

**GROUP OF EXPERTS REPORT ON THE NEW  
NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT  
"NATO 2010: ASSURED SECURITY,  
DYNAMIC ENGAGEMENT"**

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The group of experts, in their May 17, 2010 report, achieved the first elaboration phase of the NATO's new strategic concept. Following this first phase will be two others:

- > From May 17, 2010 until the second half of September, the second phase consisting of the writing of a first draft of the official strategic concept under the direction of the Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen.
- > Starting from September the 28 member States of NATO will begin negotiations, based on the Secretary General's project, to adopt the strategic concept in November 2010 during the NATO's Lisbon summit.

This schedule was decided during the NATO Strasbourg-Kehl summit in April 2010.

The group of experts comprises 12 members; thus the 28 NATO members are not all represented. Madeline Albright, Secretary of State of the United States under Bill Clinton in the late 1990s, presides over the group. The group also consists of one Frenchman: Bruno Racine, president of the French National Library and also of the Foundation for Strategic Research (FRS). Camille Grand of the FRS is also a part of the sherpas assisting the group of experts.

While the object of the report is not to develop a future strategic concept, it does examine all of the issues which will be later elaborated: threat analysis, missions, means of action and capacities of the Alliance, possible partnerships. The object is to make an independent evaluation by a group of recognized experts while keeping in mind the fact that diverging points of view exist within the Alliance (role, hierarchy of missions, partnerships, relations with Russia). The objective is to get around the difficulties associated with these divergences. An identical process was followed by NATO in 1967 with the Harmel report.

The objective of this IRIS analysis note is to comment on and critique the report.

## 1. Threat Analysis

NATO's threat analysis gives an image of the current international situation divided into two parts: world-wide and regional tendencies as well as identification of specific factors. These tendencies and factors lead to various conclusions. In order to elaborate on the threat analysis, the reporters borrowed from, in addition to consultation of other experts, the work of the Multiple Future Projects which was developed in 2008 and 2009 within the NATO Allied Transformation Command (ATC).

The seven risk factors are:

- > Proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction;
- > Ambitions of international terrorist groups;
- > The persistence of regional, ethnic and religious conflicts and their corrosive effects;
- > The growing world dependence on potentially vulnerable data systems;
- > Competition for oil and other strategic resources (which implies an importance in maritime security);
- > Demographic evolution, which may aggravate problems such as poverty, hunger, famine, illegal immigrations or pandemics;
- > Accumulation of the effects of environmental degradation including those as a result of global warming

To note among these factors is that some may be qualified as threats in and of themselves (weapons of mass destruction proliferation), while, as is the case in the majority of strategy analysis documents, there is a notable absence of analysis of cause and effect and the emergence of threats: what causes proliferation, terrorism, and climate change? Like other strategy analysis documents, the group of experts report also refers

to the development of new threats such a piracy and especially cyber-attacks. In any case, the analysis is coherent overall with what is found in the European security strategy vis-à-vis the persistence of regional conflicts or the risk of failed states becoming havens for terrorist groups.

The conclusions of this threat analysis are centered on the risks for Alliance partners. Consequently, they are:

- > "a conventional attack against the Alliance is unlikely yet future possibilities are not excluded";
- > Three threats stand out in particular: a ballistic missile attack, attacks perpetrated by international terrorist groups, cyber-attacks of varying intensity.

The conclusions reached in this report may be open to criticism, notably there is no distinction between intentional threats and unintentional threats. Visibly the assertion that a conventional threat is improbable is a reference to Russia, yet this country does possess both conventional and nuclear ballistic missiles. Therefore, it is the fact that Russia does not have the intention to threaten NATO members which is considered in analyzing the threat the country poses rather than simply a balance sheet of its military capacities. One may also add that it is not certain that the countries of central Europe would share this outlook.

On the other hand, it is very likely that the identified threat of a ballistic missile attack refers to Iran and, eventually, certain countries in the Middle East. Thus, the current and future military arsenal determines the level of threat for NATO countries in the case of Iran and not its intentions. Moreover, if NATO members are threatened by a ballistic missile attack, a conventional threat already exists in the sense that it is a military threat and it can reach the territory of NATO countries: this calls into question the analysis according to which a conventional military aggression is unlikely.

Now more than ever, it seems necessary to make a serious analysis, meaning a political-military assessment based on possible scenarios, of conventional and nuclear ballistic threats which weigh on the countries of NATO; an analysis which would need to be undertaken before NATO can develop anti-missile defense for its territory.

## 2. Respective Importance Given to Collective Defense and other Alliance Tasks

The report recalls the primordial task of the Atlantic alliance: collective defense. This point is emphasized in the presentation of the summary findings: "To reassert the fundamental engagement of NATO: collective defense"(1). In addition, collective defense makes up one of the four fundamental tasks of the Alliance (2). Chapter V of the report, which discusses military capacities, one of the recommendations for conventional defense is the necessity to "assure Chapter V engagement"(3).

This affirmation of the primacy of collective defense is made in order to reassure the member countries of Central and Eastern Europe who fear the possible reemergence of the Russian threat following the Georgian episode of August 2008. In addition, one must note that the members of the group of experts have added non-military threats constituting cyber-attacks into the realm of Chapter V collective defense (4). One of the most convincing examples of a cyber-attack was against the servers of the Estonian public services in January 2007 where the Russians are suspected to have been the orchestrators.

However, the document, when taken as a whole, cast some doubt on the real primacy of Article V for the reporters :

First of all, the report neglects the other Alliance tasks whose priorities may conflict with Article V. There is no stated priority of missions and collective defense may come into conflict with the three other missions presented in Chapter II of the report, even collective defense is emphasized. These three other missions are:

- > "to contribute to overall security in the entire Euro-Atlantic region", which may justify military operations in areas near the Treaty zone.
- > "to act as a transatlantic means of consultation on security and crisis management within the spectrum of issues facing the alliance." Even if the favored means of this consultation is outlined in Article IV of the treaty and even if this "global" engagement of the Alliance is modulated by the privileged partnership means of action, the development of this task, which can be described mainly by the development of peacekeeping operations may in fact call the primacy of Article V into question.

To this one must add that if Russia is implicitly the cause of the reaffirmation the primacy of collective defense, it also constitutes one of the principal axes of NATO partnership developments advocated by the report to address security threats which require Article 4 based consultation.

Potential conflict between these two Alliance tasks is also found in the discussion of military capacity and it is stated that "common points between Article V missions and expeditionary missions must be sought." (5) To conclude this section, the reporters have tried to find a compromise between the need to reaffirm the primacy of collective defense and the need to take into account the fact that the security of NATO member states are not necessarily only at the borders of the Treaty zone and may take other forms than purely military threats.

### 3. The Open Door Policy and New Partnerships

#### 3.1 The General Politics of Partnerships and the Open Door

The open door policy is reiterated in the group of experts' report figuring as one of the points of recommendation of Chapter IV on political and organizational issues. The open door policy is based on Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The report also recalls that the process of enlargement is governed since 1995 by six principles:

- > The respect of democratic values and the full support of NATO's political vision in candidate countries;
- > The putting in place of necessary military reforms in order to conform with the norms of NATO in matters of professionalism and to assure civil control of armed forces;
- > The equal treatment of minority populations;
- > Peaceful resolution of internal and international disputes;
- > The overall ability of the candidate country to contribute to Alliance security and the euro-Atlantic region.

This restatement of the principles of the open door policy is undertaken in a context where the participation of Georgia and the Ukraine was badly received in Russia, especially after the Georgian conflict in August 2008. If, for the Ukraine, NATO adhesion is no longer a government objective following the election of the new President Viktor Yanukovich, it rests a political goal for Georgia.

While the open door policy is only discussed over a half page in the section on political and organizational issues, the question of partnerships is given an entire chapter covering nine pages of the report. Of course one might consider that the enlargement of the Alliance and its partnerships are not on the same plane, yet

these two avenues for relations with non-NATO members do have influences on the security of member States as well as non-member States.

Since its inception, the partnership policy of the Alliance has not been conceptualized. During the entire 1990s, one can consider that the partnerships essentially served as a means of progressive integration for future NATO members. Moreover, before becoming members, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe constituted the majority of NATO partnerships. Since the integration of those countries several new partnerships have developed: Mediterranean dialogue with the Maghreb countries and Israel, the Istanbul cooperation initiative with the Gulf States, the partnership with Russia as well as the more historic partnerships such as the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. In addition, there are non-official partners in place with countries sharing NATO's security preoccupations and especially those who participate in NATO operations one manner or another, such as South Korea, Japan or Australia, who have all deployed much larger numbers of troops in Afghanistan than a number of NATO members.

The report recommends the development of these partnerships by streamlining the process: the reporters welcome "the recently taken decision by the North Atlantic Council to create a committee in charge of managing partnerships" while "recognizing that partnerships with the Alliance are of diverse origins, serve varied objectives and respond to different expectations." The reporters especially emphasize the fact that the Alliance can be reinforced through contributions from non-members. In addition, the reporters stress that "a second generation of partnerships has focused on seeking new capacities for missions such as those in the Balkans and in Afghanistan." (6)

Within this advocacy of partnerships, the reporters can design a major evolution in the Alliance which would provide three advantages:

- > For critics opposed to a "Global NATO" or a "NATO world police", an extensive partnership policy is more acceptable for a number of Alliance member states, France for example, but also for states outside of the Alliance: NATO, defensive alliance, would more take on the tone of an organization of collective security, more acceptable pour a number of countries who might consider that the Alliance is a potential threat (one thinks most notably of Russia);
- > Partnerships allow the augmentation of Alliance capacities in operations based on a consultation of Article IV of the Treaty;
- > Finally, one must ask if the partnerships are actually just a "softer" alternative to the open door policy. Even if this is not written, one can think that, in the case of some countries, a reinforced partnership with Georgia is could be an alternative to full integration in NATO. Moreover, it is without a doubt difficult for Central European and Baltic countries, who are more strongly inclined to place their priorities with the collective defense mission and the open door policy, to be opposed to the policy of partnership developments.

Among these partnerships, three are of particular importance and for specific reasons: the partnership with Russia, the partnership with the United Nations and the partnership with the European Union.

## 3.2 The Specific Partnerships

### 3.2.1 The Partnership with Russia

The partnership with Russia is a question of reconciling the fact that it is necessary to establish a partnership due to the existence of common security interests (terrorism, Afghanistan, etc.) and the fact Russia is

still considered as a potential threat based on its attitude on certain issues: Georgian crisis, cyber-attacks, political blackmail en terms of energy supply. The reporters thus established that Russia is a useful partner based on Article IV yet a potential threat based on Article V of the Treaty. The partnership is thus conceived as a means to avoid the resurgence of a Russian threat and the reporters expect much from threat analyses and common challenges between NATO and Russia in order to reinforce the partnership and to limit the diverging points between the two entities.

### 3.2.2 The Partnership with the United Nations

One of the positive elements of the report is the abandoning of the global alliance concept "world police force" and the emphasis of a means of more cooperative international crisis management with international organizations. This approach is developed in the introductory chapter on partnerships (7). Naturally, the most important partnership in terms of organization is that with the United Nations since it represents the system of universal international security. In the last strategic concept of 1999, the issue of relations with the UN was an important question, most notably due to the fact that the Americans favored permitting NATO to intervene without mandate from the United Nations Security Council. Although not reaching that point, the wording which was adopted by consensus, most notably under pressure from France, was a more ambiguous legal basis for the NATO intervention in Kosovo which began the same day that the strategic concept was adopted.

In the experts' report, the angle of attack is different: a system of task sharing between the two institutions. The experts describe the UN as an organization working in "reconstruction, development, and government reinforcement." To reduce the UN to a civil agency for development and not *prima inter pares* in matters of international security may call into question the guiding of operations in the field. While the experts recognize that NATO has no systematic role to play as leader, a revised and reduced role for the UN may in fact make this the case. As we see in Afghanistan today, the strength of NATO stems from the weakness of the UN.

### 3.2.3 The Partnership with the European Union

This is one of the most crucial subjects of the new strategic concept, notably for France. One of the arguments developed to justify France's 2009 reintegration into NATO's integrated military commandment was the hope that this return would permit the progression of the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). Although the NATO report on the EU does not summarize the CSDP, it remains an important doctrine.

In the field, notably in Afghanistan, one currently sees that several international organizations intervene more and more, which necessitates a coordination of actions between these organizations, if not the implementation of common operational planning, within a civilian-military optic.

Today, the issue to address in the reports between NATO and the EU are under three approaches:

- > In the first place, 21 of the 28 NATO members are part of the European Union. This raises the issue of articulating the strategic planning process of NATO, which was recently revisited, and the planning process of the EU, the 2010 headline goals.
- > In the field, coordination between NATO and the EU functions poorly, all parties recognize this, and the diverse difficulties, notably those allowing the functioning of the Berlin + accords which permit the EU to access NATO planning capacities, are not due only to the difference between Turkey and Cyprus which

empoison relations between the EU and Turkey, and between NATO and the EU;

> NATO does not possess its own civilian capacities while the EU is the most advanced international organization in terms of the development of civilian capacities in support of military operations. Today, 2/3 of EU operations undertaken since 2003 and the declaration of the CSDP are civilian operations. How can we create complementarities between the two organizations with a global approach without one of the organizations overshadowing the other? The question is difficult and the experts make efforts not to advocate a precise solution. The goal is set and it will be the job of the member States to find a solution. As the reporters wrote: "A large number of situations demand responses comprising a recourse to the use of force and coercive elements: NATO, the EU and other must bring the capacities with the most added value to find a solution. As a consequence, NATO must seek agreement with EU leaders on a system which permits regular joint participation meetings, reinforcement of communications between military staffs, and intensification of coordination in the crisis management, threat analysis and resource sharing domains" (8).

Partnership with the EU raises another issue: that of the global approach (meaning the conjunction of employment of civilian and military capacities during an operation) to the issue of civilian capacities which can complete NATO military capacities, and the planning of civil-military operations which can be undertaken by NATO and other organizations.

#### 4. The Global Approach

At this level, seeking consensus is not without ambiguity. The reporters endorse the fact that NATO will not create civilian capacities, an evolution to which France is opposed: the reporters recall the validity of the global policy directive endorsement (GPD) of the Alliance in 2006: "NATO does not need to develop capacities strictly destined for civil ends" since it relies on its partners for such developments.

In any case, the necessity to be able to successfully undertake civil-military operations leads the reporters to make four propositions which lead ipso facto NATO to acquire certain competences in civilian domains:

- > Creation of a small civilian planning unit at the NATO level, in charge of making contacts, sharing information and undertaking joint planning with partner countries and organizations;
- > Establishment of memorandums of understanding with larger international organizations and with NGOs;
- > Identification of NATO and non-NATO civil capacities in the defense planning process;
- > Designation by the member States of a body of civil experts ready for rapid deployment in certain missions if the qualified personnel of the partner countries or institutions are not available;

In reality, the global approach poses the much larger problem of guiding civil-military operations. This is not, however, a technical question of commandment: it is also a political question. Civil-military planning is determined by political analysis of a crisis and the political objectives that must be met to end the crisis, and one can easily imagine that the different institutions party to an operation might have differing visions of political objectives and the necessary means to put in place (i.e: underestimating reconstruction efforts and the means necessary to assure such efforts at the start of operations in Afghanistan in 2001). One can imagine the implementation an ad hoc group to fulfill the civil-military planning tasks in an integrated manner where all partner institutions (most importantly the EU and the UN) are represented. This would necessitate sharing both operational political objectives and planning techniques. This solution seems the preferred solution of the reporters yet such an affirmation remains vague. Moreover, the necessity to integrate civilian and military means demands complete integration of civilian and military planning. It must be noted



that the proposition of the reporters to create a small civil planning cell with NATO justifies a contrario the long stated demands by a number of EU countries wanting to create a small military planning cell within the EU, as some see such duplications useful.

## 5. Alliance Forces and Capacities

### 5.1 Alliance military mission and budgetary means

In the introduction to the section on military capacities and force, the reporters recall the four fundamental tasks of the Alliance represented in Chapter 2:

- > The guarantee of collective security based on Article 5;
- > Cooperation with partners and civil institutions to protect the Treaty area against a series of security challenges;
- > Deployment and power maintenance of expeditionary capacities;
- > To help shape a more stable and peaceful international security environment by reinforcing interoperability with partners;

These four missions lead the reporter to ask for "a stop to the lowering of national defense budgets." The reporters also recall that only 6 NATO countries put the required 2% of GDP toward defense.

While desirable, this recommendation runs the risk of appearing unrealistic given current budget realities of EU countries. A serious question in the future drafting of the strategic concept will be the definition of the Alliance's military ambition. Currently, the fixed objective - the ability to conduct two major operations and six minor operations - is in reality already beyond the abilities of the member States. Thus it is feared that the strategic concept does not set recommendations for spending requirements and that the issue is rather to create reasonable ambitions for the alliance and to promote a concerted, organized management of the reduction of military budgets which will be witnessed in the coming years due to the economic crisis.

### 5.2 Nuclear Forces and Disarmament

The reporters recall the necessity to "preserve a nuclear component to its strategy of dissuasion - at minimum levels required for security at a given moment." This affirmation is in line with security preoccupations in France.

Regarding disarmament, the reporters seek a dialogue between NATO and Russia on "the perception, the concepts, the doctrines and transparency in the nuclear domain. Such dialogue is meant to contribute to open possibilities for a greater reduction and ultimately, an elimination of all types of sub strategic nuclear weapons."

This is the issue of opening negotiations on the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons. The issue is of concern for NATO as around 180 weapons are currently deployed within several NATO countries. In any event, it is likely that the core of such negotiations will be American-Russian based since, for the time being, the Russians are opposed to this negotiation.

Finally, the reporters suggest the NATO take into account the new nuclear defense posture of the United States in endorsing "a policy not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against any state which is non-nuclear and is a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and who conforms to their non-nuclear proliferation



obligations." Such a proposition, should it be adopted, would place France in a difficult situation as it has not yet adopted a doctrine against nuclear first strike against non nuclear states.

### 5.3 Anti-Missile defense

Anti-Missile is, without doubt, the most controversial issue from the French point of view since the experts endorse that NATO "develop its multilayered active defense against ballistic missiles to make it the heart of command capacity and control of a NATO territorial system of anti-missile defense." It is possible that France will be opposed to this notion based on budgetary reasons as well as for strategic priorities. As the defense of troops in operation presents an operational interest, the territorial anti-missile defense demands first a more in depth threat analysis to know if a certain device is complementary and not redundant to nuclear dissuasion. It must be noted that the reporters talk of an Alliance "mission" for anti-missile defense while it should only be treated as a military capacity.

### 5.4 Defense against Cyber-Attacks

Among new threats, cyber-attacks are the ones which have been the most consistent over the past years. The reporters insist that NATO possess the means to respond to this non-conventional threat.

## 6. NATO Reform

Even if there is no perfect consensus, there is a general desire among the largest powers, the United States, United Kingdom, France, Holland, Denmark, even Germany, to impose a transformation of NATO and to make the organization more able to adapt to new types of operations in the field. The more hesitant countries for the moment are the southern countries: Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece. The objective is to "degrease the mammoth". The States have asked the NATO Secretary General to make precise recommendations during the ministerial reunion which will take place on the 10-11 of June. The measures which might be implemented are the reduction of the number of NATO agencies and the number of personnel in these agencies, and also the reduction in the number of headquarters in the integrated military command. Today, there are 12,500 military personnel in the integrated command. The implementation of this reform thus will not happen at the same time as the new strategic concept.

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### Conclusions:

A reading of the report shows that the experts' first preoccupation is to attempt to expand the bases for consensus between member states. Divergences are only presented on the margins and there are few issues which might create opposition to a principal of one state or another. Indeed, the report thus far has been well received. However, there is a risk that tied to the preoccupation with attempting to merge points of consensus. It is not exempt from ambiguities on certain points and leaves some issues unclear in the application of principles which it puts in place (i.e. open door vs. partnership; partnership vs. global alliance; global approach vs. partnership; article 5 clause of mutual assistance vs. other means of action; anti-missile defense vs. other military capacities; the role of NATO vs. the role of the European Union). The new strategic concept which will be adopted in the month of November will certainly be a shout text in order to avoid dwelling on its ambiguities. It will not "reinvent the wheel" as General Jones, the security advisor to the President of the United States, stressed during the 4th official seminar on the strategic concept in February

2010. Yet, there remains the risk that divergences of opinion among the member States will remain intact. For France, the points which will be paid close attention in the future strategic concept are:

- > The continued role of nuclear forces;
- > Relations between the EU and NATO and articulation of the global approach concept which may be adopted;
- > The issue of anti-missile defense where the French position may be in opposition to that of the group of experts and the NATO Secretary General;
- > The balance between the open door policy and partnerships.

The partnership policy which the experts promote is conforms with the French vision of the role of NATO and which NATO projects have begun to foster for some time. In any event, ambiguous interpretations are possible and NATO must continue to benefit from the weakness of other international organization- EU, UN, etc. - while, as we seen in Afghanistan, its own efficiency in the field is not yet proven. ■

*(1) Synthesis of page 5 conclusions*

*(2) Chapter 2: The Fundamental Tasks: "Firstly, the Alliance must preserve its capacity to dissuade, and to defend its member States against all threats of aggression. This engagement outlined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, must be reaffirmed without the least ambiguity.*

*(3) Chapter V, The Forces and The Capacities of the Alliance page 35*

*(4) "Nonetheless, the risk of a large scale attack against NATO systems of command and control or against energy networks may very well justify consultations based on Article 4, otherwise lead to measures of collective defense under Article 5" Chapter V, The Forces and The Capacities of the Alliance page 41*

*(5) Chapter V: The Forces and The Capacities of the Alliance page 36*

*(6) Chapter 3: The Partnerships page 18*

*(7) "In its future missions, the Alliance may well function, as is already the case in Afghanistan, within the framework of a vast network of security providers, where various international actors together adopt a global approach to manage a particular problem. However, this conception must not be mistaken as group work. Some have interpreted the term "global" to mean a desire of NATO to exercise a dominant position in the world or to place civilian organizations under military dominance. Nothing is further from the truth as this is not an issue of hierarchy; it is an issue of knowing that security has military, political economy and social dimensions. It therefore follows that the construction of security requires working together with a carefully chosen group of partners in order to assemble the different pieces of a single strategy. According to the circumstances, NATO will be able to act in a lead or a complementary role."*

*(8) Chapter 3: The partnerships page 20*