern regarding member states that have strayed from democracy and consider revoking some privileges on a case-by-case basis, while being conscious of the fact that consensus and unity are of great importance in countering Russia.<sup>95</sup> NATO members, the U.S., and even Russia have a great deal to gain from a peaceful, stable world order. Countering Russia’s perception that international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are a zero-sum competition for influence is essential. This Task Force is in agreement with researchers at the RAND Corporation who have argued that NATO should take a more active approach to deterring Russia in the realm of values than the conventional soft power approach.<sup>96</sup>

Russia’s hybrid warfare tactics, which will be covered in more detail in the following section of this paper, warrant a response from NATO in the form of information dissemination. Russia has

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<sup>87</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 19.

<sup>88</sup> Kupchan, Charles. “NATO’s Final Frontier: Why Russia Should Join the Atlantic Alliance,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2010), 109.

<sup>89</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 153.

<sup>90</sup> Stent, Angela. “Russia: Farewell to Empire? The New Russian Diplomacy; The End of Eurasia; Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization,” *World Policy Journal* 19, no. 3 (2002), 88.

<sup>91</sup> Connable, et al. *Russia’s Hostile Measures: Combatting Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 28.

<sup>92</sup> Kanet, Roger, and Maxime Henri André Larivé. “NATO and Russia: A Perpetual New Beginning,” *Perceptions* 17, no. 1 (2012), 80.

<sup>93</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 21.

<sup>94</sup> Kissinger, Henry. *World Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 371.

<sup>95</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 21.

<sup>96</sup> Connable, et al. *Russia’s Hostile Measures: Combatting Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 62.

created an organized foreign policy campaign for its disorganized “ideology,” and NATO would do well to launch its own psychological campaign for political and economic freedom.<sup>97,98</sup> This Task Force recommends that, with a commitment to accurate reporting, media from NATO alert the Russian populace to their declining standard of living and relative lack of personal freedoms.<sup>99</sup> Russian political elites would be highly valuable in this endeavor, as their opinions are influential in politics and tend to be more pro-NATO than the general Russian public.<sup>100,101</sup> NATO has an opportunity to act on the fact that, unlike the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation offers no international ideology—except perhaps membership in a vague cultural-historical collective with Russia.<sup>102</sup> NATO can offer institutions and integration as a coherent alternative for the multiple states that are undecided as to whether to seek closer relations with the U.S. and NATO or Russia.<sup>103</sup> Ultimately, to appropriately use information in response to Russian attempts at undermining the international order, NATO must assess whether Russia’s aggressive foreign policy arises from opportunism and temporary plans to disrupt Western activities, or from a long-term strategy to reshape the global system to benefit authoritarianism and Russian interests.<sup>104</sup>

### **Level of Threat Posed by Russia**

#### Different Perceptions

NATO and its member states are correct in emphasizing Russia’s relative weakness, but leaders must avoid the temptation to underestimate the threat posed by the Russian foreign policy establishment. Russia has “declining power indicators—economic, socio-political, demographic, and health,” and spends only one-third as much on defense as NATO members excluding the U.S.<sup>105</sup> Sanctions, oligarchy, and reliance on commodity exports have stunted the Russian economy (see Figure 2). A new NATO Strategic Concept should factor in Russia’s economic weakness, as the danger posed by Russia is not due to a position of strength. Yet, underestimating the threat from Russia is also dangerous and was part of the reason for the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine in 2013.<sup>106</sup> This could be due to a variety of reasons, including certain NATO and EU member states’s goals to

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>98</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 89.

<sup>99</sup> Aleksashenko, et al. *Restoring Equilibrium: U.S. Policy Options for Countering and Engaging Russia* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 25.

<sup>100</sup> Aliyev, Nurlan. “Determinants of Russia’s Political Elite Security Thought: Similarities and Differences between the Soviet Union and Contemporary Russia,” *Problems of Post-Communism* (2019), 8.

<sup>101</sup> Holas, Lukáš. “Prospects for Russia-NATO Relations: The SWOT Analysis,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (2018): 152.

<sup>102</sup> Connable, et al. *Russia's Hostile Measures: Combatting Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 23.

<sup>103</sup> Fagan, Moira, and Jacob Poushter. *NATO Seen Favorably Across Member States* (Pew Research Center, 2020).

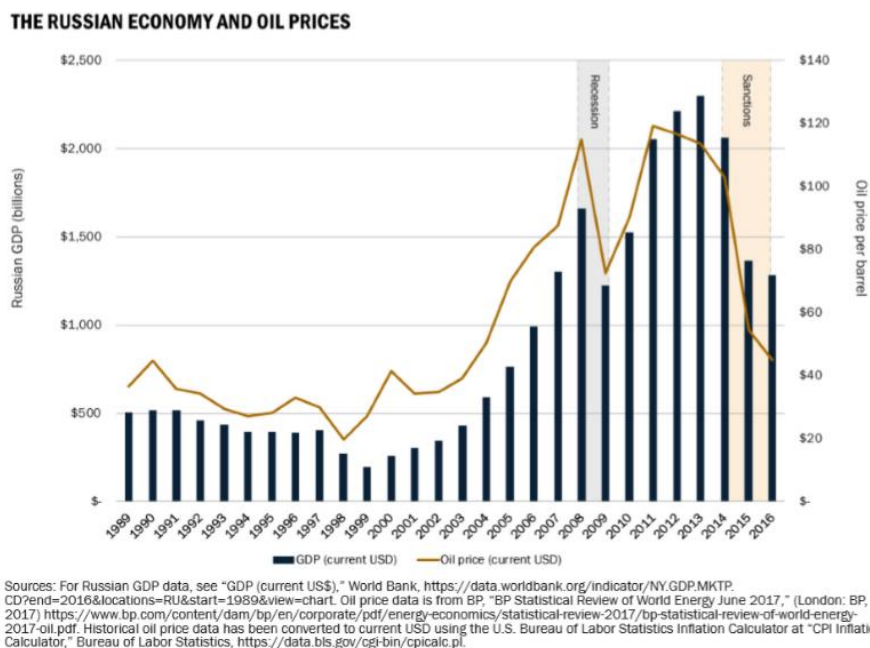
<sup>104</sup> Stronski, Paul, and Richard Sokolsky. *The Return of Global Russia: An Analytical Framework* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017), 31.

<sup>105</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 29.

<sup>106</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 63.

cooperate with Russian business interests and enter into energy deals.<sup>107,108</sup> Russia's small economy does not mean that it poses little threat.

Figure 2:



Due to Russia's economic weakness, Putin's latest term has seen a sharp rise in hybrid warfare tactics, which are important for NATO to address appropriately. The Gerasimov Doctrine, laid out in a 2013 article by the Russian Chief of the General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, states that the Russian military is using opportunistic hostile measures to disrupt its enemies, while saving the direct use of force for the final stage of its attack.<sup>109</sup> This strategy of hybridizing institutionalized deceit and destruction within "gray zones," is not new, though some of Russia's methods are.<sup>110</sup> Looking to Russia's "frozen conflicts" in areas including Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine demonstrates the Russian military strategy of "dezinformatsiya" (disinformation) and its counterpart relating to physical attacks, "refleksivnoe upravlenie" (reflexive control).<sup>111</sup> Multiple Russian generals during the Georgia War in 2008 argued that Russia should use "asymmetric" or "non-linear" warfare to offset the technological superiority of its adversaries.<sup>112</sup> The Ukraine crisis was particularly shocking in part because the threat from Russia was underestimated and because Russian attackers incorporated digital

<sup>107</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 327.

<sup>108</sup> Kupchan, Charles. "NATO's Final Frontier: Why Russia Should Join the Atlantic Alliance," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2010), 111.

<sup>109</sup> Connable, et al. *Russia's Hostile Measures: Combatting Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 24.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>112</sup> Aliyev, Nurlan. "Determinants of Russia's Political Elite Security Thought: Similarities and Differences between the Soviet Union and Contemporary Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism* (2019), 6.

disinformation and hacking into their takeover, methods which proved so effective that they are now being used on NATO member states.<sup>113</sup>

### Policy Recommendations

Responding to Russia in proportional terms will need to incorporate traditional NATO strategies of deterrence in the coming decade. This Task Force recommends maintaining sanctions on Russia as long as it occupies sovereign nations, as well as demanding transparency and predictability of military activities. The new NATO Strategic Concept should reaffirm the commitment of all NATO members to European defense initiatives and Russian economic sanctions.<sup>114</sup> Setting expectations for military transparency has also been a cornerstone of NATO dealings with Russia; increasing these calls is advisable and in-line with the recommendations made by NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, in a 2015 speech.<sup>115,116,117</sup>

In concert with the traditional “dual track” of deterrence and dialogue, This Task Force contends that innovative measures are needed to respond to the new threat posed by Russia. To a large degree, this involves improving attribution of cyberattacks and engaging in counterstrikes against Russian digital warfare.<sup>118</sup> Cyberattacks against NATO are the subject of another chapter within this Task Force report. In this effort, it will be important to bear in mind that Russia did not create the conditions it targets with disruptive hybrid methods.<sup>119</sup> Russian hybrid warfare capitalizes on and exaggerates existing divisions within countries, so it is possible that the worst effects of Russian infiltration may be avoided in states that extend opportunities for equality and assimilation to ethnic minorities (particularly Russian speakers in Eastern European countries), LGBTQ+ individuals, and other groups whom Russian narratives often exploit to create hate and divisiveness within societies.

Above all, accurately estimating and responding to Russian aggression is essential. Russia has limited resources compared to NATO member states, and it is far from the truth that every Russian action is a success.<sup>120</sup> Not every plan from Moscow threatens the entire international security order—some actions are merely symbolic or meant to garner domestic support for Putin.<sup>121</sup> Though Russia is relatively weak, and its aims are not always clear, Moscow’s application of hostile measures is both consistent and predictable.<sup>122</sup> In the coming decade, NATO has the power and obligation to counteract Russian efforts to compromise the sovereignty of states and international agreements that safeguard freedom and prosperity.

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<sup>113</sup> Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), 250.

<sup>114</sup> Aleksashenko, et al. *Restoring Equilibrium: U.S. Policy Options for Countering and Engaging Russia* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 5.

<sup>115</sup> Litzenger, Lee. "Beyond Zapad 2017: Russia's Destablizing Approach to Military Exercises." Texas National Security Review, Last modified, February 2017.

<sup>116</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 27.

<sup>117</sup> Sykes, Soleil. *Statesmen’s Forum: Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General*. (2015), 1.

<sup>118</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. “NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis.” (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019), 23.

<sup>119</sup> Stronski, Paul, and Richard Sokolsky, *The Return of Global Russia: An Analytical Framework* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017), 27.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 2-4.

<sup>122</sup> Connable, et al. *Russia's Hostile Measures: Combatting Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 19.

## Conclusion

Understanding certain relevant differences in perceptions between NATO and Russia, and formulating well-calibrated policy responses to them, has strong potential for aiding the development of a new NATO Strategic Concept. Russia does not adhere to the NATO-backed system of norms that limits its expansion. Therefore, this Task Force recommends that NATO policies toward Russia include a “dual track” of deterrence and dialogue and refute Russian attempts to sever the U.S. from NATO. While NATO remains loyal to the ideals of sovereignty and individual freedom, Russia uses opportunistic maneuvers to expand its influence. To counteract Russian apathy toward the values of NATO and its partners, this Task Force recommends NATO should make a conscious effort to reaffirm these values and promote accurate information about itself. Finally, NATO member states have sometimes been prone to underestimating the threat from Russia because of Russia’s weak economy. This problem, too, necessitates a policy response: This Task Force recommends maintaining sanctions and requests for military transparency, as well as addressing vulnerabilities that Russia could exploit in hybrid warfare. NATO’s responses to Russia in the coming decade will encompass multiple fronts and have the greatest chance of success if it utilizes both NATO’s longstanding history with Russia and NATO’s own capacity for adaptation to its advantage.

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# **NATO-Ukraine Relations: Furthering Cooperation Without Membership**

Cali Suba

## **Introduction**

There is a longstanding partnership between Ukraine and NATO, and this relationship has recently been put in the spotlight following Russia's annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. The geographical position of Ukraine makes it a key player in Russian-European relations. If it leans towards European partnership, the West gains territory bordering Russia, but if it leans towards Russia, it will strengthen Moscow's effort to make the Eurasian Economic Union an alternative to the European Union. There are several factors that are responsible for the breakout of the Ukraine conflict, including Putin citing Russia's economic concerns as Ukraine sought to open its markets to the European Union (EU) as the main driver, and the argument of some scholars that the possibility of further NATO enlargement to include Ukraine was the leading cause. This paper will first discuss the relationship between Ukraine and NATO and provide a brief background into the Ukraine crisis. It will then argue against the enlargement of the Alliance to include Ukraine, and instead present the suggestions of this Task Force for alternative approaches to strengthen NATO-Ukraine cooperation. Next, it will discuss the dilemma resulting from the West's "Russia" and the Putin regime's "Rossiya" and how it presents tremendous difficulties for finding a solution to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbass. Finally, it will discuss European security in the context of the Ukraine crisis. With regard to this issue, it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO put an emphasis on collective security over collective defense by highlighting the importance of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in this situation.

## **NATO-Ukraine Relations**

In 1994, Ukraine joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program, the aim of which is "to increase stability, diminish threats to peace, and build strengthened security relationships between NATO and non-member countries in the Euro-Atlantic area."<sup>123</sup> Later that year, Ukraine signed onto the Budapest Memorandum in cooperation with the United States, Britain, and Russia; an agreement that "focused largely on Ukrainian efforts to trade their nuclear forbearance for the greatest possible political, security, and economic benefits."<sup>124</sup> Through the agreement, Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons in exchange for security assurances. Although "it is unlikely that Ukrainian nuclear weapons would have prevented Russian aggression," Ukraine has expressed regret in entering the nonproliferation agreement, primarily because the country received soft security assurances rather than hard guarantees.<sup>125</sup> A few years later in 1997, NATO and Ukraine signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, which sought to strengthen their cooperation.<sup>126</sup> In establishing this relationship, the two

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<sup>123</sup> NATO. "NATO/PFP Trust Fund Policy." 2009. *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>124</sup> Einhorn, Robert. "Ukraine, Security Assurances, and Nonproliferation." *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2015), 47-72.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> NATO. "Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine." 1997. *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

parties sought to achieve many objectives, including reforming Ukraine's economy, building a strong democratic system, and upholding human rights and the rule of law.

In 2008, at the NATO Summit in Bucharest, NATO members agreed that Ukraine would obtain membership to the Alliance in the future. However, they did not specify an exact timeline for this process, and the promise has remained unfulfilled as relations between the Alliance and Ukraine continue to develop in other ways without venturing down the path to membership. To this day, "Ukraine, despite the Bucharest Summit pledge, is neither a NATO member nor a participant in a Membership Action Plan."<sup>127</sup> Despite the lack of progress towards Ukraine achieving membership, NATO has expressed strong support for the country's movement for independence, noting in the Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission on April 1, 2014 that "an independent, sovereign, and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is key to Euro-Atlantic security."<sup>128</sup>

### **The Ukraine crisis**

In March 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, a move that NATO regarded as both illegitimate and illegal, and has steadfastly condemned for the past six years. The following month, conflict broke out in Eastern Ukraine, and Russia was slammed by the West for breaking the agreements made during the Helsinki Accords in 1975 by intervening in Ukraine and undermining its territorial integrity. Facing economic crisis leading up to the conflict, Ukraine needed assistance and was unable to procure loan packages from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or from the EU, so it turned to Russia in November 2013 because Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich "felt he had no other choice than to accept a bailout outlined by Putin."<sup>129</sup> After receiving Russian aid, Yanukovich announced that he would suspend work with the EU on the Association Agreement (AA) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), news that "shocked the European leaders and the Ukrainian public."<sup>130</sup> Upset over Yanukovich's suspension of these programs, both the EU and the Ukrainian people rallied against him in a movement that was supported by the United States and the NATO Alliance. The rallies were opposed by Russia, since Yanukovich's decision to abandon EU programs alleviated many of Putin's concerns surrounding Ukraine's gradual shift towards the EU instead of the Eurasian Economic Union in the post-Soviet era.

Whether the conflict in Ukraine broke out in response to the potential for NATO enlargement – with Russia seeking to protect its economic interests – or yet another reason, "the Russian annexation of Crimea was all at once a shock, a wake-up call, and – in some senses – an indirect stroke of good fortune" for the Alliance, revitalizing its purpose and unity by reestablishing a common enemy.<sup>131</sup> While NATO members viewed Moscow as the clear aggressor and violator of international law in this situation, Russia portrayed itself as "the aggrieved victim in the Ukraine crisis, forced into responding

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<sup>127</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 364.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 359.

to Western actions that threatened some of Russia's most sensitive interests in its oldest, closest, and most important neighborhood."<sup>132</sup> Putin, having been accused of violating international law, justified the referendum in Crimea by arguing that the situation was no different from the independence movement that had taken place in Kosovo; a decision which had been recognized by the Alliance. However, the United States responded by asserting that Kosovo was a special case. Regardless of its legality, Russia's "annexation of Crimea and its invasion of Ukraine have fundamentally upended the security environment in Europe, thrusting NATO into the spotlight as the primary collective defense tool most European states rely upon to ensure their security."<sup>133</sup>

## **NATO Enlargement**

Since its formation in 1949, NATO has more than doubled its number of member states, increasing from the original 12 to the current 29. The Alliance's stance on enlargement since the end of the Cold War is argued to have "not only undermined Euro-Atlantic security and triggered new divisions between East and West, but...also exposed aspirant states, particularly those in the post-Soviet space, to sustained pressure and indeed coercion from Moscow."<sup>134</sup> With regards to the debate over enlargement, both the military force and political dialogue of the Alliance have sparked controversy, particularly in reference to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Article 5 states that an attack on one member of the Alliance is considered an attack on all members, and they will take action against the aggressor state by way of NATO's collective defense system, using military power if it is deemed necessary.

In reference to Ukraine, Article 5 is one of the key factors barring its accession to member status within the NATO alliance as member states are not enthusiastic about the possibility of being forced into a war with Russia should it decide to invade Ukraine. In 2015, a survey conducted in the EU showed that "a majority of voters in most European countries do not approve of taking military action in support of Ukraine against Russia."<sup>135</sup> While those same voters would certainly be in favor of NATO military mobilization if it was their country or a neighbor that was under attack, it is unclear how far out geographically this enthusiasm for collective defense extends before it is spread too thin and Europeans from NATO member states no longer care to get involved. Furthermore, there are tensions between member states that have been created over the Washington Treaty's Article 10 in relation to its implications for Article 5. Article 10 outlines NATO's "open door" policy, stating that, through the unanimous agreement of its members, a prospective member state can join the Alliance if "it is in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area."<sup>136</sup> The main predicament in the tensions over Article 5 versus Article 10 is that the former promotes collective defense of current members while the latter promotes the introduction of new ones, indicating that any new member brought into the Alliance through Article 10 will attain the

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 366.

<sup>133</sup> Deni, John. *NATO and Article 5: The Transatlantic Alliance and the Twenty-first-century Challenges of Collective Defense*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

<sup>134</sup> German, Tracey. "NATO and the Enlargement Debate: Enhancing Euro-Atlantic Security or Inciting Confrontation?" *International Affairs* 93, no. 2 (March 2017), 291-308.

<sup>135</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 393.

<sup>136</sup> NATO. "The North Atlantic Treaty." 1949. *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

security guarantees granted by Article 5, and this threatens European security by causing divisions within the Alliance over decisions about the potential membership of other states. This leads to a lack of unity that hinders the collective strength of NATO as its members argue over the security ramifications of expanding the Alliance to include new members such as Ukraine.<sup>137</sup>

Since tensions and disagreements over NATO enlargement pose a threat to European security, one option is that NATO encourage Ukraine to cease its pursuit of a Membership Action Plan (MAP), which has been a priority for the country. States with a MAP are not protected under Article 5, which is the most important aspect of the Alliance for Kiev, but, since Moscow places a lot of weight on titles such as this, establishing a MAP for Ukraine could further aggravate Russia, indicating that simply strengthening NATO-Ukraine cooperation and partnership efforts in other ways would likely be more efficient and well-received.<sup>138</sup> Pursuing alternative routes for Ukraine is not only in its best interest, it is also a far more realistic option because “NATO Allies have indicated their willingness and intent to assist Ukraine in its defense in a number of specific ways...short of the provision of lethal military assistance.”<sup>139</sup> This unwillingness on the part of NATO Allies to entertain the possibility of a war with Russia over Ukraine means that the Alliance and Ukraine must work together on alternative Ukrainian security options.

One way in which the Alliance can assist Ukraine is through NATO’s Trust Fund program, which assists its Partnership for Peace (PFP) states – of which is Ukraine is a member – in realizing a large range of projects. A PFP nation, should they have a project or program in need of funding, can put forward a proposal that follows a specific set of guidelines. Although it is acceptable for NATO staff to “provide advice and guidance, nations are responsible for deciding which ideas are developed and presented as project proposals.”<sup>140</sup> These Trust Fund projects are not funded by NATO itself, but rather by voluntary aid from an organization or country. Therefore, it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO should emphasize the potential utility of the Trust Fund program as an alternative to a MAP for Ukraine, and “continue and expand its programs and trust accounts to help Ukraine modernize its military and defense establishment.”<sup>141</sup> This includes funding for defense capabilities and training programs that will allow the military to act in line with NATO standards.

## **Crimea and the Donbass**

One of the largest difficulties Ukraine has been facing since the break-up of the Soviet Union is public divisions between its dominant ethnic groups resulting from its multiculturalism and multilingualism. Ukrainian is the main language in the Western and some of the Central regions of the country, while Russian is more common in its Eastern and Southern regions, including Crimea and the Donbass. In these regions where Russian is the dominant language, the general population tends to be

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<sup>137</sup> German, Tracey. “NATO and the Enlargement Debate: Enhancing Euro-Atlantic Security or Inciting Confrontation?” *International Affairs* 93, no. 2 (March 2017), 291-308.

<sup>138</sup> Pifer, Steven. *The Eagle and the Trident: US-Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 328.

<sup>139</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 364.

<sup>140</sup> NATO. “NATO/PFP Trust Fund Policy.” 2009. NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>141</sup> Pifer, Steven. *The Eagle and the Trident: US-Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 328.

pro-Russia and holds onto a Soviet identity, whereas the Ukrainian-speaking regions have more pro-Ukrainian populations, further dividing the nation. Crimea, being a largely pro-Russia region, held a referendum in 2014 in which the population overwhelmingly voted to join Russia.<sup>142</sup> Although there is evidence to suggest that it was not a fair referendum, the outcome would likely have been the same regardless since, out of the voters, “some 60 percent were ethnic Russians, and many might have concluded their economic situation would be better as a part of Russia.”<sup>143</sup>

The Donbass is a region in Eastern Ukraine with strong pro-Russian sentiments, which has caused conflict between the Ukrainian government, the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR), and citizens of the Donbass’s Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR). There is not currently a feasible solution for Ukraine when it comes to the recovery of the Donbass because Ukraine is not equipped to fight Russian military forces – thereby ruling out armed conflict – and it does not have the political support of the pro-Russian populations in the Donbass. Scholars and pro-European Ukrainians have argued that, when it comes to the Donbass, “the population there is out of sync with the rest of the country and that repairing the damage to industry and infrastructure caused by the conflict would be too big a burden for the economy.”<sup>144</sup>

Finding solutions that address Crimea and the Donbass is not only difficult because of concerns over economic partnerships and NATO enlargement, but also because there are deep ideological differences between Russia and the West that have created conflicting ideas over how “Russia” (or “Rossiya”) is defined. In 2007, Putin created Russkij Mir, a foundation and concept to promote “Russianness” and increase Russia’s soft power.<sup>145</sup> This has allowed Putin to put forward his idea that, since “Kyiv is the ‘mother’ that gave birth to the three eastern Slavs, [the countries] are united by a common Russian ‘Orthodox’ civilization,” and therefore “a Russkij Mir and Eurasian Economic Union without Ukraine is inconceivable” to him.<sup>146</sup> The Putin regime itself does not accept the legitimacy of Ukraine, asserting that “Russians and Ukrainians are ‘one people,’” and, in doing so, is thereby “reviving Tsarist chauvinism that denies Ukrainians are a nation and claiming their ‘artificial’ state is a Western puppet.”<sup>147</sup> However, from the other side of the conflict, the EU also has a basis for viewing Russia as an illegitimate state since it does not recognize the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes. This dynamic adds another layer of difficulty in proposing solutions for the crisis in Ukraine.

While moving forward in addressing the situations in Crimea and the Donbass, it is important to keep these underlying beliefs in mind. It does not appear as though the issues in either region are likely to be resolved soon, but, with regards to the Donbass, “the most biting Western economic sanctions would come off of Russia if it left [this region]. At some point, the Kremlin may calculate that the costs outweigh the benefits and consent to a settlement that would allow restoration of

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<sup>142</sup> Pifer, Steven. “Five years after Crimea’s illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution.” *The Brookings Institution*, March 18, 2019.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Pifer, Steven. *The Eagle and the Trident: US-Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 326.

<sup>145</sup> Kuzio, Taras. “Russian and Ukrainian Elites: A comparative study of different identities and alternative transitions.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 4 (December 2018), 337-347.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

Ukrainian sovereignty there.”<sup>148</sup> However, it is unlikely that this would happen for Crimea, so it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO invest in long-term measures to reform Ukraine’s economic sector. NATO should also support the efforts of USAID to “improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the government through transparent, open electronic processes.”<sup>149</sup> This would emphasize a transition towards open data and e-procurement, which would allow for transparency in the procurement of goods by moving these transactions online rather than in-person. Combating corruption could also assist in addressing the economic sector’s struggles by making the Ukrainian markets more appealing to foreign investors and tapping into the country’s trade potential. The success of these efforts could sway those in Crimea to want to return to Ukraine, considering those who wanted to leave for economic reasons have not actually found the desired improvement in their new situation, and help stabilize the region by reducing the sources of disagreement that have divided Ukraine’s populations.

### **Emphasizing Collective Security**

It was stated at the Wales Summit in 2014 that, regardless of whether or not Russia is labeled a threat following the conflict in Ukraine, “the Alliance’s collective perception of the global and regional security context shifted dramatically [in response to it], making collective defense of existing Alliance members once again clearly the top priority.”<sup>150</sup> While the desire to focus on collective defense is valid, it might be even more crucial to give attention to collective security efforts. Collective security is a universal system and implies that an attack on any nation is an attack on universal security, while collective defense acts more as a collective machinery to defend an alliance rather than a universal system. With regards to Ukraine, NATO’s collective defense recognizes Russia as a shared enemy, and there is potential for armed conflict and military intervention from Alliance members. This potential for armed conflict creates greater apprehension and hostility from the opposition, in this case Russia. The idea behind collective security is that there is not a predetermined enemy, making any nation that disrupts peace and stability through aggression a threat to it. Therefore, conceptualizing the conflict in Ukraine as a threat to collective security rather than collective defense could help mitigate the increasing polarization between the West and Russia, and encourage both parties to work together to maintain collective security.

In the context of the conflict in Ukraine, it is important to note that, “given that the standoff in Ukraine was between Russia on the one hand, and the EU, NATO, and the United States on the other hand, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) turned out to be the sole regional forum in which all the participants and interested parties in the conflict could meet and engage substantively with one another.”<sup>151</sup> The OSCE has allowed Russia to have a legitimate voice where European security issues are concerned, and it allows for structured discussions to take place between Russia and the West. It also plays an enormous role in preventing and resolving conflicts, following through on initiatives that are “essential to the maintenance of peace in Europe and, in practical terms,

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<sup>148</sup> Pifer, Steven. “Five years after Crimea’s illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution.” *The Brookings Institution*, March 18, 2019.

<sup>149</sup> Ingram, George. “Fighting corruption in Ukraine: USAID’s strategy.” *The Brookings Institution*, Oct. 31, 2019.

<sup>150</sup> Hill, William. *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 366.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

NATO could not attempt them.”<sup>152</sup> Because of this, despite their differences, NATO and the OSCE must work as complementary, rather than competitive, security organizations. Therefore, this Task Force argues that NATO should reframe the conflict in Ukraine as a threat to collective security – thereby minimizing the possibility of provoking greater apprehension and hostility from Russia – and work with the OSCE to create a platform for dialogue between Alliance member states and Russia that will allow them to address the conflict in Ukraine without exacerbating tensions on either side.

## Conclusion

The conflict in Ukraine has called into question the future of the relationship between NATO and Ukraine, and while this Task Force has made suggestions on how to proceed, there is no clear way forward. From the establishment of their cooperation in the early 1990s to their present-day relationship, both parties have supported one another through efforts to create a stable, peaceful region. However, after Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbass, this relationship has been taken to an even higher level of importance. There are concerns – primarily from Russia – over the enlargement of NATO to include Ukraine, and because of this, this Task Force has recommended that NATO should encourage Ukraine to cease its pursuit of NATO membership, and that the two parties should place their energy into developing Ukrainian security through initiatives supported by the Trust Fund program, which provides an alternative way to increase their cooperation and strengthen their partnership. Regarding Crimea and the Donbass, solutions will not come easily or take effect rapidly, and, in searching for the appropriate approach to these regions, this Task Force has argued that it is imperative that the differing ideas that the Putin regime and the West have about Ukrainian legitimacy are understood. Though it will take time, reforming the economic sector and tackling corruption are a good place to start. Lastly, it has suggested that the Ukraine conflict should be treated as a threat to collective security rather than collective defense, and that NATO cooperation with collective security organizations such as the OSCE should be prioritized in order help to address this conflict that poses a threat to their greatest shared interest: European security.

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<sup>152</sup> Dean, Jonathan. “OSCE and NATO: Complementary or Competitive Security Providers for Europe?” *OSCE Yearbook 1999*, (2000), 429-434.

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# Mid-Eurasia

## The Afghanistan Papers: Intervention Failures and Future Strategies

Anna Fotheringham

Afghanistan, NATO's largest and longest combat mission, is at a critical juncture.<sup>153</sup> The publishing of the Afghanistan Papers in December 2019 has made the need to shift the U.S. and NATO's intervention policy in the country undeniably evident. The Afghanistan Papers clearly exhibit the U.S. Government's efforts to deceive American individuals on issues regarding the war in Afghanistan, painting themselves as champions, and continually emphasizing progress, despite the failures elucidated in the documents. This discovery and realization explicates the imperative for the U.S. government and NATO allies to alter language surrounding the war in Afghanistan, provide transparency in their operations, and take accountability for their failures. NATO and U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, rather than developing progress and stability, has created more problems and encouraged a continuation of violence. Ultimately, the Afghanistan Papers expound the colossal failure of, and damage caused by, the intervention in Afghanistan, prompting a dire need for policy reform regarding the war, NATO and U.S. involvement in it, and the structure of future NATO and U.S. interventions. Given this reality, this Task Force proposes that NATO should implement policy that includes accounting for its failures in Afghanistan, leading with transparency and legitimacy, understanding cultural context, and, lastly, setting clear objectives and outcomes with all future intervention efforts.

NATO's engagement in Afghanistan began in response to 9/11 when, for the first time in NATO history, the U.S. invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which states that if a member is attacked, then each member "will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary."<sup>154</sup> "When President George W. Bush announced the first military action in Afghanistan in the wake of terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda in 2001, he said the goal was to disrupt terrorist operations and attack the Taliban."<sup>155</sup> The original intervention was carried out by U.S. forces under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). However, over 20 other countries provided varying degrees of military and political support to the operation. In David Auerswald and Stephen Saideman's book entitled "NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone," the authors conceptualize NATO's engagement in Afghanistan as "coordinating many distinct wars in Afghanistan conducted by different actors synchronously."<sup>156</sup> Various scholars who study the issue of intervention in Afghanistan understand that the initial operation was in effect a U.S. campaign, wherein European NATO members "failed to assume any meaningful positions in decision making."<sup>157</sup> The Bonn conference in December 2001

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<sup>153</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. "NATO at Seventy: an Alliance in Crisis." (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, February 2019), 29.

<sup>154</sup> Auerswald, David P., and Stephen M. Saideman. *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone*. Course Book ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 36.

<sup>155</sup> Almukhtar, Sarah, and Rod Nordland. "What Did the U.S. Get for \$2 Trillion in Afghanistan?" *The New York Times*. The New York Times, December 9, 2019.

<sup>156</sup> Kühn, Florian P. "Military Intervention in Alliances: NATO, Afghanistan, and the Age of Interventionism." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9, no. 4 (2015), 555.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 553.

established the basic parameters of the security, political, and economic order to be implemented in post-Taliban Afghanistan. It also created the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which provided security around Kabul and supported reconstruction efforts in the country. In the aftermath of 9/11 and the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan against al Qaeda and its Taliban enforcers, NATO supported the U.S. in its efforts to forestall security threats from Afghanistan and secure a more stable security and political environment.<sup>158</sup> ISAF was absorbed by NATO in 2003, and expanded the security efforts from Kabul to the entirety of Afghanistan.<sup>159</sup> After the insurgency intensified in 2004, ISAF's operations shifted from a simple peacekeeping mission to a full counter-insurgency.<sup>160</sup> This was a huge change in the mission with vastly different requirements from before. In 2011, ISAF operation began to be phased out, transferring the responsibility for maintaining security and stability to the new Afghan leadership. In December 2014, the ISAF operation ended, and Afghans assumed full responsibility for their country. NATO launched the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in January 2015, with the objective of training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces and institutions.<sup>161</sup> At the NATO Summit in Brussels in July 2018, allied members agreed to sustain the RSM until conditions indicated a change was appropriate. They also decided to extend financial support to the Afghan security forces through 2024, and make further progress on developing a political and practical partnership with Afghanistan. NATO's long-term goal was to have a traditional partnership with Afghanistan.<sup>162</sup>

The Afghanistan Papers reveal the failures of the intervention in Afghanistan, and attempts by the U.S. government to conceal their lack of success. In August 2016, the Washington Post, under the Freedom of Information Act, began seeking out interview records from the Special Inspector for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). SIGAR is an agency that was created by congress in 2008 to investigate improper use of funds, abuse, and fraud in the war zone. Their mission was to "conduct independent, objective, and strategic audits, inspections, investigations, and analysis in a transparent manner for the Congress and the American taxpayer to promote economy and efficiency, and to detect and deter waste, fraud, and abuse in the reconstruction of Afghanistan."<sup>163</sup> Their vision was to "improve U.S.-funded reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and safeguard U.S. taxpayers' money," and their core values included independence, accountability, tenacity, and fairness.<sup>164</sup> SIGAR's "Lessons Learned" project was launched in 2014. It aimed to analyze policy failures in Afghanistan so that the U.S. would not repeat mistakes they made in future invasions and interventions. SIGAR interviewed over 600 people with firsthand experience in the war, comprising mostly Americans; however, they also interviewed NATO allies in London, Brussels, and Berlin, as well as around 20 Afghan officials.<sup>165</sup> The Lessons Learned reports focused on the issues in Afghanistan and proposed

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<sup>158</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. "NATO at Seventy: an Alliance in Crisis." (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, February 2019), 39.

<sup>159</sup> Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "Peacekeepers Among Poppies: Afghanistan, Illicit Economies and Intervention." *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 1 (2009), 103.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>161</sup> NATO. "NATO and Afghanistan." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, January 14, 2020.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> SIGAR. "Mission, Vision and Core Values." *SIGAR*. Special Inspector for Afghanistan Reconstruction. United States Government.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Whitlock, Craig. "The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, December 9, 2019.

changes to help stabilize the country. However, they left out the harshest and most direct criticisms from the interviews, and instead wrote in “dense bureaucratic prose and [focused] on an alphabet soup of government initiatives.”<sup>166</sup>

When the Post sought out the Lessons Learned interview records in August 2016, SIGAR refused to turn over the documents, stating that they were “privileged and the public did not have the right to see them.”<sup>167</sup> The Post sued SIGAR in federal court, twice, urging them to release the documents. Eventually, SIGAR disclosed over 2,000 pages of unpublished notes and transcripts, as well as several audio recordings, from 428 of the interviews.<sup>168</sup> SIGAR only identified 62 of the individuals interviewed, blacking out the names of the other 366 interviewees. In legal briefs, the agency stated that “those individuals should be seen as whistleblowers and informants who might face humiliation, harassment, retaliation, or physical harm if their names became public.”<sup>169</sup> The Post has asked a federal judge to force SIGAR to disclose the names of all people who were interviewed, arguing that the public has the right to know which officials criticized the war, and asserting that the U.S. government misled American people. A decision by Judge Amy Berman Jackson of the U.S. District Court in Washington has been pending since late September 2019. However, rather than waiting the final ruling, the Post decided to publish the documents in December 2019 to inform the public while the Trump administration was negotiating with the Taliban and considering whether to withdraw the 13,000 U.S. troops who remained in Afghanistan.<sup>170</sup>

The Post utilized previously classified memos about the Afghan war from the office of the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld between 2001 and 2006 to reinforce the Lessons Learned interviews. These memos were called “snowflakes,” a select number of which were made public by Rumsfeld in 2011. The rest, an estimated 59,000 pages, remained secret. The Department of Defense began reviewing and releasing the remainder of the snowflakes on a rolling basis beginning in 2017, in response to a FOIA lawsuit filed by the National Security Archive, a nonprofit research institute at George Washington University.<sup>171</sup> The National Security Archive shared these documents with the Post, and, “together, the SIGAR interviews and the Rumsfeld memos pertaining to Afghanistan constitute a secret history of the war and an unsparing appraisal of 18 years of conflict.”<sup>172</sup>

The Afghanistan Papers provide the public with a candid account of the operation in Afghanistan, exposing the operation as a failure, rather than a success. The papers show how the U.S. government created more problems and violence by discussing the U.S.’s involvement in the opioid crisis, its lack of a clear strategy for engagement, its general lack of understanding of the region, and its attempts to cover up its own failures.

Before the war, Afghanistan had nearly completely eradicated opium, according to UN data from 1996 to 2001 when the Taliban was in power. Since 2001, Afghanistan has come to epitomize a ‘narcostate’ with abhorrent levels of crime and corruption.<sup>173</sup> “In a report last year, SIGAR described

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "Peacekeepers Among Poppies: Afghanistan, Illicit Economies and Intervention." *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 1 (2009), 100.

counter-narcotics efforts as a “failure.” Despite billions of dollars to fight opium poppy cultivation, Afghanistan is the source of 80 percent of global illicit opium production.”<sup>174</sup> Opium production is a major source of income and jobs in Afghanistan today, as well as a crucial source of revenue for the Taliban; outside of war expenditures, it is Afghanistan’s biggest economic activity.<sup>175</sup> U.S. intervention, alongside other peace keeping and stabilization efforts by international actors and organizations such as NATO’s International Security Assistance Force, have transformed and magnified the illicit drug economy.<sup>176</sup> Opium is deeply intertwined in the socio-economics and politics of Afghanistan. The Taliban, Afghan police, tribal elites, and many ex-warlords-cum-government-officials at various levels, profit directly from the opium trade.<sup>177</sup> Therefore, it is clear that the illicit opium economy in Afghanistan is a security issue for NATO and the U.S., not only for reasons relating to Afghanistan’s impact on the overall opium economy, but also due to the profit narcotics bring to organizations that the U.S. and NATO have spent the past 18 years attempting to take down.

It is estimated that somewhere between 20 and 40 percent of the Taliban’s income stems from drugs.<sup>178</sup> The Taliban’s sponsorship of the illicit drug economy strengthens them both financially and politically, thanks to the protection of the drug economy, which, in turn, protects many Afghans’ basic livelihood.<sup>179</sup> The illicit drug economy had no initial bearing on the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan; however, as the war has continued, profits from the drug economy have come to have an immense influence on policy surrounding intervention and strategy. Some aspects of NATO’s peacekeeping strategy have indicated that eradicating the opium economy could be key to bankrupting and defeating the Taliban insurgency, as well as to reducing corruption, advancing the rule of law, and enabling the emergence of a robust legal economy.<sup>180</sup> However, the eradication of opium has actually had extremely counterproductive effects. Namely, it has physically strengthened the Taliban by driving economic refugees to them. The U.S.’s policy of eradicating poppy fields without compensation infuriated farmers and prompted many of them to side with the Taliban. There has been no clear policy, agency, or country heading the efforts regarding the illicit drug economy in Afghanistan for the entirety of the war. The Afghanistan Papers reveal that different actors were constantly at odds with one another, and ultimately made things worse by embracing a “dysfunctional muddle of programs.”<sup>181</sup> The U.S. has spent around \$9 billion to fight the problem over the past 18 years, but Afghan farmers are cultivating more opium poppies than ever.<sup>182</sup> The issue surrounding the opium eradication policy clearly exemplifies how U.S. and NATO efforts in Afghanistan have been an exceeding failure, encouraging more issues and being counterproductive.

The strategy for Afghanistan has not been clear or effective for the duration of the 18-year campaign. Given that the war against the Taliban and al Qaeda had to be put together very quickly in

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<sup>174</sup> Almkhatar, Sarah, and Rod Nordland. “What Did the U.S. Get for \$2 Trillion in Afghanistan?” *The New York Times*. The New York Times, December 9, 2019.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Felbab-Brown, Vanda. “Peacekeepers Among Poppies: Afghanistan, Illicit Economies and Intervention.” *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 1 (2009), 100.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>181</sup> Whitlock, Craig. “The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War.” The Washington Post. WP Company, December 9, 2019.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

the aftermath of 9/11, the relatively ad hoc and unsophisticated nature of the military campaign is unsurprising.<sup>183</sup> That being said, considering how long the war has persisted, it is clear that military strategy should have been streamlined, and clear goals and initiatives should have been put in place. However, that did not happen, and confusion ensued, ultimately resulting in the quagmire present today. “Member states hid behind complexity, effectively blaming NATO” for their own failures, while “the institution made use of the strategic indecisiveness of member states and the ambiguity of the parallel U.S. mission Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), which at the beginning was detached and could be blamed for the headwind experience used by the growing insurgency,” to avoid accepting the blame itself.<sup>184</sup>

In the book “America’s War for the Greater Middle East,” author Andrew Bacevich argues that “a deeply pernicious collective naïveté” among both Republicans and Democrats has spawned interventions that are, from the outset, doomed by “confusion and incoherence.”<sup>185</sup> Further, the Lessons Learned interviews show that the mission and goals of the war continued to change as time went on, blurring strategy and allowing a lack of faith in the U.S. strategy to take root inside the Pentagon, White House, and State Department. Fundamental disagreements about the structure of ongoing operations went unresolved: Some U.S. officials wanted to use the war to turn Afghanistan into a democracy, others wanted to transform Afghan culture and elevate women’s rights, and others still wanted to reshape the regional balance of power between Pakistan, India, Iran, and Russia.<sup>186</sup> In the immortal words of Douglas Lute, a three-star Army general who served as the White House’s Afghan war czar during the Bush and Obama administrations, “we were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan — we didn’t know what we were doing.”<sup>187</sup>

In terms of specific strategy, the U.S. wanted to rebuild Afghanistan into a place that would not harbor terrorism. Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump, all promised the public that they would avoid falling into the trap of nation-building in Afghanistan; they each failed miserably on that score. U.S. officials have tried repeatedly to create, from scratch, a democratic government in Kabul modeled after their own in Washington. However, this foreign concept has proved incompatible with the Afghans, who are more accustomed to tribalism, monarchism, Communism, and Islamic law.<sup>188</sup> “Our policy was to create a strong central government which was idiotic because Afghanistan does not have a history of a strong central government...the timeframe for creating a strong central government is 100 years, which we didn’t have,” an unidentified former State Department official stated in 2015.<sup>189</sup> Afghanistan’s new government had self-organized into a kleptocracy by 2006, and U.S. officials failed to recognize the lethal threat it posed to their strategy. By allowing this corruption to take root, many Afghans became disenfranchised with the western-style democracy the U.S. was trying to prop up and turned to the Taliban to maintain leadership. As with the issue of opium, the U.S.’s lack of

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<sup>183</sup> Kühn, Florian P. "Military Intervention in Alliances: NATO, Afghanistan, and the Age of Interventionism." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9, no. 4 (2015), 558.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 557.

<sup>185</sup> Rohde, David. “Americas War for the Greater Middle East, by Andrew J. Bacevich.” *The New York Times*. The New York Times, April 15, 2016.

<sup>186</sup> Whitlock, Craig. “The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War.” *The Washington Post*. WP Company, December 9, 2019.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

understanding surrounding the effects of their policy, in turn, pushed more Afghans to side with the Taliban, strengthening their organization physically and fiscally, and ultimately leading to the exacerbation of U.S. failures.

It is evident from the Afghanistan papers that U.S. officials were constantly telling the public that they were making progress, when in actual fact they were aware that their strategy was failing. They continued lie to the public over the 18-year campaign, actively hiding evidence of the war being unwinnable.<sup>190</sup> To make matters worse, as Abdi Zenebe argues in his paper entitled “The Post-NATO Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges,” successive U.S. administrations made contradictory statements, and there was a mismatch between the U.S. administrations’s rhetoric and the facts on the ground.<sup>191</sup> As Zenebe points out, the concerted effort to conceal information, as well as a the lack of transparency and accountability for the situation in Afghanistan, is reminiscent of the tactics used by U.S. officials to manipulate public opinion during the Vietnam War, “with both forthright descriptions of how the U.S. became stuck in a faraway war, as well as the government’s determination to conceal them from the public, the Lessons Learned interviews broadly resemble the Pentagon Papers, which were the Defense Department’s top-secret history of the Vietnam war, which were leaked in 1971.”<sup>192</sup> Andrew Basevich stated in his book, “America’s War for the Greater Middle East,” that “the ultimate responsibility for the United States’ actions lies with an “oblivious” American public engrossed in “shallow digital enthusiasms and the worship of celebrity.””<sup>193</sup>

The Afghanistan papers make it irrefutably clear that the operation in Afghanistan has been a colossal failure. “The use of overwhelming lethal force does not immediately cause dictators or terrorists to turn tail and run, even if that’s what politicians in Washington want to believe. Rather, it often leads to resentment, chaos and resistance.”<sup>194</sup> The papers are an extremely important source that should indicate the clear need for increased transparency on behalf of the U.S. government and NATO interventionists, and should encourage them to take accountability by recognizing their failures in Afghanistan. Participating actors need to recognize and admit that Afghanistan has been a failure and use that to shape policy and intervention in the future. It is clear that military intervention was not the right solution; there was a lack of understanding of the region, and no clear objectives or strategy, resulting in an ineffective intervention. Thus, it is the opinion of this Task Force that the U.S. and NATO need to account for these failures and use them as lessons to guide future strategies. Despite that being the goal of SIGAR and the Lessons Learned interviews, their work was clearly ineffective due to the lack of transparency and tactical misrepresentation of the state of the operation in Afghanistan. It is imperative that future policy enforce transparency and legitimacy in statements to the public since countries are more likely to impose restrictions on a mission if it is unpopular at home.<sup>195</sup> If the public is misinformed, then an operation’s mission will also be misinformed due to a lack of

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Zenebe, Abdi. "The Post-NATO Afghanistan: Prospects and Challenges (Report)." *European Scientific Journal* 2 SE (2013), 234.

<sup>192</sup> Whitlock, Craig. “The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War.” *The Washington Post*. WP Company, December 9, 2019.

<sup>193</sup> Rohde, David. “Americas War for the Greater Middle East, by Andrew J. Basevich.” *The New York Times*. The New York Times, April 15, 2016.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Auerswald, David P., and Stephen M. Saideman. *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone*. Course Book ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 19.

accurate public response. Thus, due to the importance of public opinion in shaping policy and strategy, this Task Force recommends that the U.S. and NATO increase transparency in future operations they conduct. In addition, for future intervention to be effective and not create more problems, it is critical that intervention policy take into consideration its effects on the country where the intervention is taking place. Cultural context and a thorough understanding of the country is crucial. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, this Task Force believes that clear objectives and desired outcomes need to be put in place from the outset of any operation. Without clear goals and initiatives, policy becomes confused, creating ineffective and unproductive results. There was a profound lack of purpose in NATO's intervention in Afghanistan, which ultimately resulted in the intervention being an immense failure.

In conclusion, there is little to show for the operation in Afghanistan and the \$2 Trillion spent by the United States.<sup>196</sup> "The Taliban control much of the country. Afghanistan remains one of the world's largest sources of refugees and migrants. More than 2,400 American soldiers and more than 38,000 Afghan civilians have died."<sup>197</sup> Moving forward, this Task Force posits that NATO should hold the actors responsible for the intervention of Afghanistan accountable for their actions, provide transparency on the issue, and use the failures of the mission as a guide for future intervention policy. Due to the failures expounded in this paper – such as the intensification of the opioid crisis, the lack of understanding and knowledge of the region, an absence of clear strategy, and the continued expression of misinformation regarding Afghanistan, devoid of transparency – the imperative to hold actors in Afghanistan accountable for their actions is clear. In addition, since public opinion is critical to shaping policy, this Task Force asserts that future interventions must include greater transparency for the public, as well as more clearly defined objectives and desired outcomes. There are many lessons to be learned from the failures laid out above, thus, the policy suggestions defined in this paper should be used as a guide for future intervention policy if NATO hopes to avoid recreating the quagmire present in Afghanistan elsewhere.

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<sup>196</sup> Almukhtar, Sarah, and Rod Nordland. "What Did the U.S. Get for \$2 Trillion in Afghanistan?" *The New York Times*. The New York Times, December 9, 2019.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

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# Towards a Comprehensive NATO Counterterrorism Strategy

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## Introduction

The events of September 11, 2001 will be remembered forever, not just by the population of the United States, but by people all over the world. While most see this day as the start of the brutal War on Terror, the reality is that the birth of extremist ideology took place decades before 9/11. The attempted car-bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 – 8 years before 9/11 – and the deadly attacks on U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 stand to prove that the United States government should have been aware of and acting on the problem years prior.<sup>198</sup> The failure of the U.S. and NATO to acknowledge the threat of terrorism when it first became evident, and their insufficient response to attacks that took place before 9/11 is a failure that will have a lasting impact on generations of people living both in NATO countries and in countries where terrorism has wreaked widespread havoc. At the time of writing, NATO's involvement in Afghanistan is nearing its 19<sup>th</sup> year, with no indication that a withdrawal from the country would give way to a stable Afghan government. Due to the release of the Afghanistan Papers in 2019, it is now apparent to the public that the decades-long operation overseas has not been as effective as it was led to believe.<sup>199</sup>

From the very start of NATO's involvement in the global War on Terror, crucial mistakes have been made regarding its understanding of extremist ideology, including its cultural and historical significance in Mid-Eurasia. It is now of the utmost importance, for the sake of international peace and security, that NATO develop a comprehensive strategy for dealing with jihadi terrorist groups. If it is to rebuild its credibility with partner countries in mid-Eurasia, NATO must provide an open and honest acknowledgement of past failures in the War on Terror. To address this issue, the recommendations of this Task Force include improving relations with existing strategic partners in mid-Eurasia, redefining what can be classified as necessary defense spending to incorporate research and technological development, and increasing pressure on the Pakistani government to take action against the jihadi terrorist groups residing within its borders.

## Terrorism: What, Why & How?

In order to understand the ideology and actions of the modern-day jihadi movement, it is crucial to understand the cultural and historical significance of this rather recent phenomenon. The concept of jihad, originating during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, was based on various wars that were fought against unbelievers, and had strong influence from pre-Islamic Arabic tribal tradition.<sup>200</sup> Jihad – meaning literally to strive or struggle against – is one of two responses to tyranny dictated by the Quran.<sup>201</sup> By calling for jihad, a caliph could mobilize his people to take part in wars that would increase the size of the empire and fulfill their religious obligations. If a leader failed to wage jihad at least once per year to gain territory and spread the faith, he was seen as an apostate, and therefore, the people could wage jihad against him.

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<sup>198</sup> Bergen, Peter. "Today's Terrorism Didn't Start with 9/11 -- It Started with the '90s." *CNN*. CNN. October 5, 2017.

<sup>199</sup> Whitlock, Craig. "The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War." *The Washington Post*, December 9, 2019.

<sup>200</sup> Peters, Rudolph. *Jihad: A History in Documents*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2016), 2.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

During the imperialization of mid-Eurasia from the 18th century to the mid-20th century, the religiously influenced political traditions of the region took a back seat to secular politics. This led to the rise of Islamism, a movement that operates to “raise the political profile of Islam in some way.”<sup>202</sup> One of the primary ways Islamist groups do this is by advocating for the reimplementing of sharia law, something that has gained significant public support. Notable Islamist groups include the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Turkey.<sup>203</sup>

The jihadi movement of today developed out of a violent offshoot of Islamism, with an ideology based on fundamentalist interpretations of the Quran. The birth of the jihadi movement took place in Egypt during the 1960s, where government crackdowns against the Muslim Brotherhood resulted in radical splinter groups.<sup>204</sup> These radical offshoots were convinced that organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood were too tolerant of apostate governments to make any progress. One of these radical offshoots, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, was responsible for the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who they believed violated sharia law in signing the Sinai treaty with Israel.<sup>205</sup> Other jihadist groups that were forming around this time included the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The foundation of the jihadist movement lies in forceful resistance to governments that do not uphold religious law, or that have failed to rid their laws of Western influence. For this reason, many jihadist groups actively oppose the governments of countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey. Groups like al-Qaeda took this belief one step further, bringing the fight directly to the United States, a strong supporter of the Saudi royals. According to Middle Eastern studies specialist, Cole Bunzel, al-Qaeda orchestrated the September 11 attacks as a way to discourage the United States from continuing to support the Saudi government, and to avenge those killed by Western military forces in the Middle East.<sup>206</sup> It is important to note that, although jihadism stemmed from the Islamist movement, the two terms are not interchangeable. Bunzel writes, “only the jihadis deny outright the legitimacy of the state and threaten, as a matter of doctrine, unremitting violence until they have their way.”<sup>207</sup>

The emergence of the Islamic State (IS) in 2004 demonstrates the immense expansion of the jihadi movement since the 1990s.<sup>208</sup> Having emerged from an offshoot of al-Qaeda, IS holds many of the same beliefs as other jihadist groups. Nonetheless, they have shown unparalleled dedication to an even more extreme ideology, broadening the defining features of an ‘apostate’ and carrying out violent attacks against anyone who does not strictly adhere to their selective literalist interpretation of the Quran, including Shia and Yazidi Muslims, Christians, and Jews.<sup>209</sup>

Looking at the origin of most jihadi terrorist groups, it is obvious that the ideology takes hold in regions where decades of imperialization gave way to a weak central state. The weakened state – unable to enforce property rights or dampen revolts – creates an environment in which a power vacuum and deficient economy force the government to invite Western powers back into the country – this time as military and humanitarian aid. To extremists, this shows that the state is headed back in the

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<sup>202</sup> Bunzel, Cole. “Jihadism on Its Own Terms: Understanding a Movement.” *Hoover Institution*, 2018.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> Hogeback, Jonathan. “Is It ISIS or ISIL?” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed February 13, 2020.

<sup>209</sup> Peters, Rudolph. *Jihad: A History in Documents*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2016), 2.

direction of Westernized, secular politics, away from religion and from sharia law. For this reason, many jihadist groups were founded on the mission of ousting the current regimes and declaring an Islamic State.<sup>210</sup> Power vacuums that developed throughout mid-Eurasia during the Arab Spring – and after Western military withdrawal from Afghanistan and Syria – created the conditions that allowed for jihadist groups like the Islamic State to gain control of territory.<sup>211</sup>

### **NATO Involvement Since 9/11**

Founded with the purpose of providing security to its members and maintaining global prosperity, NATO rightly added jihadi terrorist groups to the list of international security threats following the events of 9/11. Within 24 hours, NATO had invoked Article 5 for the first time since its creation, officially joining the conflict.<sup>212</sup> According to the NATO website, jihadism “is a challenge that the international community must tackle together.”<sup>213</sup> Although the organization first identified terrorism as a security risk in 1999, it did not begin making major strides in the field of counterterrorism until late 2001. In October of that year, NATO agreed to increase intelligence-sharing, provide additional security for government facilities in the U.S. and other NATO countries, and deploy portions of the Standing Naval Forces and NATO Airborne Early Warning Force.<sup>214</sup> In December, the UN established the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a NATO-led military operation used to train the local military forces in Afghanistan.

Since the start of its involvement in 2001, NATO’s approach to counterterrorism efforts has focused on improving awareness, developing military response capabilities, and enhancing relationships with partner countries.<sup>215</sup> Nearly two decades, it became apparent that the organization believed in a strong military response, with hundreds of thousands of Western boots on the ground. In 2018, the Alliance revamped some of its older mission objectives, acknowledging the need to focus on improving the living conditions that make certain areas hotspots for jihadist recruitment.<sup>216</sup> That same year, per the request of the Prime Minister of Iraq, the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) was launched to reinforce the country’s military by providing training programs.<sup>217</sup>

Since its involvement, NATO action plans have continued to stress the importance of strategic partnerships, however, many neighboring nations have felt as though the Alliance failed to include them in major mission objectives. Specifically, relationships with Pakistan have been damaged during the operation in Afghanistan. Pakistani officials stated that they felt their boundaries had been overstepped several times, most notably when the U.S. launched a drone strike in the off-limits Baluchistan province.<sup>218</sup> Military leaders within the Alliance have argued that Pakistan has not been doing enough to combat the jihadist groups within its borders.<sup>219</sup> NATO-ISAF action plans have also

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<sup>210</sup> Axelrod, R., Borzutzky, S. “NATO and the war on terror: The organizational challenges of the post 9/11 world.” *Rev Int Org I*, (2006), 293–307.

<sup>211</sup> Peters, Rudolph. *Jihad: A History in Documents*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2016), 2.

<sup>212</sup> NATO. “Countering terrorism.” 2019. *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> Genna, Frederica. “Defense Against Terrorism Review (DATR).” *EBSCO*. EBSCO Publishing, 2018.

<sup>217</sup> Axelrod, R., Borzutzky, S. “NATO and the war on terror: The organizational challenges of the post 9/11 world.” *Rev Int Org I*, 293–307 (2006).

<sup>218</sup> Tankel, Stephen. 2016. “Confronting Pakistan’s Support for Terrorism: Don’t Designate, Calibrate.” *Washington Quarterly* 39 (4): 165–79.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

aimed to improve the operational capabilities of its Mid-Eurasian allies, but this has evidently not been the case. Rather, ambiguous goals and a lack of transparency with neighboring governments has created a situation in which a NATO withdrawal from the region seems unlikely. Not only has the failure of NATO to leave the Middle East been costly for its members and for host countries, it has also served as phenomenal recruitment propaganda for jihadist groups, and made it increasingly difficult for allied Islamic governments to work with the U.S. and NATO.<sup>220</sup>

### **The Problem with the War on Terror**

Perhaps one of the greatest contributing factors to the lack of significant progress in combating jihadi terrorist groups is the way in which Western governments initially responded to this new category of security threat, namely in their divisive rhetoric. Immediately after the September 11 attacks, President George W. Bush announced that the United States would enter “the war on terrorism,” a term that not only spread Islamophobic sentiment throughout the United States and Europe, but also contributed to the lack of a clearly defined mission objective.<sup>221</sup> Within 24 hours, NATO invoked Article 5, officially entering the conflict. Only ten years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the 9/11 attacks immediately presented post-Cold War NATO with a new mission, switching from defense against communism to a war on terrorism.

Several problems exist with the term, “war on terrorism.” Bunzel argues that this naming of the conflict demonstrated a clear lack of understanding of jihadist ideology, and gave the impression that military force was the obvious and only solution.<sup>222</sup> This was the first time that the U.S. and NATO were faced with an enemy that defied the boundaries of a traditional state actor. Even so, they categorized the conflict in a way that would warrant traditional state-vs-state warfare. Speaking on this logic, renowned historian, Michael Howard, said, “we cannot be at war with an abstract noun... our adversaries are people.”<sup>223</sup> Rather than taking the time to enhance their understanding of the nature of jihadi ideology, the U.S. and NATO pushed immediately for a large-scale military invasion.

Not only does ‘terrorism’ not accurately represent such a complex issue, it also gives the appearance that ‘terror’ is the main goal of jihadist groups. Terrorism is but a “tactic in the jihadis’ tool-chest for achieving their larger aims, which include seizing territory and establishing a state.”<sup>224</sup> By failing to see the bigger picture, the United States and NATO assumed the belief that jihadist groups acted only to terrorize the West, with no other political or ideological motivation. This belief also completely disregarded the violence that had been carried out by jihadist groups in their own countries, against their own people. Had NATO shown more solidarity with victims all over the world, it might have “created a less vengeful and more broad-based sense of victim-hood and grievance.”<sup>225</sup> Not only did NATO’s approach to the War on Terror create generalized assumptions about the beliefs of civilians in places where jihadist groups had taken charge, but it also put them in danger. The principle of distinction in International Humanitarian Law places an obligation on militaries to

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<sup>220</sup> Axelrod, R., Borzutzky, S. “NATO and the war on terror: The organizational challenges of the post 9/11 world.” *Rev Int Org 1*, (2006), 293–307.

<sup>221</sup> Bunzel, Cole. “Jihadism on Its Own Terms: Understanding a Movement.” *Hoover Institution*, 2018.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> Capie, David. “Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-Terrorism.” 2008. *New Zealand International Review*, Gale Academic Onefile.

properly and efficiently differentiate between civilians and combatants in order to ensure that the least amount of civilian casualties occur.<sup>226</sup> The unclear understanding of the situation and unstructured operational strategies of counterterrorism efforts resulted in the victimization and endangerment of large civilian populations.<sup>227</sup> Going forward, NATO must make greater efforts to incorporate knowledge from partners in Mid-Eurasia with the intention of better understanding the nature of this conflict.

### **What Should NATO be Doing?**

Since 2001, NATO has been engaged in a brutal struggle against a new-age, multidimensional enemy that must be fought using more than just unilateral military force. Knowledge gained over the nearly two-decades-long conflict should underscore “containment over intervention, partnership rather than unilateral activities, and off-shore balancing rather than the use of western soldiers.”<sup>228</sup> In order for NATO to make significant progress in minimizing the threat of jihadi terrorist groups, it is necessary that the Alliance acknowledge past failures and completely redefine its mission. This Task Force recommends that future NATO counterterrorism policy involve improving and repairing strategic partnerships, altering the definition of defense spending, and increasing pressure on Pakistan to deal with jihadist groups in its territory.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

If NATO hopes to continue minimizing the threat of jihadi terrorist groups while at the same time decreasing the responsibility it has for leading operations in the Middle East, it must increase its transparency with partner countries and expand upon efforts to train regional military forces. During the occupation of Afghanistan, neighboring governments that were supporting the NATO-ISAF mission felt as though they were not being kept properly informed on operational details.<sup>229</sup> This lack of transparency created feelings of mistrust and resentment towards Western forces. Some have argued that the risk of potential information leaks did not warrant working that closely with regional authorities.<sup>230</sup> For the sake of repairing strategic partnerships, however, NATO’s technological and security prowess should be able to mitigate the risks associated with classified-information sharing. The cultural and geographical knowledge possessed by local governments is of immense value to counterterrorism efforts, but if they do not fully trust international organizations, NATO should anticipate some push-back in intelligence sharing proposals.

Although there is some debate about the safety risks involved, many military experts have spoken in favor of utilizing voluntary civilian militias. In the struggle against Boko Haram, Nigerian citizens formed the Civilian Joint Task Force (Civilian-JTF).<sup>231</sup> The Nigerian military has relied heavily on information collected by the Civilian-JTF in their efforts to track down members of Boko Haram. Not only has their cultural and geographical knowledge been extremely helpful, it has also

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<sup>226</sup> Taha, Saad Mohammed. “The Place of Humanitarian Law in Global War on Terrorism.” *Near East University*, 2018.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> Omenma, J.T., Hendricks, C.M. “Counterterrorism in Africa: an analysis of the civilian joint task force and military partnership in Nigeria.” *Secur J* 31, (2018), 764–794.

<sup>229</sup> Tanrisever, Oktay. “Afghanistan and Central Asia: NATO’s Role in Regional Security since 9/11.” 2013. *Amsterdam: IOS Press*. ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>230</sup> Omenma, J.T., Hendricks, C.M. “Counterterrorism in Africa: an analysis of the civilian joint task force and military partnership in Nigeria.” *Secur J* 31, (2018), 764–794.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

been theorized that the loss of local support for jihadist groups encourages the population to turn over valuable information to the local government.<sup>232</sup> If evidence continues to highlight the success of these volunteer civilian militias, NATO counterterrorism efforts would likely benefit from assisting in the development of indigenous operational abilities.

In order to build upon the current efforts to strengthen the operational capabilities of local governments, this Task Force recommends that NATO begin delegating certain aspects of its mission to culturally-cohesive regional organizations. The proximity of neighboring countries “creates physical and cultural ties, shared vulnerabilities and shared opportunities,” all of which strengthen their potential to take over much of the counterterrorism work that NATO is currently in charge of.<sup>233</sup> For example, in 2007, the countries of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Iran created an alliance to promote cultural and agricultural development projects based on their common Persian language.<sup>234</sup> The Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre is another coalition that has been involved with the conflict in Afghanistan.<sup>235</sup> With local knowledge, they work to combat drug trafficking – as well as other forms of organized crime – that often serve to fund terrorist groups. These regional partnerships, as well as the aforementioned volunteer militias, develop the kind of support networks and military capabilities necessary to combat jihadist groups.

### **Redefining “Defense Spending”**

NATO was founded in 1949 on the basis of being an allied national security front, in which the collective action of all members served to maintain defense capabilities. For decades, U.S. officials have complained that many NATO states fail to contribute the agreed-upon 2% of GDP to defense spending.<sup>236</sup> As of 2019, only seven out of twenty-nine NATO member states met this requirement, while other highly-capable countries like France, Italy, and Germany failed to do so.<sup>237</sup> The issue of burden-sharing has been the basis for continued criticism by President Trump, who has argued that the United States cannot possibly benefit from an alliance in which they contribute 70% of all defense spending.<sup>238</sup> This has resulted in an obvious lack of cohesion amongst members of the Alliance.<sup>239</sup> In spite of President Trump’s threats to leave the Alliance, it appears that member states are no longer willing to spend the required amount on building up their military.<sup>240</sup> By broadening the definition of defense spending, NATO will not only re-establish cohesion within the Alliance, but will also ensure that all members are able to contribute to global security efforts in a way that encompasses more than just military might.

In 2018, a group of scientists and technology experts from various NATO states and partner countries attended a workshop to share and assess their recent developments in the field of

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid

<sup>233</sup> Tanrisever, Oktay. “Afghanistan and Central Asia: NATO's Role in Regional Security since 9/11.” 2013. *Amsterdam: IOS Press*, ProQuest Ebook Central, 181.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Carpenter, Ted Galen. *NATO: The Dangerous Dinosaur* (Washington, D. C.: The CATO Institute, 2019).

<sup>237</sup> Fiorentino, Michael-Ross. “NATO Pledge: Which European Countries Spend over 2% of GDP on Defence?” *euronews*, March 14, 2019.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

counterterrorism.<sup>241</sup> Some of these achievements included new technologies to assist in the detection and removal of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and handheld “dirty bomb” detectors.<sup>242</sup> Participants in this workshop included many of the NATO countries that have continually not met the required defense spending contribution, such as Italy, the Ukraine, Croatia, Norway, Portugal, and Slovenia.<sup>243</sup> Additionally, it may benefit NATO counterterrorism efforts to count humanitarian aid toward member contribution, given that the Alliance has acknowledged the importance of improving living conditions in regions where jihadist movements are growing. In doing so, NATO members that oppose an increasing their military spending may be more willing to increase their foreign aid to countries affected by terrorism. By working to improve the economy, infrastructure, and access to education in at-risk areas, NATO member countries could have a major impact on the lives of civilians. Former British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, once argued that “[the] belief that the correct response to the terrorist threat was a military one,” was, “misleading and mistaken.”<sup>244</sup> Broadening the definition of defense spending to include technological developments and humanitarian aid would not only expand the scope of counterterrorism efforts, it would also provide an avenue for NATO members to contribute according to the solution they believe is most effective.

### **Increasing Pressure on Pakistan**

Despite repeated demands from several international actors – namely the United States and NATO – the Pakistani government has failed to uphold its promise to drive jihadi terrorist groups out of the country. Pakistan began receiving aid from the U.S. after 9/11, when it agreed to support NATO counterterrorism efforts.<sup>245</sup> By 2005, cooperation from the Pakistani government had declined as public support for the Taliban grew and peace deals were signed with jihadi groups in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).<sup>246</sup> The Pakistani government’s failure to uphold their end of the bargain outraged U.S. officials. In a 2016 congressional hearing, following years of mounted frustration, the U.S. placed holds on Pakistan’s financial assistance, with some lawmakers contemplating whether or not it was time to officially declare Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism.<sup>247</sup> To date, the United States and NATO have yet to proceed with this designation, feeling that such a move would endanger their already-limited cooperation with counterterrorism efforts.<sup>248</sup>

Although NATO involvement with Pakistan has been rather narrow in comparison to that of the United States, global counterterrorism efforts would benefit from increased pressure from a multinational organization like NATO. One of the shortcomings of the original demands made by the United States was their maximalist nature, having outlined few short-term goals and requiring that Pakistan carry out large-scale incursions against several powerful militant groups.<sup>249</sup> This Task Force

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<sup>241</sup> "Italy: New NATO scientific projects to help with the fight against terrorism." *TendersInfo News*, Gale OneFile: Business, 2018.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> Omenma, J.T., Hendricks, C.M. “Counterterrorism in Africa: an analysis of the civilian joint task force and military partnership in Nigeria.” *Secur J* 31, (2018), 764–794.

<sup>245</sup> Tankel, Stephen. 2016. “Confronting Pakistan’s Support for Terrorism: Don’t Designate, Calibrate.” *Washington Quarterly* 39 (4): 165–79.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

recommends that NATO identify concrete goals with incremental benchmarks to guide Pakistan's policy towards jihadist groups residing within their borders. The organization should also consider providing conditional financial and military aid to assist in the achievement of said goals. In order to build credibility with Pakistan, it is in NATO's best interest to avoid feeble responses to continued inaction by the Pakistani government.

### **Conclusion: Defining "Success"**

For nearly two decades now, NATO has been engaged in what seems like an endless battle to minimize the threat of jihadi terrorist groups. From the beginning of its involvement in the global war on terror, the organization has made crucial mistakes regarding its understanding of this relatively new threat, further complicating the search for a durable solution. Consequently, NATO is faced with several obstacles that hinder its counterterrorism efforts, including damaged relationships with strategic partner countries, regional governments that are largely unprepared for a NATO withdrawal, and a lack of cohesion among members of the Alliance. In order for the organization to achieve significant progress in its counterterrorism objectives in a way that makes possible a future withdrawal from the region, this Task Force recommends that NATO improve relations with strategic partnerships in Mid-Eurasia, redefine what defense spending means in terms of required member contribution, and increase pressure on Pakistan to take action against jihadi terrorist groups within its borders. In addition, NATO will have to be much clearer and more realistic when setting operational goals, keeping in mind that long-term success requires more than just military solutions, and may never result in the total eradication of jihadi ideology from the world. Rather, the struggle against jihadi terrorism is comparable to the reality of fighting ordinary crime in that; "victory does not mean an end to the problem, but rather reducing the violence to the point where normal life for most people is possible."<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Byman, Daniel, and Ian A. Merritt. 2018. "The New American Way of War: Special Operations Forces in the War on Terrorism." *Washington Quarterly* 41 (2): 79–93.

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# Migration and Mid-Eurasia: Strategizing for the Present and Preparing for the Future

Micah Slaughter

## Introduction

In the past decade, migration from and through Mid-Eurasia has become a pressing issue. Here, Mid-Eurasia refers to the area spanning from Afghanistan to Morocco, or roughly the region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This region is critical as both a source of emigration and a key area through which migrants from Eastern and Southern Eurasia, as well as sub-Saharan Africa, must pass. In reference to the NATO Alliance, looking at flows of migration through the MENA region takes top priority as an area of consideration for the member states NATO. Though it is not a direct security issue, the institution of the NATO alliance should view this migration as a top concern because of its entangling roots in socio-demographic complexities and world challenges, like those posed by globalization and climate change. The subject of migration encompasses far more than initially meets the eye and has the potential to exacerbate security issues if addressed inadequately.<sup>251</sup> To examine issues in the MENA region, this Task Force recommends building a concrete foundation of understanding on regional history and the issues presently at hand there, before outlining potential strategies for prevention, which focus primarily on the importance of transnational partnerships, suggest further generous support for areas neighboring crises, and conflict resolution collaboration between powers.

## Laying the Foundation

Migration policies and military policies are inextricably linked issues. These issues form a positive feedback loop with military action driving migration and inadequate migration policy leading to radicalization and terror, which prompt a further need for military intervention, creating a vicious cycle. The following sections shift gears slightly away from the cases of Afghanistan and terror, towards the migration events in the MENA region. To set the stage for policy strategies, examining cases from the Arab Spring revolutions of the early 2010s provides prudent background information and grounds for analysis. In the wake of civil war, the Syrian migrant crisis provides perhaps the most extensive example of the complexities of migration. Popular uprising, foreign intervention, radical jihadism, and unmanageable human movement through states like Turkey are all implicated in the still unfolding events in Syria.<sup>252</sup> The fallout from these violent revolutions and subsequent foreign military interventions have displaced millions of people and pushed even more out of the MENA region.<sup>253</sup>

### Libya – A Case Study

NATO's intervention in Libya serves as a prime example of the interplay between migration and the security alliance, though it does not suffer from the same degree of complexity as the case of Syria. The military intervention there was the result of pressure from French President Nicolas Sarkozy, despite initial rejection from the United Nations and some NATO members. Britain, France,

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<sup>251</sup> Claude Lambert. "On "Military Force and Mass Migration in Europe." *Parameters* 47, no. 4 (2017): 121-22.

<sup>252</sup> Marion Boulby, and Kenneth Christie. *Migration, Refugees and Human Security in the Mediterranean and MENA*. (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 4-6.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

and the U.S. rationalized action in Benghazi through the “Responsibility to Protect Civilians” (R2P).<sup>254</sup> The United Nations report on R2P states explains that, “...when a state fails to protect its people, the international community is obligated to act, including with military intervention, to protect those people. This principle became important in the wake of diplomatic failures in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia.”<sup>255</sup> Thus, NATO members invoked R2P following the Qaddafi regime’s threats to attack its people.

The U.S. actually played a relatively small role in the Benghazi intervention, securing a regional no-fly zone and providing resources to French and British forces.<sup>256</sup> This coordination highlights some of NATO’s strengths, like allowing member states more flexibility in their involvement.<sup>257</sup> However, the international community widely recognized the Libyan intervention as forced regime change on the behalf of NATO. Such impressions, coupled with underdeveloped plans for post-intervention action, marred the NATO actions in Libya as a failure.<sup>258</sup>

The lack of a concrete strategy for post-intervention Libya has left the country without a stable government since the early 2010s. In regard to migration, instability in Libya poses a major challenge due to the high levels of illegal immigration and incidences of human trafficking and smuggling seen in the post-war period. Libya’s northern coast and uncontrolled borders make it a prime location for migrants trying to reach Europe. Southern NATO states like Italy bear the brunt of this movement because of their shared coastline with the Mediterranean, a centuries old highway for transit and migration.<sup>259</sup> The Qaddafi regime exploited these issues in order to place pressure on Southern European nations, but the collapse of the regime has only served to worsen the problem, giving more power to criminal smuggling groups and placing a greater burden on migrants.

The case of Libya is only one of many complex narratives, entangling security, politics, and human rights. It exemplifies the all-encompassing nature of military action, and thus serves as a rich foundation for further analysis of migration from and through the Mid-Eurasian landmass.

### **Identifying Present Issues**

Discerning precisely what issues motivate migration lies at the heart of the crisis. The influences driving migration spread across political, economic, religious, and climate-focused sectors of society. The term “push factors” refers to the reasons people leave an area.<sup>260</sup> In the MENA region, push factors have typically included poor governance, prolonged conflicts, minimal economic opportunity, and diminishing resources.<sup>261</sup> Conversely, “pull factors” refer to the reasons people move into an area, such as political stability and employment opportunity.<sup>262</sup> Migration in Mid-Eurasia includes a number of different categorizations of people: Migrants being the umbrella term

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<sup>254</sup> Mustafa O. Attir, and Ricardo René Larémont. "Euro-American Foreign Policy, the Fall of the Qaddafi Regime, and the Consequences for Migration." *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 7, no. 1 (2016): 85-100.

<sup>255</sup> Attir, 91.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, 89-102.

<sup>257</sup> David P. Auerswald, and Stephen M. Saideman. *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 196-8.

<sup>258</sup> Attir, 6.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 92-4.

<sup>260</sup> Iulian Chifu, and Simona Țuțuianu. *Torn between East and West: Europe's Border States*. (London; New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 98.

<sup>261</sup> Boulby, 80.

<sup>262</sup> Chifu, 98.

encapsulating both asylum seekers – those fleeing hostility and persecution – and refugees – those having already obtained asylum status.<sup>263</sup> Leaving to seek refuge is generally the last resort for populations in war-torn nations. Asylum seekers moving through Mid-Eurasia see the European Union and NATO member states as their only choices for a safer, better life.<sup>264</sup>

Limited adherence to international laws and norms surrounding asylum seekers and refugees within the MENA region has also served to push migrants out of Mid-Eurasia entirely. The United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention and subsequent Alternatives to Camps policy bar countries from placing certain restrictions on refugees and on refugee camps.<sup>265</sup> In the MENA region, Jordan and Turkey have notoriously disregarded these standards.<sup>266</sup> Continued military strife, long term instability, and displacement due to climate change threaten to exacerbate the current issues of migration, making mitigation essential.

### Migration Routes and Their Risks

The Mid-Eurasian landmass offers several different routes for passage, each with their own set of risks. There are three major routes in general. The first is a land route traversing Mid-Eurasia to Eastern Europe. The two other routes are waterways, both of which cross the Mediterranean Sea. The western most route passes through Morocco and the Straits of Gibraltar, and the central route departs from the shores of Libya.<sup>267</sup> These two are by and large the deadliest routes as crossing the Mediterranean poses the greatest threat to migrants. It is also the most popular means of migration.<sup>268</sup>

Transit migration also makes up a considerable portion of human movement through the MENA region. These migrants typically move north from the African continent or northwest from East and Southeast Asia through Mid-Eurasia, attempting to enter Europe through these three major migratory routes.<sup>269</sup> Moving between host nations requires migrants to be constantly on the move to find an adequate, amenable country in which to seek refuge.

Here, Libya again plays an important role. As crossing the Mediterranean becomes more popular, the insecurity of Libya's borders and shores make it a prime location for migrants. Four of the major starting points for these routes are located along the Libyan coast, compared to two major departure areas in neighboring Tunisia.<sup>270</sup>

### Issues upon Arrival

Unfortunately, the struggle for migrants does not end upon arrival in NATO member states. In order to obtain refugee status, asylum seekers must prove their fear of persecution in their homeland for reasons of race, religion, or nationality, among other identity markers.<sup>271</sup> Asylum applications can take months to process, with nearly three quarters of them being rejected.<sup>272</sup> During this time, migrants may face racism, xenophobia, or threats of deportation in a particular host country.<sup>273</sup> A major influx

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>265</sup> Boulby, 84.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Attir, 94.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>269</sup> Ester Mingot. "Transit Migration in the Mena Region: A Review in Case." *The Ahfad Journal* 29, no. 2 (2012): 85.

<sup>270</sup> Attir, 96.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Boulby, 9.

of migrants into NATO member countries will also stress political and economic systems there, as the rise of right-wing populism in Europe has already demonstrated.<sup>274</sup>

In addition to the challenges of the asylum process, migrants are often forced to contend with the costs of their travel. Working with smuggling groups to cross the Mediterranean via Libya can cost upwards of \$10,000.<sup>275</sup> Financing their travels poses a major challenge to most migrants, particularly economic migrants. Criminal groups engaged in smuggling or human trafficking often trap migrants into debt peonage or sex work in order to pay off their debts.<sup>276</sup>

### **Proposals Moving Forward**

In order to develop adequate strategies for combatting migration related security challenges, the NATO alliance must broaden the scope of its possible actions beyond the realm of military action.

#### Expanding the Possibilities through Partnerships

Migration is a security issue with no clear solution. Addressing such a situation will require NATO to partner with other international organizations and individual nations to address the problem. The economically specialized European Union may prove to be a good ally in tackling migration related issues, in part because of its overlap with NATO in member nations. The European Neighborhood Policy also addresses issues of migration and security on a case by case basis with some successes in small countries.<sup>277</sup> Therefore, it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO extend its potential policies beyond the realm of security into political and economic action to adapt to the modern day security atmosphere, and enter into new collaborative partnerships focused specifically on addressing this issue.

#### Strategies for the Present

Given the preceding analysis of migration-related issues at hand, developing potential strategies and policies for addressing these problems becomes far more tangible. Two potential strategies this Task Force argues NATO should pursue in the immediate future include both providing additional economic and structural support to the neighboring countries where crises and conflict are taking place, and strengthening social support systems in host countries receiving immigrants. Both would help alleviate pressures on host nations without placing undue burdens on migrants.

Providing well-resourced support programs to countries or regions neighboring a crisis could help to address some of the factors pushing migrants out of the MENA region entirely. This is particularly true for “first asylum” countries which typically house the greatest number of displaced peoples.<sup>278</sup> Syrian migration into Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon during the Syrian Civil War offers the clearest example of the stress placed upon first asylum countries. Well-funded programs in neighboring countries may help to avoid the neglect of the U.N.’s Alternatives to Camps policy, barring nations from placing restrictions on refugees’ work opportunities or mobility.<sup>279</sup>

In final host countries, strong social and economic networks may help migrants acclimate to life in a vastly different setting. Beyond assuaging language barriers, access to job training and

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

<sup>275</sup> Attir, 93.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>277</sup> Chifu, 173-4.

<sup>278</sup> Boulby, 81.

<sup>279</sup> Boulby, 84-5.

education allows migrants to become self-sufficient members of society early on in their journey.<sup>280</sup> Such programs could also help prevent indoctrination or radicalization of younger migrant communities against the West, creating a preventative measure for combatting violent conflict and terror.

### Strategies for the Future

Moving forward, preventing migration crises and their subsequent problems necessitates not only solving the present problems, but also putting in place sustainable policies and strategies for the future. One potential strategy this Task Force believes could be invaluable for the Alliance is to employ military intervention as an absolute last resort, favoring economic or political tactics instead. Linking back to the idea of partnership, kindling durable regional partnerships avoids the complications associated with foreign, and particularly American, interference. Opting to work with neighboring states allows nations with similar or familiar languages, cultures, and histories to collaborate on conflict resolution and reform.

Again, the case of Libya helps to illustrate how such planning may unfold. The state has been without a stable government since the fall of the Qaddafi regime to the NATO intervention and the Arab Spring revolutions. In recent months, neighboring Algeria and Tunisia have made multiple statements surrounding their mutual cooperation and their attitudes towards the crisis in Libya.<sup>281</sup> All three countries share mutually intelligible Arabic dialects, similar histories of colonialism and political strife, and similar demographic makeups since the Berber Amazigh peoples are indigenous to the whole of North Africa. Bound together by these commonalities, the Algerian and Tunisian leaders alleged their well-founded support for the establishment of new institutions and election systems in Libya under the guidance of the United Nations and various European states.<sup>282</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This Task Force briefing merely skims the surface of the all-encompassing, global issue migration through Mid-Eurasia represents. For the purposes of this Task Force, Libya serves as an excellent foundation for understanding the origins of the current migration crisis and for contextualizing its consequent challenges. Providing support to first asylum countries and constructing strong social safety nets in final countries of settling prevents much of the fallout caused by migration before it develops into a security crisis. Another preventative measure, limiting future usage of military force in troubled areas, can mitigate the push factors of emigration. Above all, partnering with international organizations and regional powers grants NATO the opportunity to play a role in migration-security issues without the appearance of Western intervention and without moving beyond the scope of the security alliance. The challenges of security and movement continue to grow more complex and intertwined as rates of migration and displacement rise. NATO, as an international security apparatus, must change its perspective on migration moving forward in an increasingly globalized world if it hopes to adequately address these issues.

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>281</sup> "ودبحة جزائرية لتونس... الرئيسان التونسي والجزائري يقترحان استضافة لقاءات لفرقاء أزمة ليبيا". Al Jazeera. (Al Jazeera Media Network, February 2, 2020). <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/politics/2020/2/2/الجزائر-تونس-قيس-سعيد-عبد-المجيد-تيون-ليبيا>

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

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# East Eurasia

## China-Russia Relations: Threat or No Threat to NATO?

Jing Wu

### Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949 as an alliance between North America and Europe to prevent the influence of the communist Soviet Union from spilling over into other Eastern European countries. Today, the purpose of NATO is “to guarantee the freedom and security of its members countries by political and military means.”<sup>283</sup> Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO’s initial *raison d’être* has been accomplished, but a new potential threat is rising from the East: The relationship between China and Russia. This relationship has been given several names from a “strategic partnership,” to a “soft alliance,” to a “marriage of convenience.”<sup>284,285,286</sup> As the terms indicate, the relationship is very complicated. There are common interests between them, but there are also conflicting ones. These points of convergence and divergence in their interests not only shape the relationship between the two states, but also the regional area around them. The ambiguous relationship between China and Russia potentially threatens the stability not only of the regional area, but of the entire Eurasian supercontinent just as it did in the early stages of the Cold War. Although still distant, the possibility of an alliance between these authoritarian regimes should be considered a concern for NATO and its partners.

This paper will attempt to explain the long history of this relationship and suggest what NATO should do in response to the challenge it presents. In order to address the complexity of Sino-Russo relations, the first section will examine the relationship between China and Russia’s predecessor, the Soviet Union, in order to provide a clear idea of the basis upon which the current relationship was formed. The following section will be dedicated to a consideration of the economic, military, and political factors that have encouraged cooperation between the two. The third section will focus on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in contrast to NATO and its implications for the Transatlantic Alliance. Finally, the concluding section will use the previous analyses to propose policies concerning what actions this Task Force believes NATO should take to address the strengthening relationship between China and Russia.

### Looking Back into History: Sino-Soviet Relations

Ties between China and Russia go as far back as the Mongol Empire; however, given the scope of this paper, the present analysis will be limited to relations beginning in the latter half of the Soviet Empire’s rule. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in its early stages, was based on the Soviet’s own model. This shaped the initial relationship between the two states: The Soviet Union was the “big brother,” experienced and successful in achieving Communism, and the fledgling Chinese state was

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<sup>283</sup> “NATO Checklist.” NATO. NATO, n.d.

<sup>284</sup> Kashin, Vasily, Ma Bin, Yuki Tatsumi, and Zhang Jian. “Sino-Russian Relations: Perspectives from Russia, China, and Japan.” Seattle, WA: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2019.

<sup>285</sup> Gabuev, Alexander. “A ‘Soft Alliance’? Russia - China Relations After the Ukraine Crisis.” European Council on Foreign Relations, February 2015, 1–11.

<sup>286</sup> Lukin Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018.

the “younger brother” who had just fought its own communist revolution.<sup>287</sup> The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) provided policy guidance to the CCP, while the CCP sent scholars to the Soviet Union to study their model of development. As the new People’s Republic of China rapidly developed and the CCP grew to become another great communist power, the CCP found itself more and more in opposition to the CPSU. The diverging ideologies between the two communist parties led to tensions and eventually to the breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations. Under Mikhail Gorbachev, the CPSU pursued democratic-like policies while the CCP chose to pursue its own model to fit the unique circumstances of China. The Sino-Soviet split is attributed to the period from the late 1950s to the 1960s. Due to the complicated relationship between the two states, no single event is credited as the sole reason for the break.

The end of the Cold War marked the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the CPSU. The communist party disappeared, and the states previously in the union emerged as independent countries. Russia is often viewed as the successor state to the Soviet Union because it once made-up the largest part of the empire in terms of geographical size and political voice.<sup>288</sup> However, this view is largely incorrect and misleading. The Soviet Union was not Russia and Russia is not the modern-day Soviet Union. The Cold War ended the battle of influence between the Soviet Union’s Communism and the United States’s democracy. Although Russia and the United States have their own battle over interests in East Eurasia, the conflicts are not the same. In a way, China can be considered the real ‘winner’ of the Cold War since it became the sole large power in Asia after the Soviet Empire collapsed.

The rise of China in recent years has caught NATO’s attention, especially due to the re-establishment of relations between China and Russia. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia and China have established relations with each other on the basis of many joint declarations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Communism took a huge hit: The United States was left as the single “superpower” and China could not win the battle for influence in Asia by itself. Thus, China shifted towards Russia in the 1990s.<sup>289</sup> Russia, having taken the biggest hit from the collapse of the Soviet Union and needing to restore relations with other states, reached out to its neighbor. Thus, every few years since December of 1991, when Moscow and Beijing resumed talks after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a new joint declaration has been signed. These declarations range from mutual relations to bilateral relations of friendship and peace to agreements on nuclear weapons.<sup>290</sup> Over the last decade, most of the interactions between China and Russia have been based on mutual disagreements with the United States and countering the United States’s promotion of democracy. Part of the resentment towards the United States has to do with its leading role in many of the existing multilateral institutions such as NATO. China and Russia have both felt that they are being treated unfairly because of choices they have made in the past and are now being left out of important international decisions.<sup>291</sup>

### **Current Chinese-Russian Cooperation**

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>288</sup> Ojo, Emmanuel Oladipo. “From Russianisation to Legalisation: Russia and the Question of Successor State to the Soviet Union.” *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences* 10, no. 12 (August 12, 2017): 1840–55.

<sup>289</sup> Lukin, Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 42.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 96-104.

<sup>291</sup> Stent, Angela. “The Sino-Russian Partnership and Its Impact on U.S. Policy toward Russia.” *Asia Policy* 25, no. 1 (January 2018), 5–11.

Many scholars credit the United States for the increased cooperation between Beijing and Moscow. The United States, viewed as a common adversary for spreading its influence in Asia, has drawn the two powers closer together. Russia and China both want the United States to acknowledge emerging spheres of influence. The powers and institutions established at the end of World War II are slowly changing and breaking down as new players are rising.<sup>292</sup> Marc Ozawa, an Assistant Researcher at the University of Cambridge, argues that the United States should stay in North America, China in Asia, and Russia in East Eurasia.<sup>293</sup> The growth of U.S. presence in Asia is seen as a threat, pulling the two other states together. The terms used to describe this relationship range from “strategic partnership” to “soft alliance,” to “marriage of convenience.” However, there is widespread consensus that neither China nor Russia are seeking a direct alliance, just a partnership.<sup>294</sup> Despite common interests, the long complex history of distrust and misunderstandings between China and Russia prevent either side from wanting to fully commit to a formal alliance. Nonetheless, Moscow and Beijing have strengthened their partnership in economic terms through energy sales and funding, in military terms through joint exercises and arms sales, and in political terms through cooperation. These three areas of collaboration define the relationship between China and Russia.

Economic cooperation can easily be argued to be the most visible aspect of this partnership. The swift development of China’s economy has called for great amounts of energy resources which Russia has been quick to provide. As of 2017, China was Russia’s second largest trading partner with energy sales making up the largest component of their trade.<sup>295</sup> China maintains ambitious plans for its development and desires to become a true competitor to the United States. Mohan Malik, a Professor of Strategic Studies at the National Defense College, speculates China will become a competitor “far more powerful than the former Soviet Union.”<sup>296</sup> Beijing is determined to be the “big brother” in this new relationship. In return for energy sales, China has provided Russia with much-needed funding. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has been trying to rebuild itself as a great power in Eurasia, and its state income relies heavily on natural resource exports.<sup>297</sup> In addition, the 2008 Financial Crisis hit Russia relatively hard in comparison to China, who handled the problem rather well. As a consequence, a trade imbalance has occurred with China sending goods to Russia and Russia sending resources, mainly in the form of energy, to China.<sup>298</sup> Despite the fact that both states have benefitted from it, the increased economic cooperation has also created tensions since China has clearly gained the upper hand in the new relationship. In the words of Andreas Heinemann-Gruder and Heidi Reisinger, authors of “NATO and Asia-Pacific,” “despite rhetorical declarations of goodwill, Chinese-Russian energy relations have been characterized by competition, underlying suspicion, price

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<sup>292</sup> Ansar, Arif. “The Future Role of SCO.” *Defense Journal* 22 (July 31, 2019).

<sup>293</sup> Ozawa, Marc. “Russia and China: ‘Axis of Convenience’ or ‘Stable Strategic Partnership’?” *NATO Defense College*, (July 2019), 1–4.

<sup>294</sup> Korolev, Alexander, and Vladimir Portyakov. “China-Russia Relations in Times of Crisis: A Neoclassical Realist Explanation.” *Asian Perspective* 42, no. 3 (2018), 411–437.

<sup>295</sup> Lubina, Michał. *Russia and China A Political Marriage of Convenience - Stable and Successful*. (Leverkusen: Budrich, Barbara, 2017), 167.

<sup>296</sup> Malik, Mohan. “Geopolitics: Asia Out of Balance?” *NATO and Asia-Pacific*, NDC, (Rome, Italy, 2016), 17–38.

<sup>297</sup> Heinemann-Gruder, Andreas and Reisinger, Heidi. “Russia’s Pivot to China: Discerning Reality from Rhetoric” *NATO and Asia-Pacific*, NDC, (Rome, Italy, 2016), 207-218.

<sup>298</sup> Kashin, Vasily, Ma Bin, Yuki Tatsumi, and Zhang Jian. “Sino-Russian Relations: Perspectives from Russia, China, and Japan.” Seattle, WA: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2019.

battles, and rivalry in Central Asia.”<sup>299</sup> On the one hand, this complicated relationship between Beijing and Moscow may push them apart, but, on the other hand, the trade imbalance makes Russia reliant on China. NATO and others should be aware of the possibility of China using its economic power over Russia to coerce support for its interests in Eastern Eurasia.

Chinese funding to Russia is also a key part of the country’s plans to expand its influence in Asia through the One Belt, One Road initiative. China has prioritized using trade and economic interactions to shape its foreign policy as it has stated it wants to have a peaceful buildup.<sup>300</sup> In terms of economic cooperation and competition, China’s One Belt, One Road initiative may present a challenge to the further deepening of relations between Beijing and Moscow. President Xi Jinping of China hopes this project will help establish economic relations between China and the European Union.<sup>301</sup> In expanding its partnerships and influence, China may clash with Russia considering the current state of Russia’s relations with European states. For example, the Silk Road Economic Belt plans to go through parts of the Caucasus region and Ukraine, which may lead to problems with Russia considering Moscow’s conflicts in these areas.<sup>302</sup> This is one of the reasons China does not give its full support to Russia and vice versa.

Military cooperation between Beijing and Moscow is characterized by the transfer of weaponry and technology, as well as by joint military exercises. In addition to energy and gas transfers, Russia exports a significant amount of weapons and technology to China. Sanctions imposed on China by the West after 1989 forced Chinese leaders to turn towards Russia for military weapons and technology.<sup>303</sup> However, current military sales are mainly commercial rather than for security issues. On the one hand, this situation is starting to put a strain on the relationship between the two because of China’s tendency to resell the technology to other small states.<sup>304</sup> On the other hand, Beijing and Moscow have continued joint military exercises, a practice that goes back to the era of Sino-Soviet relations. The exercises are designed to serve both as warnings to other states of the two countries willingness to exercise military power in the region, and protests against the expanding American presence in Asia. The Chinese-Russian naval drills, dubbed “Joint Sea 2016”, were an expression of their military cooperation as well as a response to the United States’s arrangement of antimissile defense systems in the region.<sup>305</sup> As referenced in the section entitled “Military Balance in Eurasia,” China and Russia feel encircled and contained by the United States.

In regard to the political aspect of their cooperation, while it may first appear as though there has been a pivot of China and Russia towards each other, this paper argues that there has been no such pivot. Despite conflicts and periods of disunity, the two states have always been connected. The reason for this connection is mutual disagreement with the United States; countering the influence of the

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<sup>299</sup> Heinemann-Gruder, Andreas and Reisinger, Heidi. “Russia’s Pivot to China: Discerning Reality from Rhetoric” *NATO and Asia-Pacific*, NDC, (Rome, Italy, 2016), 208.

<sup>300</sup> Ansar, Arif. “The Future Role of SCO.” *Defense Journal* 22 (July 31, 2019).

<sup>301</sup> Zeng, Jinghan. “Does Europe Matter? The Role of Europe in Chinese Narratives of ‘One Belt One Road’ and ‘New Type of Great Power Relations.’” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 55, no. 5 (August 2017): 1162–1176.

<sup>302</sup> Korolev, Alexander, and Vladimir Portyakov. “China-Russia Relations in Times of Crisis: A Neoclassical Realist Explanation.” *Asian Perspective* 42, no. 3 (2018): 411–437.

<sup>303</sup> Lukin, Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 154.

<sup>304</sup> Lubina, Michał. *Russia and China A Political Marriage of Convenience - Stable and Successful*. (Leverkusen: Budrich, Barbara, 2017), 191-192.

<sup>305</sup> Korolev., 423.

United States is, and always has been, a top priority for both countries. Alexander Lukin, Head Professor in the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs department at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, sees China's partnership with Russia as an "alternative to the unipolar world that Washington [is] bent on achieving."<sup>306</sup> The main region of conflict is Central Asia where China, Russia, and the United States have overlapping and competing interests. This rivalry is termed the "Great Games" by Alexander Cooley, Director of Columbia University's Harriman Institute, who argues that the three great states have different but overlapping interests that have turned into a power contest.<sup>307</sup> The United States is interested in Central Asia because of its military bases and routes for operations in Afghanistan. For Russia, Central Asia and the rest of Eastern Eurasia represent potential areas for the expansion of their influence. China's interest in the region is related to security cooperation over Xinjiang (a large autonomous region of China with a large Uyghur population), economic development, and energy.<sup>308</sup>

In the aftermath of 9/11, the situation in Central Asia changed. The U.S., China, and Russia began their "Great Games" competition and, as a result, the Asian states learned not only how to counter their interests, but also how to make beneficial negotiations.<sup>309</sup> Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have oil and natural gas that attracts both China and Russia's attention.<sup>310</sup> Energy reserves in Central Asia may turn Beijing away from Moscow due to price negotiations as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan now offer it options that were not available when the country first turned to Russia for energy during its shortage. After the violent shutdown of student protest in Tiananmen Square in 1989, the West, horrified over human rights violations, imposed sanctions on Beijing, forcing them to seek assistance from Moscow.<sup>311</sup> Similarly, Russia was forced to seek assistance from China after the U.S. and European Union imposed sanctions on it during the Ukraine Crisis in 2014.<sup>312</sup> Sanctions were used by the West to punish and isolate China and Russia, respectively, but they have inadvertently pushed the two to rely on each other even more. However, Central Asia may now offer alternatives to economic cooperation between the two big states. A decrease in economic reliance on each other would allow Russia and China to focus on their own interests without having to be constantly suspicious of the other. Another possibility, that seems increasingly reasonable with the expansion of the SCO, is further cooperation between Beijing and Moscow with the addition of Central Asian states.

### **An Alternative to NATO: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization**

A key aspect of Chinese-Russian relations has always been mutual dissatisfaction with the United States's growing international influence. However, the three powers do share some similar interests. The main source of disagreement is in how they hope to achieve these interests. For example, after 9/11, the U.S., China, and Russia announced they were committed to battling terrorism, but China and Russia did not agree with the United States on methodology. As an alternative to cooperation with

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<sup>306</sup> Lukin, Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 51.

<sup>307</sup> Cooley, Alexander. *Great Games, Local Rules: the New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.)

<sup>308</sup> Lukin, Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 3.

<sup>309</sup> Cooley, Alexander. *Great Games, Local Rules: the New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> Lukin, Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 154.

<sup>312</sup> Gabuev, Alexander. "A 'Soft Alliance'? Russia - China Relations After the Ukraine Crisis." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, February 2015, 1–11.

the U.S. and U.S.-led organizations, Beijing and Moscow have committed to battling terrorism through the SCO. Based on the Shanghai Five, a forum that deals with border issues between China, the former Soviet Union (mainly Russia), and Central Asian states, the SCO was established in 2001 to battle terrorism, extremism, and separatism.<sup>313</sup> There are also high levels of economic cooperation between its members: China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Under the SCO, China and Russia have been able to pursue their own interests by working together, especially in Central Asia. As Lukin states, “Russia welcomes China’s stabilizing economic presence in Central Asia, while Beijing recognizes the traditional Russian interests in the region.”<sup>314</sup>

In the SCO’s early days, the West did not give it much thought, but under President Barack Obama, the United States began to recognize the need for support in Afghanistan from other organizations. The active support provided by the SCO in Afghanistan established the organization as legitimate from the Western perspective.<sup>315</sup> For Eastern Eurasian countries, the SCO may present an alternative to NATO membership. Both organizations are based on the principles of security, battling terrorism, freedom, and separatism. The main differences that separate the SCO from Western multilateral institutions are consideration for respected nation’s ideology of all members, rejection of intervention in its members’s domestic policies, and the rejection of military interference.<sup>316</sup> These factors may appeal to Eastern Eurasian countries due to NATO’s difficult membership requirements. Observing states have asked for official membership into the SCO but very few members are accepted (only India and Pakistan have been able to gain membership thus far). The expansion of the SCO would allow the members to counter U.S. influence in the region, but, because of its small budget, the SCO cannot support many members. China, as one of the leading members, has suggested Moscow and Beijing should contribute financially to the establishment of an SCO Development Bank, but this proposal has been rejected by Russia. Russia does not have the financial capacity to contribute the same amount as China and it fears that, if China is the main contributor, it will use its majority contributions to the bank as platform from which to control the organization.<sup>317</sup> The proposal for an SCO Development Bank is still in discussion today because of support from other members. The creation of the bank would allow SCO to admit more members and create more development projects. If the SCO were to institute a Development Bank, the SCO could become a real challenger to the U.S. and NATO.

### **Proposals**

To prevent potential conflict from occurring and, with the possibility of the SCO expanding into a great multilateral institution that could become an opponent to NATO and the U.S., NATO must acknowledge the relationship between China and Russia as a real threat to its ideology. Given this reality, this Task Force has prepared a two-part proposal for NATO.

First, NATO should not let the United States lead the organization by itself to counter Chinese-Russian relationships. Although the U.S. has a leadership role within NATO, the Alliance should not

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<sup>313</sup> Cooley, Alexander. *Great Games, Local Rules: the New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 74-75.

<sup>314</sup> Lukin, Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 87.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid*, 121.

<sup>316</sup> Gvosdev, Nikolas K., and Christopher Marsh. “Chapter Four: The Bear and the Dragon: China and the East Asian Vector.” In *Russia Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2014), 131.

<sup>317</sup> Lukin, Alexander. *China and Russia: The New Rapprochement*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 124-126.

allow the U.S. to use the organization to pursue its own goals in East Eurasia and should urge it work with its partners instead. The United States should recognize the emergence of spheres of influences and a multipolar world. As Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO, says, “in many ways, NATO is the ultimate expression of the West – Europe and North America.”<sup>318</sup> NATO is focused on the West and, in order to understand the East, it must acknowledge that it is not necessarily the most powerful institution there. Times have changed, states have risen and fallen, and the institutions put in place after World War II are shifting. Failing to recognize different spheres of influence prevents institutions and states from fully understanding the politics of different regions, and may push ideological rivals together (as in the case of Russia and China). Rather than acting alone, the United States would benefit from working with its NATO allies to counter the rising spheres of influence – something it ultimately cannot do unless it acknowledges their existence.

Second, NATO should work with other organizations and partners in dealing with Russia and China. Although NATO does have partnerships with multiple Asian states, the objectives of the partnerships are not clear (see section entitled “NATO Partnerships in East Asia”). The fate of Chinese-Russian relations is difficult to foresee but NATO should not underestimate or ignore the potential dangers of the states’s continued collaboration. NATO’s security goals for peace can be established by working with other organizations. Similar to Beijing and Moscow, who cooperate in response to the threat posed by the U.S., NATO can work with other multilateral organizations in response to threats from Chinese-Russian relations. Further, NATO might benefit from working directly with Russia and China. The overlapping goals of fighting terrorism and protecting member states that NATO and the SCO share could allow room for cooperation. In Afghanistan, the two organizations have already shown that this is achievable. In a recent speech, Stoltenberg announced NATO has no plans to leave Afghanistan.<sup>319</sup> Thus, further cooperation between the SCO and the Alliance could prove beneficial to NATO’s endeavors. This would encourage dialogue between the two organizations and different member states, which could serve as a platform for cooperation in other areas where their interests overlap. In addition, increased dialogue could offer the Alliance opportunities to make better use of its partnerships in East Eurasia. Japan, for example, is an important NATO partner who the organization could cooperate with to counter threats due to rising Chinese-Russian relations. Japan, as another growing power in Asia, is an attractive potential investor for Russia.<sup>320</sup> Thus, by encouraging dialogue between its Japanese partner and Russia, NATO may be able to lessen Moscow’s reliance on Beijing. So far, NATO has not done much in response to Chinese-Russian relations, but by working with its own members and other organizations, NATO will greatly increase its ability to achieve its goals in countering the threats posed by cooperation between Beijing and Moscow.

### **Concluding Remarks: What is Next?**

This paper has attempted to explain the complex relationship between China and Russia, which is characterized by cooperation, mistrust, and uncertainty. Aside from the obvious geopolitical reasons

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<sup>318</sup> Stoltenberg, Jens. 2020. "Munich Security Conference." Munich: NATO, February 15.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Lubina, Michał. *Russia and China A Political Marriage of Convenience - Stable and Successful*. (Leverkusen: Budrich, Barbara, 2017), 272.

for their current close relationship, the long history between the two states has made it difficult for them to separate. This paper has argued that there not been a Chinese pivot towards Russia nor a Russian pivot towards China, but rather growing U.S. interest and influence in East Eurasia has strengthened the preexisting ties between Beijing and Moscow, pushing them towards a closer relationship reminiscent of the early Sino-Soviet period. In the future, Chinese and Russian relations will not likely turn into a full-on alliance due to mutual mistrust and misunderstandings. Michal Lubina, an Assistant Professor of Middle and Far Eastern studies at Jagiellonian University, suggests the two states have similar interests but domestic policy differences will limit their cooperation, “Russia and China represent two different forms of authoritarianism: In general, there is more social freedom in Russia and less economic efficiency and the other way around in China.”<sup>321</sup> However, this does not mean that NATO should not be concerned about the relationship between China and Russia. Despite the underlying factors of the relationship, there has been an increase in cooperation in response to growing U.S. influence, which should be considered a real concern for NATO. If the SCO, under the leadership of Beijing and Moscow, expands to include more members and more areas of cooperation, it will become a competitor to NATO. If this happens, tensions between the U.S. on one side and Russia and China on the other may escalate into a real battle. To prevent this, this Task Force has argued that NATO should take steps to cooperate, and promote dialogue, with other multilateral organizations regarding the stability of East Eurasia. In addition, it has asserted that NATO should ensure that all of its members are working together equally in countering these threats, lest China and Russia come to view the Alliance as a tool of the United States for playing the “Great Games,” which would lead to greater hostility. While the emergence of a full-fledged alliance between China and Russia seems unlikely, the high level of military, economic, and political cooperation between the two states should be a cause for concern for NATO and the stability of the regions surrounding its members. NATO should take action to address this and not brush-off the threat of this complicated relationship.

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 284.

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# **NATO partnerships in East Eurasia: Past, Present, and Future**

Yean Kim

## **Introduction**

The U.S. declared a “pivot to Asia” during the Obama administration before the 2014 Ukrainian crisis reminded NATO members that Russian actions still affect NATO. Asia remains a first-order focus for the U.S. military, with the U.S. and EU both acknowledging the importance of the Asia-Pacific zone in the world economy. This paper examines the NATO structures that allow the Alliance to focus more of its attention on the rise of the Asia-Pacific region. For the U.S., the Asia-Pacific region is no less important than the north Atlantic zone; for the European Union, the Asia-Pacific zone is becoming no less important than North America.

After the Cold War ended, NATO developed a series of partnership organizations that now involve 41 states in four different forums of cooperation. The common concept uniting these partnerships is the idea that, “if NATO’s neighbours are more stable, NATO is more secure.”<sup>322</sup> One of these forums, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), encompasses all NATO Members, several former Warsaw Pact countries, and other states in Europe, and seeks to create individually tailored partnership programs with the overall goal of providing security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Two of the other forums include the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), which are both focused on confidence-building measures among Mid-Eurasian countries. The final forum is the Partners Across the Globe, which is the newest of these four forums and seeks individual cooperation with various countries around the world with the goal of “projecting stability and strengthening security outside NATO territory.”<sup>323</sup>

This paper will focus on the “Partners Across the Globe” forum since it is the Alliance’s main forum for cooperation with the Asia-Pacific. It will first analyze the history of NATO partnerships in the Asia-Pacific at a macro-level and then discuss the history of NATO’s partnerships by country. The following section will analyze the present structure of NATO partnerships in the region, both at a macro-level and at the individual country level, focusing on current perceptions of these partnerships from NATO’s perspective, as well as perceptions of NATO from the perspective of the partner countries. The paper’s final section will be dedicated to a discussion of several policy proposals that this Task Force believes will help NATO effectively carry these partners into the next decade. It will argue that NATO’s partnerships suffer from two interconnected problems: The lack of sufficient focus and sufficient resources allocated to them. To solve these problems, this Task Force will argue that NATO should establish an East Eurasian Strategic Plan dealing with NATO’s goals for each partner country and the region as a whole, as well as recommend engaging in cooperation with multilateral institutions on common security threats based on shared values.

## **The History of NATO’s Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific**

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 drastically changed how NATO partnerships operate, serving as a catalyst for a shift in the purpose of NATO partnerships from spreading

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<sup>322</sup> NATO, “Partnership for Peace Programme.” *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*

democracy and security in Europe to a tool for the projection of NATO power.<sup>324</sup> This was the effective start of NATO's global partners program, the biggest driver of which was the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) program in Afghanistan.<sup>325</sup> The NATO-led ISAF program, lasting from 2003 to 2014, became the main platform for operational cooperation with South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, based on common interests and shared values.<sup>326</sup>

However, the objectives of these partnerships were debated among NATO member states. In 2004, then-U.S. ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns, advocated for an "extension of the alliance of democracies" leading to a NATO "Global Partnership Council."<sup>327</sup> Similarly, Some U.S. analysts, such as Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier in 2006, argued for the expansion of NATO to encompass all democratic countries by creating a "Global NATO."<sup>328</sup> However, many European allies criticized this concept, arguing that the proposals were too ambitious. They instead advocated for only pursuing practical and operational cooperation with the partners (such as in ISAF).<sup>329</sup> As a result, the few mentions in official language of NATO's global partners in East Eurasia remained vague and unfocused, as can be seen from analysis of the Alliance's summit declarations before 2010. NATO's 2004 summit, the first one after the start of ISAF, did not mention the Asia-Pacific region, although it did mention Australia once as a country engaging in increased operational cooperation.<sup>330</sup> The 2006 summit only mentioned the "political and operational value" of partnerships with "contact countries," or countries outside of the existing partnership frameworks of the EAPC, MD, and ICI.<sup>331</sup>

Only starting in 2008, with the growing emphasis placed on the Asia-Pacific by the new U.S. administration, was there an increase in the flow of operational cooperation – such as the anti-piracy "Operation Ocean Shield" in the Gulf of Aden and increased dialogue with states in the region. The 2008 and 2009 summit declarations emphasized the value of the Partners Across the Globe forum and recognized the importance of countries like Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea in "contributing to stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond."<sup>332,333</sup> Later NATO summit meetings, up to 2014, also provided similar mentions to these partner

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<sup>324</sup> Burton, Joe. "NATO's 'Global Partners' in Asia: Shifting Strategic Narratives." *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 10.

<sup>325</sup> Schreer, Benjamin. "Beyond Afghanistan: NATO's Global Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific." *Research Paper - NATO Defense College*, no. 75 (April 2012), 1.

<sup>326</sup> Burton, Joe. "NATO's 'Global Partners' in Asia: Shifting Strategic Narratives." *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 11.

<sup>327</sup> Kamp, Karl-Heinz. "'Global Partnership': A New Conflict Within NATO?" *Analysen Und Argumente Der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, no. 29 (2006), 2.

<sup>328</sup> Daalder, Ivo, and James Goldgeier. "Global NATO." *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 5 (2006), 105.

<sup>329</sup> Kamp, Karl-Heinz. "'Global Partnership': A New Conflict Within NATO?" *Analysen Und Argumente Der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, no. 29 (2006), 4.

<sup>330</sup> NATO. "NATO Press Release (2004)096: Istanbul Summit Communiqué - 28 June 2004." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>331</sup> NATO. "Riga Summit Declaration - Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Riga on 29 November 2006." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>332</sup> NATO. "Bucharest Summit Declaration - Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>333</sup> NATO. "Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg / Kehl." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

countries.<sup>334,335</sup> In addition, there were efforts to formalize NATO's partnerships in East Eurasia, exemplified by various meetings between high-level NATO officials and their counterparts in the East Asian countries. In these meetings, the objectives of these partnerships were clarified, emphasizing a focus on operational partnerships and bilateral relations. However, these objectives remained quite vague, indicated by the lack of a coherent NATO Asia-Pacific policy along with the lack of specific focus and direction in pursuing these bilateral relations.<sup>336</sup>

Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014 changed the progress in all of NATO's partnerships. After the invasion, NATO was forced to turn its attention towards collective defense, focusing more on West Eurasia instead of other regions around the world. This, along with the end of the ISAF mission, resulted in a diminished sense of importance given to NATO's global partnerships in East Eurasia. This has meant that, although there have been continued mentions regarding them, NATO's global partnerships have remained relatively vague with no new major advancements made in the past several years.<sup>337</sup>

### **The Present Situation of NATO's East Eurasian Partnerships**

It is against this background that this paper will analyze the present situation of NATO's global partners in the Asia-Pacific. Currently, NATO still views its partners in the region as critical for cooperation on emerging issues, such as cybersecurity, energy, and common security challenges like North Korea's weapons of mass destruction.<sup>338</sup> However, even though NATO views cooperation on these issues as important to its partnerships, presently, there is not much actual cooperation being done in these fields, either multilaterally or bilaterally.<sup>339,340</sup> In addition, there are currently three general ways in which states cooperate with NATO, which have remained more or less the same since 2012.<sup>341</sup> The first, and by far most concrete, form of cooperation is operational partnerships, such as those that took place in Afghanistan. However, this era appears to be almost over as the U.S. prepares to draw down its presence in Afghanistan. The second type is commercial partnerships in defense sales, which helps European and American firms gain market share in the Asian defense market – the second largest market in the world. The final form of cooperation is political partnerships, which provides another way for partner states to cooperate with the U.S. and helps to increase the legitimacy of NATO operations.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> NATO. "Wales Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>335</sup> NATO. "Lisbon Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Lisbon." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

<sup>336</sup> Schreer, Benjamin. "Beyond Afghanistan: NATO's Global Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific." *Research Paper - NATO Defense College*, no. 75 (April 2012), 2-3.

<sup>337</sup> Moens, Alexander, and Brooke A. Smith-Windsor, eds. *NATO and Asia-Pacific*. NATO Defense College, (2016), 7-10.

<sup>338</sup> Burton, Joe. "NATO's 'Global Partners' in Asia: Shifting Strategic Narratives." *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 18.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

<sup>340</sup> Frühling, Stephan. "'Key to the Defense of the Free World': The Past, Present and Future Relevance of NATO for US Allies in the Asia-Pacific." *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 17, no. 2 (June 2019), 13-14.

<sup>341</sup> Burton, Joe. "NATO's 'Global Partners' in Asia: Shifting Strategic Narratives." *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 13-14.

<sup>342</sup> Tsuruoka, Michito. "NATO and Japan as Multifaceted Partners." *Research Paper - NATO Defense College*, no. 91 (April 2013), 5-7.

Although these three cooperation formats represent general ways in which NATO forms partnerships to conduct its operations, it can be argued that different countries have different levels of involvement in the partnerships due to various practical constraints, in what Benjamin Schreer dubs different “levels of ambition.”<sup>343</sup> Japan’s constitution, for example places restrictions on overseas military deployment, so it has mostly engaged in economic assistance during the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. On the contrary, Australia was able to send direct military support because no such constitutional restrictions prevented it. This is why it is beneficial to discuss NATO partners in the region on an individual country level.

#### Australia and New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand currently have the most sophisticated partnership with NATO, having cooperated with the U.S. and U.K. as allies during the Cold War through initiatives like the Five Eyes Program that encouraged cooperation between their intelligence agencies. However, such interactions before the September 11 terrorist attacks were limited – with one notable exception being the NATO mission in the Balkans, which both countries contributed troops to.<sup>344</sup> After 9/11, however, Australia, New Zealand, and NATO intensified dialogue with each other and engaged in operational partnerships in Afghanistan. The large amount of political and pragmatic cooperation between these states and the Alliance resulted in a very high degree of interoperability among them.<sup>345</sup> However, despite this high degree of cooperation, NATO and Australia currently do not have a coherent strategy for their partnerships. At present, Australia and NATO are both supportive of each other’s past, present, and future missions, with both viewing the other as an important partner in dealing with emerging security issues in the Asia-Pacific and as key participants in future NATO operations around the globe, but this partnership still lacks specific focus and direction.<sup>346</sup>

#### The Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea’s (ROK) relations with NATO are relatively new, having started in 2005. As with Australia and New Zealand, its partnership has mostly focused on operational support in Afghanistan.<sup>347</sup> Presently, the ROK and NATO are both supportive of each other’s goals and missions, viewing each other as positive security influences. Elites in the ROK also view NATO as important in addressing emerging issues where the cooperation of many states is required.<sup>348</sup> However, they tend to view NATO as somewhat ineffective in handling security threats on the Korean Peninsula, due to the perceived lack of NATO involvement in dealing with the ROK’s main security threat, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and its weapons of mass destruction, but, this perceived lack of

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<sup>343</sup> Schreer, Benjamin. “Beyond Afghanistan: NATO’s Global Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific.” *Research Paper - NATO Defense College*, no. 75 (April 2012), 3.

<sup>344</sup> Wellings, et al. “Narrative Alignment and Misalignment: NATO as a Global Actor as Seen from Australia and New Zealand.” *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 2-3.

<sup>345</sup> Schreer, Benjamin. “Beyond Afghanistan: NATO’s Global Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific.” *Research Paper - NATO Defense College*, no. 75 (April 2012), 4.

<sup>346</sup> Wellings, et al. “Narrative Alignment and Misalignment: NATO as a Global Actor as Seen from Australia and New Zealand.” *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 27-29.

<sup>347</sup> Schreer, Benjamin. “Beyond Afghanistan: NATO’s Global Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific.” *Research Paper - NATO Defense College*, no. 75 (April 2012), 4.

<sup>348</sup> Yoon, et al. “Views on NATO from Mongolia and the Republic of Korea: Hedging Strategy, and ‘Perfunctory Partnership?’” *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 56.

involvement also has to do with the fact that neither the U.S. nor the ROK see much need in involving NATO in this issue.<sup>349</sup>

### Japan

Japan's interactions with NATO are unique due to constraints imposed by the country's constitution on its use of military power. This is why, from the 1990s onward, Japan has supported various NATO operations financially, as with the ISAF mission in Afghanistan (sending over \$5 billion in aid), and engaged in political dialogue and defense industry cooperation with its members, especially the U.S., whom Japan is a very close ally of.<sup>350</sup> NATO and Japan view each other as significant partners in various aspects of cooperation, although Japanese elites view NATO as having limited impact on the region due to its focus on Russia, as opposed to Japan's focus on China.<sup>351</sup>

### **The Way Ahead: The Future of NATO's Global Partnerships in East Eurasia**

This analysis of the past and present of NATO's partnerships in East Eurasia, both from a macro-level and an individual country level, reveals several problems in their current layout. The largest problem with the partnerships, a historical problem continuing into the present, is their lack of focus and direction. As can be seen from the preceding analysis, cooperation between NATO and countries with different security needs and environments generally take the same form due to the lack of a coherent partnership strategy. In light of this, this Task Force highly recommends that NATO establish a coherent East Eurasian strategic plan for dealing with its goals in the region as a whole, and for each partner country.

Another important and connected issue with the current format of partnerships is the lack of sufficient resources. Currently, less than 1% of NATO's common budget (around \$20 million) goes to its partnerships, minimizing its impact on regional stability and forcing a reliance on member states' contributions.<sup>352</sup> To solve this problem, rather than increasing its common partnership budget and engaging in a full pivot to the Asia-Pacific, this Task Force argues that using NATO as a forum for cooperation in various security and emerging issues would be a better solution.<sup>353</sup> This would involve reaching out to multilateral institutions (such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Defense Minister's Meeting-Plus) for multilateral cooperation on common security threats based on shared values. A codified, specific NATO strategy for East Eurasia (mentioned above) would help drive the overall discussion, in addition to bilateral discussion among individual partners tailored to their security needs.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed the evolution of NATO's Global Partners in East Eurasia and its future directions. Upon analyzing the history and current situation of NATO's partnerships in the

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<sup>349</sup> Yoon, et al. "Views on NATO from Mongolia and the Republic of Korea: Hedging Strategy, and 'Perfunctory Partnership'?" *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 59-61.

<sup>350</sup> Tsuruoka, Michito. "NATO and Japan as Multifaceted Partners." *Research Paper - NATO Defense College*, no. 91 (April 2013), 2-7.

<sup>351</sup> Bacon, Paul, and Joe Burton. "NATO-Japan Relations: Projecting Strategic Narratives of 'Natural Partnership' and Cooperative Security." *Asian Security* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2018), 40-41.

<sup>352</sup> Lute, Douglas, and Nicholas Burns. "NATO at Seventy: An Alliance in Crisis." Harvard Kennedy School - Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2019, 32.

<sup>353</sup> See Jacob Boehme's paper recommending against a NATO military pivot to the Asia-Pacific, and Jing Wu's paper on China-Russia relations for an expanded argument.

region, it can be seen that they suffer from an interconnected problem of lack of resources and focus. To solve this problem, this Task Force has argued that NATO should create a coherent strategy for East Eurasia that deals with its goals for each partner country and the region as a whole. Then, it should tailor its partnerships with each partner country to their needs and goals, while also reaching out to multilateral institutions to cooperate on shared security threats. These policies would mitigate the budgetary issues of NATO's partnerships and give the partnerships specific focus going into the next decade.

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## **Minority Opinion: China's Exodus – The Belt and Road Initiative, Challenge or Opportunity?**

Kaixuan Li

### **Overview**

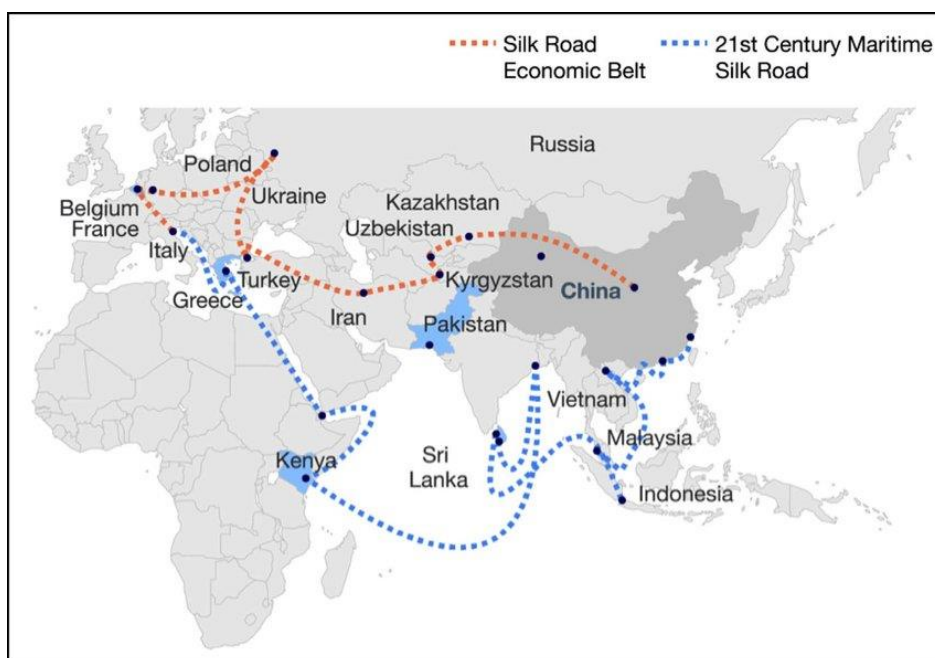
More than two thousand years ago, there was an ancient trade route from China that linked to Central Asia to the West for centuries called the “Silk Road,” which played a very important role in the development of civilizations in these regions. In 2013, China's Chairman, Xi Jinping, announced a similar global development strategy aimed at restoring the ancient route, entitled the “Belt and Road” initiative (BRI). The strategy involves numerous infrastructure development projects and large investments spanning 70 countries worldwide, and covering approximately 60% of the world population. In relation to the initiative's title, “belt” represents the development of a maritime network that seeks to connect China's coastal cities with other coastal cities from Southeast Asia all the way to Europe, and “road” refers to a railway network covering the same regions.<sup>354</sup> It is composed of a total of six economic corridors: The New Eurasian Land Bridge that connects Western China to Western Russia; the China-Mongolia-Russia Corridor that connects North China to Eastern Russia via Mongolia; the China-Central Asia-West Asia Corridor that connects Western China to Turkey via Central and West Asia; the China-Indochina Peninsula Corridor, which connects Southern China to Singapore via Indo-China; The China-Pakistan Corridor, which connects South Western China through Pakistan to Arabia sea routes; and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor, which connects Southern China to India via Bangladesh and Myanmar. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the main objective of the BRI is to “increase connectivity between China and other countries through infrastructure and other connectivity related investments, policy coordination, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds. It entails large financing and investment flows to BRI partner countries for these purposes, as well as other cooperation mechanisms.”<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Gill, Indermit, and Somik V. Lall, “Winners and Losers along China's Belt and Road.”

<sup>355</sup> UNDP. “Belt and Road.” UNDP in China.

Figure 1:



Map of One Belt and One Road initiative.

## Economic Influence

To better understand the economic influence of the BRI, it will be necessary to explore the economic benefit China and its partner countries stand to gain from this strategy. Over the past 30 years, China has become the 2nd largest economy in the world, with a GDP of \$14.3 trillion in 2019, and has maintained an annual GDP growth rate of over 6% for the past twenty years.<sup>356</sup> Although China's economic development has been rapid in the past, the sustainability and quality of the development is less than optimal. Below are the three main problems China is facing, as well as how BRI member countries could potentially help solve these issues and realize profit at the same time.

(1) China still lacks natural resources and overexploitation of its mineral resources during its early years has exacerbated this issue. Currently, China heavily relies on imports of crude oil from countries such as Russia, Canada, and Australia, since it only has 20.3 billion barrels of oil reserve domestically, approximately 1% of global oil reserves.<sup>357</sup> More importantly, most of these imports pass through the region of Malacca, where almost 41% of global pirate attacks take place.<sup>358</sup> The Chinese government has cited the sea route of Malacca as a strategic weakness multiple times in its national research, and it may have a serious impact on economic and military activities if anything goes wrong in Malacca as it would essentially cut-off China's oil supply.<sup>359</sup> In order to avoid this region, China is building a new pipeline through Myanmar under the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor project that starts from Madeira Island, the west coast of Myanmar, and reaches a total length of 771 kilometers to Yunnan province in South China. At the same time, China is actively interacting with

<sup>356</sup> Trading Economics. "China GDP Annual Growth Rate 1989-2019 Data: 2020-2022 Forecast: Calendar." *Trading Economics*.

<sup>357</sup> Vasquez, Patricia. "China's Oil and Gas Footprint in Latin America and Africa." *Revue Internationale de Politique de Développement* 11, no. 1 (May 2019).

<sup>358</sup> McCauley, Adam. "Pirates in Southeast Asia: The World's Most Dangerous Waters." *Time*. Time.

<sup>359</sup> Shaikh, et al. "Prospects of Pakistan-China Energy and Economic Corridor." *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 59 (2016).

Pakistan, one of its most important allies and a member country of the BRI. Initially, Pakistan, through the creation of a strategic agreement on natural gas pipelines – the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline (IPI) – sought the help of Iran to solve an energy problem resulting from its lack of a natural gas supply.<sup>360</sup> However, after the United States began imposing severe economic sanctions on Iran and strict control of Iran’s natural gas resources, it was forced to look for new partners. In this context, Pakistan asked China to build a LNG gas depot in Gwadar Port, so that Iran could sell natural gas to Oman on the other side of the Persian Gulf and transfer it from Oman to Gwadar Port in the southwest corner of Pakistan, and finally pass the Chinese LNG decomposer Shipping to Pakistan. At the same time, the right to develop the Gwadar Port was handed over to China, and it took advantage of this opportunity to open up a strategic energy channel connecting Kashgar to Western China. By using this channel, China has been able to reduce the journey of its oil and gas resources from the Middle East by 8,700 kilometers compared to the sea route through Malacca. Similarly, Chinese goods can also be transported by road to this land. Using the geographical location of Gwadar Port, water transportation can radiate outwards to the huge market in the Middle East and Africa. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is probably the most important corridor for China, and the best model of a win-win strategy between it and the member countries of the BRI that China has worked with since 2013. In this case, China has gained access to the Middle Eastern market and a secure source of energy through the oil pipeline; in return, China has committed \$45.6 billion to help Pakistan develop its economy, of which \$33.8 billion is to be invested in the energy sector and \$11.8 billion in the infrastructure sector.<sup>361</sup>

(2) The geographical-industrial layout of mainland China is not balanced which leads to problems in population allocation. China's industrial and public infrastructure are mostly concentrated in areas along the east and west coasts due to their convenient locations and early government policies of “Chinese economic reform” implemented by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1980s.<sup>362</sup> Despite the fact that China has a population of 1.3 billion, most of its citizens live along the coast, which has left inland areas underdeveloped and underpopulated. However, since European countries have joined the BRI, things have changed. China has made use of the extensive European railway network and started to import expensive goods such as cars and auto parts to China via railway; the routes also cover some parts of China that are seriously underdeveloped. For example, according to research done by a reporter from Wall Street Journal, Trefor Moss, “Alashankou, a far-flung outpost in China's northwest, is the primary exit point for Europe-bound trains and the quintessential belt-and-road boomtown. Its population has tripled to 32,000 in five years and new public projects include a sports complex and an opera center.”<sup>363</sup> Currently, European countries are also benefiting from the increased volume of trade from the BRI: The number of trains sent from China to Europe reached 3,700 in 2016 and is expected to be over 5,000 by 2020.<sup>364</sup> Last year, during Chinese Xi’s visit to France, China signed deals worth

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<sup>360</sup> Chatzky, Andrew, and James McBride. “China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative.” Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations. 28 January 2020.

<sup>361</sup> Habibi, Nader, and Hans Yue Zhu. “What CPEC Means for China's Middle East Relations.” *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 22 January 2020.

<sup>362</sup> Chang, David W. “China under Deng Xiaoping: Political and Economic Reform.” Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991.

<sup>363</sup> Moss, Trefor. “China Now Has a Rail Link into the Heart of Europe.” *The Wall Street Journal*, The Wall Street Journal Eastern Edition, 2017.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

billions of euros, including a huge Airbus plane order to show its support of the BRI member country after France joined in early 2019.<sup>365</sup>

(3) China's overcapacity problem is getting serious. In 2008, Former Premier Mr. Wen Jiabao introduced a "four trillion yuan investment plan" for the purpose of stabilizing the domestic economy and offsetting the impact from the global recession.<sup>366</sup> According to a report by the Brookings Institution entitled "The Long Shadow of China's Fiscal Expansion," the program funds, which amount to nearly 11% of China's annual GDP, were designed to be spent on infrastructure projects between 2009 and 2010."<sup>367</sup> Despite the fact that this plan helped China mitigate the impact of the 2008 Recession, it has created new problems for the country, such as overcapacity in the long run, and it continues to affect many of its key industries, including chemicals, steel, and cement. Renewable energy development, such as the solar industry, have been affected by anti-dumping and countervailing investigations globally. However, these industries that are plagued by overcapacity problems and are still considered relatively desirable in many third world countries along the route of the BRI. By adapting the BRI strategy to transfer excess capacity to these countries, China could not only solve the problem of industrial structure adjustment and upgrading, but also promote the economic development of these third world countries.

### **Political Implications and Concerns**

The Belt and Road Initiative is by far the most ambitious economic expansion strategy in the 21st century. According to the Chinese government, the first thing to understand about the BRI is that it is a solely economic development strategy, and there are no political implications involved in the initiative.

There are growing concerns about the incentive of loans from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), especially after Sri Lanka signed a 99-year lease on one of its strategic seaports, "the Hambantota Port," worth \$1.4 billion, with China after failing to pay for the loans it provided.<sup>368</sup> It is also unclear if China will use this port for military purpose and the potential risk of letting a foreign country control Sri Lanka's own port is unquestionably large, leading to accusations that China is setting up debt traps in underdeveloped member countries that accept loans from AIIB to implement the BRI. Malaysia also encountered a similar problem about the Chinese infrastructure loan that was going to be used for building the east coast rail line that connects Malaysia's east coast economic region to the west coast and central areas. China's Exim Bank will provide a RM55 billion loan to the Malaysian Rail Link, Sdn Bhd, which was set up specifically for the project, however, the two parties have announced that the main contractor for the railway construction is China's state-owned enterprise the China Communications Construction Co., Ltd.<sup>369</sup> Under the contract, the company must subcontract some of its work to second-hand contractors. But the fact remains that Malaysia will have to pay a large part of the loan to a Chinese company immediately, and then have to

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<sup>365</sup> Katz, et al. "Airbus Secures \$35 Billion China Deal in New Blow to Boeing." *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, 25 March 2019.

<sup>366</sup> Chinese Consulate. "China's 4 trillion yuan stimulus to boost economy, domestic demand." Chinese Consulate, 11 November 2008.

<sup>367</sup> Gill, Indermit, Somik V. Lall, and Mathilde Lebrand. "Winners and Losers along China's Belt and Road." *The Brookings Institution*, Brookings, 20 June 2019.

<sup>368</sup> Moramudali, Umesh. "The Hambantota Port Deal: Myths and Realities." *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 1 January 2020.

<sup>369</sup> NST Team. "Finance Ministry Says ECRL Can Cover Its Operating Cost, Pay Back Loan." NST Online. 13 November 2017.

repay the loan with long-term interest. Even if the railway plan is not profitable, Malaysian capital will still flow to China due to the fact that the government is the loan guarantor, and all risks and liabilities will go toward the Malaysian taxpayers. In addition, China exports its laborers to these regions and has become the loaner of these massive projects with almost zero liability, indicating that, even if the loan goes bad, China could always use this debt to gain national leverage and exert more political influence over these member states.

In the meantime, by mobilizing such a large amount of national resources and accelerating expansions throughout Eurasia and Africa, Beijing will be able to put itself into a more engaged place in the current world order, something it has not done in recent history. With China's domestic money from both public and private sectors flowing into these new areas, it will inevitably force the regime to modify its noninterference policy and loosen restrictions on unilateral military intervention.<sup>370</sup> China is slowly moving further into uber sensitive areas with complicated international issues, such as issues with Iran and the fact that the Western world does not wish for a mega power such as China to gain traction in certain areas. Any political intervention that the BRI strategy might involve would very likely be considered geopolitical expansion from the perspective of the West.

### **How It Compare to the Marshall Plan and the Ancient Tribute System**

For the past few years, many Western scholars have come to view the BRI as a second iteration of the "Marshall Plan," since it aims to help underdeveloped countries in Eurasia build infrastructure and provides loans through the AIIB, and there are worries that it may give China the ability to build its own sphere of influence and fundamentally challenge the current U.S.-led world order by implanting itself in the center of political life within BRI member states. There is approximately \$400bn worth of financing that is planned to be granted to BRI member states, which is vastly more than the amount of funds granted to Europe by America's Marshall plan after WWII. There are five clear differences between Marshall Plan and BRI, which are elucidated in what follows.

(1) The institutional difference. The Marshall Plan served the purpose of bringing together U.S. allies in Europe after World War II. The Belt and Road Initiative mainly covers the former Soviet Union states and poor Third World Countries in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe.

(2) The nature of the funds is different. Ninety percent of the Marshall Plan was a grant and 10% was a loan. There was no concern of falling into a debt trap by signing on to the Marshall Plan, and this helped the United States build political and economic support in Europe. The Belt and Road Initiative mainly relies on financing and lending, and debts are mainly the responsibility of the borrower.

(3) The development foundation is not the same. The Marshall Plan targeted countries that originally had a market economy and industrialization foundation, or countries that had an institutional development market economy and had undergone industrialization. The Belt and Road Initiative is mainly for developing countries with relatively low level of development.

(4) Investment security. The Marshall Plan's investments were relatively stable and democratically monitored. The political situation of some Asian and African countries along the Belt and Road is volatile with no constraints or regulation, thus the investment security is very problematic.

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<sup>370</sup> Rolland, Nad  ge. "China's Eurasian Century? Political and Strategic Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative." Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2017.

(5) The corruption index. The Marshall Plan targeted countries ruled by law with democratic supervision, but the Belt and Road Initiative has limited transparency and openness and targets countries with weak economic fundamentals and governance.<sup>371</sup>

There are also voices arguing that China is bringing back its ancient tribute system. “The Belt and Road Initiative revives memories of China’s imperial tributary system,” writes Dominic Ziegler in a recent article from “the Economist.”<sup>372</sup> In this recent article, Ziegler states that “China sits at the centre of the world, bringing its wealth and power to bear, first on its near-abroad, and linking people into the concept of China as a beneficent power and an alternative locus to the West,” which the writer is convinced is the true aim of the BRI strategy.<sup>373</sup>

The “tributary system” was an ancient Chinese network of loose international relations centered around China in which the central dynasty sealed “rewards” to its vassal states – in this case, countries such as Vietnam and North Korea – while the vassal states acknowledged the predominant role of China in East Asia.<sup>374</sup> Reflecting on the tributary system, the BRI does indeed share some similar elements to the ancient system; for instance, they both provide goods and service to its members, while at the same time admitting the sovereignty of the member states. However, there is over 5,000 years of Chinese history and almost every dynasty, or the emperors in them, had radically different approaches to diplomacy and definitions of the tribute system, making it almost impossible to compare the BRI to the various forms the ancient tribute systems took during different dynasties. In ancient times, almost all diplomatic relationships from Asia to the West held some sort of geopolitical meaning, and prioritized Chinese hegemony. Compared to today, China’s “Belt and Road” is more based on geo-economic considerations instead of the latter and we cannot view the Belt and Road Initiative the same way as we view the Tribute system from Ancient China or Marshall plan from 1945. In addition, considering the Belt and Road Initiative is only 6 years old, it is currently too early to tell what the BRI’s impact will be on international society.

### **Conflict and Resolution: America in retreat and China on the Rise**

At the end of 2017, the Trump administration released its first “U.S. National Security Strategy Report.”<sup>375</sup> In addition to defining China as a revisionist country in the international system and labeling China as the United States’s leading strategic competitor, it also indirectly criticized the Belt and Road initiative. The report states that “China seeks to replace the U.S. position in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the influence of its state-driven economic model, and rearrange regional order in a way that is conducive to its own country.”

One year later, Trump administration started a trade war with China, aiming to eliminate the economic expansion of China. Inevitably, the main issue of the BRI from the U.S. perspective comes with the rise of China’s global influence, especially in Eurasia. If considered from the perspective of challenging U.S. hegemony, the BRI is indeed a big threat to the United States, but if we view it with

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<sup>371</sup> World Bank. “Overview: Opportunities and Risks of Belt and Road Transport Corridors.” World Bank, August 2019, 1.

<sup>372</sup> Ziegler, Dominic. “China Wants to Put Itself Back at the Centre of the World.” *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper, 6 February 2020.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> Shangsheng, Chen. “陈尚胜.” (中国传统对外关系的思想制度与政策). Jinan, China: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2007.

<sup>375</sup> U.S. Embassy Tbilisi. “2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America.” U.S. Embassy in Georgia, 19 December 2017.

the perspective of demand and supply for the regions it is aiding, then it does make sense to have such a strategy to help these underdeveloped regions. In fact, there is tremendous opportunity for mutual benefit between the West and China under the Chinese business expansion in Eurasia region.

In the book “NATO and the Asia Pacific,” one of the chapters emphasizes the main motivation behind China’s expansion in MENA (the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan).<sup>376</sup> It discusses how, starting from the Arab Spring, China faced increasing challenges from the threat of rising Islamist regimes that were in support of the separatist Uyghurs on the western-most border of China’s Xinjiang province, and how such a trend forced China to exercise military presence in the MENA region in order to maintain domestic stability.<sup>377</sup> In the past few years, China has taken a number of actions, such as building ports along the Suez Canal, sending warships to visit the Mediterranean region along Suez Canal, and building stronger ties with Israel to increase its involvement in the Middle East peace process. “NATO can engage China in a “Partnership of necessity,”” argues Christina Lin, one of the contributors of the Moen’s book. Despite the fact that the values and cultures between China and the West are different, collaboration between China and NATO in MENA areas could act as a platform for further interactions between them. Misreading China’s intention will lead to the loss of mutual trust, and it is easy to cause conflicts in some areas or important nodes. As the world's largest military group, NATO has a responsibility to contribute to the maintenance of world peace and development, and the same goes for China. Therefore, there is a need to enhance mutual trust and strengthen cooperation.

## **Conclusion**

As a Chinese scholar who participated in this NATO task force, I find myself in the obligation of providing an honest response to Western critics regarding the BRI. It’s certain that BRI is misunderstood by many U.S. policy makers, and any external policies involve geopolitics, but not necessarily geopolitical expansion. China has a strong and lasting “peace gene,” and its external expansion violates historical traditions and is not in line with the “realist” of win-lose transactions.<sup>378</sup> On several occasions, the Chinese officials stated there is no intention for China to replace America as the global leader. “There are a thousand reasons to make the China-US relationship a success, and not a single reason to break it,” Xi said at his first meeting with Trump.<sup>379</sup> However, there is still a considerable number of Western scholars, based on empiricism, who believe a new Cold War era between China and U.S. is inevitable due to their different ideologies. But it’s proven in history that there is no universal political model that can be adapted in any social context. In his article “The China Challenge”, Henry Kissinger pointed out that “creating a bloc of democratic states for an ideological crusade is unlikely to succeed.”<sup>380</sup> The American failures during the Vietnamese War and Korean War both illustrate this point. At the same time, the world is a very different place than the 20th Century when America had the dominant influence of economy and politics worldwide after WWII. With the establishment of the EU and the rise of China plus the proliferation of nuclear weapons in major countries, it’s becoming harder for America to maintain its global interest without challenges from the

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<sup>376</sup> Moens, Alexander, and Brooke A. Smith-Windsor, eds. *NATO and Asia-Pacific*. NATO Defense College, (2016), 219-221.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-226.

<sup>378</sup> Liangyu. “Commentary: China's Development a Blessing for World Peace.” Xinhua, 14 March 2019.

<sup>379</sup> Anbaije, and Zhang Yunbi. “Xi: 'A Thousand Reasons' to Build Ties.” Chinadaily.com.cn, 8 April 2017.

<sup>380</sup> Kissinger, Henry. “The China Challenge.” *The Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones & Company, 14 May 2011.

rest of the world. America should get used to this new normal. The “Thucydides trap theory” is also taken into consideration by many Historians and Politicians worldwide when it comes to U.S.-China relations. However, I don’t believe this is the case for the U.S. and China relations. The main argument of the Thucydides trap is “when one great power threatens to displace another, war is almost always the result,” but is China really powerful enough to displace America as the world leader?<sup>381</sup> Probably not, and the Chinese government has mentioned multiple times that China is not seeking to challenge America’s position as the world leader. Eventually, NATO’s biggest political interest still remains in European continent and American government should agree that the state of Russia is the main challenge of NATO operation in Europe instead of China from the Far East. In the meantime, it’s important to take the China-Russia relationship into consideration as it’s still not clear what BRI’s influence will be for Russia. Therefore, NATO should give China a chance to prove itself and view BRI as an opportunity instead of a challenge, and build a mutual trust relationship with China which would give Eurasia a brighter future.

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<sup>381</sup> Allison, Graham. “The Thucydides Trap.” *Foreign Policy*, Foreign Policy, 12 April 2019.

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# Emerging Issues

## Military Balance in Eurasia

Jacob Boehme

### Introduction

The relative peace that marked the post-Cold War period is starting to disappear. The very nature of the international security environment is rapidly changing and many of the positive trends in security and arms control of the last century are being reversed. The global conflicts that once dominated the world stage have become smaller and more contained within their respective regions, as evidenced by Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, and various land reclamation projects in the South China Sea by the People's Republic of China (PRC).

However, although conflicts today appear to be regionally contained, this is a misleading representation since many of them are inextricably linked to larger global and interregional issues. What affects military capability in one region inevitably impacts other regions as well. Decisions made in one region naturally inform choices made in another. Nowhere is this more glaringly evident than in arms development, where the mobility of weapons and the fact that they can be aimed at, or used against, different targets compel states to note the actions of others when considering their own security. Nuclear weapons have once again taken center stage as the cornerstones of states' defense and deterrence strategies, as can be seen from responses to North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and subsequent missile tests, the formal end of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in 2019, and the imminent expiration of the New START Treaty in 2021.<sup>382,383</sup>

In early 2012, the United States recognized the changing global security environment and transformed its regional strategy to a "pivot" or "rebalance" towards East Eurasia making efforts to modernize its conception of the nuclear triad.<sup>384</sup> Today, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) faces an ever-changing security environment and grapples with the questions of how it should adapt. To address this issue, NATO cannot limit its focus to its West Eurasian neighborhood, and must expand its view to East Eurasia as well. Following the example of the U.S., the rest of NATO's members must decide how they will meet the changing calculus of their security needs. To address this, this Task Force will propose a twofold solution: First, non-U.S. NATO members should not make a military pivot towards East Eurasia, and second, the U.S. should take steps to preserve international arms control agreements as well as adjust its nuclear and conventional posture to provide security, deterrence, and assurance to states in both East and West Eurasia. Underlying this is the need to build consensus across allies and adversaries, as well as within the U.S. itself.

### Current Security Environment

The current global security environment can be described as uncertain. Regional adversaries have arisen and are challenging the very core values of the U.S. and NATO. In West Eurasia, the U.S.

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<sup>382</sup> Masterson, Julia. "Fact Sheets & Briefs: Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy." Arms Control Association, February 2020.

<sup>383</sup> Reif, Kingston. "After the INF Treaty, What Is Next?" Arms Control Association, Jan./Feb. 2019.

<sup>384</sup> U.S. Dept. of Defense. *Nuclear posture review report*. Washington D.C., United States. Feb. 2018.

contributes to NATO in an effort to promote democratic values, freedom, and security through political and military means. An important part of this effort is Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which states that an attack on one member will be considered an attack on all other members.<sup>385</sup> Complementing this is NATO's nuclear deterrence posture, which relies on the United States's nuclear weapons forward deployment in West Eurasia.<sup>386</sup> This nuclear umbrella forms a security environment in which NATO's objectives can be met. In East Eurasia, the U.S. has cultivated several bilateral and multilateral partnerships to protect its regional interests. Examples of these partnerships include increased air, naval, and marine rotations through Australia, strengthened defense cooperation across the board with Japan on - top of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security – the presence of U.S. military bases and troops in South Korea, and the formation of defensive ties with Indonesia, Vietnam, and Singapore. The U.S. nuclear umbrella also extends to allies in the region, but unlike West Eurasia, there is no nuclear sharing program in the region, there are no independent nuclear states (such as the United Kingdom and France), and there is no use of U.S. nuclear weapons on the delivery systems of regional allies like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and others. The U.S. considers an attack on its allies the same as an attack on itself.

Russia, the PRC, and North Korea, the U.S.'s regional adversaries, feel that the survival of their regimes is threatened by U.S. military presence in the area. In an address to the Russian Duma, Russian president Vladimir Putin said, “we have every reason to assume that the infamous policy of containment, led in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries continues today.”<sup>387</sup> Seeing NATO intervene in Libya, a locale that Putin perceives to be out of NATO's neighborhood, raised questions within Russian leadership about how far the West sees their interests extending. Fueling suspicions of an inherent western hostility to Russia, Russian military leaders have come to see the color revolutions, a series of peaceful street protests that toppled the corrupt and undemocratic regimes in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan and ushered in the election of new presidents, as a new U.S. and European approach to “warfare that focuses on creating destabilizing revolutions in other states as a means of serving their security interests at low cost and with minimal casualties.”<sup>388,389</sup> The expansion of NATO and the EU to include many ex-soviet states has only exacerbated their worries about containment and survival. Many officials, military leaders, and experts in Beijing believe that the U.S. is a hegemonic power committed to the containment of the PRC and even the overthrow of its current system of government.<sup>390</sup> In a public announcement, the North Korean government stated that “the U.S. disclosed its attempt to topple the political system in [North Korea] at any cost, threatening it with a nuclear stick. This compels us to take a measure to bolster its [sic] nuclear weapons arsenal in order to protect the ideology, system, freedom and democracy chosen by its people.”<sup>391</sup> Their attitudes towards the U.S. military presence in the region indicate that the perceived stakes are asymmetrical between the U.S. and its adversaries, even when both consider their core values are on the line. The regional

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<sup>385</sup> NATO. “The North Atlantic Treaty.” April 1, 2009.

<sup>386</sup>“NATO - Official Text: Brussels Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, 11-12 July 2018, 11-Jul.-2018.” 11 July 2018.

<sup>387</sup> Roberts, Brad. *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2016, Ch 4.

<sup>388</sup> Mitchell, Lincoln Abraham. “The Color Revolutions.” Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

<sup>389</sup> Cordesman, Anthony. “Russia and the ‘Color Revolution.’” Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 28, 2014.

<sup>390</sup> Roberts. *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, Ch 5.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch 2.

adversaries are under the perception that their very existence is at risk, at a time when the U.S.'s international credibility and power is faltering. This complicates the security situation as this perceived vulnerability may make these adversaries more inclined to escalate tensions in order to preserve their respective regimes and stand more resolute against the U.S. and NATO.

Of equal importance are these states's nuclear doctrines. The U.S. seeks to provide the nuclear umbrella while maintaining a flexible and tailored strategy. The U.S. supports the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), yet it has not yet ratified it. Of note is the fact that the U.S. has not adopted a no first use policy. The transparency of the U.S. nuclear arsenal recently took a hit, when the Department of Energy denied a data request from the Federation of American Scientists.<sup>392</sup> North Korea, as noted in the prior government statement, is ready to develop and use nuclear weapons to defend itself, especially against the U.S. It engages in nuclear blackmail and brinkmanship to decouple the U.S. from its allies and contest the U.S. security framework.<sup>393</sup> North Korea's nuclear arsenal's scope and capabilities remain ambiguous, however, in 2016, Pyongyang announced a shift in its thinking towards denuclearization of the peninsula, hinting at the will to negotiate.<sup>394</sup> The PRC, having a more modest nuclear posture, has remained hazy about its arsenal's pace, scope, and intentions, while modernizing its conventional forces and making aggressive moves in the South China Sea. It prefaces its entry into international nuclear arms control agreements on the progress of bilateral U.S.-Russian agreements.<sup>395</sup> Russian military doctrine states that "the Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and (or) its allies, and also in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation involving the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is under threat."<sup>396</sup> Accordingly, Russia adheres to a first use policy on their nuclear weapons, and uses the leverage that this provides to engage in nuclear blackmail and brinkmanship to outmaneuver and coerce the U.S. and NATO into situations favorable to Russia. In the past, Russia has been receptive to bilateral nuclear arms control agreements and their adjacent verification regimes. North Korea, in a similar vein to the PRC, has an opaque nuclear arsenal. In addition, much like Russia, North Korea also uses its nuclear arsenal for blackmail and brinkmanship, seeking to decouple the U.S. from its allies and challenge its international commitments.

### **Nuclear Arms Control Agreements and Policy**

This stability ushered in by nuclear arms agreements has begun to fall apart alongside the treaties themselves. The Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), 1987-2019, required both the U.S. and the Soviet Union to eliminate and forswear all their nuclear and conventional ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges from 500-5,500 kilometers.<sup>397</sup> This marked the first major nuclear arsenal reduction, as well as the implementation of an inspection regime that would form the cornerstone of future arms reductions agreements. The treaty's slow decline resulted from a series of noncompliance disputes between the U.S. and Russia. While the U.S. had signaled concerns over

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<sup>392</sup>Taheran, Shervin. "U.S. Reverses Nuclear Stockpile Transparency." Arms Control Association, Jun. 2019.

<sup>393</sup> Roberts. *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, Ch 2.

<sup>394</sup> Davenport, Kelsey. "North Korea Shifts on Denuclearization." Arms Control Association. September 2016.

<sup>395</sup> Roberts. *The Case for U.S. Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century*, Ch 5.

<sup>396</sup> "Военная Доктрина Российской Федерации." Российская газета. Российская газета, December 30, 2014.

<sup>397</sup> "Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty)." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State. 8 December 1987.

deployment of noncompliant missiles, Russia fired back with charges that a U.S. missile defense system placed in West Eurasia could launch noncompliant missiles.<sup>398</sup> This deadlock continued to plague talks between the two, however, Putin openly articulated that he wished to extend the treaty with no preconditions, and setup a demonstration of the “noncompliant” missiles. Neither the U.S. nor its NATO allies attended the demonstration.<sup>399,400</sup> The issue of noncompliance did not get resolved and the U.S. formally withdrew from the treaty, prompting Russia to formally withdraw as well. The result of this treaty’s termination has been an intensification of tensions between the U.S. and its allies, and Russia. There is now no legal framework prohibiting an entire class of weapons from being redeployed, increasing security uncertainty and mutual suspicion between the two. The void where the INF used to be is being filled by new weapons on both sides, all of which only increase the possibility of both miscalculation and a new arms race.<sup>401,402</sup>

The expiration of the INF means that there is only one remaining bilateral nuclear arms control agreement between the U.S. and Russia, the New START treaty. New START placed a cap on the total amount of deployed nuclear warheads at 1,550, deployed through 700 strategic delivery systems, and limited deployed and non-deployed launchers to 800.<sup>403</sup> Today, New START exists in a state of free fall and uncertainty, where it is unclear whether it will continue past its expiration date in 2021, as some critics in the U.S. call for a treaty with expanded weapons coverage and the inclusion of other nuclear states like the PRC. This Task Force highly recommends the renewal of the New START agreement; it is the responsibility of the U.S. and Russia to keep this alive as they collectively own 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons.<sup>404</sup> Its existence provides a successful verification and monitoring system that helps maintain trust and confidence between the two powers. It serves as framework for transparency and a platform for valuable information gathering on Russian capabilities and posture that would be difficult to get otherwise. Without it, there would be no limit to U.S. construction, and therefore spending on nuclear weapons, which exacerbates the problem of the already high price tag on many of the nuclear weapons and their supporting infrastructure. As Russia would also no longer have any kind of limit on the construction of nuclear weapons, and the potential for buildup and the reignition of a costly arms race with both Russia and the PRC would exist without it. New START shrinks the margin of error and miscalculation; it is in the interest of all involved parties to continue it.

The CTBT, while itself not a direct arms control agreement, puts a moratorium on any nuclear weapons test explosions or other nuclear detonations.<sup>405</sup> CTBT effectively prevents the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which can have a destabilizing effect on a region, as seen in East Eurasia with North Korea. The U.S. has signed but not ratified the treaty. As expressed in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, “although the U.S. will not seek ratification of the CBTB, it will continue to support the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization Preparatory Committee as well as the International Monitoring System and the International Data Center. The U.S. will not resume nuclear

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<sup>398</sup> “The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at a Glance” Arms Control Association. August 2019.

<sup>399</sup> Dougherty, Jill. “Nuclear Insecurity: Should New Start die?”. KennanX. Podcast audio, January 22, 2020.

<sup>400</sup> Taheran, Shervin. “As INF Treaty Falls, New START Teeters” Arms Control Association. March 2019.

<sup>401</sup> Reif, Kingston. “New Russian Weapons Raise Arms Race Fears” Arms Control Association, April 2018.

<sup>402</sup> Burns, Robert. “US Adds 'Low Yield' Nuclear Weapon to Its Submarine Arsenal.” AP NEWS. Associated Press, February 3, 2020.

<sup>403</sup> “U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Agreements at a Glance” Arms Control Association. August 2019.

<sup>404</sup> Dougherty, Jill. “Nuclear Insecurity: Should New Start die?”. KennanX. Podcast audio, January 22, 2020.

<sup>405</sup> Reif, Kingston. “Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at a Glance” Arms Control Association, September 2019.

explosive testing unless necessary to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, and calls on all states possessing nuclear weapons to declare or maintain a moratorium on nuclear testing.”<sup>406</sup> This Task Force posits that a reciprocal ratification between the U.S. and Russia would be a great first step towards nonproliferation and a more stable security environment. As stated earlier, the PRC has predicated any changes to its nuclear doctrine on changes to both the Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals, so progress with Russia could mean progress with the PRC.

The realm of nuclear weapons policy exerts an influence on the global security environment at a level comparable to that of the aforementioned arms control agreements. A change in official nuclear policy has the potential to send the necessary signals to adversaries of a willingness to negotiate. The current regional challengers feel threatened by what they perceive to be an aggressive stance, and a change in the policy of first use might be a step in the right direction. Thus, this Task Force proposes that the U.S. adopt a no first use policy on the condition that Russia responds with a reciprocal policy change since it would make clear assurances that the U.S. posture is defensive in nature without detracting from its security deployment commitments. It is important to mention that the PRC already adheres to a no first use policy.<sup>407</sup> The adaption of a Russian and U.S. no first use policy would decrease the uncertainty of action between the three and open possibilities for increased dialogue and engagement while maintaining a deterrence stance.

### **NATO Pivot and Military Rebalance of East Eurasia**

NATO’s core mission and purpose are once again being called into question. Critical to all NATO members’s interests is the security situation in East Eurasia, as the region is home to vital sea lanes and contains three of the world’s largest economies: The PRC, Japan, and India.<sup>408</sup> Given that the U.S. is already contributing to the regional balance of power in East Eurasia, the remaining NATO members must consider how they can assist the U.S. in increasing the power of the Alliance in East Eurasia. While an economic or political pivot could strengthen the alliance’s position within the regional order, a military pivot would likely only serve to weaken NATO by increasing tensions between it and its East Eurasian adversaries. The non-U.S. NATO members should not militarily pivot towards east Eurasia.

It is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO does not make a military pivot towards East Eurasia. To an extent, the United States’s pivot towards East Eurasia is an endeavor to counter the PRC’s increasing assertiveness in the region – illustrated most clearly by its reclamation of the Fiery Cross Reef and Mischief Reef, as well as its subsequent installation of military infrastructures there.<sup>409,410,411</sup> To counter this, the U.S. has reached out to allies in the region and created working strategic frameworks mentioned previously. Thus far, the U.S.’s NATO allies have not been critical assets in maintaining regional security, and there does not appear to be a desire from either the U.S. or its East Eurasian partners for NATO members to join in. This brings into question what factors are

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<sup>406</sup> U.S. Dept. of Defense. *Nuclear posture review report*. Washington D.C., United States. Feb. 2018.

<sup>407</sup> Sanders-Zakre, Alicia. “Chinese Analysts Urge Nuclear Increase” Arms Control Association, March 2018.

<sup>408</sup> “GDP (Current US\$).” Data. February 13, 2020.

<sup>409</sup> M.R. Ausling, Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Hearing on “Rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific Region and Implications for US National Strategy.” 24 July 2013.

<sup>410</sup> Beech, Hannah. “China’s Sea Control Is a Done Deal, ‘Short of War With the U.S.’” The New York Times. September 20, 2018.

<sup>411</sup> Perlez, Jane. “China Building Aircraft Runway in Disputed Spratly Islands.” The New York Times. 16 April 2015.

keeping them from participating and contributing to U.S. operations. One key reason is the PRC and how they believe it would interpret a NATO pivot towards East Eurasia. The perceived outcome of such a pivot would be an agitated PRC that is encouraged to make moves to counter it. A NATO pivot that enhances the U.S. military posture would likely only serve to antagonize the PRC, fuel suspicions that the U.S. is seeking to contain it, and complicate the security environment further by confirming to Chinese leadership that the American objectives in the region are offensive in nature.

As Nicola Casarini, Senior Fellow for Asia at the Istituto Affari Internazionali, notes in relations to European States's increased focus on East Eurasia, "the focus of the European 'pivot' is primarily on economic, monetary, technological, and soft power issues, and much less on increasing a military presence and forming security alliances."<sup>412</sup> This has meant that European efforts to pivot towards East Eurasia have not been channeled through NATO, but the EU instead. This could reflect a general loss of direction and confidence in the Alliance among European states following the end of the Cold War and its failures in Mid-Eurasia. More broadly, however, this might also be explained by both an inability to project a military force in East Eurasia and a lack of funding to support such an endeavor.

Like the U.S., NATO members face an uncertain security environment against the backdrop of declining defense budgets.<sup>413</sup> Excluding the U.S., the U.K., France and Canada constitute NATO's three largest naval powers. Looking first to the U.K., efforts to modernize and update its navy have focused on the creation of new aircraft carriers. In the words of Professor Michael Clarke, Director General of the Royal United Service Institute, "the carrier is going to be a first-class carrier."<sup>414</sup> He elaborates, stating that "it will require most of the Royal Navy to support it and protect it, so it means we will in a sense design the navy around one carrier battle-group. That is pretty powerful, but it means putting a lot of eggs in one basket."<sup>415</sup> According to the 2013 French White Paper on Defense and National Security, the French defense of ministry has planned to downsize its military. This process began with the Military Program Act of 2009, which called for the elimination of 55,000 positions within its operational forces between 2009 and 2015.<sup>416</sup> An additional reduction of 24,000 was also planned for 2019. The Ministry of Defense will also reduce its own workforce by 24,000 personnel by 2019.<sup>417</sup> In addition, they have planned to decrease their frigate fleet from 18 to 15.<sup>418</sup> This indicates that militaries of both the U.K. and France are stretched thin, and the expansion and pivot towards East Eurasia would require clearly contradicts their efforts to downsize their forces. Canada currently only spends about 1% of its GDP on defense despite the 2% target set for NATO members at the Wales Summit in 2014.<sup>419</sup> It is abundantly clear that both capital and resources are in

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<sup>412</sup> Casarini, Nicola. "European Union Institute for Security Studies." European Union Institute for Security Studies, March 26, 2013.

<sup>413</sup> "Military Expenditure (% of GDP) - United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France." Data. World Bank Group. February 14, 2020.

<sup>414</sup> Norton-Taylor, Richard. "UK Defence All at Sea as Hammond Moves to FO." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 15 July 2014.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid.

<sup>416</sup> "The White Paper on Defence and National Security." France NATO. 2013.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> "The French White Paper on Defence and National Security." France NATO. 2010.

<sup>419</sup> Toit, Allan Du, Alexander Moens, and Brooke A. Smith-Windsor. "NATO and Asia-Pacific." Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College, Research Division. 2016.

limited supply, so it seems very unlikely that any of these states could make a meaningful contribution towards a strategic rebalance.

### **U.S. Rebalance and Deterrence in East Eurasia**

The U.S.'s nuclear arsenal has significant relevance within the current security environment as it plays the crucial role of both providing assurance to its allies and deter adversaries. Within Washington, two camps of thought have emerged: One argues that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is already top tier and doesn't need any kind of investment to be efficient, while the other asserts that U.S. nuclear capabilities need to be modernized in the face of advancements made by its adversaries. Considering the changes in the international security environment, American policy makers have leaned more towards the modernization of the U.S. nuclear triad.<sup>420</sup> The biggest concern about modernization is the associated price tag. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that if the plans for nuclear forces delineated in the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy's 2019 budget requests were carried out, it would cost approximately \$494 billion over the 2019-2028 period to achieve – a 23% increase from the CBO's 2017 10-year estimate.<sup>421</sup> Modernizing the nuclear arsenal will not be cheap, and, while the arsenal modernization plans are still in the early stages of development and planning, the prices projected by the CBO may not be completely accurate. As plans become better defined, estimates are likely to increase and take a greater toll on available resources. Like the aircraft carrier case with the U.K., investing increasing amounts in the arsenal could lead the U.S. to place all its eggs in the nuclear basket.

While the nuclear arsenal does play a unique role in U.S. assurance and deterrence objectives, it does not deter everything - as evidenced by the Russian annexation of Crimea and Chinese land reclamation in the South China Sea. It appears as though the threat of nuclear weapons is not an effective deterrence against aggression that does not involve them. By investing heavily in nuclear modernization projects, the U.S. runs the risk of underinvesting in the conventional aspect of its deterrence regime, which are particularly critical for deterrence efforts in East Eurasia, and could potentially inadvertently weaken its overall deterrence posture and prompt both adversaries and allies to act in response. Adversaries, noticing that the U.S. posture is shallow and one-dimensional may become emboldened to pursue their ambitions unfettered, while allies perceiving a weakened posture may mobilize to take defense into their own hands, further complicating the security environment and exacerbating underlying tensions in the region. Thus, this Task Force asserts that it would be in NATO's best interest to encourage the U.S. to limit the extent of the modernization of its nuclear forces, opting instead to invest that money in improving the conventional aspects of its military.

### **Conclusion**

Given the current international security environment, there is very little room for meaningful and positive changes, but there is reason to believe that there may be a path towards a brighter and more stable future. First, this Task Force recommends that non-U.S. NATO members avoid making a military pivot towards East Eurasia as there is little will or way to do so. The NATO members who have the highest potential to contribute meaningfully to U.S. efforts do not appear likely to do so in the face of falling defense spending and increasingly stretched and diminished forces. Second, given the

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<sup>420</sup> Reif, Kingston. "Congress OKs Trump Nuclear Priorities" Arms Control Association, 2020.

<sup>421</sup> "Projected Costs of U.S. Nuclear Forces, 2019 to 2028." Congressional Budget Office, January 24, 2019.

expiration of the INF, this Task Force posits that it is more critical than ever for the U.S. to engage with its adversaries at the level of nuclear arms control agreements and international commitments. New START must not falter as its provisions serve to limit the cost of the weapons themselves, the price of war, and the chance of escalation resulting in an arms race. Third, this Task Force argues that the U.S. should alter its nuclear posture to decrease the uncertainty generated by its actions. CTBT ratification should be reciprocated between the U.S. and Russia, since testing increases the perceived level of threat a state poses to their another's security, and this could spark an arms race. Thus, adopting a no use policy would reassure U.S. adversaries that its posture is solely defensive in nature. Progress between the U.S. and Russia could mean progress with the PRC, since it has predicated any future engagement in nuclear arms control on agreements between the U.S. and Russia, and bring more predictability and transparency to their relationship, decreasing the possibility of miscalculation and subsequent escalation. Finally, this Task Force asserts that policy makers in Washington should consider how the Department of Defense's budget is allocated and adjust the U.S. deterrence posture to reflect the realities of the current international security environment. An imbalance and improper spending could generate uncertainty in both allies and adversaries, destabilizing the already unstable security environment.

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## NATO-Based Assessment on European Energy Security

Andrew Robles

Energy security has been at the forefront of national planning and strategy development for well over a century. Although NATO allies are benefiting greatly from the recent developments in oil and gas extraction, the global energy market remains a volatile environment in which disruptions to energy supplies continues to threaten NATO's cohesion and the national security of individual member states. Within the past decade, the world has seen a major shift in global energy allocation, and, as a result, the geopolitical structure of much of the world has drastically changed. These changes are of substantial strategic interest for NATO since they embody key aspects of its stance towards energy security. As stated at the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration, ensuring that "members of the Alliance are not vulnerable to political or coercive manipulation of energy which constitutes a potential threat" and that they maintain "a stable and reliable energy supply...and the interconnectivity of energy networks [is] of critical importance and increases [their] resilience against political and economic pressure."<sup>422</sup> With these goals held to priority and the new energy climate taken into consideration, this task force recommends that NATO members capitalize on their newfound leverage in the energy and continue to set forth a unified agenda that favors the EU in energy trade deals with Russia, to support the joint market collaboration between the United States and vulnerable NATO members, and to prioritize involving Turkey, along with many Eastern European allies, in wide-scale European energy interconnectivity efforts. To support these actions, the Task Force has gathered evidence and analysis of Russia's economic reliance on energy trade, which has been threatened by the evolving energy market, researched the EU's success in establishing market rules and regulations to strip monopoly power from Russia, and studied the geopolitical tension between Russia and Eastern European countries.

During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it appeared as though the world was headed towards an energy crisis. The idea that producers were about to exhaust the 'peak oil' level was prevalent throughout industry and politics, and, with the major powers of the NATO alliance still in an energy-dependent state, the threat of energy scarcity bestowed oil-rich countries with a substantial amount of influence and power.<sup>423</sup> As recent as 2008, the head of the International Energy Agency, Nobuo Tanaka, envisioned a future in which oil and gas are so concentrated in the last remaining regions that major powers would be forced into "energy-related conflicts and social disruption," many of which would have substantial consequences for European stability.<sup>424</sup> However, within the last decade, the petroleum industry in the United States has been able to capitalize on innovations in extraction methods to access oil and natural gas reserves that were previously inaccessible, like shale gas and tight oil.<sup>425</sup> This innovation eventually led the United States to a state of energy independence that has made it not only a net exporter of oil and natural gas, but also the largest producer of petroleum and natural gas in the world, producing about 11 million barrels of crude oil and 285 billion cubic feet of

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<sup>422</sup> NATO. "Brussels Summit Declaration." *NATO*, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 30 August 2018.

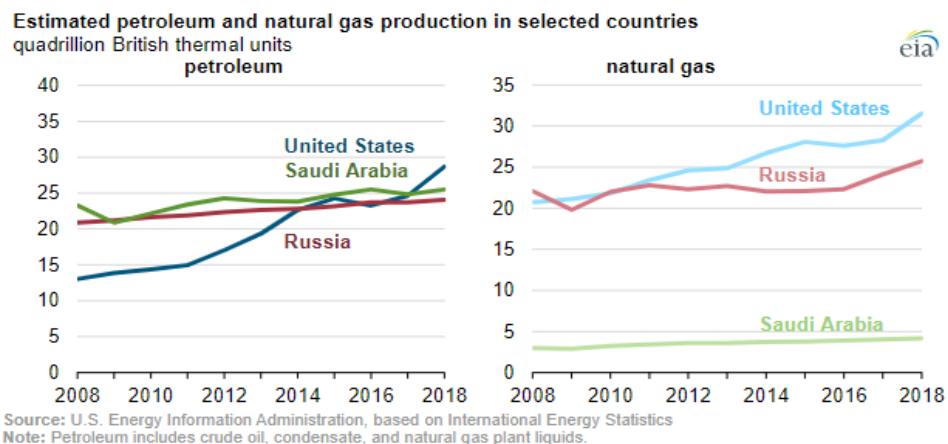
<sup>423</sup> Lynch, Micahel. "What Ever Happened to Peak Oil." *Forbes*, 29 June 2018.

<sup>424</sup> Meghan L. OSullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Is Changing Global Politics and Strengthens Americas Power*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 16.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

natural gas per day in 2018.<sup>426</sup> Thanks to the new abundance of useable fuel, technological advances in energy efficiency worldwide, and a growing preference for natural gas over petroleum, the price of oil has dropped from an average of \$100 per barrel in July 2014 to the current average of \$50 per barrel as the new supply of energy has entered global markets.<sup>427</sup>

Figure 1:



This new source of energy inputs has transformed the global energy landscape from a period of scarcity marked by fears surrounding ‘peak oil’ to an era of abundance with major implications for the global energy market. Contracts that held countries in bilateral deals for decades are being replaced by short-term deals, introducing new optionality to states’s national energy mix. Energy prices are becoming much more competitive and transparent as competitive gas markets transfer negotiating power to importing countries. The abundance of new energy sources has transformed a system that was heavily politicized, and, in many ways, inefficient, into a well-functioning, fluid market capable of reducing volatility, allocating resources in a predictable manner, and increasing overall consumer confidence.

Even with the emergence of a richer global energy structure, NATO still has a major stake in the current European energy system since Russia’s majority claim on the market has only grown more controversial with its continued expansion into Europe. Ever since Russia first annexed Crimea and stopped its inflow of gas to Ukraine – using energy as a geopolitical tool – concerns surrounding its stability as a major trade partner have remained prevalent in international discourse. Despite opposition from the United States and other European allies, there has been continued bilateral collaboration between NATO allies and Russia to secure direct passage pipelines to satisfy Europe’s growing energy demands. However, despite a growing necessity for energy, the level of primary energy produced within the European Union has dropped significantly over the past decade, at about a 12% decrease from 2007 to 2017, only adding to the concerns about Europe’s further dependence on Russian energy imports.<sup>428</sup> The EU has been, and will continue to be, a net importer of energy for the foreseeable

<sup>426</sup> Brown, Bill. “The U.S. Leads Global Petroleum and Natural Gas Production with Record Growth in 2018.” *EIA*, U.S. Energy Information Administration, 20 August 2019.

<sup>427</sup> Meghan L. OSullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Is Changing Global Politics and Strengthens Americas Power*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 37.

<sup>428</sup> European Commission. “Energy Production and Imports.” *European Union*, Eurostat, 24 January 2020.

future. The primary concern for NATO will be if its members can securely rely on Russia to be the primary provider of energy, and if so, how to maximize the advantages from continued trade while protecting member states from foreign influence and threats.

As stated earlier, the concern lies with Russia's long history of using its position as a major energy supplier to threaten, influence, and punish nearby countries over political and economic disputes, which has had significant consequences for all members of the European energy network. Ukraine has been a frequent target of Russian aggression given its proximity to Russia and regional significance as a major transit country. In 2006, when 78% of all Russian gas deliveries to the European Union traveled through Ukrainian pipelines, Russia's state-owned gas corporation, Gazprom, stopped supplying gas to Ukraine in an attempt to get the new, pro-Western administration to pay higher prices for natural gas.<sup>429</sup> Similarly, in 2009, Gazprom stated that Ukraine was well over \$1 billion in debt to it for supplies over the past years and cut-off supplies intended for Ukraine again after weeks of failed negotiations.<sup>430</sup> Within the same week of the initial gas disruption, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave the order to halt all gas shipments via Ukraine after accusing the country of corruption and siphoning gas meant for its European consumers, effectively cutting off access to 80% of Europe's natural gas imports.<sup>431</sup> Given the infrastructural requirements for the transportation of natural gas at the time, Ukraine was not able to access alternative gas markets putting it in a precarious position.

This scenario depicts the immense amount of geopolitical power a regional energy producer can exert on consumers who do not possess the necessary infrastructure or market structure to counter a monopolistic supplier in an environment of energy scarcity. Today, Russia supplies the EU with 40.6% of its natural gas.<sup>432</sup> It remains Europe's cheapest supplier of gas, and bilateral trade deals with major European powers such as Germany, Italy, and France have provided them with discounts and guarantees from Russia directly.<sup>433</sup> Countries on Europe's eastern border, such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Romania, are even more dependent on Russian energy, importing more than 75% of all their natural gas from it.<sup>434</sup> In an attempt to bypass transit countries such as Ukraine and Bulgaria, Russia has been securing its position in the European gas market through the implementation of direct Russia-Euro pipelines, most notably Nord Stream 2 and Turk Stream, both of which have sparked intense debate and controversy among NATO allies. Owned by Gazprom, Nord Stream 2 is currently being developed by gas companies in France, Austria, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The pipeline is the second installation in the Nord Stream system and will double the quantity of direct gas supplies from Russia to Germany, which is the largest recipient of Russian gas, accounting for about 30% of all Gazprom's exports in 2018.<sup>435</sup> While the countries developing the pipeline state that the project will "enhance EU's energy security by increasing the capacity of a direct supply route," the United States, along with Eastern European countries, argues that this will leave former transit

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<sup>429</sup> Aalto, Pami. *The EU-Russian Energy Dialogue: Europe's Future Energy Security*. The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms Series, Taylor and Francis, (2016), 38.

<sup>430</sup> Reuters. "TIMELINE: Gas Crises between Russia and Ukraine." *Reuters*, Reuters, 29 January 2009.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> Bartuska, et al. "The Geopolitics of Energy Security in Europe." Carnegie Europe, 28 November 2019.

<sup>435</sup> Zaniewicz, Maciej. "New Gas Pipeline Geopolitics in Central and Eastern Europe." Warsaw Institute, 21 December 2019.

countries more vulnerable to supply cutoffs and price manipulations, and deprive them of significant income (upwards of \$3 billion per year), while granting Russia greater political leverage on importing countries, such as Germany and others who depend on the pipeline's gas flow.<sup>436,437</sup>

Similarly, in another effort to bypass shipments through Ukraine, Turk Stream aims to strengthen Russia's presence in Southern Europe via a pipeline connecting Russia and Turkey. Launched in January 2020, Turk Stream consists of two pipelines with the capacity to transport 31.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas.<sup>438</sup> Turkey, Gazprom's second largest gas export market, is already a concern for NATO cohesion due to its authoritarian-leaning governance. It has a strong economic incentive to maintain its close ties to Russia as the pipeline provides Turkey with the foundation to collect revenue from other consuming countries, granting it increased regional influence. For Russia, the pipeline secures its market access to Southern Europe and presents opportunities to further increase its influence in Turkey and slowly peel it away from its NATO and EU alliances. This narrative surrounding European energy trade with Russia is heavily focused on the development of Nord Stream 2 and Turk Stream and, while the threats these developments pose to European energy security should not be ignored, the EU and the evolving market structure have done much to mitigate the influence and power of Gazprom within European countries, rendering many of these perceived threats to Western Europe invalid with current geopolitical and economic realities.

While, in its current state, Europe does still need Russian gas and oil to fuel its economies, Russia also needs the European market to uphold its strongest industry, especially since the new period of energy abundance has created significant economic difficulties for Russia. Sharp drops in energy prices over the last decade have greatly contributed to Russia's economic decline, which has seen its GDP drop from \$2.297 trillion USD in 2016 to just \$1.658 trillion in 2018, representing a 28% decrease in only two years.<sup>439</sup> The energy sector is so integral to Russia's economic security that, in 2015, it "accounted for nearly a third of the value-added in Russia's GDP and for more than half of its export revenues."<sup>440</sup> The radical changes in the global energy supply, combined with increased transportation capabilities that make it possible for American Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) to be sold in European markets, pose a critical threat to Russian stability, more so than Russian pipelines do to European security. Given this reality, neither NATO nor the EU should expect to be able to prevent Russia or Gazprom from developing new pipelines across the European mainland as they attempt to solidify their presence in the main export market for their primary industry. In the current international climate, the idea of Russia shutting down its gas supply to Europe, especially in its given financial state, would be an "economic suicide" to quote natural gas analyst, Sergei Kapitonov, of the SKOLKOVO Energy Center in Moscow.<sup>441</sup> According to the Energy Information Association, oil and

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<sup>436</sup> Wiczorkiewicz, Julian, and Dominik P. Jankowski. "NATO's Pending Energy Security Crisis." *The National Interest*, The Center for the National Interest, 21 February 2019.

<sup>437</sup> Belkin, et al. "Nord Stream 2: A Geopolitical Lightning Rod." *Hein Online*, Congressional Research Service, 7 August 2019.

<sup>438</sup> Garding, Sarah, and Michael Ratner. "TurkStream: Another Russian Gas Pipeline to Europe." *Hein Online*, Congressional Research Service, 11 April 2019.

<sup>439</sup> World Bank. "GDP (Current US\$) - Russian Federation." The World Bank, n.d.

<sup>440</sup> Meghan L. OSullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Is Changing Global Politics and Strengthens Americas Power*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 185.

<sup>441</sup> Bauomy, Jasmin. "Europe Needs Gas and Russia Has It - The Story Behind The New Pipeline." *Euronews*, 8 January 2020.

natural gas compromise almost 40% of Russia's national revenue, the majority of which would not be possible without Europe.<sup>442</sup> European countries were responsible for the purchase of roughly 65% of Russia's oil production and approximately 40% of all the natural gas produced by Gazprom in 2018.<sup>443</sup> Russia is well aware of their dependence on the European market and has taken effort to increase their own market diversification with the recent completion of the Power of Siberia, a pipeline connecting Gazprom's natural gas from Eastern Siberia to mainland China. While the increased cooperation between China and Russia may be alarming to Western-based alliances, the outcomes have been largely single-sided, favoring China's growing demand for energy. Gazprom's efforts to secure a competitive position in the Chinese market has already been diminished by existing pipelines from Myanmar and Turkmenistan, as well as oversea shipments of LNG, thus forcing Russia to accept market-based pricing from a single consumer and granting China a clear upper hand in price negotiation.<sup>444</sup> Despite the Russian government exempting Power of Siberia from mineral extraction and property tax, it is estimated that the project won't become profitable until at least 2030, further straining Russia's economic situation according to the Carnegie Moscow Center.<sup>445</sup> Even at the peak estimated capacity, which will require the development of a completely new oil field, Power of Siberia will only be able to provide about 9% of China's estimated energy demand by 2025, a reality which places Russia as just another option rather than required partner.<sup>446</sup> Overall, the Russian effort to expand into new markets has not freed it from its dependence on Europe to import its energy. Given this relationship, the European Union should not expect to see Russia jeopardize the backbone of its economy. In addition, this Task Force strongly questions claims that suggest Russia will threaten the energy security of Western European NATO allies through gas shut-offs or price exploitation and, therefore, does not regard the Nord Stream or Turk Stream as immediate threats to European security. This Task Force urges NATO to take caution in the implementation of any policy that may result in removing Russia completely from the European energy markets as that would likely destabilize the country's economic sector, remove one of its largest foundations for trade and negotiations with the West, and compromise the strongest deterrent to physical Russian aggression against Western and Central Europe.

The best counter to the dominance of Russian gas in Europe is not necessarily stopping Russian imports, but rather continuing the liberalization of the new oil and gas markets, the diversification of potential suppliers, and the implementation of market regulations that ensure all actors abide by EU rules that encompass the security concerns of both the EU and NATO. While energy independence may not be a realistic goal for many countries who continue to rely on fossil-fuels, energy competition and anti-monopoly regulation have been shown to be workable alternatives. For example, the 2019 amendment to the EU Gas Directive implemented the provision that all "pipelines entering or leaving the European internal energy market need to comply with EU law," and that "any new gas pipelines originating outside the EU will have to comply with the core principles of

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<sup>442</sup> Song, Kelly, and Ashleigh Garrison. "Russia's Achilles Heel: Putin Still Falling Short on Master Plan for Aging Oil Economy." *CNBC*, NBC, 19 July 2018.

<sup>443</sup> "Delivery Statistics," Gazprom Exports (Gazprom, 2019)

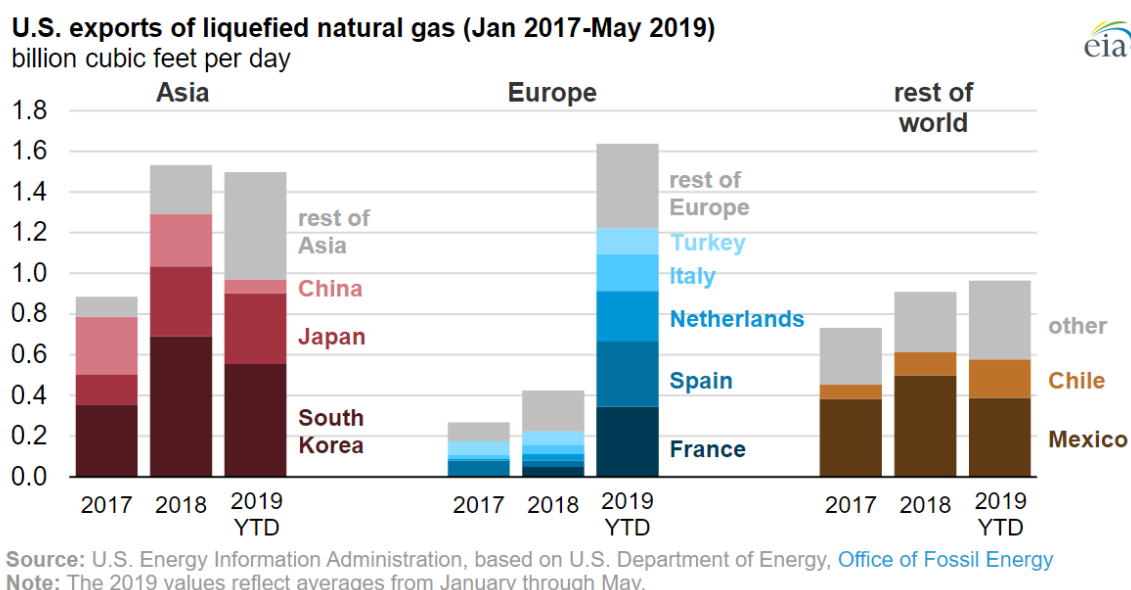
<sup>444</sup> Persily, Larry. "Gazprom Pipeline to China Looks Far from Profitable." *Alaska Journal*, 12 February 2020.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>446</sup> Krutikhin, Mikhail. "Power of Siberia or Power of China?" *Al Jazeera*, 19 December 2019.

the Third Energy Package.”<sup>447</sup> This has worked to strip Gazprom of its monopoly power via unbundling by requiring it to give up its majority ownership of the pipeline in order to supply natural gas through it, thus providing third-party access to other European suppliers.<sup>448</sup> In addition to market regulations, diversification of suppliers, from the United States to Australia, has worked to provide Europe with a new source for reliable energy. Over the last two years, the United States has increased exports of LNG to Europe by nearly 700%. That number is only expected to grow as new infrastructure continues to be built and economies’s movements towards decarbonization make natural gas more prevalent.<sup>449</sup>

Figure 2:



The EU has recognized the need for further infrastructure development and implemented a Comprehensive Strategy for LNG and Storage in 2017.<sup>450</sup> This includes “building the necessary infrastructure to complete the creation of the internal energy market” in an effort to “end the dependency of certain Member States on one gas supply source.”<sup>451</sup> According to the European Commission, if all ongoing projects are implemented on schedule, “all Member states except for Malta and Cyprus will have access to three sources of gas by 2022, and 23 Member States will have access to the global liquified natural gas market.”<sup>452</sup> By diversifying the market, consumers will be able to negotiate better deals with Gazprom – as Lithuania did in 2014, reaching a 20% discount after the

<sup>447</sup> Morningstar, et al. “European Energy Security and Transatlantic Cooperation: A Current Assessment.” Atlantic Council: Global Energy Center, June 2019.

<sup>448</sup> European Commission. “Third Energy Package.” *European Union*, European Commission, 30 January 2020.

<sup>449</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration. “Independent Statistics and Analysis.” *EIA*, U.S. Energy Information Administration, 29 July 2019.

<sup>450</sup> Krutikhin, Mikhail. “Power of Siberia or Power of China?” *Al Jazeera*, 19 December 2019.

<sup>451</sup> European Parliament. “Comprehensive Strategy for Liquid Natural Gas and Storage.” *European Union*, European Parliament Legislative Train, December 2019.

<sup>452</sup> Morningstar, et al. “European Energy Security and Transatlantic Cooperation: A Current Assessment.” Atlantic Council: Global Energy Center, June 2019.

construction of a singular LNG terminal.<sup>453</sup> The United States has also taken action to support this initiative and is currently in the process of attempting to pass the European Energy Security and Diversification Act, which would supply \$1 billion in financing to support private sector investments in projects that diversify energy sources and energy transport capabilities.<sup>454</sup> Due to the climate of mutual dependence, recent diversification of new energy suppliers, and strong market regulations, this Task Force advises NATO and its members to continue to push forth Europeans demands in negotiations with Gazprom and Russia so that they can maintain economic ties as a platform for cooperation, while protecting the emerging market from hostile exploitation.

The threat posed by Russian energy dominance in Western Europe has been substantially mitigated by the evolving market structure and increased regulations and, as a result, it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO use its resources and influence on countering the isolation of Eastern European countries from the mainstream energy mix via increased political and infrastructural connectivity in the region. A major concern for Ukraine during the conception of the Nord Stream projects was that they would allow Russia to pursue more aggressive tactics against it since Russia would no longer have to factor in the majority of its market consumers when taking bilateral action to threaten or intimidate transit countries. The addition of the Nord Stream and Turk Stream systems will likely allow Russia to maintain its politically favor-based resource pricing system throughout the region without harming its own economy. Through this system, Russia can reward countries for their political standing or cooperation via favorable pricing, and punish those Russia disagrees with by threatening gas shutoffs and implementing price increases with little to no transparency.<sup>455</sup> This has been well-noted by European officials and, after the annexation of Crimea, the European Commission stress tested the energy sector of the region in order to analyze the ability of EU countries to withstand disruptions in their energy supply – identifying missing infrastructure links and long-term supply contracts with Russia as the main vulnerabilities.<sup>456</sup> Working to alleviate the energy difficulties facing Central European NATO and EU members is the Three Seas Initiative, established in 2016 with the mission of creating a “north-south energy and infrastructure corridor in the region” to reduce states’ dependence on Russian energy through their own developments.<sup>457</sup> This includes NATO members such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and others in the Central/Eastern European region. A major goal of the initiative is to capitalize on new LNG terminals in Poland, Lithuania, and Croatia, thereby decreasing future demand for Russian gas and providing the necessary infrastructure to purchase, hold, and transport gas from alternative suppliers throughout the region. Furthermore, West-to-East reverse gas flows have been a main driver connecting the full European market; nearly all existing transit pipelines can handle reverse flows, providing greater flexibility to the Eastern region and even supplying Ukraine with enough natural gas

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Morningstar, et al. “European Energy Security and Transatlantic Cooperation: A Current Assessment.” Atlantic Council: Global Energy Center, June 2019.

<sup>455</sup> Zaniewicz, Maciej. “New Gas Pipeline Geopolitics in Central and Eastern Europe.” Warsaw Institute, 21 December 2019.

<sup>456</sup> Morningstar, et al. “European Energy Security and Transatlantic Cooperation: A Current Assessment.” Atlantic Council: Global Energy Center, June 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Wermer, David. “The Three Seas Initiative Explained.” Atlantic Council, 27 August 2019.

to end its dependence on Russia.<sup>458</sup> Given these circumstances, the Task Force recommends that the NATO countries involved in the Three Seas Initiative coordinate with Turkey and Ukraine to create a regional gas hub that uses gas supplied by local producers, supplemented by gas from Norway and LNG from the United States, in an effort to deter further energy exploitation from Russia and keep Turkey involved within European energy plans that lessen any effects of Russian influence. Providing expanded access to the global market will allow countries who may be exploited by aggressive Russian pricing to attain greater negotiating power, and give countries within Russia's sphere of influence the opportunity to take advantage of European policy, infrastructure, and economic benefits.

Over the last decade, NATO's overall energy security has improved dramatically as a result of new innovations in resource extraction and a completely restructured global energy market. The influx of new energy sources to the European market has presented NATO allies with the opportunity to not only introduce new suppliers, but also create a climate in which the EU can successfully negotiate rules and regulations to stabilize what was once an unpredictable, Russian-dominated energy market. Moving forward with the considerations of this Task Force, NATO members should continue to push forward EU-centered regulations and standards in continued business with Russia, increase market access within vulnerable countries with suppliers such as the United States, and prioritize involving Turkey in its interconnectivity efforts, such as the Three Seas initiative, to solidify its involvement in, and commitment to, the Alliance. Despite being heavily reliant on international energy imports, the EU has successfully managed to improve its security and independence as the emerging market structure has granted it new opportunities to diversify a once restricted system.

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# Issues of Cyber Security as it Relates to NATO

Annie Comstock

## Current NATO Cyber Security Stance

To understand NATO's position on cyber security, it's imperative to analyze its existing documents for any references to cyber policies. The first mention of cyber security is in the 2006 Summit in Riga, Latvia. In the official text from the Summit, NATO set out to develop a Network Enabled Capability and work towards the protection of its key information systems from cyber attacks.<sup>459</sup> Each year, it has developed these policies, but thus far, no noteworthy policies or international agreements on a cyber code of conduct or specific defensive and offensive measures have been created.<sup>460</sup> The most drastic policy developments were introduced during the 2009 Strasbourg Summit, when NATO established the Cyber Defence Management Authority, improved the Computer Incident Response Capability, and, most importantly, created the Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) in Estonia.<sup>461</sup> The CCDCOE conducts research, training, and exercises in technology, strategy, operations, and law. It also hosts CyCon, the International Conference on Cyber Conflict and Locked Shields, which is a unique international cyber defense conference that works to advance academic research and build community within the field.<sup>462</sup>

Since NATO began implementing cyber security policies in the early 2000s, every summit since has included a lengthy report on NATO's commitment to cyber defense. The most recent summit in Brussels ended with the statement that "cyber defence is part of NATO's core task of collective defence," and should be considered as important as other military domains.<sup>463</sup> In 2016, the Cyber Defence Pledge was introduced, making the commitment to both safeguard the Alliance within the ever-evolving cyber landscape and aid allied nations in developing the capacity to defend themselves

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<sup>459</sup> NATO. "Riga Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of States and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North American Council in Riga." NATO, November 29, 2006.

<sup>460</sup> NATO. "Brussels Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels." NATO, July 12, 2018.

<sup>461</sup> NATO. "Strasbourg/ Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/ Kehl." NATO, April 4, 2009.

<sup>462</sup> "About Us." The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. Accessed February 4, 2020.

<sup>463</sup> NATO. "Brussels Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels." NATO, July 12, 2018.

in cyber space.<sup>464</sup> NATO's summits in 2009<sup>465</sup> and 2014<sup>466</sup> stated that international laws would also extend to cyber conduct. In the 2014 Wales Summit, the Alliance made commitments to enhance cyber defense and endorsed the development of an enhanced cyber security policy.<sup>467</sup> The Summit established the Alliance's fundamental responsibility to defend its own networks and stated that aid to allies should be "addressed in accordance with the spirit of solidarity."<sup>468</sup> However, NATO has yet to clearly define how its member states should work together to provide each other with international support in the cyber realm.

The Tallinn Manual and Tallinn Manual 2.0 are "the most comprehensive [guides] for policy advisors and legal experts on how existing International Law applies to cyber operations," and were compiled and maintained by an international group of experts at the invitation of the CCDCOE.<sup>469,470</sup> In both editions of The Tallinn Manual, NATO shirks responsibility for international cyber security by arguing that it is categorized as a defense alliance, not a security alliance, and, therefore, the issue is outside of its purview, despite the fact that its website states that "NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means."<sup>471,472,473</sup> Escaping accountability through the technicality of language and the difference of mere synonyms has enabled NATO to avoid taking responsibility for adapting to a new era. It will be discussed later why it is imperative to the continuance and vitality of the Alliance that it seize the opportunity to develop comprehensive cyber policies rather than balk at the magnitude of the undertaking.

Due to its refusal to take responsibility for developing comprehensive cyber policies, it has allowed its competitors to gain a head start in this arena, and therefore it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO pursue an increased focus in this area by creating competent, well-informed

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<sup>464</sup> NATO. "Warsaw Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw." NATO, July 9, 2016.

<sup>465</sup> <sup>465</sup> NATO. "Strasbourg/ Kehl Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/ Kehl." NATO, April 4, 2009.

<sup>466</sup> NATO. "Wales Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales." NATO, September 5, 2014.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> NATO. "Wales Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales." NATO, September 5, 2014.

<sup>469</sup> "About Us." The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. Accessed February 4, 2020.

<sup>470</sup> *Tallinn Manual 2.0 on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Operations*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> *Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Operations*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<sup>473</sup> NATO. "What is NATO?" NATO/OTAN, 2019.

policies that allow it to confront the challenges of this new era and adequately address the threats posed by its competitors.

## **Attribution**

One of the largest issues when it comes to strategic cyber operations is the lack of attribution of the origin of cyber attacks. At present, it is impossible to discern with absolute certainty where a cyber attack came from.<sup>474</sup> There are certain factors that can be used to improve estimates of an attack's origin, but many of them can be falsified. One of the best ways to attribute attacks involves searching for patterns present in similar cyber attacks, and using them to group attacks that may be from the same actor. These groups are classified as Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs).<sup>475</sup> The main course of action NATO and its allies can take to address this is continued investment in technology that enables increased certainty in attribution. This is one of the largest factors influencing the rapid growth of cyber attacks, and one of the most daunting to solve. Since the inaccuracy of current attribution methods is one of the largest factors influencing the rapid growth of the use of cyber attacks, it is the recommendation of this Task Force that NATO and its allies continue investments in technologies that increase the certainty of attribution.

## **Cyber Warfare between States**

Looking forward, it appears likely that cyber warfare will replace conventional warfare as the primary arena for conflict since it is significantly less costly in terms of both resources and, thus far, human lives. A state does not need billion-dollar machines to be flown across the world to commit a cyber attack, rather, all that is required is a few highly skilled people with a strong internet connection. Given the current state of technology, cyber warfare also offers perpetrators plausible deniability due to the lack of concrete attribution methods. States have already begun to opt for cyber tactics, such as the use of super malware like Stuxnet, over conventional methods to achieve their desired outcomes, and it does not appear as though this trend is likely to reverse any time soon. Examples of these techniques include the Russian attacks on Estonia, the Sony Pictures hack from North Korea, and other lesser actions that have already exemplified the utility of this strategy.<sup>476</sup> Most countries with advanced militaries now have cyber operations in every branch of their military or have it as its own force. International intelligence gathering agencies rely heavily on cyber espionage, as well.<sup>477</sup> NATO is

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<sup>474</sup> Segal, Adam. *The Hacked World Order: How Nations Fight, Trade, Maneuver, and Manipulate in the Digital Age*. Second edition. New York: PublicAffairs, 2017.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>476</sup> Segal, Adam. *The Hacked World Order: How Nations Fight, Trade, Maneuver, and Manipulate in the Digital Age*. Second edition. New York: PublicAffairs, 2017.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

already struggling with leaders in France and the United States questioning its continued utility and ignoring this emerging form of warfare could be dangerous for its longevity.<sup>478</sup>

### **Article 5 As It Relates to Cyber Security**

One of the most important aspects of NATO's various agreements is Article Five of the Washington Treaty. It states that an attack on one member of the Alliance is to be treated as an attack on all members. Currently, it has only been invoked once in the Alliance's history, but, in 2019, NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated that it could be triggered in response to "serious" cyber attacks.<sup>479,480</sup> However, the 2007 Russian cyber attacks on Estonia following political tensions over the relocation of a statue were certainly serious since the Estonian parliament, banks, and ministries were affected for 22 days.<sup>481</sup> This intrusion certainly constituted a serious attack, but NATO's only response was an internal review of its own security, the formation of the CCDCOE, and creation of the first edition of the "Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare," rather than invoking Article Five.<sup>482</sup> Given the gravity of the attacks, it brings into question what would constitute a serious enough attack for the Alliance to invoke Article Five. Therefore, NATO would benefit from a clearer articulation of the factors that would provoke retaliatory action regarding cyber attacks and Article Five

Conversely, if there was a clearly articulated strategy for responding to a cyber attack, and countries were transparently retaliating to a previous attack, it would be unprecedented. In cyber security's brief history, countries have not typically openly claimed responsibility for cyber attacks.<sup>483</sup> Retaliatory attacks from a coalition such as NATO would be new territory for attribution and escalation as well.

Countries would need to brace for a continued escalation and retaliatory attacks, as there is little precedent for escalation as it relates to cyber attacks. It is currently unknown how a collective response would escalate a situation. However, if NATO wishes to remain a viable military alliance, it

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<sup>478</sup> Stearns, Jonathan. "Analysis: Why NATO, at 70, Is Facing New Doubt and Criticism." The Washington Post. WP Company, December 5, 2019. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/why-nato-at-70-is-facing-new-doubt-and-criticism/2019/12/04/c63266c2-16c2-11ea-80d6-d0ca7007273f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/why-nato-at-70-is-facing-new-doubt-and-criticism/2019/12/04/c63266c2-16c2-11ea-80d6-d0ca7007273f_story.html).

<sup>479</sup> Stoltenberg, Jens. "NATO Will Defend Itself (Article by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Published in Prospect)." NATO/OTAN. NATO, August 29, 2019. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_168435.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_168435.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> Herzog, Stephen. "Revisiting the Estonian Cyber Attacks: Digital Threats and Multinational Responses." *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 2 (2011): 49–60. <https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.4.2.3>.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>483</sup> Segal, Adam. *The Hacked World Order: How Nations Fight, Trade, Maneuver, and Manipulate in the Digital Age*. Second edition. New York: PublicAffairs, 2017.

is the belief of this Task Force that it needs to consider the invocation of Article Five in response to threats from the cyber realm.

### **Stuxnet as an Example**

Perhaps the most infamous piece of software ever created, Stuxnet has drastically altered geopolitical tensions, as well as redefined and amplified the conversation around cyberwarfare and cyber security. Stuxnet is a piece of super malware that is suspected to have been created by the United States in collaboration with the Israeli government with the intention of delaying or halting the Iranian nuclear program.<sup>484</sup> As a result of Stuxnet's interferences, Iran's nuclear centrifuges were malfunctioning, talented engineers lost their jobs, and Iran's nuclear program was impeded. Stuxnet was discovered in 2012 after it unintentionally infected thousands of computers around the world.<sup>485</sup> It was by far the most complex malware the world had seen and operated for years undetected.

If the attributions of Stuxnet's origins are to be believed, then much can be learned from it. It provides an example of countries working together without sharing all of their information. Through collaboration and task sharing, two advanced countries were able to build an extremely powerful tool without compromising their security. There was clearly an element of trust involved, as they collaborated on at least four zero-day vulnerabilities. Zero-day vulnerabilities are extremely valuable and sensitive information, such as a breach in a computer program that the vendor of the product has no knowledge of. Further, it was used when there was an inability to resolve concerns over Iran's nuclear program conventionally.<sup>486</sup> In this instance, countries used cyber warfare to affect geopolitical change and enact physical damage during an international conflict. This will not be the last time that nations and their allies use cyber warfare to affect international issues surrounding policy, security, and international agreements. To some extent, this can serve as both a measure of success for the perpetrators and a warning that there are more cyber threats to come.

### **Cyber Security and Democracy**

NATO is both a political and military alliance, with the core purpose of promoting democratic values among the allied nations.<sup>487</sup> Therefore, it is pertinent to analyze the ways in which cyberspace has influenced democracy in the past and may influence it in the future.

In 2016, Psy-Group, an Israeli company specializing in social media manipulation known to recruit from the Mossad, simultaneously managed American clients and worked for Russian oligarchs

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<sup>484</sup> Zetter, Kim. *Countdown to Zero Day: Stuxnet and the Launch of the World's First Digital Weapon*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2016.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>487</sup> "What is NATO?" NATO/OTAN, 2019.

to swing the on-going American election.<sup>488</sup> The company shut down voluntarily after it became clear that it was under investigation for the latter of these actions.<sup>489</sup> It is not enough to hope that alliances with powerful countries will ensure the loyalty of the private sector in allied countries. Adversaries in cyber war may recruit collaborators either directly within a target country or within allied countries of the target, widening the likelihood of damaging attacks to anything from democracy to critical physical infrastructure. This Task Force highlights the threats of cyber security to democracy to bolster its argument that there is a need for NATO to increase its cyber security policies to safeguard its values.

## **Working with The Private Industry**

Today's technology companies have more power relative to their governments than any other sector in history. Government militaries have always paired with private industry, but now it is different. Not only have private companies encrypted their products and services in such a way that it is near impossible to reverse engineer, they also store more information about citizens than any other sector previously known. The amount of power that these companies have is staggering, and governments must contend with the fact that some of these companies are economically and structurally more powerful than they are. For example, only 14 countries in the world have a GDP higher than Apple's \$1.4 Trillion valuation.<sup>490</sup> When the United States FBI requested that Apple write a program to enable the unlocking of iPhones belonging known domestic terrorists – eleven times between 2015 and 2016, and again in 2020 – the company refused. After a lengthy legal process, Apple was found to not be legally required to do so, and it continues to dominate the United States's technology market, unimpeded.<sup>491</sup> NATO and its allied countries must learn to navigate this new environment and the new power structures that exist.

Beyond the products of companies that many cyber citizens have in their own homes, there exist many groups of hackers and cyber mercenaries who are able to cause significant damage to some of the most powerful countries in the world. In the cyber era, tools for espionage and spies are for sale in radically new ways unseen before. Innovative tools that are used to surveil citizens and access sensitive information are accessible on the private market. There are a handful of extremely powerful companies, such as DarkMatter, NSO, and Black Cube, who have recruited top talent as cyber mercenaries and are monetizing the transnational illicit sale of information.<sup>492</sup> The aforementioned Psy-Group was another private company active in the cyber realm that was able to enact political influence over the presidential election of one of the most advanced countries on earth, and a member

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<sup>488</sup> Mazzetti, Mark, Adam Goldman, Ronen Bergman, and Nicole Perloth. "A New Age of Warfare: How Internet Mercenaries Do Battle for Authoritarian Governments." The New York Times. The New York Times, March 21, 2019.

<sup>489</sup> Entous, Adam, and Ronan Farrow. "Private Mossad for Hire." The New Yorker. The New Yorker, June 25, 2019.

<sup>490</sup> Kolakowski, Mark. "At \$1.3 Trillion, Apple Is Bigger Than These Things." Investopedia. Investopedia, January 29, 2020.

<sup>491</sup> Newman, Lily Hay. "This Apple-FBI Fight Is Different from the Last One." Wired. Conde Nast, January 16, 2020.

<sup>492</sup> Mazzetti, Mark, Adam Goldman, Ronen Bergman, and Nicole Perloth. "A New Age of Warfare: How Internet Mercenaries Do Battle for Authoritarian Governments." The New York Times. The New York Times, March 21, 2019.

of NATO.<sup>493</sup> A new environment that prizes individual- and knowledge-centric cyber capabilities is emerging and indicates that nations and their alliances can no longer hold a full monopoly on violence and the ability to affect geopolitical change.<sup>494</sup>

To maintain security and democracy, governments and international alliances must work with the private industry. NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, has acknowledged this, writing in 2019 that NATO must strengthen its relationship with industry to improve their cyber defense capabilities.<sup>495</sup> To attempt to work against the private technology sector would likely be ineffective and detrimental to growth. Research and development on more secure practices by private companies, as well as mutual investments with governments, have become essential for protecting critical infrastructure in nations around the world. It is critical for the mutual defense and security of NATO's allies that they increase spending towards cyber measures in collaboration with their biggest technology centers, rather than wasting valuable resources on buying things like tanks or nuclear weapons that are increasingly becoming less likely to be used. This Task Force recommends that NATO allocate resources to creating partnerships with private companies and reconsider its defense spending, providing appropriate subsidies or advantages to encourage this kind of partnership and tangential growth.

### **An Argument for No Offensive Action**

Some leading cyber security experts, such as Seunghwan Yeo, argue that offensive cyber security is a field that is elusive in nature to states and, therefore, NATO would be an ineffective body for addressing it.<sup>496</sup> Conventional military techniques are incompatible with the constantly evolving cyberspace. With the lack of attribution discussed previously, it is not yet possible to implement legitimate and effective deterrence measures.<sup>497</sup> Following this line of thinking, this Task Force asserts that the best course of action for the Alliance would be to establish a strong multilateral network and work on increasing its defensive measures in the cyber realm. Further, each member state should work on bolstering the defenses of both its government servers and private industries. If this were to become the focus of NATO as it relates to cyber security, there could be a great deal of information sharing that would increase allies's security.

Although states are unlikely to share any known vulnerabilities they have with other nations, they may be more inclined to share information on matters of security. Taking a collaborative approach

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Yeo, Seunghwan, Amanda Birch, and Hans Bengtsson. "The Role of State Actors in Cybersecurity: Can State Actors Find Their Role in Cyberspace?" In *National Security and Counterintelligence in the Era of Cyber Espionage*.

<sup>495</sup> Stoltenberg, Jens. "NATO Will Defend Itself (Article by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Published in Prospect)." NATO/OTAN. NATO, August 29, 2019. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_168435.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_168435.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>496</sup> Yeo, Seunghwan, Amanda Birch, and Hans Bengtsson. "The Role of State Actors in Cybersecurity: Can State Actors Find Their Role in Cyberspace?" In *National Security and Counterintelligence in the Era of Cyber Espionage*.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

would require a great deal of trust between NATO allies, but could be extremely rewarding. With the combined resources of some of the wealthiest countries in the world, the Alliance has the potential to make its members some of the most secure.

### **Information Sharing and Collaboration within NATO States**

There is also the issue of information sharing and collaboration between NATO states. The CCDCOE promotes a significant amount of information sharing, training, and collaboration between allied powers for the protection of NATO facilities.<sup>498</sup> In addition, the CCDCOE is one of the world's largest cyber defense testing and training exercises.<sup>499</sup> The Wales Summit stated that “close bilateral and multinational cooperation plays a key role in enhancing the cyber defence capabilities of the Alliance,” and that it “will continue to integrate cyber defence into NATO operations and operational and contingency planning, and enhance information sharing and situational awareness among Allies.”<sup>500</sup> As previously mentioned, Stuxnet is an example of bilateral cooperation with limited but powerful information sharing; proof that such cooperation is achievable. Therefore, this Task Force recommends using the leadership and collaborative abilities exemplified by Stuxnet research as a guide for how to work with allies on cyber security offensive measures.

### **Conclusion**

The urgent issues of cybersecurity cannot be solved in the immediate future, and this paper has only scratched the cyber surface of broad, deep, and complex threats. NATO currently lacks clear and well-informed policies surrounding cyber security, and that is the principle basis for the recommendations of this Task Force. In this paper, this Task Force has proposed creating clearer guidelines for when Article Five should be invoked after a cyber attack by showing how its failure to do so after the Russian attack on Estonia in 2007 has allowed Russia to continue to develop its cyber capabilities, and eventually work with an Israeli company to meddle in the United States's 2016 election. NATO has claimed at times that cyber security is not largely related to its core principles, but this has been shown to be untrue due to the threat to democracy that cyber attacks pose. This Task Force has further recommended that the Alliance make investments in cyber technologies so that it can increase certainty in the attribution of attacks – thereby increasing its ability to deter attacks from adversarial powers – and form potentially powerful partnerships with private companies – through joint defensive and offensive spending by its members. Additionally, this Task Force has asserted that the most pressing course of action for NATO is to establish a strong multilateral network with allies and increase defensive measures within each member state's public and private sectors. It is unclear

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<sup>498</sup> “*About Us.*” The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. Accessed February 4, 2020.

<sup>499</sup> Stoltenberg, Jens. “*NATO Will Defend Itself* (Article by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Published in Prospect).” NATO/OTAN. NATO, August 29, 2019.

<sup>500</sup> NATO. “*Wales Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales.*” NATO, September 5, 2014.

how much collaboration is feasible within NATO on specific offensive or defensive measures, but the Stuxnet virus has provided an effective model that this Task Force recommends be followed for collaboration in the future.

Although policing cyberspace is nearly impossible, NATO can seize the opportunity to pioneer international law in this area. There are other multi-lateral organizations that could potentially step forward, but it is the opinion of this Task Force that if NATO is well poised to take significant measures. The Alliance is comprised of nations that agree on the principles of international internet sovereignty and are bound by military and economic alliances that lessen the impetus for ulterior motives. Given the technological and financial resources available to its members, it has the potential to be a platform for extraordinary coordination and revolutionization of international cyberspace.

NATO currently maintains the assertion that it need not participate in the fight over hegemony in cyberspace because it is a defense organization rather than a security organization, as stated in the Tallinn Manual. However, this distinction is only designed to delay addressing a formidable issue. Defense is merely a tool that is used to protect security, so if NATO wishes to remain categorized as a defensive military alliance, it must adapt to the changing climate in which it is operating.

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## Editorial Conclusion

Nathan A. Sebree

NATO is an alliance in crisis at a critical juncture in its history. The ever-evolving international security environment continuously presents new threats and difficulties that the Alliance must address and overcome if it wishes to remain viable into the future. This Task Force has endeavored to address just a small number of the issues characterizing the current security era and present workable proposals that it believes could provide substantial aid to the Alliance as it faces this new world. Thus, it asserts that these proposals are pertinent to the most pressing concerns surrounding NATO and should help form the basis of its next Strategic Concept.

In the section entitled “West Eurasia,” this Task force has recommended that the Alliance expand its cooperation with the EU, encourage the U.S. to recognize the security efforts of its European Member States, and prepare its European member states for the possibility of decreased U.S. involvement in the organization. Looking to the largest threat to European security on the continent, Russia, this Task Force has proposed gaining a better understanding of its hybrid warfare tactics and develop appropriate responses to its aggression in the form of a “dual track” solution. In regard to the most confounding crisis on the continent, Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and how to address it, this Task Force has argued for a reconsideration of the Alliance’s relationship with the state – opting for increased partnership rather than full-fledged membership – and increased cooperation with the OSCE, especially in relation to Ukraine.

The chapter “Mid-Eurasia,” was dedicated to a discussion of NATO’s position toward this turbulent region. Here, the Task Force suggested that the Alliance and many of those involved must be held to account for the failures in Afghanistan, promote greater transparency in all of its future endeavors, and create clear objectives and desired outcomes prior to intervening in any conflict. It also asserted that NATO would benefit from providing support to first asylum countries and constructing strong social safety nets in final countries of settling for migrants traveling into the territories of its member states, as well as increasing pressure on Pakistan to take action against jihadi terrorist groups inside its borders.

In East Eurasia, this Task Force has exemplified the need to refocus and update NATO’s regional partnerships. It has provided evidence to support the assertion that the Alliance should not engage in a military pivot towards the region and instead tailor its partnerships with each regional partner to their needs and goals, while also reaching out to multilateral institutions to cooperate on shared security challenges. In addition, this Task Force has shown that NATO would greatly benefit from the preservation of international arms control agreements and an adjustment of its nuclear and conventional posture to provide security, deterrence, and assurance to states in East and West Eurasia, as well as the creation of a coherent strategy for East Eurasia, dealing with its goals for each partner country and the region as a whole. A minority voice in the Task Force has also argued that, in relation to the rise of China and the Belt and Road initiative, NATO should view these developments as an opportunity to seek mutually beneficial cooperation with the growing power, rather than as a challenge to its authority.

In the ultimate section concerning emerging issues, the Task Force has posited that NATO should Develop comprehensive cyber policies that allow NATO to confront the challenges of this new era and adequately address the threats posed by its competitors, while investing in technology to make

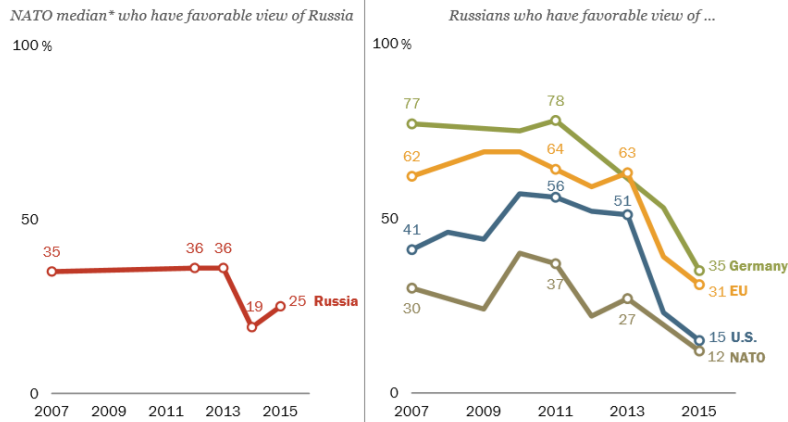
allied countries less susceptible to cyber attacks and increase certainty in their attribution. Additionally, it believes that the Alliance must reconsider defense spending and expand it to include important issues like counterterrorism and cybersecurity partnerships with private companies, as well as continue to push forward EU-centered regulations and standards in business transactions with Russia, increase market access to energy sources in vulnerable countries with suppliers like the United States, and prioritize involving Turkey in its interconnectivity efforts to solidify its commitment to the Alliance.

Given the preceding analyses, it is clear that NATO continues to be relevant in the new, unconventional, ever-changing landscape – arguably, more so than ever. The Alliance plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of both its member states and its allies around the world, but its ability to maintain this position is dwindling. Should NATO make a concerted effort to address all of these issues and incorporate these proposals in its new Strategic Concept, it is the firm belief of this Task Force that it will be in a much better position to tackle the issues of the new global security environment and remain viable well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

# Appendix

## Bennett:

### NATO Publics Have Negative View of Russia as Russian Ratings of West Plummet



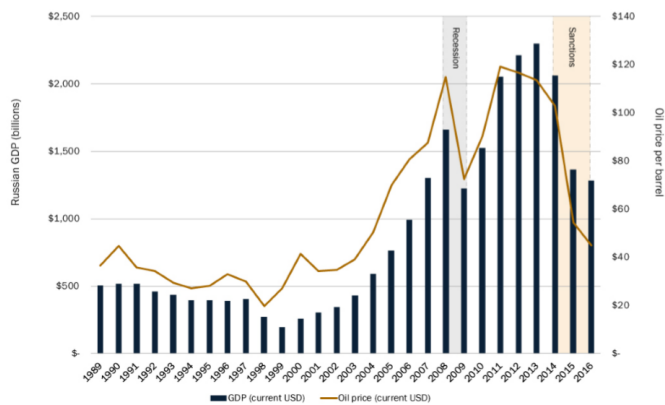
\* NATO median includes France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, the UK and the U.S.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q12a, d-f, o.

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Source: Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, *NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid*. Pew Research Center, 2015.

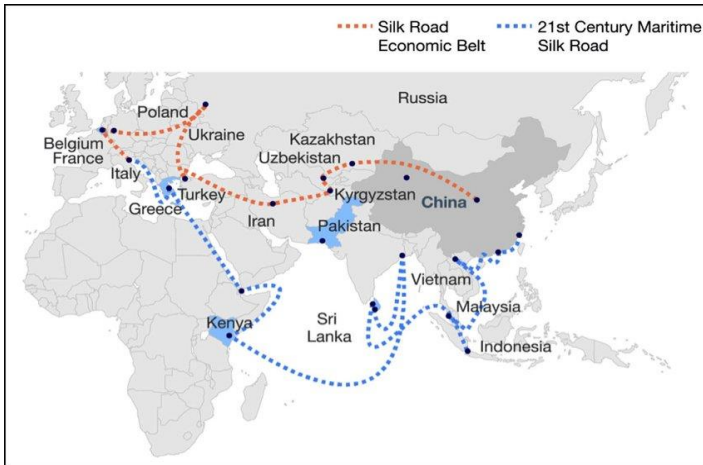
### THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY AND OIL PRICES



Sources: For Russian GDP data, see "GDP (current USD)," World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=RU&start=1989&view=chart>. Oil price data is from BP, "BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2017," (London: BP, 2017), <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-2017/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2017-oil.pdf>. Historical oil price data has been converted to current USD using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation Calculator at "CPI Inflation Calculator," Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpiicalc.pl>.

Source: Aleksashenko, Sergey, Pavel Baev, Micheal O'Hanlon, Steven Pifer, and Alina Polyakova, *Restroing Equilibrium: U.S. Policy Options for Countering and Engaging Russia*. (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2018), 18.

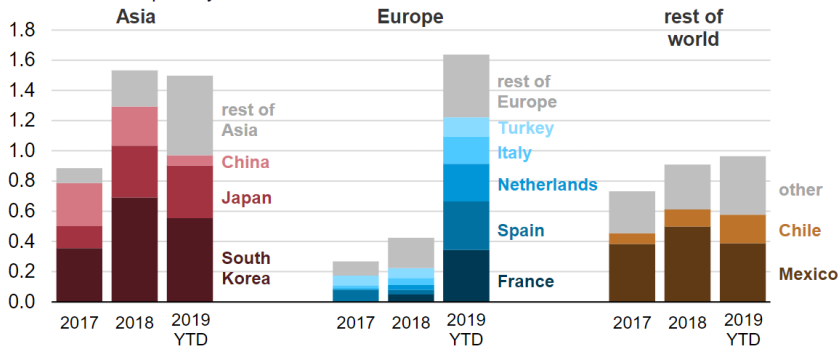
Li:



Source: McKinsey Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/capital-projects-and-infrastructure/our-insights/one-belt-and-one-road-connecting-china-and-the-world>.

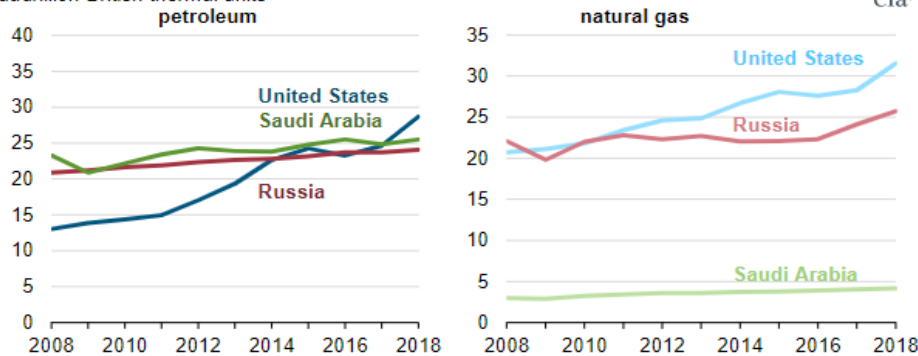
Robles:

**U.S. exports of liquefied natural gas (Jan 2017-May 2019)**  
billion cubic feet per day



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Fossil Energy  
Note: The 2019 values reflect averages from January through May.

**Estimated petroleum and natural gas production in selected countries**  
quadrillion British thermal units



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on International Energy Statistics  
Note: Petroleum includes crude oil, condensate, and natural gas plant liquids.



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