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Why NATO Needs a New Strategic Concept

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One of the core reasons that have made NATO the most successful security alliance in recent history is its ability to adapt to a changed political environment, updating the Atlantic Alliance's strategic foundations in doing so. Contrary to commercial enterprises, which are constantly reassessing their market strategies, new NATO strategies are drafted only at long intervals. In the Alliance's 70-year history only seven such documents, traditionally entitled "Strategic Concepts," have been issued: in 1950, 1952, 1957, 1967, 1991,² 1999³ and, most recently, in 2010.⁴ The first four Concepts had a strong military focus, were classified secret and formulated by NATO's military arm, the Military Committee (MC).⁵ The three strategies that have been drafted since the end of the Cold War are openly accessible and were formulated by the Alliance's political arm, although each of them also incorporates secret additional military documents.

However, NATO strategies are often less future-oriented than they appear. Instead, they capture in writing what is already being practiced by NATO in response to concrete requirements. The Strategic Concept of 1999, for instance, underlined the necessity of crisis management when NATO had been fulfilling this task in the Balkans since 1995. The 2010 Strategic Concept defines cooperative security through partnerships as one of the Alliance's core tasks, even though numerous partnerships within Europe, with Mediterranean countries or the Gulf states had existed long before. NATO strategies

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² "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept," 8 November 1991, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm

³ "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," 24 April 1999, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm

⁴ "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," 20 November 2010, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf

⁵ These documents were marked accordingly, such as the Flexible Response Strategy, MC 14/3.

thus always also serve to assess the Alliance's current status and to document existing procedures.

Since 2014, the security situation in Europe has changed substantially. The European peace order that was established together with Russia after the end of the East-West conflict has ceased to exist – it has fallen prey to Russia's aggression in Eastern Europe, which culminated in the Russian annexation of Crimea. Hopes to establish cooperative security in the Middle East have been totally destroyed by civil wars and Islamist terror. NATO's reaction to those changes was a surprisingly united and quick response, together with the European Union. The September 2014 NATO Summit in Wales adopted a host of initial measures to improve the defence capability of the Alliance. Just under two years later, in July 2016 at the Warsaw Summit, these measures were enhanced and adapted to the threats in the East and the South.

Will those immediate measures suffice to enhance the Alliance's military capacity, or is there a need for a fundamental strategic debate about its future tasks and missions? Does NATO need a new Strategic Concept and, if so, how should it be formulated and what elements should it contain?

The need for a change in strategy

The most recent strategy, adopted at the NATO Summit in Lisbon in November 2010, was naturally marked by the events that had occurred before and during the drafting process. Russia was still considered a partner of NATO, even though the relationship with Moscow was clearly strained after the Russo-Georgian War in 2008. This was reflected in the positions within the Alliance: while members from Eastern Europe took a critical stance on Russia, the majority stuck to the idea of a common European security order that included Russia. In 2009, Barack Obama was sworn in as President of the United States and presented an agenda that focused, among other things, on a policy of arms control. He announced his dream of a world free of nuclear weapons and promised a new beginning in relations with Russia. The war in Afghanistan, in which 28 NATO members and 22 partner states participated in various ways, had been going on for years and yet there were no signs of a breakthrough in the pacification of the Hindu Kush country. The admission of Albania and Croatia to NATO in 2009 was supposed to increase stability in the Balkans, whereas Kosovo's declaration of independence one year before threatened to reopen old wounds in the region.

In this situation, NATO saw itself less as a defence organization than as a manager of crises occurring beyond its borders, an honest broker both with regard to Russia and to global security cooperation, as well as a political transformation agent for aspiring member states in South-East Europe. While collective defence in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty nominally remained the Alliance's *raison d'être*, it was not regarded as a realistic scenario ever to be implemented. Armed forces were regarded as expeditionary forces for interventions outside NATO territory and were to be reorganized or transformed accordingly. As early as 2003, NATO had created Allied Command

Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, in order to streamline the military structures, capabilities and doctrine of the Alliance.

The situation could not be more different today, given that three global political developments have fundamentally changed the situation in the Euro-Atlantic security community.

Russia's readiness to alter European borders by force, as demonstrated in Crimea, marks a turning point in security policy. What is more, since Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the regime in Moscow has even increased hostilities. Nuclear threats against Western neighbours, test flights with nuclear-capable bomber aircraft or President Putin's announcement that Russia could overrun the Baltic States within a matter of days have permanently damaged the trust in Russian politics. Therefore, the crisis in Eastern Europe is not only a passing patch of bad weather but, in fact, represents a fundamental climate change in terms of security policy. Since 2014, NATO has returned to the Article 5 world, in which deterrence and collective defence have again become its primary tasks. At the same time – and this constitutes an important element in the dual strategy adopted towards Russia – options are maintained to keep up the dialogue and cooperation with Moscow.

Secondly, the upheavals in the MENA region (the Middle East and Northern Africa), as it is called within NATO, exceed everything we have seen so far in an already unstable part of the world. States are dissolving or governments are proving increasingly unable to assert their sovereignty across their entire state territories. Instead, more and more armed militias or transnational regimes, such as Islamic State (IS), are emerging. The massive conflicts in the Islamic world are reminiscent of the Thirty Years' War four centuries ago, a conflict that was motivated by religious and cultural reasons, as well as by sheer power politics, and which did not end with the victory of one party, but through general exhaustion. Every day, NATO members experience the direct consequences of developments in the MENA region in the form of civil wars, Islamic terrorism and major refugee movements towards the North.

Even Article 5 threats are possible in connection with MENA, and not only in the form of direct military aggression against a NATO member – Turkey. After NATO stressed the need for protection against terrorist attacks in the Strategic Concept of 1999, Article 5 was invoked following the September 11 attacks of 2001, in spite of them not having been committed by state actors. A similar situation could arise following a devastating attack by IS, if the consequences were analogous to military aggression.

At the same time, there is increasing recognition that interventions in MENA from the outside are rarely successful. In a region where statehood is being effectively eroded and replaced by actors with ethnic or religious motivations who are ready to use violence, the traditional instruments of crisis management from the outside are doomed to fail. Faced with general intervention fatigue in all NATO states, those instruments are limited in any case. The willingness of governments and societies to

sacrifice their resources and even the lives of their soldiers is dropping as crisis intervention creates more, and not less, chaos. Take, for example, NATO's military intervention in Libya in 2011.

Thirdly, developments in the Asia-Pacific region can become vital threats to members of the Alliance, a fact that has so far been mostly ignored. The economic and military growth of China and the emerging conflicts over territories and sea areas could jeopardize trade routes to Europe and America, and thus the economic survival of the affected states. Furthermore, in the Asia-Pacific region, five nuclear powers are facing each other directly, in some cases with hostile intent (China, India, Pakistan, Russia and North Korea). The United States – as the sixth nuclear power – is also exerting its influence in the region as a stabilizing or troublesome force, depending on the perspective. The potential for violent conflict is obvious. Even Article 5 scenarios are imaginable. Given the unpredictability of the regime in Pyongyang, a missile launch towards Alaska does not seem entirely unrealistic.

Lastly, the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States might confront NATO with the unprecedented situation of a U.S. no longer taking the lead in Euro-Atlantic security issues. Even if campaign slogans should not be taken at face value for America's future NATO policies, it is still worrisome that the concepts of alliances, commitments or treaty obligations appear to range low in the priority list of the incoming administration.

In the light of such drastic changes it is essential to carry out a strategic reorientation of NATO or, more precisely, adapt its strategic foundations to the new situation. The confrontation with Russia, which may last for a long time, as well as threats from other regions to the territorial integrity of NATO members necessitate a new political and military understanding of the Alliance's tasks. However, reverting to the defensive role NATO played during the East-West conflict is not enough. A new mix of tasks must be found. Even if military crisis management that goes beyond collective defence is becoming more and more unlikely, especially in the Middle East (also because Russia would probably veto any mandate of the UN Security Council to that effect), such missions cannot be completely ruled out. Additionally, NATO must achieve consensus on which of its current core tasks to retain and which new ones to possibly add.

Reaching such consensus, however, is not an easy task given that the soon to be 29 NATO members (after the admission of Montenegro) have different interests depending on their geographic location and history. What is required is a policy debate on the future tasks of the Alliance that leads to a generally accepted new Strategic Concept.

Creating such a concept becomes even more urgent as the European Union, too, has reacted to the new security situation with a review of its 2003 security strategy. In June 2016, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, presented a draft

for a European Union “Global Strategy.”⁶ As the EU and NATO almost simultaneously agreed on intensifying cooperation during the NATO Summit in Warsaw, strategic coordination between the two organizations is practically imperative.

Still, there is some skepticism particularly within the NATO bureaucracies in Brussels or in the capitals with respect to the benefits of a new NATO strategy. Critics warn that entering into a strategic debate at this point of time might further erode Alliance cohesion rather than strengthen transatlantic unity. Going into the conceptual details of current NATO policies might display that different NATO members pursue different security interests which are not equally addressed. For instance, NATO’s intention to strengthen deterrence and defence has been coherent in Eastern Europe but much less so with regard to the threats in the South. The already existing East-South gap in NATO might become wider. Even with respect to countering Russia’s aggression, NATO might prove to be less united as summit communiqués or common statements have been indicating so far. If NATO would initiate in such an unpredictable situation – the critics argue – a debate about the nuts and bolts of strategic guidelines, it would have to paper over existing differences by stating lowest common denominators. The document coming out from such a process would not be worth the paper it is printed on and could not serve as a serious strategic guide for Alliance policies.

Even if this criticism contains a grain of truth, it neglects two important and closely intertwined aspects. First, the danger that substance gets watered down for consensus holds true for every NATO project and is the in-built dilemma of a consensus based Alliance. Second, with respect to strategy discussions, the process seems at least as important as the final product, as it forces allies to define their priorities and communicate them to others. To emphasize this point one could refer to NATO’s nuclear strategy, the so called “Deterrence and Defence Posture Review.” The fact that the Alliance took on the highly sensitive issue of nuclear deterrence forced NATO decision makers to intensively deal with a topic they usually try to avoid as far as possible.

Formulating a strategy

After having formulated seven strategies under very different conditions, NATO has plenty of experience when it comes to conducting and implementing fundamental strategic debates. As a rule, new strategies were based on the preceding document, and adopting those parts that remain valid in the new era as “agreed language.” Consequently, the most recent document, the 2010 Strategic Concept, would be the basis on which to start a strategic debate.

That Concept was the result of a long and sometimes tedious process. As early as the middle of the

⁶ “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe,” Brussels, June 2016, https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/about/eugs_review_web_6.pdf

past decade, there were voices demanding clarity from NATO about its future role. The attacks of 11 September 2001, which had led to a complete reorientation of international security policy, and the Iraq War had led to one of the most severe crises in the history of the Alliance. During the Munich Security Conference in early 2006, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, as one of the top-ranking politicians of the Alliance, demanded that a new strategy be formulated. The response from other heads of government was rather cautious. Some worried that a consensus on the Alliance's tasks might not be reached at all, given the tense situation between the Allies. Also, it was unclear whether the members would be able to agree on a substantial strategy or only on a "feel-good document" that would not be politically binding. The latter had happened before. In 2008, a Declaration on Alliance Security⁷ had been prepared, which was adopted during the NATO Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl one year later. This declaration, however, remained devoid of any consequences and did not even have a "feel-good effect" in terms of external visibility. It simply faded into obscurity.

The debate about a new strategy gained fresh impetus when Anders Fogh Rasmussen from Denmark was appointed Secretary General of NATO in 2009. Rasmussen was the first former head of government in this position and this added significant political weight to the post of Secretary General. He was responsible for some of the characteristic features of the 2010 Concept: it was to be a short and concise document, which connected elements of strategy with those of political self-determination, often referred to as a "mission statement." This document was not intended to be the result of debates held by NATO committees behind closed doors, but to be developed in a public process. An expert group led by Madeleine Albright, the former United States Secretary of State, was tasked with the development of recommendations to be gleaned from specially organized seminars and debates in member states. The Secretary General would remain in charge, assemble a strategy from those recommendations and submit it to the member states for approval.

This approach broke with most traditions in NATO bureaucracy and was criticized accordingly at working level. The member states, it was said, would never approve a document that had not been drafted and negotiated, sentence by sentence, by their own representatives. The expert group would never come up with useful suggestions and the concept of a transparent process would collide with the confidentiality of NATO procedures. It was also claimed that the Secretary General would not be able to win the support of the member states for his ideas, as he was less of a "general" and more of a "secretary."

All of those fears turned out to be groundless. The workshops and the process of open debates met with great interest and boosted NATO's image, because countries such as Israel and Egypt also contributed to the discussion. The expert group drafted a report, which served as the strategy's blueprint.⁸ The

⁷ "Declaration on Alliance Security," Strasbourg/Kehl 4 April 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_52838.htm

⁸ "NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement," Brussels, 17 May 2010, <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/experts-report.pdf>

Secretary General kept the process tight enough to avoid endless debates among member states about wording. The result was a lean and precise Strategic Concept that found greater resonance than its two predecessors in 1991 and 1999. Like the two previous documents, the new Concept had a hybrid character – on the one hand, it contained a self-definition of NATO, which some disrespectfully compared to an advertising campaign; on the other, it made clear statements on the tasks and objectives of the Alliance. The Concept’s description of the three core tasks of NATO – defence in accordance with Article 5, crisis management outside the Alliance and cooperative security through partnerships – may not have been very revolutionary. What matters, however, is that all member states were able to agree on this canon (which can by all means be considered a hierarchy), in spite of the alleged existential crisis of the Alliance and its lack of future orientation. The frequent allegation that the result was (yet again) not a “real” strategy, combining defined objectives with methods and a timeline, falls short as well. No openly accessible paper would ever live up to this demand.

Which of the lessons learned in 2009/2010 can be used in the new strategy debate that has been requested, and how should the future Strategic Concept be formulated?

Principles of the strategy debate

In response to the resurgence of direct threats to the territorial integrity of Alliance territory, there are voices in the United States calling for a return to the strategies employed during the East-West conflict, i.e. concepts that are primarily military in nature and subject to secrecy. Now that NATO’s purpose has again become evident, they claim, there is no longer any necessity for “self-affirming folklore.” Rather, there is a need for clear military planning requirements and for adapting the means to the ends, as described above.

Such an argument fails to recognize that, unlike during the Cold War, there is now very much an obligation to publicly justify security policy. In times of heightened public interest in foreign and security policy threats in particular, there is an increased need to explain contexts and to canvas support for political decisions. This is compounded by the fact that modern communication tools, such as the social media, open the floodgates of disinformation and conspiracy theories. The most blatant example of this is Russia’s current propaganda offensive against NATO. The development of a new Strategic Concept should thus be guided by three principles.

First, the process should again be transparent and inclusive in nature and involve the discussion of individual aspects in workshops or conferences. The German Federal Government’s process for preparing the latest White Paper showed how expedient the inclusion of a broad range of expertise and different interest groups can be. Whether an external group of experts tasked with formulating proposals should again be commissioned is debatable, especially given that opinions varied widely regarding the expertise provided by this 12-member group, most of whom were diplomats. Whatever

the case will be, an external or internal strategy team will be required for supporting the workshop, evaluating outcomes and developing a draft. Above all, sufficient inclusion of military expertise must be ensured. A major disadvantage of the group of experts known as the “Twelve Apostles” was that this group did not include a single military representative.

Second, two non-NATO countries must be included on an equal basis: Sweden and Finland. These two countries, whose civilian and military commitment to the Alliance exceeds that of some full members, are already very closely involved in NATO processes. Despite the fact that they will have no voting rights in the North Atlantic Council when it later decides on the new strategy, their contribution to strategy development will prove indispensable.

Third, the situation in the Asia-Pacific region necessitates consultation with important partners in the region: Australia, Japan, South Korea and possibly New Zealand. They have already demonstrated their commitment in Afghanistan and, as “Western democracies,” are indispensable for maintaining the rules-based international order. In addition, Japan and South Korea in particular, should be included in NATO’s nuclear debate since they are also sheltered by the United States “nuclear umbrella” (under the policy of “extended deterrence”).

The new core functions of the Alliance

The Washington Treaty, which, as NATO’s founding document, is occasionally termed the “first Strategic Concept,” defines a whole series of Alliance tasks. In addition to defence and Alliance solidarity, these range from the promotion of international peace and justice and close consultation between NATO Allies all the way to the improvement of international economic policy.⁹

Up until the late 1960s, the Alliance in fact concentrated on the core task of deterrence/defence against aggression from the Soviet Union or the Warsaw Pact countries (although neither is explicitly named as a specific threat in the Treaty). The publication of the Harmel Report in 1967, by Belgium’s Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, resulted in the addition of a second task, namely “détente.” This dual approach is also found in the current political and military measures taken vis-à-vis Russia, as agreed at the NATO Summits in Wales and Warsaw. These remained the two main tasks until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

The first Strategic Concept after the end of the Cold War, published in 1991, defined four core functions: preserving stability in Europe, providing a forum for Allied consultation as provided for in Article 4 of the Washington Treaty, deterring and defending against attack, and preserving the strategic balance.

⁹ The North Atlantic Treaty, 4 April 1949, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

The 1999 Strategic Concept no longer made reference to core functions, but provided a somewhat complicated description of the four NATO “security tasks”: security through peaceful conflict resolution, transatlantic consultation, deterrence/defence, and stability through crisis management and partnership. The subsequent 2010 Strategic Concept outlined the three aforementioned core functions of collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security.

It is evident that, given the long-running conflict with Russia and the multifaceted threats facing Alliance territory, a combination of tasks from before and after the Cold War must be found.

Hence, the first core task in a new Strategic Concept should be *deterrence and defence* or the *protection of Alliance territory*. By contrast with the post-1991 period, however, this is no longer merely a matter of providing the required rhetoric, but must be backed up by credible military capabilities. In addition, defence plans tailored to the different potential scenarios are required. Ever since the end of the Cold War, secret military documents which addressed the military implications of the political requirements specified in the Concepts have been produced in addition to the public Strategic Concepts. Given the very real threats we face, these documents will become even more important in the future.

In line with the well-known dual strategy, the second core task in addition to deterrence would be to strive towards *détente* in relations with Russia, as described in the Harmel Report published almost fifty years ago. Hence, all communication and cooperation options must be kept open. However, two factors are of critical importance. First, as intended by Pierre Harmel, a policy of *détente* should be approached from the Alliance’s own position of strength. Some of those who today advocate improving relations with Russia seem to regard steps towards *détente* as a substitute for defence capability. Second, expectations with regard to *détente* should be kept low. Currently, there is no sign of any fundamental change in Russian policy towards respecting principles of international law, such as the inviolability of borders. Russia’s political leaders under President Putin have succumbed to their own image of imperial grandeur, which makes them think in terms of spheres of influence. This, in turn, implies limited sovereignty for the countries situated in these zones. The fact that such a claim to power corresponds to neither political nor military reality is of very little concern to the regime in Moscow. Putin seems virtually doomed to cultivating the myth of his own grandeur by behaving aggressively to ensure the support of the Russian people despite constantly deteriorating economic conditions. The price to be paid for this will be that, after two decades of failure to modernize the country, Russia will lose even more time, causing it to fall further and further behind other countries. Nor will cooperation be able to cushion Russia’s structural decline.

A third task consists of creating or at least fostering *a stable security environment* in the countries neighbouring NATO territory – either through close *partnerships* or, in exceptional cases, through *military intervention*. In the 2010 Strategic Concept, these were still presented as two separate core functions, which caused debate, as early as during the Strategic Concept’s development phase. Until then, military crisis management in Afghanistan had only resulted in very limited success. In the light

of the “Arab Spring” and the NATO intervention in Libya, military interventions for the protection of the civilian population still appeared a valid option. This made the fact that, after its liberation from a dictatorial regime, Libya was not able to maintain an even partially functioning society even more disappointing. Instead, state authority fragmented into opposing political camps or fell into the hands of countless armed groups, with the outcome remaining uncertain even today. At the same time, the escalating crisis in Syria has revealed the unwillingness of NATO countries to again rush into a military adventure. Today, any new NATO military commitment beyond national defence will be the absolute exception.

Partnerships, on the other hand, be they to obtain support from non-NATO countries (as in Afghanistan) or to provide other countries with NATO military expertise and thus enable them to enhance their own preventive security capabilities, have at least in part been successful. If both functions – partnership and military crisis management – are combined under the concept of “stability export,” it will be possible to provide a flexible response to any requirements.

However, the crucial point is that the current NATO partnership concept was developed in the years preceding 2014 and based on structures and formats that are no longer appropriate to the requirements of the world of Article 5. The oldest existing partnership format, the “Partnership for Peace,” essentially no longer exists because of the conflict between two of its members, Russia and Ukraine. Due to the developments in the Islamic world, two other formats, the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) between NATO and the Gulf States, are also in ruins. A fundamentally new approach is required.

The fourth task is fundamentally new and is derived from current, especially hybrid challenges, be they in the form of Islamic terror, cyber warfare or indeed Russia’s propaganda offensives. Since there is only very limited opportunity to stabilize the Middle East, and since Islamic terrorists not only pose an external threat to NATO countries but are already established within Western societies, religiously or ideologically motivated terrorism cannot be fully prevented. Despite all preventive efforts, terror attacks of varying types and scale will occur – a sad reality which several NATO countries have had to face in the past. Such attacks are aimed at destabilizing social cohesion and always bear the risk of causing panic and over-reaction. The disinformation and propaganda disseminated by Russia has a similar objective, namely the destabilization of what it regards as “Western” societies. In both cases, the *resilience* of these societies, i.e. their ability to endure attacks and not be easily taken in by disinformation, *must be enhanced*. The heads of state and government have already made a joint commitment to this effect at the NATO Summit in Warsaw.¹⁰

10 “Commitment to enhance resilience, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw,” 8-9 July 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133180.htm?selectedLocale=en

Resilience is an ambiguous term¹¹ and is used in different political, economic and social contexts, often as an enhanced version of “resistance.” As such, it is quickly considered as something of a panacea for the protection (or even immunization) of societies, countries or groups against risks. However, it is much more a matter of enabling countries to ensure damage limitation after an attack and of helping them to rapidly return to stability. NATO countries and important partners have learned different lessons in this regard, which they can pass on. In line with the principle of the “Centres of Excellence,” which NATO maintains in many member states and which cover a variety of areas, expertise on resilience could be gathered and, if required, provided to NATO Allies.

Timeframe

Given its fundamental importance, the new NATO strategy must be commissioned by NATO’s highest political body, the North Atlantic Council, at Heads of State and Government level. The next opportunity would be the NATO summit scheduled to take place in Brussels in 2017. It is already intended that this meeting should take the form of a “mini-summit.” Its main purpose will be to provide the newly elected US President with the opportunity to make his/her NATO debut. By giving the starting signal for a strategy debate, the importance of the meeting would increase without the need for any agreement on difficult substantive issues.

Strategy formulation and coordination within the Alliance should not take longer than a year. Assuming that summits take place at least every two years, the new Strategic Concept could be issued in 2018 or 2019 at the latest – coinciding with NATO’s 70th anniversary. The Alliance would thereby maintain its practice of issuing a new strategy approximately once every ten years. It is arguable whether such a fundamental strategic debate should not be held much more often, in order to be prepared for the rapid changes in global politics. However, in an Alliance currently counting 28 member states, increasingly longer periods of time are apparently required to achieve consensus on fundamental issues.

Given the fundamental changes of the recent years, NATO cannot avoid adapting its strategic basics to the new realities of the Article-5 world. Agreeing on new tasks and missions and putting them into writing will not be an easy endeavour in times where different allies are affected by different threats to a different degree. However, the example of the 2010 Strategic Concept has shown, not only that the process provided a value in itself but that also the strategic document that resulted contained much more substance than many critics had expected. Avoiding a strategic debate for the sake of avoiding disagreement is not an option for an Alliance which has often been characterized as the institutionalization of transatlantic dispute, yet has survived almost seven decades.

11 Michael Hanisch, “What is resilience? Ambiguities of a Key Term,” Working Paper 19/2016, Federal Academy for Security Policy, Berlin 2016, https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working_paper_2016_19.pdf



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