



ANALYSIS

NATO BEYOND 70

RENEWING A CULTURE OF READINESS

| HEINRICH BRAUSS |

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INTRODUCTION

On 11-12 July 2018, the heads of state and government of the North Atlantic Alliance met in Brussels. Political and public attention centred almost exclusively on the Allies' defence expenditure, the issue of spending 2% of national GDPs on defence, and President Donald Trump's criticism of Canada and European nations. The political agenda of the summit, however, and the range of decisions taken there, was much broader and much more substantial. It was the third summit in a row since 2014 that dealt with NATO's far-reaching and long-term adaptation to the fundamentally changed security environment since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the illegal occupation of Crimea, as well as the emergence of the terrorist organisation ISIL/Daesh. The Wales summit of 2014 adopted the Readiness Action Plan (RAP)

as an initial response to Russia's aggressive posture. In 2016, the Warsaw summit agreed the principles and elements of the Alliance's Strengthened Deterrence and Defence Posture and NATO's approach to Projecting Stability to its neighbourhood. The Brussels summit reviewed progress in implementing NATO's posture and decided a range of far-reaching measures to ensure its full credibility and effectiveness to respond to all challenges and threats, from wherever they might arise. This paper summarises the defence-policy related decisions of the Brussels summit to direct and guide NATO's further adaptation, in particular further strengthening deterrence and defence, explains their rationale, and places them into the overall political and strategic context.

1. BURDEN-SHARING DEBATE

This Brussels summit was a memorable event in many respects. The participants—politicians, NATO and national staffs and the media alike—certainly experienced an emotional rollercoaster. President Trump again confronted the European Allies and Canada in harsh terms with his demand that they increase their defence expenditure to 2% of their national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He did

not appear to acknowledge that, after many years of decline, defence spending across Europe and Canada has continuously increased in real terms since 2014. In 2017, NATO Allies across Europe and Canada boosted their defence budgets by a combined 5.2% (i.e. some 15 billion US dollars by European Allies and Canada) over 2016, which represents the biggest increase in a quarter of a century. 2018 will be the fourth consecutive year of rising defence spending.¹ On the other hand, only eight Allies are expected to spend circa 2% of their GDP on defence² in 2018, and only 16 (out of 29) Allies plan to reach 2% of GDP by 2024.³

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The biggest European economy, Germany, spent 1.27% of its GDP on defence last year, and announced it would raise defence spending to 1.5% in 2024.⁴ Although this amounts to a significant increase in absolute terms, as things stand now, Germany and a number of other Allies will not meet all the guidelines set by the Defence Investment Pledge (DIP), which all the Alliance's political leaders agreed at the 2014 summit in Wales.

In this context, it is worth noting that the DIP is not just about spending 2% of GDP on defence, and burden-sharing is not only about financial resources. Both are much broader and more differentiated. Allies whose proportion of GDP

* This analysis is based on a panel discussion on "2 % and then what?" during the Annual Baltic Conference on Defence (ABCD) 2018 titled "[NATO at 70: No Time to Rest](#)", which took place on 25–26 September 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia.

¹ "[Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC](#)", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 14 September 2018, last updated 15 September 2018. Over the past two years, Canada and the European Allies have spent a cumulated \$41 billion more on defence.

² Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, the United Kingdom and the United States; Romania and Poland are currently at 1.9%. On the other hand, in 2014 only three Allies spent at least 2% of GDP on defence: Greece, the UK and the US.

³ Based on reports NATO has so far received from individual Allies.

⁴ According to current estimates this would, however, imply an increase in the German defence budget of some 80% to more than €60 billion, doubling the budget since 2014, i.e. within ten years.

spent on defence was below 2% committed themselves to (1) halting any decline in defence expenditure; (2) aiming to increase defence expenditure in real terms as GDP grows; and (3) aiming to move towards the 2% guideline within a decade with a view to meeting their NATO Capability Targets and filling NATO's capability shortfalls. Allies that spent less than 20% of their annual defence budget on major new equipment, including related research & development (R&D), committed themselves to aim, within a decade, at increasing their annual investment to 20% or more. At a meeting in Brussels in May 2017, in discussing what constituted "fair burden-sharing", the Alliance's political leaders also emphasised that (4) additional resources from increased defence spending should be used to meet NATO Capability Targets and help fill the Alliance's capability shortfalls, and that (5) contributions of forces and capabilities to NATO operations,

longer prepared to continue providing the bulk of the Alliance's defence spending and cutting-edge capabilities while many European states ensconced themselves under the US security umbrella and relied on it as the global policeman. As early as 2011, the then US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, in an attention-grabbing speech in Brussels, red-flagged a possible break-up of NATO and indicated the possibility of reduced US willingness to make all its capabilities available to NATO if the other Allies continued not to shoulder their fair share of the common burden. And it was during president Obama's tenure that the DIP was agreed. However, only president Trump directly linked the US commitment to NATO and its collective defence guarantee to demonstrable and traceable efforts by all European Allies and Canada to raise defence spending to at least 2% of GDP. This and president Trump's rhetoric and unilateral actions, the US withdrawal from a number of multilateral fora and commitments, and the disputes over tariffs between the US and other nations and organisations, including US Allies, raised serious concerns among the European NATO members.

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missions and engagements abroad, to non-NATO operations and missions abroad, and other activities such as Assurance Measures, enhanced Forward Presence and tailored Forward Presence, should also be taken into account. As a result, fair burden-sharing among the Allies is to be assessed against three elements, the so-called "3C": defence expenditure ("cash"), capability target implementation ("capabilities") and contributions to operations and missions and other relevant engagements ("contributions").

However, it is the financial side which came to the fore in the debate. The dispute over defence spending and president Trump's harsh criticism of NATO Allies and partners have dominated NATO-related headlines since he took office. For a number of years, however, many senior figures in the US have expressed their growing dissatisfaction with the contributions to security and defence of many European nations and Canada. The US had time and again warned the other Allies that it was no

2. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

In the aftermath of the G7 summit in May 2017 in Taormina, Italy, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly stated that: "The times in which we could completely rely on others are somewhat over. ... We Europeans must take our fate into our own hands."⁵ This statement attracted widespread public attention in Europe and beyond as it was perceived by some as suggesting a move away from the United States. It fuelled a debate about the future of transatlantic relations, on the partnership between Europe and North America, and on the future of NATO. It raised the question of whether the unique transatlantic partnership had reached a historical crossroads.

⁵ "Merkel: Europe can no longer rely on US and Britain", *Deutsche Welle*, 28 May 2017.

Essentially, there are two schools of thought. The proponents of the first believe that president Trump is a *sui generis* phenomenon that should not be identified with the United States as a whole. There is another America, and its Allies and partners need to “survive” Trump’s tenure and meanwhile make every effort to preserve the unique transatlantic partnership, since European security and welfare cannot be ensured in the foreseeable future without the US.

The second school of thought believes that president Trump is the exponent of a fundamental change in American society and, as a

consequence, a significant change in US policy and strategic orientation: America first, less interest in working with Allies, a focus on China, a tendency to shed the role of global policeman and global responsibility, withdrawal from key geostrategic regions, including Europe, or at least limiting the US commitment to Europe over time. The Europeans should therefore review and adjust their strategy vis-à-vis the US and focus on European unity, strengthening the European Union (EU) and its ability to act, and on enhanced European efforts in the field of security.

Whatever one thinks about president Trump’s role and impact, it is essential to remain realistic and consider a number of political

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The unity and solidarity of its members is the greatest asset of this Alliance, its strategic centre of gravity, the most important political currency of deterrence

realities, geostrategic constants and strategic imperatives. First, the latest controversies about the US-European relationship have recalled the importance and value of the transatlantic bond, the alliance between North America and Europe. Together they form a security community that protects and defends their democratic values and institutions in a world where fewer and fewer people share these but, rather, contest and fight against them. Moreover, Europe and North America together represent half of the world’s economic

output. And, despite the arguments over tariffs, they are each other’s biggest trading partners. They need to stand together against the multitude of challenges and threats that concern them both.

Second, the transatlantic link is essential for both Europe and North America. It is vital for Europe’s freedom, security and prosperity, for Europe’s protection against an aggressive and

belligerent Russia, and for balancing Russia’s strategic ambitions, military capacities and, in particular, nuclear potential. But the transatlantic link is also essential for the US to maintain its role and influence as a global superpower. Europe provides the geostrategic hub for the projection of American power to the Middle East and North Africa. And there are no partners more valuable to America and more capable across the globe than its European Allies. For all these reasons, America needs to remain a European power. But it also needs Europe to remain the power it is today.

Third, NATO provides the only institutional framework for the transatlantic partnership. For 70 years, the Alliance has helped to preserve peace, stability and prosperity in Europe. NATO’s enlargement has led to a significant geostrategic shift in that it helped to bring democracy, security and stability to Eastern Europe. The unity and solidarity of its members is the greatest asset of this Alliance, its strategic centre of gravity, the most important political currency of deterrence. However, as things currently stand, whether the Europeans like it or not, the burden-sharing question has become a defining issue for the Alliance and the transatlantic relationship. To preserve this unity, it is imperative that the Europeans expend much more effort on common security, against threats old and new. This precisely demands increased resources, which must be provided without delay, dependably and durably—not for the sake of reaching 2%, but in

order to make the armed forces of most European Allies fully capable of coping with NATO's whole spectrum of operations and missions, including contributing to large-scale high-end operations for collective defence against a peer adversary, if needed; and not as a concession to the US leadership, but in Europe's own security interests, as a capable and respected international player and as a self-confident partner of North America.

With the above in mind, abiding by the DIP and fully implementing the three elements of fair burden sharing—cash, capabilities and contributions—also has an important political dimension: fair burden- and responsibility-sharing is the ultimate expression of Alliance solidarity and unity and, thus, of NATO's credibility. It is a means to foster the transatlantic bond as well as intra-European cohesion. Hence, at the 2018 Brussels summit, the commitment to implement the DIP in full was confirmed and renewed. And this commitment needs to be underpinned by credible national plans that demonstrate how those Allies that do not yet spend 2% of GDP on defence—and, respectively, 20% of this on major equipment and R&D—intend to reach these targets by 2024.⁶

3. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Focusing on the 2% target alone, however, is not a strategy. It does not replace all the efforts that are necessary to cope with today's challenges and threats, and tomorrow's. The argument over defence spending must not obscure the many other important decisions unanimously agreed in Brussels by all the Allies, including the American president, to further strengthen NATO's overall posture. It is these decisions that provide the strategic framework for the further implementation of the Warsaw summit decisions on NATO's long-term adaptation.

⁶ These plans are to be submitted by Allies to NATO by the end of each year, for review by defence ministers at their meetings in February the following year.

Meanwhile, it has become common knowledge that, since 2014, NATO has faced a fundamentally changed, unpredictable and dangerous security environment, with enduring challenges and threats from multiple directions: from state and non-state actors with state-like aspirations, capabilities and resources; from military forces and capabilities; and from terrorist, cyber and hybrid attacks.⁷

There are two main sources of insecurity, challenges and threats facing NATO. To the east, these are essentially generated by Russia's continuing aggressive posture and its use of power politics to achieve geopolitical goals. Its military doctrine and wide range of conventional and nuclear capabilities, large-scale military exercises on NATO's borders, as well as its continuing malicious cyber and

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widespread disinformation activities, underpin Russia's campaign of intimidation and destabilisation. This is aimed at intimidating and achieving control over its "near abroad", i.e. Russia's immediate neighbours; putting the whole of Europe at risk; undermining the cohesion of NATO and the EU; and driving a wedge between Europe and North America. Russia's military-strategic thinking and operational plans were amply demonstrated by the large-scale Zapad and Vostok exercises.⁸ They support Moscow's political intimidation strategy.

To the south, the Alliance is confronted with an arc of insecurity and instability stretching from the Atlantic coast of the Sahel through North Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus to Afghanistan. Continuing crises, state failure and civil wars have fuelled terrorism and caused mass migration, all of which concern not only

⁷ "Brussels Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Press Release (2018) 074, paragraph 2.

⁸ Vostok 2018 was likely the largest exercise to take place in Russia since 1981.

the security of southern Allies but the Alliance as a whole. While it is safe to say that terrorist organisations pose the most immediate asymmetric threat, Russia represents the most serious potential military and geopolitical threat to the Alliance. And through its military intervention in Syria, Russia has aggravated the crisis in the region and has become the most assertive non-NATO actor and a destabilising factor in the eastern Mediterranean.

From an Alliance perspective, all the major challenges and threats emanating from both strategic directions are equally important. Allies expect NATO to be able to support the security of every member state against any potential threat. In NATO, this is widely known as the “360-degree approach” to security. With this in mind, Allies agreed a complex dual approach to cope with the broad spectrum of challenges and threats: strengthening NATO’s deterrence and defence posture and, based on that, projecting stability and strengthening security outside its territory, thereby contributing to the Alliance’s overall security. While renewed emphasis has been placed on deterrence and collective defence, NATO must remain capable of responding to crises beyond its borders,

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including through military interventions. The Alliance must also remain actively engaged in supporting partners and working with other international organisations, first and foremost the EU. Deterrence and defence and projecting stability efforts complement each other and have mutually reinforcing effects for upholding Alliance security, at and beyond NATO’s borders, and both thus contribute to international security.

NATO’s efforts to project stability are multifaceted. They include:

- enhancing relationships with partners;
- offering tailored defence and security capacity-building support, particularly to those partners located in unstable regions,

such as Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Tunisia and Jordan, to help them enhance their resilience and provide for their own security;

- deploying mobile training teams and units capable of providing short-notice advice and assistance on a range of competences and skills;
- launching a new training mission for Iraq at the Brussels summit;
- contributing to the fight against terrorism, including through supporting the Global Coalition Against Daesh;
- continuing crisis response operations and missions like the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, which is being enhanced, and NATO’s engagement in Kosovo (KFOR);
- conducting maritime operations, such as the maritime security operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean.

It is obvious that the threats generated by Russia and by international terrorist organisations are very different. They nevertheless have some elements in common. Both try to discredit democratic values, affect democratic institutions, destabilise Allies’ societies and paralyse government decision-making; try to undermine local or regional security systems and weaken Allies’ unity, cohesion and solidarity; and could threaten the integrity of Allies’ populations and

territory. To this end, both apply means of hybrid warfare—disinformation, subversion, propaganda and malicious cyber activities—and threaten to resort to violence or use military force, up to nuclear blackmail (Russia) or attempting to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction (terrorist groups). Against this background, NATO has taken a broad approach to deterrence and defence to respond to the wide spectrum of challenges and threats in peacetime, crisis and conflict. Furthermore, deterrence and defence, projecting stability and NATO’s contribution to the fight against terrorism are three main components of the Alliance’s overall approach to security.

4. THE ALLIANCE'S COMPREHENSIVE ADAPTATION

In light of this broad and worrying spectrum of challenges and threats, NATO has to be able to deter any threat of large-scale aggression or intimidation and defend against the full range of threats, including the threat of or use of WMD.⁹ The Alliance must also be able to deter a regional or local threat or attack carried out at short notice and designed to confront the Alliance with a fait accompli, and demonstrate that it is able to deny success to any such

The Alliance needs to ensure that it has the right forces in the right place at the right time to deter and defend, if necessary, or deploy for crisis intervention outside its territory

possible attempts. And NATO needs to be able to respond to multiple simultaneous threats, emanating from different directions, in several regions and across domains,¹⁰ rapidly, effectively and on various scales, wherever needed across NATO's territory and adjacent waters,¹¹ against state and non-state actors. In particular, Russia's overall strategy and posture is directed against NATO as a whole, not just one region.

With all this in mind, ensuring the credibility and effectiveness of NATO's posture requires a holistic view at the breadth and depth of the Alliance's entire territory and its periphery and adjacent waters.¹² Any potential adversary's risk calculus at any time needs to come to the conclusion that NATO is capable of dealing with all relevant contingencies and deny the adversary any options, so that even a limited aggression or attempt at coercion in one region

would not be a viable option. As a result, for the Alliance to retain maximum flexibility, agility and freedom of action to be able to respond to a variety of crises in different geographical areas and to select the most appropriate and effective response to any threat or attack while remaining defensive in nature, "reinforcement" rather than the permanent forward deployment of large forces has been and remains the concept of choice for NATO's adaptation. This requires the assured, timely availability of appropriate forces wherever and whenever they are needed.

Consequently, the Alliance needs to ensure that it has the right forces in the right place at the

right time to deter and defend, if necessary, or deploy for crisis intervention outside its territory. This has been a longstanding guiding principle of NATO's adaptation. Since 2014, work on this has been centred on meeting three

key requirements: Responsiveness, Readiness and Reinforcement. They overlap and complement each other.

- **Responsiveness** means that the Alliance is able to take timely and effective decisions on whether, where and how to deploy forces, especially in the face of short- or no-notice threats. Military responsiveness includes the ability to deploy appropriate forces where they are needed.
- **Readiness** means that Allies have sufficient high-quality forces and capabilities that can be deployed rapidly and employed effectively, whenever and wherever they might be needed, for strengthening the conventional component of deterrence, for collective defence or for crisis-response operations.
- **Reinforcement** means that NATO is capable of ensuring rapid and effective military support to a threatened Ally or Allies.

The Alliance's broad deterrence and defence posture is complemented by systematically strengthening NATO's and its members' cyber defence and resilience against hybrid

⁹ Through an appropriate mix of conventional and missile defence and nuclear forces.

¹⁰ Land, air, maritime, cyber and space.

¹¹ The Area of Responsibility of the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) stretches from the North Pole to the Tropic of Cancer in the south, from the eastern coast of North America to the eastern border of NATO.

¹² The Atlantic Ocean; the North Atlantic; the North, Baltic and Black seas; and the Mediterranean Sea.

campaigns, and on the other hand reasserting Alliance nuclear deterrence against Russia's nuclear strategy as well as coherent, pro-active strategic communications and deterrence messaging towards any potential adversary.

Much has already been achieved. The Readiness Action Plan (RAP) agreed at the summit in Wales in 2014 has been implemented. A few examples: the size of the enhanced NATO Response Force (NRF) has been tripled to become a joint force of some 40,000 troops. Its readiness has been significantly increased, in particular through the multinational Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) of some 5,000 troops, which is on permanent standby, ready to move within a few days. The number and size of multinational exercises in the region have increased. Plans for rapid reinforcement of Allies located on NATO's periphery are in situ. Procedures for accelerated decision-making are also in place, which enables the Alliance to take a decision on the deployment of rapid-response forces within 8–12 hours. The headquarters of the Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE) in Szczecin, in charge of collective defence in the region, is fully operational. Furthermore, the multinational combat-ready enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, led by the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the US respectively, have been operational since mid-2017. They unambiguously demonstrate that, even in the event of a limited incursion to achieve a *fait accompli*, Russia would from the outset be in an armed conflict with the Alliance as a whole, including the three nuclear powers.

Under tailored Forward Presence (tFP), there is a multinational divisional headquarters and brigade framework for regular exercises in Romania and Bulgaria and enhanced NATO air and maritime presence in the Black Sea region. The Framework for the South has been established and its regional hub in Naples is operational, improving NATO's understanding of the region, situational awareness and ability to respond effectively and expeditiously to

crises in the south, including through intervention with forces or the training of partner countries' forces. Moreover, the US has significantly increased its commitment to, and spending on, Europe's security under the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI),¹³ for more US troops in Europe, particularly in Poland, enhanced pre-positioning of equipment, more exercises and training, and improved infrastructure.

At the same time, strengthening deterrence and defence is being complemented, in NATO's own security interest, by meaningful dialogue and engagement with Russia, particularly in the NATO–Russia Council, to seek reciprocal transparency and reduce the risk of misperception or misunderstanding and

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inadvertent incidents.¹⁴ In the last two years, the NATO–Russia Council has met eight times, and meetings at the military strategic level between SACEUR and the Russian Chief of the General Staff also take place from time to time. Meaningful and focused dialogue with Russia does not come at the expense of ensuring credible deterrence and defence. On the contrary, it offers an opportunity for the Allies to understand Russia's views better and to convey clear deterrence messages.

¹³ The budget for EDI will increase from 3.4 billion dollars in 2017 to 6.5 billion in 2019. As part of this, the US has deployed, *inter alia*, an Armoured Brigade Combat Team (up to 5,000 troops) to Poland on a rotational basis. From 2019, additional US troops will be deployed to Europe and additional military equipment will be pre-positioned. For details, see Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), [Defense Budget Overview: Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request](#) (Washington DC: Department of Defense, February 2018).

¹⁴ This has occasionally been called a dual-track approach to dealing with Russia, referring to the Harmel Report of 1967, which recommended a strategy of deterrence/defence and détente/limited cooperation with the Soviet Union to seek opportunities for arms control and arms reduction.

5. DECISIONS AT THE BRUSSELS SUMMIT

All the measures listed above reflect significant progress in NATO's adaptation—the biggest reinforcement of collective defence in a generation. However, ensuring full effectiveness of NATO's deterrence and defence posture requires further work. The relevant decisions taken at the Brussels summit have provided far-reaching strategic direction and guidance for this work, which is already in full swing. These decisions essentially address eight key issues.

- NATO is working on further improving **advance planning** for reinforcement and defence of a threatened Ally or Allies, including for multiple regions to be tackled simultaneously. NATO is also working on an **effective response to Russia's A2/AD capabilities**, in particular in the Baltic Sea (Kaliningrad) and the Black Sea (Crimea), to ensure the freedom of decision, action and movement of Alliance forces on land, in the air and at sea in a crisis and conflict. Furthermore, NATO's **exercise programme** is being further developed to integrate large-scale joint collective defence operations and logistics support. Work is also underway to assess the requirement for **protection of critical infrastructure** for reinforcement, including air defence in the most exposed regions.
- In addition, in order to enhance Alliance responsiveness, work is underway to further improve the Alliance's **strategic anticipation capability and decision-making procedures**, including with a view to short- or no-notice crises, and exercising them regularly.
- The **NATO Command Structure** (NCS), i.e. the network of NATO's multinational military headquarters, will be significantly adapted. This is one of the most important decisions taken by the Brussels summit. For some 25 years before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, NATO's command-and-control arrangements were focused on so-called "out-of-area" operations for crisis response, such as in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. Collective defence was

fading into the background. That will now change. The NCS will be enabled to command and control operations across the whole mission spectrum, including large-scale manoeuvre operations for collective defence under hybrid conditions and cyber threats and facing simultaneous risks and threats in multiple regions. To this end, the NCS will be reinforced by some 1,200 personnel. A new **Cyber Operations Centre** has been established at SHAPE in Mons, Belgium, and two new commands will be set up: the **Joint Force Command Norfolk** in Norfolk, Virginia, to plan and manage the movement of US and Canadian forces across the Atlantic for the reinforcement of Europe; and the **Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC)** in Ulm, Germany, in charge of coordinating, supporting and protecting the movement of forces into, across and from Europe to where they are needed, with Germany (located in the centre of Europe) as the strategic hub of military mobility across the continent. Work on the adaptation of the NCS is progressing expeditiously.

- To enable rapid reinforcement, a sufficient number of highly capable and rapidly employable forces is required. Work is underway to improve the quantity and quality of Allies' high-readiness forces and capabilities. Member states are working to implement fully their NATO Capability Targets to **develop heavier, more high-end forces and capabilities and more forces at higher readiness**, as was agreed at the 2016 summit in Warsaw. In addition, the NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI), agreed by NATO's political leaders, also marks a significant step towards further strengthening the Alliance's posture. Allies agreed the so-called "4x30", which means improving the readiness and quality of up to 30 land battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat vessels, **"ready to employ"** (i.e. combat-ready already in theatre) within 30 days by 2020. It is noteworthy that Allies also agreed to develop these high-readiness forces further into a number of larger formations at high readiness (land combat brigades, maritime task groups and enhanced air wings) in the years to come.

Once implemented, these forces will significantly improve NATO's military responsiveness and will back up the enhanced NATO Response Force.

- Furthermore, for timely reinforcement it is also essential that Allied forces can be rapidly moved across Europe and the Atlantic. To this end, the whole of NATO's territory needs to be "enabled" to allow for the rapid movement of forces to wherever they are needed. NATO developed a comprehensive **Enablement Plan**, and work is now underway to implement this. In parallel, the EU is working to implement its **Action Plan on Military Mobility**. The two initiatives complement and support each other. The agreement between NATO and the EU, confirmed at the Brussels summit, to work together systematically to improve military mobility and to enable the rapid movement of forces to, across and from the European continent, is particularly significant. It is expected to become a flagship project for NATO-EU cooperation that will serve the security interests of all Allies and all EU Member States. It is designed to support the Alliance's ability to reinforce threatened Allies on NATO's periphery, facilitate the reception and onward movement of forces from North America to Europe and enable the deployment of forces for crisis response beyond NATO and EU borders. To this end, NATO and EU Member States are working on improvements in four areas:
 - to create the necessary legislative conditions for the rapid cross-border movement of military personnel, equipment and forces in peacetime and crises. Rapid Air Mobility will allow short-notice cross-border air movement in Europe;
 - to establish the command-and-control arrangements required for moving forces in Europe, including coordination with relevant civilian authorities (as part of a whole-of-government approach);
 - to obtain access to transport capacity and multimodal logistics capacities; and

- to improve civilian infrastructure (main supply routes, bridges, tunnels, harbours, airfields, etc.) to allow for military movements, including heavy forces for large-scale operations. To this end, the European Commission will, within its Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) policy and programme comprising some 2,500 projects within nine core network corridors across Europe, co-finance dual-use (i.e. civilian and military) projects. TEN-T will benefit both NATO and EU Member States. It will also contribute to facilitating the deployment of US forces to, across and from Europe (e.g. North Africa or the Middle East) and is therefore a significant factor in transatlantic burden-sharing.
- The **Alliance Maritime Posture** is being reinforced to cover the Atlantic Ocean and the Baltic, Black and Mediterranean seas as a connected and coherent whole. The intention is to improve overall maritime situational awareness, reinvigorate maritime warfighting skills in key areas and protect sea lines of communication, particularly with a view to the transatlantic dimension and the North Atlantic as a line of communication for strategic reinforcement.¹⁵ Similarly, the implementation of NATO's **Joint Air Power Strategy** is being taken forward as a key enabler for NATO Air Policing and Ballistic Missile Defence and guiding Allies' aerospace capabilities to operate jointly, swiftly and effectively in peacetime, crisis and conflict.¹⁶ Given the space-forces-time relationship in NATO Europe, in a crisis and conflict the Alliance's air power would probably be the reinforcement force of first choice.
- **Cyber defence** is part of NATO's core task of collective defence. Strong cyber defence is an essential element of NATO's deterrence and defence posture. Allies work to implement fully the 2016 Warsaw Summit Cyber Defence Pledge on

¹⁵ Brussels Summit Declaration, paragraph 19.

¹⁶ Ibid.

delivering strong national cyber defences. Moreover, cyberspace has become a domain of operations. Allies agreed to integrate sovereign cyber effects,¹⁷ provided voluntarily, into Alliance operations and missions, under strong political oversight. Allies have also started to address the challenge of how to deter an adversary from launching cyber-attacks and how to combine “classic” deterrence, digital *resilience* and measures to be developed in order to be able to impose costs on those who would harm allied nations, with a view to discouraging them from launching significant, widespread cyber-attacks.¹⁸

- NATO’s **nuclear capability** is an essential component of the Alliance deterrence and defence posture. It is clear that nuclear weapons have a unique character, as their use and even any threat of use would fundamentally change the nature of any conflict. The fact that they would impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the expected benefits that the adversary might hope to achieve lends nuclear weapons the ultimate deterrent effect. The fact that Russia has deployed dual-use weapons and has conducted exercises involving nuclear capabilities has pointed to a possible Russian doctrine of “escalate to de-escalate”, i.e. the potential use of nuclear weapons early in a conventional conflict to convince an adversary (NATO) to stand down for fear of further escalation. This has prompted NATO to reconsider the relationship between the conventional and nuclear component of its deterrence and defence posture, in peacetime as well as in crisis and war, when conventional operations and nuclear deterrence would occur simultaneously. These discussions are continuing. The breach by Russia of the INF Treaty¹⁹ and the US government’s intention to withdraw from it will probably have a significant bearing on NATO’s

consideration of the nuclear component and its posture, the relationship between it and the conventional component, including missile defence in particular, and on possibilities for reinvigorating arms-control efforts.

NATO’s deterrence and defence posture is an anchor of stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. This and the variety of its efforts to help project stability to its strategic neighbourhood and to contribute to the fight against terrorism are part of a broader response to the changed and evolving security environment. NATO’s impact is further enhanced through effective coordination and cooperation with partners and other international organisations, particularly the EU. NATO-EU cooperation is essential for responding to hybrid threats, ensuring effective cyber defence, maritime security, projecting stability to Europe’s neighbourhood, developing capabilities and, as already mentioned, improving military mobility. NATO and the EU have turned the corner in respect of their relationship and cooperation. In the last three years, the relationship has advanced more than in the previous two decades and has reached an unprecedented level because both organisations were shaken by the changed security environment and both have adapted.²⁰

In the past two to three years, the EU has built up significant momentum in further developing its Common Security and Defence Policy. While collective defence will remain the sole responsibility of NATO, stronger European Defence²¹ will contribute to the defence of Europe. Essentially, this is also about intra-European and transatlantic burden-sharing. NATO has welcomed EU efforts to strengthen European Defence, including the enactment of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the establishment by the European Commission of the European Defence Fund to invest in improving military capabilities of EU

¹⁷ This expression stands for offensive cyber operations.

¹⁸ See Brussels Summit Declaration, paragraph 20.

¹⁹ The US-Russia Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) commits both parties not to possess, produce, or flight-test a ground launched cruise missile (GLCM) with a range capability of 500–5,500 km, or to produce launchers of such missiles.

²⁰ In the margins of the Brussels Summit, NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and the presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, Tusk and Juncker, signed a new Joint Declaration on NATO-EU cooperation, demonstrating their desire to further deepen cooperation, based on a range of areas of enhanced cooperation and 74 concrete projects.

²¹ European Defence essentially concerns improving the protection of the EU’s borders, improving CSDP crisis response, and improving the capabilities of EU Member States.

nations, foster multinational cooperation, reduce duplication of weapon systems and overcome fragmentation. Since 22 EU Member States also belong to NATO²² and have only one set of forces and one defence budget each, it is essential that military capabilities developed within the framework of the EU and with its financial support are also available to NATO—and vice versa. Staff in the EU and NATO work closely together to ensure that capability development in the two organisations is fully complementary and the respective priorities are coherent. But EU Member States now need to deliver. Moreover, it is essential to ensure full transparency of decision-making in both organisations as well as the full involvement of non-EU Allies—Albania, Canada, Norway, Montenegro, Turkey, the US, and soon the United Kingdom—as they all play an essential (in the case of the US, indispensable), role in European security. In this respect, there is room for improvement.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Brussels summit decisions described above will determine NATO's development and the strengthening of its posture and capabilities for years to come. They will foster the shift in strategic mindset in the Alliance. For many years, it focused on out-of-area crises and discretionary crisis-response operations with a long preparation time. Now, deterrence and defence—adapted to the political reality *de nos jours* and the geostrategic circumstances of today and tomorrow—and the possibility of non-discretionary Article 5 collective defence operations at short notice, are again at the heart of Alliance strategic thinking. Deterrence has been and continues to be the core of NATO's purpose and mission as the fundamental means of preventing conflict,

protecting Allies' territories and populations, and maintaining the Alliance's freedom of decision and action at any time.

Implementation of the decisions will demonstrate NATO's indispensable role and continuing relevance. The German defence minister, Ursula von der Leyen, commented that, of the four NATO summits she had attended, none had produced as many substantial decisions as the one in Brussels. And Wolfgang Ischinger, chairman of the Munich Security Conference, opined that NATO is in its best shape for years.²³ In order to keep this positive momentum, the culture of readiness and responsiveness should be reinvigorated and guide the Alliance's adaptation, its strategy, planning, structures, procedures and capability development.

Deterrence and defence, and the possibility of non-discretionary Article 5 collective defence operations at short notice, are again at the heart of Alliance strategic thinking

Strengthening Allies' forces and capabilities; developing heavier and more high-end forces at higher readiness, fully manned, fully equipped and combat ready; enhanced training and exercises; military mobility; strengthening cyber defence; and sustaining current crisis-management operations and other efforts to project stability: all these requirements necessitate much more resources for defence than in the past, and by all Allies equitably. The implementation of the Defence Investment Pledge substantiates NATO's deterrence and defence posture as well as its efforts to help project stability. Fair burden-sharing among Allies, not only across the Atlantic but also within Europe, is essential for Alliance solidarity and cohesion. It is crucial to NATO's credibility.

²² 21 after Brexit. Moreover, five EU Member States (Austria, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden) are currently close partners of NATO and associated with it through, inter alia, a tailored capability development process, the Planning and Review Process (PARP), in which all but Malta participate. In view of the potential Russian military threat, Finland and Sweden in particular are linked to NATO and a number of Allies in terms of a common threat assessment in the Baltic region, discussion on deterrence and defence matters, and exercises.

²³ Thorsten Jungholt, "[Wolfgang Ischinger: 'Mir sitzt die Angst in den Knochen'](#)", *Die Welt*, 7 July 2018.

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