



CENTRE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

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NATO 2030

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Introduction

During the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation meeting of Heads of State and Government, which took place in London in Late 2019, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was asked by alliance leaders to lead a 'Forward-Looking Reflection Process'. This process would prepare NATO for increased global competition in the near future. Accordingly, Stoltenberg appointed a group consisting of John Bew, Greta Bossenmaier, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, Marta Dassù, Anna Fotyga, Tacan Ildem, Hubert Védrine, and Herna Verhagen. This group was tasked with researching and stipulating proposals in three areas: ensuring unity and cohesion in the NATO, expanding the political consultation and coordination among NATO allies, and finally, increasing the role NATO plays in political settings. The group was also tasked with researching procurement of technology to mitigate against future security threats.

The group worked via internal and external consultations, including inputs from academics, military officials, business and technology sector leaders, and government representatives from allies, international organizations, and NATO partner states. The final report illustrates the vision for NATO in 2030, outlining the major security trends leading up to 2030.

Main Findings

NATO has had a successful run leading up to the start of its 8th decade. While its demise was considered inevitable after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, NATO has continued to function as a successful alliance. The global order in the next decade is going to be uncertain and demanding on the alliance. New threats and their manifestations will arise in addition to the current threats.

The alliance has gone through major changes since its formation. It saw a time in history where the US had nuclear dominance over the world. It has expanded partnerships and tried to maintain civil relations with Mediterranean and Middle East nations. It has acted as a mediator in conflict management, expanded its partnerships to former Soviet nations. More recently, it adjusted to a new world order where terrorism is a critical threat.

Internal strains in NATO can be attributed to this shifting environment. Allies have indicated concerns about their collective strategic future in the long term. Europeans worry that the US is more inclined to focus on the Indo-Pacific, while Americans are concerned that Europeans won't commit to their obligation of a collective defense, and will instead seek an autonomous path that will ultimately damage the unity of the alliance. Therefore, the first thing to note is that while the collaborative military strength makes NATO powerful, it is still vulnerable to such political disputes.

It is considerably more challenging for NATO to fight off new threats. As opposed to having a single rival, the alliance now battles with terrorism, unstable allies, technological threats, and hostile non-state actors. Every ally is likely to prioritize different threats in accordance to the proportion of risk it poses to their nation.

According to the group's reports, by 2030 NATO is expected to¹ maintain its status as the Euro-Atlantic region's bedrock of peace, stability, and rule of law. It is expected to be up to date with strategic concepts for the defense of all its members. It will likely play an enhanced role as a forum that allies turn to seek strategies against threats.

Recommendations and Achieving the NATO 2030 Vision

To begin the journey to achieve the vision for NATO 2030, the 2010 Strategic Concept must be updated. This vision must be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen cohesion and integrate new

¹Bew, John, Greta Bossenmaier, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, Marta Dassù, Anna Fotyga, Tacan Ildem, Hubert Védrine, and Herna Verhagen . NATO 2030: United for a New Era; *Analysis and Recommendations of the Reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General* , 2020. Pg. 11

strategic realities. In addition to preserving its core values, allies need to work towards updating NATO's role as a forum for consultations. It is recommended for NATO to maintain its current dual-track deterrence and dialogue strategy with Russia. The alliance is expected to reply to Russia's aggressive behavior through the mechanisms of international law, while simultaneously keeping an open mind when it comes to possible peaceful coexistence.

Based on the recent developments in China's national capabilities and economic resources, NATO should be committed more substantially in terms of planning strategies against security threats posed by China. All areas of the allies' security interests in relation with China must be discussed. Furthermore, consequences of the technological advancements in China that could threaten collective defense and military readiness must be deliberated.

While speaking of technology, emerging and disruptive technologies pose a challenge and opportunity to NATO. NATO must prioritize competing with large authoritarian states for dominance in EDTs. In addition to this, NATO must take necessary steps to convene a digital summit to identify inadequacies in the collective defense in context of AI policies, research, norms, strategies, etc. Furthermore, it needs to work towards creating an outline on strategic steps to prevent aggressive artificial intelligence use by hostile actors.

As mentioned earlier, terrorism is one of the biggest asymmetric threats faced by the allies. Policies and strategies against terrorism need to be more firmly embedded in NATO's basic mission, especially in terms of resources. Other necessary steps include intelligence sharing and situational awareness about terrorists' use of EDTs and hybrid tactics.

Seeing that NATO is striving to do more in the international arena than just catering to itself and its allies, it has to play a role in increasing situational awareness, providing early warnings and sharing accurate and verified information in terms of climate change. It further needs to consider the establishment of a Climate and Security Centre of Excellence for the same. NATO needs to acknowledge that not all threats will be military in nature. In addition to climate change, threats like pandemics, crisis management, betterment of energy and telecommunications grids, etc. Furthermore, NATO needs to revise and reform its 2014 Green Defence framework.

In addition to the above reforms and changes that NATO must take within itself to achieve the NATO 2030 Vision, it is also necessary for NATO to make external reforms. One of the first steps in the same is that NATO and the EU needs to re-establish confidence and trust. This involves the NATO Heads of State to meet in a formal session to establish a permanent political liaison office. NATO should be open to welcoming EU's efforts towards co-creating a capable European defense that will ultimately benefit NATO.

Conclusion

Past evolution does not ensure success in the future. While the foundational aim to 'safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law... to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area... [and] to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security'² remains the same, it is integral for NATO to be in a constant state of change to survive as an alliance. The vision set forth by the group illustrates the steps that NATO needs to make, not only to benefit itself, but also to benefit the collective world order. There some uncertainty in terms of maintaining civil ties with nations like Russia, while also actively treating them as a threat.

While developing and incorporating these new strategies, NATO allies need to ensure that they abide by the core tasks of collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security. Furthermore, it needs to enhance the ability of all the allies to coordinate when it comes to safeguarding against China. This involves entertaining the idea of establishing a consultative body. In the Post-Cold War era, NATO has reinforced the idea that it actively supports arms control, and nuclear deterrence. With the ever-changing global scenario, NATO needs to take action to ensure

² Bew, John, Greta Bossenmaier, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, Marta Dassù, Anna Fotyga, Tacan Ildem, Hubert Védrine, and Herna Verhagen . NATO 2030: United for a New Era; *Analysis and Recommendations of the Reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General* , 2020. Pg 9

that it abides to its core values, while also continuing to change and adapt and refusing to reach a state of stagnancy.

Bibliography

1. Bew, John, Greta Bossenmaier, Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, Marta Dassù, Anna Fotyga, Tacan Ildem, Hubert Védrine, and Herna Verhagen . NATO 2030: United for a New Era; Analysis and Recommendations of the Reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General , 2020