

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

Charles L. Barry and Julian Lindley-French

The cohesion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the linchpin of the U.S. global security order for over 65 years, is threatened externally by Russian aggression and internally by centrifugal European forces spawned by persistent economic challenges and immigration. Yet NATO is as relevant to the future as it was in the past. Europe is by far the region with the most enduring ties to the United States. The world's largest and richest region, it is the strongest U.S. partner across all elements of power: diplomatic/political, informational, military/security, and economic/financial. The United States should protect this irreplaceable resource by moving with urgency to assert strong and sustained leadership and commitment to the future of NATO's dominant roles in regional peace and global security. The United States should likewise strengthen its ties to individual European nations and with the European Union to underscore its enduring support for an appropriately integrated and prosperous Europe at peace.

Every new administration in Washington must struggle to set the right priorities as it gets organized. The President's national security team—a team that now includes new economic and financial players—must find its own cohesiveness. Early decisions will set the tone for the 4 years to come. These first choices will signal where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Europe fit among the new President's priorities. There is a compelling need for strong, active, and inclusive U.S. leadership of its most important global security alliance.

The United States and Europe have more in common than any other two regions of the world. Their economies are the largest by far: the \$18 trillion European Union (EU) economy and \$17 trillion U.S. economy represent more than one-third of global gross domestic product (GDP). The largest foreign investor in the EU is the United States, and the largest foreign investors in the United States are in Europe. Together

the United States and EU annually account for \$4 trillion in collective foreign direct investment (FDI), close to 50 percent of world's FDI, an average of 15 million jobs related to transatlantic trade per year, \$5 trillion in commercial transatlantic sales per year, and \$120 billion in U.S.-EU development assistance globally per year. In addition, 98 percent of U.S.-EU trade is dispute-free. Europe is the largest regional investor in the United States, representing approximately two-thirds (66 percent) of FDI through 2013. Asia is a distant second with 17 percent.

NATO is the cornerstone of U.S. allies and partners across the globe. Treaty partners represent 28 of 34 defense treaty allies around the world. Of the six Asian non-NATO allies, three are formal partners of the Alliance. In total NATO has 41 formal partner countries. When coupled with NATO's 28 members, these 69 countries account for one-third of the nations in the world willing to operate at times with NATO, following the Alliance's doctrine, standards, and operational procedures. NATO's military and political influence is unparalleled, with its membership including three of the five founding permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and three of the world's nuclear powers.

This close cooperation with like-minded nations is embedded in U.S. national security strategy, our defense strategic concepts, and our military strategy.¹ It is fundamental to our doctrines and planning for operations. Although the United States reserves the right to act unilaterally, seeking out allies for support and conducting international affairs with partners has long been a bedrock of U.S. foreign policy. Working with allies has become part of our national security DNA.

And there is no greater grouping of allies and partners than the North Atlantic Alliance, the strongest cohort of U.S. allies and partners anywhere in the world and at any point in history. NATO members and partners offer flexible military capabilities able to support the United States around the world.² By virtue of their membership or formal partnership in the Alliance, each nation testifies to its willingness to pursue common interests with the United States politically, economically, and, at times, militarily. Given the large number of nations linked to NATO, it can only be regarded as the linchpin of U.S. security strategy. Although a unique military alliance, NATO is also a successful, even essential, venue for political consultation, cooperation, and crisis response, both military and nonmilitary. It has also served as a forum for diplomatic actions and even economic cooperation.

NATO therefore is and will continue to be the enduring alliance for the United States in the 21st century.³ Our vital national security interests require that the United States engage in demonstrable leadership of it. Every U.S. administration comes to appreciate the value of the invest-

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

ment in and commitment to NATO. Realizing the highest return on that investment demands early, steady, and substantive engagement at all levels, including by the President.

Unfortunately, this has not always been the case in recent years, and rebuilding is required. Preoccupation with turmoil throughout the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa has sapped Washington's diplomatic as well as military time, resources, and energy. Since 2009 the U.S. rebalance to Asia has consumed unprecedented Presidential and Cabinet-level attention and travel. NATO/Europe has been (until recently) an area for culling resources and lowered focus for overtasked agencies.⁴

A different perspective is warranted. The United States needs its allies united behind a positive global agenda. Without the political, financial, and military support of NATO's many Allies and partners, the United States pays a far higher price for less peace in the world. NATO should be accorded standing recognition by U.S. policymakers as the most crucial diplomatic/military tool in America's international repertoire. NATO is a global, not a regional contributor, worthy of high engagement at all times, not only when Europe is in peril.⁵

The next U.S. President should prioritize staffing key positions well before June 2017 when the administration's first meeting with NATO leaders and ministers will be held. The President should have a substantive phone call with the NATO Secretary General (as well as the President of the European Council of the European Union) within the first 30 days. Allies should know what agenda the United States has in mind, and ideally consensus-building will have begun. How the United States prepares, and whether it presents a solid vision, will be leadership signals to Allies for the next 4 years. During that time there may be two summits and eight sets of ministerial meetings for the State and Defense departments, plus discussions triggered by crises. The United States must work to create expectations of close cooperation going both ways. In any global crisis, a key question will be, "What kind of support can our NATO Allies and partners provide?"

U.S. leadership in NATO has been challenged in recent years. A string of U.S. actions since September 11 has not ended well, cooling allied ardor. Allies want a tension-lowering, communicative but firm approach to Russia that takes into account the concerns of all Alliance members. They also look to a new U.S. President for wise choices regarding crises from NATO's south. Delivering on both will strengthen U.S. leadership and transatlantic ties. It will also send a strong message to Russia and other powers that there is solidarity across the Atlantic—that the United States and Europe cannot be divided on key issues.

The Warsaw Summit

The very successful Warsaw Summit in July 2016 exemplifies the modern NATO event: decisions by heads of state are made that address the most significant threats to Allies' security, plus agreed top-level positions are announced on a host of other important matters (at Warsaw, more than 100) that the Alliance intends to act on and resource. Summits sustain their impact by calling for follow-up actions and reports by staffs, commands, and the nations themselves. The 27th NATO summit in Warsaw also typified most summits by publishing a number of separate declarations by heads of state on topics of particular importance, such as Ukraine, transatlantic security, Afghanistan, commitment to resilience, cyber, Georgia, and NATO-EU relations. These declarations joined the primary declaration where heads of state gave the weight of their high offices to more than 30 pages of issues NATO is working to achieve.

NATO commitments showcased at Warsaw were particularly strong. They include:

- the continuous rotational deployment of NATO battalion battle groups beginning in 2017 in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland
- establishing the framework for a NATO multinational division headquarters in Poland
- the continuous rotation of a U.S.-armored brigade in Germany with prepositioned equipment
- substantially increased funding (\$3.4 billion) for the European Reassurance Initiative
- further construction of missile defense facilities ashore in Poland
- additional deployments of maritime and air forces in the NATO area, including the Black and Baltic Sea regions.

In recent years, every administration has experienced several Alliance summits. A Brussels Summit is possible in 2017 to introduce the new heads of state of the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States, and possibly France and Germany (both hold elections in 2017). Leaders might also call for a vision for the future and new Strategic Concept to be prepared for NATO's next decade. A summit will take place on NATO's 70th anniversary in April 2019 (which, notably, would be only months after Russia's presidential election). Summits include all NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

members plus representatives of the EU and many partners, and they are watched around the world. NATO convenes a special meeting between NATO members and Russia after each summit, adding to their potential to improve international relations and reduce tensions. NATO and its members typically begin to prepare for summits a year before.

Strengthening and Sustaining Alliance Political Cohesion

NATO needs leadership that overcomes differences, works to find common ground, achieves consensus decisions, and marshals support for action. Alliance cohesion is stressed by many factors, including continuing economic distress, a more aggressive Russia, massive refugee overflows, terrorism, differences over the role of nuclear weapons or missile defenses, ethnic divisions, and intra-Alliance relations. These challenges are manageable with steady leadership and an agenda that addresses members' discrete security interests. NATO should not be only a rare tool for collective defense, but it should also function as connective tissue for both the United States and Europe, a transatlantic underpinning to international security.

Building and maintaining cohesion inside NATO is complex for different reasons. First, NATO has a much larger and more diverse membership than it did 25 years ago, complicated by an EU that at times seems more competitive than complementary. Second, the Cold War threat that kept lesser national and regional concerns in the background for the sake of security ended a generation ago. An additional and mounting concern is Turkey and its increasingly authoritarian leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose July 2016 post-coup consolidation of power has raised serious concerns about Turkey's democracy and even its future in NATO. Finally, Russian president Vladimir Putin's objective is likely to damage or destroy the very cohesion NATO is trying to preserve and strengthen.⁶

NATO expansion has done much to bring democracy to the newer member states, but in an alliance of 28 or more members, there will always be perennial competing interests to take into account and differing agendas to navigate and integrate. Well-known clusters of nations—the Arctic, Balkan, Baltic, Benelux, Nordic, Southern, or Visegrád countries—divide resources and localize priorities when it comes to external threats and military requirements. Bilateral voices add to this mix at times: the U.S.-UK “special relationship,” the Franco-German “axis,” and the U.S.-Canada “North American pillar” are examples. Also, decades of NATO membership have masked but never completely overcome lingering tensions between Turkey and Greece. These fissures or fault lines are offset by the clear need for collective action to contain Russian

expansion and the instability emanating from NATO's southern flank. There are powerful contributions to be harnessed within each of NATO's "subcommunities," and NATO's agenda must always take into account their separate concerns.

Better NATO Decisionmaking

Decisionmaking has become unwieldy in an alliance that has mushroomed from 12 to (soon) 29 members; growth has slowed NATO to a crawl. The decision process itself is straightforward; every agreement requires consensus, and each member's voice has equal weight. One member can block any decision. The consensus method applies at every level of debate. An objection in any forum thwarts progress until resolved. However, consensus is not unanimity. Total affirmation is not required. Members who disagree can either raise objections or simply remain silent to achieve "consensus."⁷ However, silent members may later offer no political or material/military support or may even criticize agreed actions in some way. Members may also interpret differently what was agreed. Thus, achieving consensus does not always signal an Alliance in harmony.

Are there ways to expedite agreements and strengthen consensus support? The Libya operation in 2012 illustrates that in crisis NATO's machinery can move very fast indeed. Several suggestions have been put forth. Could NATO agree to a formal steering committee to develop North Atlantic Council (NAC) proposals?⁸ Might the informal "quad" employed during the Cold War (France, Germany, United Kingdom, and the United States) be resurrected to work out issues in advance?⁹ Another suggestion has been to adopt less than full consensus criteria for minor decisions or at working levels of agreement.

U.S. sponsorship and support from at least key members in Europe would be needed for even minor changes to be put in place. Structural changes to the consensus custom are certain to be drawn out and fraught with the potential for discord.¹⁰ Working to make decisions less contentious within the current process will be more promising. Regular informal discussions among key leaders, including at the highest levels, appears to hold the most potential for improvement. The mechanism could be varied based on the issue, consulting other members on particular matters. Implementation should be transparent and only as a precursor to formal decision sessions.

Other changes could be employed to speed decisions. For example, written decision drafts could be circulated in advance of discussions except in emergencies.¹¹ Already there are instances where working pa-

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

pers are distributed after meetings with dissenting views included. These practices indicate there is flexibility at least in the formative stages. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe could be authorized to complete select contingency planning and steps toward military alerts to reduce the complexity of reaching decisions in a crisis.¹²

The new U.S. administration should decide on one or two techniques for improving consensus decisionmaking and refine them with key Allies. Transparency with other members should be part of the plan, and their views should be brought into the mix before a final proposal is on offer. The rewards will be reinforced cohesion and stronger support for reform. In the end there will also be greater participation in implementation.

Detering and Communicating with Russia

When it comes to Russia, U.S. and NATO policies are integrated: the Alliance generally follows the U.S. lead. Furthermore, NATO and Russia are both encumbered by the same history—an adversarial past that is often more in focus than any possible future. NATO wants Russia as a partner but not a co-decider in crafting the Alliance agenda. Russia seeks a new European order without NATO and EU “blocs.” Promising cooperation deteriorated with the first NATO enlargement and NATO’s bombing of Russian partner Serbia in 1999.¹³ Relations were mutually suspended after the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and they all but ended over the 2014 crisis in Ukraine. By 2015 Russia listed NATO first among its military threats,¹⁴ and both U.S. and NATO military leaders have made a reciprocal assessment.¹⁵ At the end of a third consecutive 8-year U.S. Presidency, each begun with the goal of improving relations with Russia, the NATO-Russia relationship has regressed to near Cold War stasis.¹⁶

Rapprochement will be challenging. Putin’s worldview seems fixed. Above all he fears a “color revolution,” inspired by next-door representative democracy he cannot tolerate and standards of living he cannot hope to emulate. The West cannot easily acquiesce politically to Russian revanchism in Crimea and Ukraine, and it will not give way to Russia’s assertions of suzerainty on NATO’s eastern borders. The stage is set for a period of mutual confrontation for some time.

In this environment NATO must resolutely reassure the worried Baltic states and deter Russia. Stronger deterrence posturing is therefore under way and will likely continue. No current indicators suggest that Russia wants military confrontation with NATO, yet Russian military adventures since 2008 are grounds for caution and concern.¹⁷ NATO must strike a delicate balance: reassuring Allies and deterring Russian miscalculation

while also calming tensions. Russia should suspend provocative exercises near borders and, more importantly, its activities seeking political, economic, or social destabilization of NATO members through “ambiguous warfare” intended to exploit “the conflict potential of populations.”¹⁸ Nothing is more likely to deter such behavior than NATO firmness and resolve, demonstrated by strong forces on the ground in threatened areas.

The Southern Flank

The situation to NATO’s south has evolved from a distraction to a central concern. The present galvanizing threats from this region are terrorism infiltrating from failed states across the Middle East and North Africa and the collateral flow of refugees from the same conflict zones. Countering terrorism includes protecting national homelands from attack, but also intelligence-gathering and protecting the flow of energy and commerce. Stemming the flow of refugees calls for both humanitarian relief and removing the impetus to leave home for the unknown. Terrorists from the south have struck NATO members throughout Alliance territory. The growing flow of migration now challenges every Ally as well. Hence the risks from the south are demonstrably risks to all.

A “NATO southern strategy” has been called for to address the increasing risks from across the Mediterranean in North Africa, and from the Middle East.¹⁹ NATO is already implementing a host of important programs and operations in the region, from active partnerships to operations, and from joint exercises to force contingencies such as and enhanced NATO Response Force and Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), both tailorable and responsive to the south as well as the east. NATO’s political focus is appropriately balanced toward the south, and one of two joint force headquarters, Joint Force Command Naples, has a southern region mandate and is also active in overseeing NATO representation at and support to the African Union.

Stronger steps may, however, be needed. Refugee displacements from the Middle East and North Africa have reached calamitous proportions, causing the greatest political crisis in Europe since the Cold War and fueling in part Britain’s exit from the EU. The campaign of terror in Europe shows no signs of abating and may well increase in intensity as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant loses territory and resorts to even greater violence abroad. As argued elsewhere in this volume, the United States will be hard put to shore up its traditional allies in a Middle East in near collapse. Should conjoined refugee and terrorist pressures in Europe continue to magnify, NATO may be forced to consider stronger military measures as it looks south.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

Alliance Defense Spending²⁰

Every U.S. administration since 1952 has engaged in NATO burdensharing debates, the constant struggle over defense spending among “friendly rivals.”²¹ In terms of annual GDP, Europe is larger than the United States but spends far less on defense per nation and much less per capita than its American counterpart.²² In 2014, *declining* U.S. defense spending reached only 3.5 percent of GDP; however, Europe’s *rising* average was just 1.33 percent of GDP. That year, the United States spent the equivalent of \$2,051 per person on defense, while Europe averaged less than one-fifth that amount, just \$404 per capita. That is only about \$1.32 per citizen per day invested in self-defense.²³

The charge that Europe is “free riding,” however, is false.²⁴ Europe, with a larger GDP than the United States and with twice its population, spent almost \$300 billion on defense for 2014 (the United States spent \$654 billion, about 2.25 times higher). However, much of the U.S. defense budget supports American security interests worldwide and is not specifically focused on Europe. Europe should not spend like the United States on defense. It is not the dominant world power and, per capita at least, few Europeans enjoy the wealth of the United States, which on average is half again that of Europeans.²⁵ More than a 2 percent commitment that many Allies cannot meet, NATO needs military formations that are better trained, supported by modern equipment and enablers, and stocked to appropriate levels with repair parts, munitions, fuels, and other items. In short, they should be employable. In any great crisis, even modest contributions of quality units (such as a division from the larger powers and a brigade or battalion from the smaller ones with appropriate air and naval units) add up to a formidable military force no likely adversary can match.²⁶ This may be a more prudent and effective approach than insisting on higher defense spending per se.

Critical U.S. Leadership Priorities for NATO

Ten critical priorities will be on NATO’s agenda as a new administration is seated. Each will probably come to the fore in the first term, demanding U.S. attention and direction. They are sketched briefly as follows.

Sustaining Investment in NATO Partnerships

The substantial network of NATO partnerships built up since the mid-1990s is at risk of withering on the vine for lack of attention post-Afghanistan. U.S. leadership will be needed to reinvigorate political and military cooperation with 41 partner countries and several international organizations.²⁷ Together with NATO members, this is a reservoir of

more than one-third of the world's nations disposed to operating with NATO, a substantial addition to both U.S. and NATO security.²⁸

At their Wales Summit in September 2014, Allies agreed to a Defense and Related Security Capacity Building initiative to assist partners in strengthening capabilities they might contribute to NATO. The Warsaw Summit established a Partnership Interoperability Initiative for willing and capable partners to become better prepared for future crisis management missions. Another Warsaw program offers enhanced opportunities for partners making substantial operational contributions to draw even closer to the Alliance.²⁹ These programs should be pursued in full. Broader partner groups—the Partnership for Peace Program, Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative—provide regional focus and should be kept vibrant.³⁰ NATO's eight “partners across the globe” engage in dialogue and cooperate on issues of mutual interest such as counterterrorism, cyber defense, and energy security.³¹ NATO military leaders strongly endorse the contributions of partners and the programs that build their capabilities.³² However, realizing the benefits of partnership programs will require sustained effort and resources over the long term from NATO staffs as well as nations.

Keeping NATO's Nuclear Arsenal Relevant

Alliance leaders regularly reaffirm NATO's pedigree as a nuclear alliance.³³ However, beneath that broad agreement, some Allies openly question the utility of theater nuclear forces (TNF) in Europe.³⁴ TNF is how Europeans share the responsibility for, as well as the risk of their own, nuclear defense. The indivisibility of nuclear defense is why TNF should be modernized and kept viable. In 2012 NATO completed a Deterrence and Defense Posture Review to harmonize these differences but did not succeed.³⁵ The relevant issue is the impending obsolescence of the specialized “dual (i.e., nuclear) capable aircraft” (DCA) operated by five participating Allies.³⁶ These are the delivery systems essential to TNF. Already, experts note, current DCA aircraft are too vulnerable in today's air defense environments.³⁷ The solution for three of the five participating Allies will be the planned acquisition of the U.S. F-35, currently the only future DCA.³⁸ Germany and perhaps Belgium will have to consider modifying the EF 2000 Eurofighter for a DCA role, in coordination with U.S. plans to modernize the TNF arsenal.³⁹ In addition to fleet modernization, weapons storage facilities must also be upgraded, especially in light of heightened terrorist activities across Europe. These costs should be a priority for NATO common funding.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

Readiness Action Plan: Reassuring Allies and Force Adaptation

The Wales Summit approved and Warsaw confirmed a Readiness Action Plan featuring two parts, Assurance and Adaptation. In 2015 alone NATO held more than 300 exercises, many conducted by rotational forces in Eastern Europe, highlighted by NATO's largest exercise in a decade (Trident Juncture) held in the south. Tailored assurance measures are being implemented in Turkey to address risks arising from the Syrian conflict. Assurance is now an Alliance-wide endeavor under regular review by NATO ministers.

Post-Warsaw measures will include a substantial increase in U.S. military force presence and prepositioned equipment in Europe. NATO's VJTF is a 5,000-strong force deploying over 2 to 7 days.⁴⁰ VJTF is backed by 35,000 troops in an enhanced NATO Response Force comprised of interoperable land, maritime, air, special operations, and enabling forces (including cyber defense). Behind these are remaining national forces of members and partners in graduated levels of readiness. Ensuring that all force commitments, including U.S. participation, are interoperable and fully resourced over time will be crucial to success.⁴¹ Response times are just as critical to deterrence, as adversaries must see that NATO forces will respond effectively before there is any opportunity for success.

Full-Spectrum Deterrence

The United States should lead NATO toward a 21st-century vision of strategic deterrence. Deterrence cannot plateau with the operational or tactical positioning of a few ready units. In order to be credible, deterrence must be strategic as well: geographically broad, resourced in depth and across the spectrum of forces from conventional to nuclear. Geographically, NATO capabilities must deter risks from the north as well as the east and south. Nuclear deterrence requires exercising in that realm too, something that has been absent for 25 years. A conceptual 360-degree deterrence posture must be full spectrum—effective against terrorism and hybrid threats as well as conventional and nuclear threats. Strategic deterrence also means up-to-date mobilization and exercise plans to bring the full weight of national forces, industry, and resources to bear against any serious challenge.⁴² Highlights of national plans should be reflected in the NATO Defense Planning Process, including mobilization of critical civil resources and relevant industrial capacity.

Cyber Defense

In conflict and peacetime, no domain is more contested than cyberspace. The Alliance should undertake to coordinate national command activities relevant to NATO by creating a Coordination Center for Operational

Cyber Forces.⁴³ NATO cyber defense requires steady investment via common funding. This reflects universal dependence on information systems for mission execution, the fast-paced nature of technology evolution, and the rapid evolution of cyber. A top priority is to ensure protection of Alliance data on national systems connected to NATO networks.

Ten years after first being defined, it is time for NATO cyber defense requirements to transition from incremental project-based funding to a planned level of common funding. The reality of universal dependence on information systems for mission execution makes steady NATO funding an imperative. Fast-paced technology evolution and the rapid morphing of the cyber threat environment ensure cyber defense has become a fundamental item in NATO resource planning.

Defense Against Hybrid Threats

Every NATO member and partner is affected, directly or indirectly, by hybrid threats from Russia. These threats take the form of cyber intrusions, public media manipulation and disinformation (*maskirovka*), encouragement of separatist movements, corruption of public officials, large-scale penetration of NATO member intelligence services and political parties, and energy resource intimidation, as well as others. The initial goals are economic and political instability. But the collapse of a bordering NATO state such as Estonia due to Russian subversion—clearly an Article 5 event—could be an existential threat to NATO's viability altogether. The failure to achieve unanimity in the North Atlantic Council in this event through the defection of even a few of NATO's smaller, poorer, newer members—those most susceptible to Russian intimidation—might spell the end of the Alliance as we have known it. NATO thus requires a viable concept for resilience and hybrid defense, a concept that builds on and assists in national defensive measures. Stronger and better integrated national forces, especially in eastern Europe, are badly needed, and here NATO can help. Energy dependence on Russian supplies also constitutes a serious vulnerability that must be addressed. The Alliance can help build member capacity with respect to governance for internal minorities, energy independence, strategic communications, and cyber defenses. NATO can also help coordinate national measures for intelligence, police, paramilitary, special operations, and conventional military forces.

Missile Defense

Missile defense is an essential Article 5 capability.⁴⁴ It has been a goal of NATO for 15 years given ever-growing missile threats, including potential weapons of mass destruction payloads. The Alliance is making progress toward missile defense for all allied territory and populations.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

Systems are also in place for protecting deployed troops. Aegis systems, both ship-borne (based in Spain) and land-based (in Romania), cover the southern regions of the Alliance. Another Aegis system is under development in Poland. This will be the final piece of the U.S. European Phased Adaptive Approach missile defense system. It requires funding through 2018. When completed NATO will have an Article 5 collective defense capability against missile attacks. Other Allies contribute to NATO missile defense with land- and sea-based systems, and these contributions should expand. The latest countries to join the program are Denmark, the Netherlands, and Spain.⁴⁵

Missile defense is also a major NATO-Russia issue. Russia fears NATO capabilities may neutralize the missile and rocket forces it relies on for national defense, both conventional and nuclear, creating a destabilizing situation of Russian vulnerability.⁴⁶ Russia wants NATO to terminate its missile defense program or allow Russia in as co-directors and decision-makers. NATO has stated neither option is acceptable. Thus there is an impasse at a time when risks have increased and communications are minimal. Given that some 30 countries have missile systems capable of reaching NATO territory, the need for effective missile defense is clear.⁴⁷ It will come, however, at the price of continued Russian intransigence.

The NATO Strategic Concept

The 2010 Strategic Concept (SC) no longer reflects the strategic environment and is in need of updating. The SC states that “the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low.” Since peace was shattered in Ukraine, many Allies have raised concerns about the threat of conventional attack. Terrorist threats born in the conflicted territories to NATO’s south have spawned deadly attacks in France, Germany, and Belgium. Refugee flows across Europe have grown to alarming proportions and continue unabated. The world of 2010 seems far away indeed. A near-term option may be to provide interim political guidance to NATO military leaders for revision of MC 400/3, the classified instructions commanders use to implement the 2010 Strategic Concept, followed by a revised SC rolled out at the 70th anniversary summit. In crafting a revised concept, NATO leaders will likely consider guidance tailored to NATO’s eastern region and separately for NATO’s south and southeast. Branch plans for other areas (for example, the Arctic) should be included.

NATO’s Open Door Policy

NATO has invited Montenegro to join the Alliance and has a long-pending decision to accept Macedonia once its name dispute with Greece is

resolved.⁴⁸ Allies want to assert their resolve that Russia not have a de facto veto over new members. However, it is equally important to take in new members only where there is demonstrable mutual benefit to security. Expansion for expansion's sake is unwise. For some, a permanent partnership is all that is desired. Militarily neutral Serbia is an example of a NATO partner (since 2006) that does not aspire to membership.

Bosnia-Herzegovina's long, slow Membership Action Plan process is hampered by internal political disputes between its two entities, Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Near-term goals are further reconciliation and avoidance of retrenchment or open conflict.

Membership for Ukraine and Georgia will continue to be contentious with Russia. Russia commenced military operations in Georgia and Ukraine in part to send a clear signal that membership in NATO now is unacceptable. In spite of NATO's 2008 Bucharest Declaration (one repeated at Wales) that both countries will become members, NATO should be in no hurry. Both will take some time to complete Membership Action Plans, a process neither has begun. Their priority should be much-needed internal reforms. The goal should be to draw them closer to NATO as active partners, along the examples set by Finland and Sweden.

Reform

NATO should respond to recent terrorist attacks and other threats facing the Alliance by solving its longstanding failure to share information. Many attempts have failed at getting Allies to generate more than a minimalist and untimely intelligence picture. A major transformation is called for. A worthy solution is to invest in a standing committee of national intelligence directors, answerable to the NAC and parallel in both structure and process to the Military Committee. Such an institution is the only way to establish a culture of information-sharing not only for terrorism but also for threats in every domain.

Alliance-wide reforms were initiated at the 2010 Lisbon Summit and endorsed in 2012 at Chicago.⁴⁹ These included reforms to NATO headquarters staffs, military command structure, and agencies. Reforms were also enacted for Alliance resource management and common funding processes. At the start of 2017 the focus should be on developing team excellence, assessing performance, and making adjustments.

There is an urgent need to achieve far greater outcomes from Alliance programs and operations. The culprit here is the unavoidable political processes that are necessary for the Alliance to function at all. The solution is greater cooperation and more effective leadership, not just by the Secretary General and the United States but by all members. No member should merely "show up" and be minimally engaged. Representatives

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

must know the processes and prepare well. Military commands should receive all the properly trained and skilled personnel nations promised. Leaders and staffs alike should lean in and be willing to support initiatives even as they protect essential prerogatives.

NATO, the European Union, and Brexit

Though U.S. relations with Europe are primarily through NATO, since the mid-1990s U.S.-EU relations have been part of the mix, broadening cooperation in the economic, financial, political, and even security arenas.⁵⁰ The growing power of the EU as a partner in nonmilitary global affairs has been at the heart of these developments. The EU is a full member of both the G-7 and the G-20 with global influence. It elaborates Europe's collective foreign and security policy interests. It maintains 139 delegations around the world, including in most nations and with the United Nations, African Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, International Atomic Energy Agency, World Trade Organization, and others. The EU has steadfastly cooperated with NATO in postconflict stabilization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Afghanistan, and, in the near future, perhaps Libya.

The United States gains substantial benefit from a healthy EU economy and stable EU financial picture because Europe and the United States are each other's most significant investment and job-creating partner. A stable, politically cohesive Europe free from conflict will be America's strongest partner in global affairs. For example, EU economic sanctions against both Iran and Russia have helped further U.S. security interests. Achieving the same result through myriad bilateral negotiations across Europe would be difficult if not impossible. A strong EU depends on good relations among members that are themselves politically and economically vibrant. When this is the case, the EU is a force for global stability and a reliable partner for the United States, including in the prevention and resolution of conflicts worldwide.

Today, the United States should be concerned. The EU has been buffeted by too many crises over the past several years: the 2008 economic recession and the subsequent euro financial crisis; a series of tragic and seemingly unending terrorist attacks in Madrid, London, Paris, Brussels, Nice, and beyond; a political crisis triggered by the unprecedented result of the Brexit referendum in June 2016; and a refugee invasion from the south spawning mass encampments, riots, renationalization of borders, and the rise of xenophobia across the Union. Were the EU to unravel, the impact would be global—economic and political uncertainty, but also in terms of peace and security. The United States should take three steps to help the EU find its way back to sound political and economic health.⁵¹

First, the United States and the EU should agree on a new 21st-century pact to replace the limited and ancient 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda that still defines their relationship. There is much to build on through transatlantic cooperation in diplomatic, political, and economic realms. Development aid is one area. Prevention of and recovery from crises and conflict are other portfolios. And there are myriad other issues from terrorism (a mainstay of the 1995 agreement that should endure) to environmental, social, and poverty issues among the disenfranchised.

Second, the United States should actively collaborate with the EU on strategies to alleviate its most acute problems. This might include working with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to find new approaches to the euro crisis, within the context of a recovering global economy. This might also include collaboration on border security to address overwhelming refugee flows.

Third, the United States should work with the EU to preserve its cohesion in the face of persistent attempts by Russia to divide Union members on a host of issues from energy supplies to sanction support related to Russian aggression against Ukraine. Closer transatlantic ties will help ward off hybrid attacks against the EU by partnering on cyber security, energy security, strategic communications, and counterterrorism.

NATO-EU relations have unquestionably been affected by the June 2016 Brexit referendum vote to leave the EU, a historic event. Though future EU-UK relations are a matter for the parties to negotiate, the United States should make known to both sides its major interests in a strong EU as well as a healthy United Kingdom. We can neither take solace nor be a disinterested party in seeing the EU unravel politically, a potential that Brexit may portend as anti-EU sentiments strengthen into political movements within other members' polities. We cannot know whether Brexit will ultimately be a positive for the United Kingdom. However, it is already positive for a Russia intent on eroding EU solidarity on economic sanctions and its overall political resolve. Spillover into NATO decisionmaking and cohesion cannot be ruled out, and in fact should be anticipated.

No one anticipates the EU disintegrating, and the immediate risk of further "leave" votes appears low. However, Brexit has strengthened similar political movements across Europe, most notably in France, Germany, and Spain, and it would be unwise to ignore their genesis. For Brussels, the UK "leave" vote should kindle determination to build a more politically credible EU, one less focused on regulating and more intent on addressing the day-to-day concerns of its citizenry. The United States should urge the EU to move in that direction. No matter its faults, it is hard to see how disintegration could best the status quo ante, even for the United Kingdom.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

The United Kingdom has made clear its desire to maintain access to the EU's single market. The most probable path will be arduous negotiations between London and Brussels on bilateral agreements rather than, for example, rejoining the European Free Trade Association or otherwise coordinating trade relations as a member of a group. The United Kingdom must also negotiate new agreements around the globe, heretofore arranged for it by the EU. However, negotiating any new trade relations must await completion of the Brexit separation process that the United Kingdom will initiate by invoking Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (also called the Lisbon Treaty). That step is expected to be taken in spring 2017. Negotiations are anticipated to take 2 years. During that time Brexit will be the dominant preoccupation in UK-EU relations, demanding much top-level attention by both sides. The United States should take account of the magnitude and duration of this distraction over the next several years.

The future foundation for transatlanticism should be a mutual U.S.-EU commitment to NATO as the primary security provider for Europe. This will allow mutual cooperation in a host of nonmilitary yet urgent priorities essential to regional and global prosperity. The United States should design programs that highlight the mutual value of a strong partnership with the EU to spread global prosperity. U.S.-EU cooperation should also help surmount the final obstacle (the Cyprus conflict) to building a collaborative and comprehensive NATO-EU transatlantic crisis response capacity.⁵² This is sorely needed. The EU has superb capacity for conflict prevention and postconflict recovery, and NATO has taken on the heavier lifting of the in-between mission of crisis response. As the two institutions learned in Kosovo, they will eventually find modalities of cooperation during a crisis, but they can do so much better if they can plan ahead.

Conclusion: Building Beyond Warsaw

The new administration will have to engage from the beginning in hands-on leadership of the NATO alliance. That necessarily includes tangible commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty's Article 5 and endorsement of agreements reached most recently at the Warsaw Summit. Executive-level personal relationships across the Atlantic should be sought out early in 2017. NATO and EU portfolios should be passed on, hand-to-hand, between outgoing and incoming U.S. administrations. The aim is to establish assured U.S. leadership of an Alliance from the beginning and to confirm that NATO remains the cornerstone of U.S. engagement abroad on security matters.

Solid transatlantic cohesion should be consciously woven into a positive and active agenda. The best start will be to follow through on commitments already under way. Allies will react positively to initial consistency, especially on top priorities such as Russia and crises to the south. Managing consensus should be eased by working informally and regularly with a select group of NATO members to propose and hone positions favorable to the Alliance as a whole. The discrete small group concept has proved acceptable in the past, and such a group need not be exclusive in every case. This is an effective way to expedite Alliance business. A corollary to the small group method is that it is incumbent on group members to be aware of the positions of nonmembers and keep them informed. This is particularly important for the United States because of its geographic distance from and unique role in the Alliance.

Beyond NATO's internal cohesion, the United States should encourage NATO to invest in deepening the quality of its vast and valued partnerships. That so many nations desire to work with NATO is a treasure to be preserved: members and partners who have indicated a willingness to operate together using NATO procedures. With solid leadership, a cohesive membership, and a strong participating partner cohort, NATO will always have the fundamentals in place to maintain interoperable capabilities, to respond to Russia, and to address crises to the south.

The end of the Cold War led many to believe that NATO's fundamental *raison d'être* no longer existed. Since then, NATO has proved resilient, enduring, and essential. For the United States, NATO represents by far the most important link in a chain of security alliances and partnerships that span the globe. The Alliance is a bedrock of U.S. national security and, with care and attention, will remain so for many years to come.

Notes

¹ This point is brought out in an excellent piece on developing strategy, advising that one strategic consideration is that "it is always better with allies." See R.D. Hooker, Jr., "The Strange Voyage: A Short Précis on Strategy," *Parameters* 42, no. 4/43, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2013), 67.

² For more elaboration on the many ways the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) continues to serve U.S. interests, see W. Bruce Weinrod, "We Still Need NATO," *The American Interest*, January 15, 2016, available at <www.the-american-interest.com/2016/01/15/we-still-need-nato/>.

³ Julian Lindley-French, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization: The Enduring Alliance*, 2nd ed. (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2015), chapter 7.

⁴ As an example, President Barack Obama did not formally meet with new NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg until May 2015, 8 months after Stoltenberg took office, in spite of the ongoing crisis with Russia, a request to do so from NATO, and a multiday Stoltenberg visit to Washington, DC, in the interim. See Josh Rogin, "Obama

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

Snubs NATO Chief as Crisis Rages,” *Bloomberg.com*, March 24, 2015, available at <www.bloombergtv.com/articles/2015-03-24/obama-snubs-nato-chief-as-crisis-rages>.

⁵ Examples of NATO’s global engagement include its cooperation with China in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, airlift and training with the African Union in Addis Ababa, earthquake relief operations in Pakistan in 2005, and humanitarian relief airlift operations for earthquake victims in the Philippines in 2013. See NATO Web site at <www.nato.int/>.

⁶ S.R. Covington, *Putin’s Choice for Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2015), 12. See also February 2016 National Public Radio (NPR) interview with Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, USA, commander, U.S. Army Europe, who made the same point as firsthand experience; available at <www.npr.org/2016/02/05/465672051/u-s-presence-in-eastern-europe-is-vital-commanding-general-says>.

⁷ Paul Gallis, *NATO Decision-Making Procedure*, RS21510 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, updated May 5, 2003).

⁸ Christof Bertram, “Toward 2015—Institutions Matter,” in *Visions of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Simon Serfaty (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005), 82–83.

⁹ The informal “quad” was formed as the Berlin group, the three occupying powers and Germany, to deal with issues related to the security of Berlin during the Cold War. It continued as the quad after the Cold War but was abandoned during strong disagreement over requests from the United States for NATO support for the invasion of Iraq. It has not been functional since 2003.

¹⁰ The method of Alliance decisionmaking is not specified in the Washington Treaty except with regard to Article 10 dealing with the acceptance of new members. In that one case, the Alliance must be unanimous. Consensus was adopted early to reflect collective decisions of sovereign members. See “Consensus Decision-Making at NATO,” March 14, 2016, available at <www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49178.htm>.

¹¹ Edgar Buckley and Kurt Volker, *NATO Reform and Decision Making*, Issue Brief (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, February 2010), 2.

¹² Leo G. Michel, *NATO Decisionmaking: Au Revoir to the Consensus Rule?* INSS Strategic Forum 202 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, August 2003), 6–7.

¹³ Lindley-French, chapter 5. Operation *Allied Force* was a bombing campaign against Serbia, a Slavic partner of Russia, from March 24 to June 10, 1999. Its success forced withdrawal of Serbian forces from the province of Kosovo, allowing its protection from Belgrade by NATO forces to this day. The bombing had a significant adverse effect on Russian perceptions of NATO.

¹⁴ See *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, December 26, 2014, para. 12 (“The Main External Military Dangers”), a. (NATO), available at <www.scribd.com/doc/251695098/Russia-s-2014-Military-Doctrine>.

¹⁵ See Weinrod for congressional testimony statement by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford. For U.S. and NATO, see General Phillip M. Breedlove, USAF, *United States European Command Theater Strategy* (Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany: Headquarters U.S. European Command, October 2015), 4.

¹⁶ Bridget Kendall, “Rhetoric Hardens as Fears Mount of a New Cold War,” *BBC.com*, November 14, 2014, available at <www.bbc.com/news/uk-30010263>; Dmitri Trenin, “Welcome to Cold War II,” *Foreign Policy*, March 4, 2014, available at <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/04/welcome-to-cold-war-ii/>>.

¹⁷ Covington, 21; NPR, Hodges interview.

Barry and Lindley-French

¹⁸ Charles Barry, interviews with national defense officials in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, February 2015.

¹⁹ F. Stephen Larrabee and Peter A. Wilson, "NATO Needs a Southern Strategy," *National Interest*, January 27, 2014, available at <<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/nato-needs-southern-strategy-9769>>.

²⁰ All data are for actual expenditures in 2014, unless otherwise noted.

²¹ Wallace J. Thies, *Friendly Rivals: Bargaining and Burdenshifting in NATO* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

²² *Europe* used here means the 28 European Union (EU) countries plus non-EU NATO members Albania, Norway, and Turkey (31 countries). See World Bank, "European Union," available at <<http://data.worldbank.org/region/EU>>; World Bank, "United States," available at <<http://data.worldbank.org/country/united-states>>.

²³ Calculations based on data from *Military Balance 2016* (London: Institute for International Strategic Studies [IISS], 2016), chapter 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.* All data in this section refer to 2014 actual defense spending, unless otherwise noted.

²⁵ An interesting fact is that, applying IISS data, Europeans would only need to spend €1.86/person/day to reach 2 percent. Today they only average €1.24/person/day. The difference: €0.6 euros. In contrast, the United States spends the equivalent of €6.30/person/day.

²⁶ For example, a force consisting of U.S., United Kingdom, French, Polish, and German divisions, with brigades from Italy, Spain, Turkey, and the Nordic members and battalions from the others, would constitute a full field army, larger than the Russian Federation could deploy in the east.

²⁷ This number includes Russia, whose partnership with NATO is suspended but has not been dissolved by either party in a formal sense.

²⁸ Breedlove, 6.

²⁹ The initial partners invited at Warsaw to become "enhanced opportunity partners" are Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan, and Sweden. See Warsaw Summit Communiqué, para. 101.

³⁰ At Warsaw, NATO also announced that its international staff will soon begin working-level ties with the international staff of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The four Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) partners—Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates—are all members of the six-nation GCC, and NATO has long held open invitations for the remaining GCC members, Oman and Saudi Arabia, to join the ICI.

³¹ NATO's eight partners across the globe reveal two distinct groups: Afghanistan, Iraq, and (to a lesser extent) Pakistan are partners seeking improvement of weak security capacity; Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, and New Zealand are stable partners contributing to NATO missions and pursuing interoperability.

³² Breedlove, 6.

³³ NATO Wales Summit Declaration, September 5, 2014, para. 49. This affirmation is also found in the 2012 Chicago Summit Declaration (para. 58) and the 2010 Alliance Strategic Concept (para. 17) approved at the Lisbon Summit of that year.

³⁴ John R. Galvin, *Fighting the Cold War: A Soldier's Memoir* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 360. Writing about his thoughts as Supreme Allied Commander Europe after a discussion with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William J. Crowe in early 1990, General Galvin stated, "For my part, I had become convinced that NATO could defend itself without the use of nuclear weapons at all." For much fuller treatment of military as well as political factors impacting theater nuclear weapons utility,

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Europe

refer to Laurence T. Martin, “Concluding Remarks: Reflections on the Forty Years’ History of TNF [theater nuclear forces],” in *The History of NATO TNF Policy: The Role of Studies, Analysis and Exercise Conference Proceedings, Volume II, Papers and Presentations*, ed. R.L. Rinne (Livermore, CA: Sandia National Laboratories, February 1994), 311–321, available at <www.iaea.org/inis/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/26/072/26072023.pdf>.

³⁵ Synthesis of March 5–6, 2012, roundtable featuring three European institutes—Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques (IRIS, France), Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg (Germany), British American Security Information Council (United Kingdom)—and the Washington, DC–based Arms Control Association. IRIS report, April 2012.

³⁶ This is a good point at which to emphasize that TNF is the *only* nuclear capability subject to NATO decisionmaking. The strategic nuclear forces of NATO’s nuclear members—France, the United States, and the United Kingdom—are employed by national decisions of those powers alone. NATO is tied to the U.S. strategic nuclear umbrella by the North Atlantic Treaty. In an attack demanding a nuclear response, presumably NATO would first attempt to secure its territory by conventional means and then by TNF. An unlimited strategic nuclear war would call for the national decisions noted here.

³⁷ Germany and Italy use the Panavia Tornado IDS fighter as a dual-capable aircraft platform (DCA). Belgium and the Netherlands use the F-16A/B, and Turkey uses the upgraded F-16C/D (Block 50). Both basic models were introduced in 1974, though all are presumed updated to some degree. Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey are to purchase the U.S. F-35A, a new DCA aircraft. Germany was to retire the Tornado in 2015 but will keep it until 2020 at least. See Justin Bronk, “The Forced Evolution of Europe’s Tactical Nuclear Capability,” RUSI Defense Systems, February 1, 2016, available at <<https://rusi.org/publication/rusi-defence-systems/forced-evolution-europe%E2%80%99s-tactical-nuclear-capability>>.

³⁸ The five European NATO members hosting an aggregate of fewer than 200 U.S.-controlled B61 gravity bombs are Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey. Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey are already committed to purchase the dual-capable U.S. F-35 Lightning II. Belgium is undecided and Germany has no plans for the F-35.

³⁹ The United States will convert current B61 Mod 3 and 4 TNF weapons to digital Mod 12 weapons within 10 years, allowing the EF 2000 to be modified for the DCA role. See Bronk.

⁴⁰ The Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) is similar to the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force—Land (AMF-L), NATO’s initial response force from the early 1960s until 2002. Both forces are broad-participation (14–22 nations) multinational brigade-size units of 5,000, kept on high alert at home bases until called on. However, AMF-L was comprised of assigned forces under a permanent active headquarters. VJTF is comprised of units and a command that rotates each year, following an intense train-up and certification process. Views differ on the merits of the two designs.

⁴¹ Charles Barry, *Building Future Transatlantic Interoperability Around a Robust NATO Response Force*, Transatlantic Current Paper 7 (Washington, DC: NDU Press, October 2012).

⁴² Author discussion at NATO headquarters in July 2012 with a senior allied military officer. Response to author’s question regarding force reconstitution and mobilization was simply that “we have no such plans.”

⁴³ The model for such a center is the Special Operations Forces (SOF) Coordination Center that resulted from the 2006 Riga Summit initiative on SOF transformation. Today that center has evolved into the very successful NATO SOF headquarters under Allied Command Operations.

⁴⁴ Lindley-French, chapter 6.

Barry and Lindley-French

⁴⁵ Breedlove, 10–11.

⁴⁶ Julianne Smith, *The NATO-Russia Relationship*, Project Report (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 2008), 13.

⁴⁷ For more detailed information and a chronology of allied missile defense development, see NATO, “Ballistic Missile Defense,” available at <www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49635.htm>.

⁴⁸ NATO’s Warsaw Summit Declaration, para. 1, July 9, 2016, available at <www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm>.

⁴⁹ NATO Chicago Summit Declaration, paras. 69–73.

⁵⁰ In the security arena, the United States has developed common efforts on assistance to Africa through U.S. Africa Command and on common concerns in the areas of security-sector reform, terrorism, and cyber security.

⁵¹ James G. Stavridis, “Once Again Europe Needs America,” *Politico.com*, January 21, 2016, available at <www.politico.eu/article/europes-security-disorder-demands-american-help-pressure-refugees-social-strain-open-borders/>; also see Damon Wilson, “Rallying the Transatlantic Community to a Greater Purpose,” Atlantic Council, February 3, 2016, available at <www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/rallying-the-transatlantic-community-toward-a-greater-purpose>.

⁵² Lindley-French, chapter 7.