

**The Netherlands and NATO's New Strategic Concept:
Observations and Policy Recommendations
from
The Netherlands Atlantic Association**

Executive Summary

This report and its recommendations are presented by the Netherlands Atlantic Association as a contribution to the debate on preparation of a new strategic concept for NATO, as mandated by NATO leaders at the alliance's 60th anniversary summit in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany on April 3-4, 2009.

The report's conclusions and recommendations for the Government of the Netherlands, addressing broad principles rather than detailed proposals, are summarized in the following paragraphs:

The Netherlands and the Process of Preparing a New Strategic Concept

Drafting a new strategic concept will be a difficult task requiring debate on a number of controversial issues. The question now debated of whether the new concept should start from the still-relevant and non-controversial aspects of the 1999 concept, or should begin from a "blank sheet," is important. The Netherlands has its own preferences, interests and priorities in the outcome of this process. The Dutch public, political class and government will have the opportunity to engage in the exercise and should make certain that perspectives from the Netherlands are clearly heard and taken into account. However, the most important Dutch interest is that the outcome produces a unified, committed transatlantic alliance that remains relevant to the security concerns of its members.

Because of the predictably contentious nature of the process, The Hague should use its substantial credibility and respect for its voice on both sides of the Atlantic to play the role of mediator, facilitator, and honest broker. The Government of the Netherlands should emphasize the importance of capturing the areas of agreement among the allies at the outset, even if the drafters would like to start with a "blank sheet" approach. The process should then move on to building consensual approaches to issues on which there currently are opposing assumptions and approaches. Such an approach, while potentially placing some limits on the advocacy role of the Dutch government, could maximize the influence of the Netherlands over the final outcome.

NATO's Purpose

The new strategic concept will be required to reflect the fact that allied security is potentially jeopardized by Russian behaviors and is currently threatened by a diverse set of sometimes-synergistic challenges that include international terrorism, failed state instability, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber terrorism, international crime, piracy, and energy security. When attacks result from such threats, the allies should consider invoking Article 5 to help shape their response. The response should be a united one tailored to the nature of the attack, and will not necessarily require military action.

NATO is about commitment to the goals of the alliance and compromise to facilitate cooperation. Consistent with the honest broker role suggested above, the Government of the Netherlands should seek a definition of strategic challenges that reflects the concerns of the member states that feel most vulnerable to Russian power and influence as well as those that are most concerned about imminent global challenges, including Afghanistan. Both Article 5 and non-Article 5 challenges need to be taken into account in alliance and member government political and military policies. Such an approach would take into account to the extent possible the interests of all member states by balancing the priorities and resources dedicated to the wide range of potential and current threats facing the alliance. In all cases, the Government of the Netherlands should put a high priority on finding ways to maintain alliance cohesion and solidarity of purpose.

NATO's Tasks

The threats and challenges facing the NATO nations are numerous and complex. The response calls for high quality and flexible military forces, but also for sophisticated political judgments and actions. The quality of political judgment and initiative can either increase or diminish the demand for military responses. Without appeasing threats to the security of the alliance, the allies have to find as many ways as possible to limit threats through active diplomacy and other non-military instruments of national influence. However, the history of international relations reveals that diplomacy is much more effective when it is fully supported by credible military options.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge to the alliance is the fact that, in Afghanistan, the burdens and risks have not been shared equally among the allies. Some allies, including the Netherlands, have put their troops in harm's way to be able to deal directly with the threat from al Qaeda and Taliban forces. Others, led by Germany, have limited their involvement to important but less dangerous tasks and regions. The nationally-imposed caveats on the use of German forces and those of some other allies have reduced the effectiveness of the ISAF and produced a serious casualty differential between allies. This is one of many divisions that cuts not just across the Atlantic but also divides European states. The simple fact is that neither the alliance nor the process of European integration will thrive in the future if such inequitable sharing of burdens and risks continues.

The Government of the Netherlands should advocate striking a balance in the new strategic concept between creative diplomacy, for example in relations with Russia, as well as in dealing with international terrorism, and credible policies of deterrence and defense efforts. It should also be a strong proponent of the concept of an alliance in which burdens and risks are shared equitably among the Europe allies as well as between Europe and North America.

In addition to keeping up its own alliance commitments, the Government of the Netherlands should exert "peer pressure" on other allied governments to ensure that current gaps in capabilities and risk-taking are mitigated in the future.

NATO's Transformation

There is no doubt that NATO's military forces still require substantial transformation at all levels. As suggested in The Hague discussions, the main obstacle is the lack of political will in national capitals to devote the priority and resources to the necessary upgrading and re-orientation of military forces.

Over the past 20 years, a number of factors produced this lack of will, including the desire to realize the post-Cold War peace dividend, the constraints imposed on discretionary spending, notably including defense, by the deficit spending limits required by European Union monetary union, and differences with the United States over the best mix of hard and soft power to deal with international security challenges. Today, even though the European allies no longer have the "Bush alibi" for limiting their defense efforts, one can add the global economic downturn to the list of factors that will make political leaders unwilling and, in some cases, unable to support even current levels of defense spending. Only a handful of NATO's members currently make the informal alliance goal of spending at least two percent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defense. The estimated average for NATO Europe in 2008 was 1.7 percent of GDP; the Netherlands came in at 1.4 percent.

This suggests that, in order to maintain capable and relevant military forces, NATO nations will have to be particularly creative and efficient. Perhaps the most important requirement will be for nations to establish clear spending priorities, and to make those priorities consistent with transformation requirements.

Another obvious conclusion is one that has been around for at least three decades: small and mid-size NATO allies need to look more closely at developing cooperative military programs and units with other allies. The 2002 Prague Capabilities Commitment pointed in the right direction, and the NATO-EU Capability Group helps put the necessary focus on the fact that NATO and EU programs should move along the same axis. Some progress has been made in this area, witness the European Expeditionary Air Wing, in which The Netherlands is a key participant. But stronger political will is required to make more progress.

There is still strong resistance in most NATO nations to giving up elements of force structure that may no longer make strategic sense. This is somewhat inconsistent with the fact that countries already depend to varying degrees on their EU and NATO partners for ultimate assurance of their well-being, but traditions die hard. The PCC walked tenderly around the question of task specialization and multi-national programs, but current economic conditions suggest that new efforts may have to be considered in this area. Most importantly, when countries face financial circumstances in which they may be forced to abandon defense programs, units or missions, they should do so as part of a plan developed in cooperation with allies rather than unilaterally.

The Government of the Netherlands should use its position as a small country that is serious about defense to elevate the priority given to bilateral and multinational cooperation among NATO and EU states to make defense expenditures more effective and productive of defense capabilities. The Hague could propose that, in the process of developing a new strategic

concept, the allies should assemble a new catalogue of possible cooperation projects among small and medium-sized allies that could potentially produce better defense efforts at reduced costs.

The Need for a Comprehensive Approach to Security

While everyone concerned agrees that contemporary security challenges cannot be met with military responses alone, nobody has found the silver bullet for a “comprehensive approach.” The dilemma deepens when one considers that effective performance by non-military operations (intergovernmental or NGO) in a place like Afghanistan or other areas of conflict rely on a degree of protection from NATO, the United States, or some other friendly entity.

The United Nations some day may provide an answer to this problem, depending on the political evolution of two key Security Council members: Russia and China. Today, however, it appears that the best chance for effective coordination would be among the members of NATO and the European Union, in spite of the fact that there are well-documented obstacles to making that connection effective.

The Government of the Netherlands should propose the convening of a summit meeting among all NATO and EU member states at which, among other things, the states would agree to establish a Euro-Atlantic Comprehensive Approach Coordinating Group as part of the NATO/EU Strategic Partnership. The Group would be responsible for coordinating the military and non-military contributions of NATO and EU members to conflict and conflict prevention operations, and for developing effective working relations in those situations with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the OSCE, and with non-governmental organizations.

NATO's Relations with the European Union

For the next period of history, the European Union will neither be transformed into a United States of Europe nor fall apart at the seams. It will continue to evolve toward a “*United Europe of States*,” rather than a “*United States of Europe*.” Someday, the members of the European Union may decide to create a unitary political state but, until that day, the member states will retain ultimate control over their foreign and defense policies. The process of European integration has not necessarily reached its end-state. But, barring some transformative crisis or war, the process seems to have reached the point where further progress will be made in slow and small steps, rather than rapid and large ones.

The return of France to full participation in the alliance helps make the point that European integration and transatlantic cooperation can and should be compatible and mutually reinforcing. This is the only way that the allies can deal with the near-term challenges posed by Afghanistan and the longer term challenges of international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the task of nurturing stable and cooperative relations with Russia, China and other important players in the international system.

The European Union is already an important participant in a multi-player world. A continuing trend back toward a position of a “pillar” in the transatlantic relationship and away from “polar” pretensions would augur well for both the United States and Europe.

The Government of the Netherlands, as a member in good standing of both NATO and the European Union, should be a leading proponent of overcoming the issues that block much-needed cooperation between NATO and the European Union. As part of the process leading up to agreement on a new strategic concept, and in the context of the NATO/EU summit suggested above, The Hague should seek agreement on a joint NATO/EU declaration on the need for an interdependent and mutually-reinforcing relationship between European integration and transatlantic cooperation.

Membership, Partnerships and Relations with Russia

NATO faces a true dilemma: cooperation with Russia is a key element of future European and international peace; but the values for which NATO stands – democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law – and the interest of the members in defending their security as well as these values – must remain at the heart of the alliance’s purpose.

The fact that the allies have promised that “one day” Ukraine and Georgia will become NATO members limits the alliance’s room for maneuver. However, it is a commitment that, depending on the decisions made by those countries and their preparedness for membership, will have to be sustained in alliance proclamations. Neither country today meets the requirements for membership as laid down in the 1995 NATO Enlargement Study.

On the issue of opening membership to like-minded democracies from other regions of the world, the split in the alliance on this question suggests that such states should, at least in the near term, be offered meaningful “global partnerships” rather than full membership. This could involve, as some have recommended, creating a “Global Partnership Council” bringing together representatives of NATO countries and “like-minded” states beyond the North American, European and Mediterranean regions to discuss operations in which those countries participate as well as future security objectives and concerns. The new Global Partnership Council could replace the current Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC).

The Government of the Netherlands should be a strong proponent of NATO’s open door policy, which means that qualified states wishing to join the alliance should receive positive consideration. The Government should nonetheless be clear that joining the alliance is not a right, but a privilege and obligation, and the requirements in the 1995 Enlargement Study should be followed religiously. The Hague should also make it clear that current members of the European Union that are not NATO members would be welcome in the alliance, and that global partnerships should be developed with states from other regions that make contributions to NATO missions and wish to have a stronger association with the alliance. Creation of a Global Partnership Council could serve as an effective compromise between those who would like to extend membership to like-minded states and those who oppose stretching NATO membership so far from the original area.

At the same time, The Hague should encourage the alliance to explore every possible angle for cooperation with Russia. Russia and NATO share a number of interests, including the necessity of dealing effectively with threats posed by international terrorism. The alliance, however, should not allow Russia's definitions of its security interests to dominate alliance decision-making. The Dutch government should insist that NATO be guided by the values that are the foundation both for Dutch democracy and for the transatlantic alliance.

Arms Control Issues

While forward-deployed nuclear warheads may become an issue in drafting the new strategic concept, the primary arms control concern for NATO today is the threat of additional proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology. The nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) has proven inadequate to the task of preventing proliferation. The fact is that proliferation occurs when countries decide that their security interests require, or would benefit from, becoming nuclear weapons states. The most important avenue to non-proliferation therefore is conflict resolution and security assurances, while technical controls of the NPT at least complicate and slow down the proliferation process.

The questions of nuclear weapons in Europe, deployment of an anti-missile system on European territory, and endorsement of a "global zero" could become serious complications in preparation of the new strategic concept. Technical issues, for example whether or not the missile defense system would work as planned, will be important. However, the political aspects would likely be more significant. Those countries that fear Russia the most place a high value on such symbols of the commitment to their defense.

The political reality is that the strategic concept will be required to include an arms control element to balance the inevitable calls for defense improvements. What the content of the arms control element should include, however, is a more difficult question.

The Government of the Netherlands should pursue strong provisions in the new strategic concept regarding non-proliferation, including efforts to negotiate settlement of regional disputes that provide incentives for proliferation.

As for the nuclear weapons deployed forward in Europe, the Netherlands faces its own dilemma in that hosting American nuclear warheads under dual-key arrangements gives Holland a seat at the NATO nuclear table, while at the same time absorbing funds that might better be used improving Dutch non-nuclear capabilities.

Under the circumstances, however, the Government of the Netherlands probably should not be out in front on this issue, but should, as suggested earlier, seek to be an honest broker on the issue to help find approaches that will preserve alliance unity on a basis that honors the interests of all NATO members.

Concluding Observations

Preparation of a new strategic concept is both a challenge and an opportunity for the alliance and the Government of the Netherlands. It will be important for the new concept to start from the very strong foundation provided by shared values and interests and the many areas of policy on which there is alliance consensus. The process will then be required to reflect on all that has changed since the 1999 concept was prepared, and to ensure that the changes are captured in the new document. To the extent that the exercise can move the alliance consensus forward, it must be done in a way that accommodates the diverse interests of all alliance members.

This suggests that NATO's purpose must continue to serve the values and interests of its members, as specified in the North Atlantic Treaty. Today, this means that NATO's strategic vision must respond to the territorial defense needs of its members but must also serve on a more global level to defend against threats to the security interests of its members even when the roots of those challenges are found far from Europe.

The opportunity in this exercise, and one that the Government of the Netherlands should grasp enthusiastically, is to present the true face of this alliance to the publics and parliaments in NATO countries as well as to the world, which now is much more aware of the alliance's problems and potential. The public diplomacy function of the new concept could therefore be just as important as the strategic guidance that it provides for the alliance's future.

The aim should be to win as many people and countries as possible over to the perspective that the Euro-Atlantic alliance is a force for good both in the Euro-Atlantic area and internationally. Most importantly, new generations of voters and leaders in NATO countries are at a growing distance from the critical role played by transatlantic cooperation for their nation's security and well-being following the Second World War. In this regard, the Government of the Netherlands should advocate enhancing NATO-government as well as alliance-wide programs intended to inform successor generations in NATO countries of the continuing benefits of the transatlantic alliance and Euro-Atlantic cooperation more generally.

The Netherlands and NATO's New Strategic Concept: Observations and Policy Recommendations

Introduction

The Netherlands Atlantic Association, in cooperation with the Atlantic Treaty Association, convened an international group of experts on NATO strategy and -European relations in The Hague on May 27-28, 2009 to discuss the challenges posed by the task of preparing a new strategic concept for the alliance. Their deliberations were joined by a number of experts and former defense and foreign policy officials from the Netherlands.

The NATO heads of state and government mandated preparation of a new concept when they met on April 3-4, 2009, in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany to celebrate NATO's 60th anniversary. The current revision of the concept was agreed at a summit meeting in Washington on the alliance's 50th anniversary in 1999. The Hague meeting was designed to produce contributions to the debates and discussions that will be held in the coming months to help shape a new concept.

This report was prepared under the auspices and responsibility of the Netherlands Atlantic Association and drafted by the meeting's moderator and rapporteur, Stanley R. Sloan. The report was stimulated by the Hague discussions, but it goes beyond the excellent papers, presentations and discussions from the sessions to suggest some tentative conclusions, observations and policy recommendations for consideration by the Government of the Netherlands. This report does not represent a consensus of participants in The Hague conference, nor does it necessarily reflect the official view of the Atlantic Association, but it does attempt to reflect areas of important intra-European and transatlantic divisions that emerged in the discussions as well as areas where European and transatlantic consensus might be found.

The report is intended to stimulate further discussion and suggestions from the broader Dutch political leadership and foreign and security policy community. It concentrates on the broad political/strategic issues on which the Government of the Netherlands will be required to act, but does not deal in a comprehensive way with important technical details of military strategy and forces that governments will nonetheless be required to settle as part of the strategic concept exercise.

Structure of the Discussions

The Hague discussions took place over two days and covered a range of topics likely to have implications for preparation of the new concept.¹ The topics covered included: the purpose and tasks of NATO; political, military and organizational transformation of the alliance; a comprehensive international approach to security challenges; partnerships, enlargement, and relations with Russia; and arms control issues.

¹ The conference presentations have been published in book form (*NATO's New Strategic Concept: Moving Beyond the Status Quo?*), available from the Netherlands Atlantic Association at <http://www.atlcom.nl/english/>.

The keynote address for the conference was delivered by Ambassador Herman Schaper, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to NATO, who provided a base-line perspective on the critical issues and relationships that will influence preparation of a new strategic concept as seen from his post at NATO Headquarters. Each topic was initiated by two brief presentations by international experts followed by generous time for debate and discussion.

What is the Purpose of a Strategic Concept?

From the beginning, the NATO allies have produced an agreed document that outlines the security threats and dangers facing the alliance and lays out how the allies intend to shape political and military responses to those challenges. Since the end of the Cold War, strategic concepts have served not only as guides for allied policies and programs but also as a way of communicating NATO's purpose to audiences in member states and around the world.

NATO's first strategic concept, prepared in 1949-50, was titled "The Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Area" (DC 6/1).² In these early days of the Cold War, the concept was kept secret even though its broad outlines were reflected in alliance policies, proclamations and programs. In 1957, at the urging of the United States, NATO's next strategic concept (MC 14/2)³ accepted the concept of "massive retaliation," which suggested that the allies would respond to aggression against any member of the alliance with all means necessary, including nuclear weapons. It was intended to communicate to the Soviet Union that aggression would risk a response employing American strategic nuclear weapons delivered on Soviet territory.

When the threat of massive retaliation was progressively undermined by the development of extensive Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities, the United States lobbied for a new strategy, meeting serious European resistance to such a change. After many years of discussion and negotiation, the allies in 1967 adopted the strategy of "flexible response" (MC 14/3). As the name suggests, the new strategy pledged that NATO nations would use all means at their disposal to repel an attack and would develop the capacity to escalate to whatever level of force – conventional or nuclear – might be necessary to terminate a conflict on terms favorable to the alliance. Adoption of this strategy acknowledged that massive retaliation lacked serious credibility because the Soviet Union could respond with nuclear strikes on US territory. Once again, details of the strategy were classified, even though the broad terms were publicly-known.

The 1967 strategy was still in place when the Cold War ended. In 1991, the allies adopted a new strategy that reflected the dramatic changes that had come about in the international political situation and acknowledged serious uncertainty concerning the nature of future threats (C-M(91)88).⁴ The idea of preserving the capability for flexible responses to military challenges remained in the 1991 concept, but the political context was dramatically

² The first concept was approved based on a document from the alliance Defense Committee (DC).

³ MC stands for the NATO Military Committee, within which the 1957 and 1967 strategies were produced.

⁴ The 1991 concept was a document prepared for and approved by the North Atlantic Council, whose bureaucratic numbering system appears on the concept. The fact that the Council had the main responsibility for preparation of this estimate reflects the fact that most of the changes that were required addressed political rather than technical military issues.

different and, for the first time, the document was made public. The military demands on the new strategy were substantially reduced from Cold War requirements.

After NATO had become an important instrument for dealing with the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, the allies prepared an updated version of the 1991 concept for approval at the 50th anniversary summit in Washington in April 1999 (NAC-S(99/65)).⁵ That document was more confident that political/military cooperation in NATO would be necessary to deal with a variety of challenges to the security of the allies. But it reflected serious differences among the allies about when and how the alliance would be used in the future.

At the time the concept was drafted, the allies were conducting military operations against Serbia to force a Serbian withdrawal from Kosovo. The operation was initiated without the benefit of a UN Security Council mandate and was viewed by most European allies as an exception rather than a new rule that would govern future NATO operations. The concept left open large questions about when and where NATO military operations would be considered in the future. The United States wanted the concept to acknowledge the growing global nature of the challenges the alliance faced, while most European states opposed expanding NATO's mission either geographically or functionally.

Why Prepare a New Concept?

Since the preparation of the 1999 concept, much has changed in the world. The 9/11 attacks on the United States put a clear focus on the threat to the security of all NATO allies posed by international terrorism. When the NATO allies agreed in 2003 to take charge of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, they did so in spite of the fact that Afghanistan was nowhere near Europe and that the main enemy was a non-state actor. For the first time in NATO's history, the alliance was responding to a military challenge that arose beyond the European continent. In addition, relations with Russia, which the allies had attempted to move toward a partnership in the 1990s, had become clouded by Russian responses to a variety of NATO policies and the totalitarian tendencies that had crept back into Russian policies. Russian leaders complained in particular that NATO continued to expand and had taken in several additional former Warsaw Pact states and Soviet republics.

Governments and experts have understood for several years that NATO needed a new strategic concept, particularly after the 9/11 attacks and NATO's invocation of its collective defense provision (Article 5) in response, leading eventually to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Then-Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer explicitly called attention to the need for a new statement of alliance purpose and approaches.

The 1999 concept was "updated" in 2006 with agreement on new Comprehensive Political Guidance which, in spite of its name, mainly reflected the judgment that NATO's militaries needed to be better prepared for more demanding crisis response operations. However, many European allies were reluctant to engage in re-writing the concept – an exercise that was so important to the alliance's future – with an administration in Washington that seemed not to put a high value on allies and alliances. Differences within Europe as well as across the Atlantic

⁵ The 1999 update followed the 1991 practice of designating the concept as a North Atlantic Council document.

suggested that an attempt to draft a full-blown concept would be more divisive than constructive. The George W. Bush administration, to its credit, understood the European preference for leaving the task to the next administration. With the advent in 2009 of President Barack Obama and his alliance-friendly foreign and defense policy focus, the stage was clearly set for preparation of a new concept.

The allies in the meantime have been working together in Afghanistan and Kosovo while dealing with a variety of other challenges, including piracy off the coast of Somalia. However, while practical cooperation has continued on these and other security tasks, a number of questions have arisen about the purpose of the alliance, the scope of its missions, the intra-allied balance of risks and responsibilities in Afghanistan, the challenges posed by Russia, membership or partnership for non-European states, relations with other international actors, particularly the European Union (EU) and the United Nations, and the role of arms control. And so, while NATO seems more or less to be working in practice, the “theory” on which alliance cooperation is based is increasingly out of date and reflecting differences among the allies on crucial aspects of alliance policy.

Issues, Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The Netherlands and the Process of Preparing a New Strategic Concept

Discussion

The overriding purpose of a new concept is to gather together as much consensus as possible among the allies to provide a foundation for alliance decisions and activities for the next period of history. It is intended to provide strategic direction for the alliance and also to serve as a way of communicating the purposes and requirements of alliance to allied publics and parliaments. The alliance has always been and will remain a political as well as a military arrangement. Building consensus will require careful attention to military conditions but also to political and economic circumstances. The basis for that consensus is shaped by changes in the international situation, activities of the alliance, and political, economic and military trends within allied states since the previous concept was prepared.

It is inevitable that a “new” strategic concept will carry over elements from the previous concept that the members judge not to have been undermined or invalidated by experience. It is also simply true that the easiest place for drafters of the concept to begin is by identifying “eternal truths” and continuities that can easily be carried forward in a new concept. To the extent that allies disagree on how to interpret the history of the last ten years, they will have problems agreeing on how to prepare for the next.

The allies have adopted an entirely new methodology for preparation of the concept. The draft is to be prepared under the responsibility of the new Secretary General, former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who will be advised and assisted by an international group of experts, or “wise men and women.” The process will reach out to member states, seeking perspectives and ideas, and then will be submitted to the North Atlantic Council for approval.

Conclusions

Drafting a new strategic concept will be a difficult task requiring debate on a number of controversial political and military issues. The question now debated of whether the new concept should start from the still-relevant and non-controversial aspects of the 1999 concept or should begin from a “blank sheet” is important. The Netherlands has its own preferences, interests and priorities in the outcome of this process. The Dutch public, political class and government will have the opportunity to engage in the debate and should make certain that perspectives from the Netherlands are clearly heard and taken into account. However, the most important Dutch interest is that the outcome produces a unified, committed transatlantic alliance that remains relevant to the security concerns and political interests of its members.

Policy Recommendation

Because of the predictably contentious nature of this undertaking, The Hague should use its substantial credibility and respect for its voice on both sides of the Atlantic to play the role of mediator, facilitator, and honest broker. The Government of the Netherlands should emphasize the importance of capturing the areas of agreement among the allies at the outset, even if the drafters would like to start with a “blank sheet” approach. The process should then move on to building consensual approaches to issues on which there currently are opposing assumptions and approaches. Such an approach, while potentially placing some limits on the advocacy role of the Dutch government, could maximize the influence of the Netherlands over the final outcome.

NATO's Purpose

Discussion

There is no question that the new concept will strongly reaffirm the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty's Article 5 – the collective defense provision of the treaty through which all the allies pledge to regard an attack on one ally as an attack on all, and to respond as each decides appropriate through each state's own constitutional provisions. Reaffirmation of this provision is not only likely, but also necessary.

Article 5 is NATO's core commitment, which makes its confirmation essential if the alliance is to continue. However, this task is made easier by the fact that the 1949 Treaty of Washington, at the insistence of the United States, avoids the automaticity that had been built into the 1948 Brussels Treaty. In the Brussels Treaty, the original West European Union members pledged to join fully in defense of an ally that was under attack. The Washington Treaty simply guaranteed that all allies would decide how to support an ally that had been attacked.

Since the end of the Cold War, much of NATO's day-to-day activity has involved non-Article 5 cooperation. The alliance's involvement in the Balkans in the 1990s was not under the Article 5 mandate – no ally had been attacked. However, the Treaty's Article 4 pledged the allies to consult together in the case of threats to their security or territorial integrity. NATO's Balkan missions were clearly non-Article 5 operations that were judged threatening to the

interests and security of NATO member states. NATO did invoke Article 5 following the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, and the initial actions to remove the Taliban government in Afghanistan from power could be regarded as falling under that mandate. However, subsequent NATO involvement, including command of the ISAF, is more in response to the threats to allied security posed by al Qaeda and the possibility that a failed state in Afghanistan that is taken over once again by the Taliban could pose new challenges in the region and ultimately to allied security.

So, the basic difference between Article 5 and non-Article 5 military operations and cooperation is quite clear: Article 5 is relevant in response to an attack on an ally; non-Article 5 (Article 4, in particular) cooperation is under the rubric of responding to or anticipating threats to the interests or territorial integrity of member states.

A key question that confronts allied states in preparing the new concept is whether NATO should continue to focus on global challenges to the security of the allies or should draw back to a more traditional regional focus of defending against potential attacks on member states. Another question addressed by a panelist in The Hague meetings was whether or not Article 5 now should be seen as moving beyond physical attacks on NATO territory. More broadly, some experts have raised the question of whether or not attacks on the cyber systems or economies of member states should be causes for invocation of Article 5. Another question is whether NATO should prepare to be able to pre-empt an imminent physical attack.

The United States for many years has believed that NATO will not be relevant to American security if it does not find a way to shape responses to security challenges beyond the territory of member states. This could include the possibility of pre-empting threats before they can be executed. Some allies have agreed. However, a few allies are reluctant to engage in military operations far from their borders. Others are strongly focused on the perceived challenges to their security posed by a more confident, energy-rich and more authoritarian Russia.

Conclusions

The new strategic concept will be required to reflect the fact that allied security is potentially jeopardized by Russian behaviors and is currently threatened by a diverse set of sometimes-synergistic challenges that include international terrorism, failed state instability, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber terrorism, international crime, piracy, and energy security. When attacks result from such threats, the allies should consider invoking Article 5 to help shape their response. The response should be a united one tailored to the nature of the attack, and will not necessarily require military action.

The differentiation between deterrence of a Russian threat and dealing with non-Article 5 requirements is sometimes overdrawn. The ability of allies to develop forces that are flexible and able to be deployed at some distance from their home bases in a variety of conditions is one that enhances deterrence as well as the ability to deal with imminent threats to the security interests of the member states. Moreover, maintenance of political and strategic solidarity in the alliance strengthens NATO's ability to deal with a full spectrum of challenges.

Policy Recommendation

NATO is about commitment to the goals of the alliance and compromise to facilitate cooperation. Consistent with the honest broker role suggested above, the Government of the Netherlands should seek a definition of strategic challenges that reflects the concerns of the member states that feel most vulnerable to Russian power and influence as well as those that are most concerned about imminent global challenges, including Afghanistan. Both Article 5 and non-Article 5 challenges need to be taken into account in alliance and member government political and military policies. Such an approach would take into account to the extent possible the interests of all member states by balancing the priorities and resources dedicated to the wide range of potential and current threats facing the alliance. In all cases, the Government of the Netherlands should put a high priority on finding ways to maintain alliance cohesion and solidarity of purpose.

NATO's Tasks

Discussion

The enumeration of NATO's tasks flows directly from the definition of its role, discussed above. If one follows the logic of a broad definition of threats and challenges, the new strategic concept will have to project a wide range of policy instruments to deal with them.

The challenges posed by Russia are complex, and are discussed in their own right below. However, the question here is: what must NATO do to deal with potential Russian behaviors that threaten the security or territorial integrity of member states? During The Hague meeting, some participants suggested that NATO countries should think more carefully about how their policies are seen by others, particularly by Russia. Other participants suggested that legitimate Russian interests are taken into account, and have not been threatened by NATO's decisions, for example on enlargement and missile defense. This, of course, begs the question of how to define "legitimate Russian interests."

In spite of NATO's attempts to develop a unique "partnership" with Russia, Russian leaders have recently asserted that they perceive as threatening NATO's membership policies as well as plans to deploy in Central Europe a missile defense system against future Iranian missiles aimed at American or European targets.

In 2009, Russian conventional military forces do not pose an imminent threat of large-scale attack against any NATO member. However, Russia's nuclear forces remain both potentially threatening and a source of leverage in its relations with other states, including NATO members. One of NATO's key tasks is to try to ensure that Russia does not pose such a threat in the future. The political reaffirmation of Article 5, suggested above, is an important part of the answer. Alliance solidarity is another key element. The United States, Canada and the European members of the alliance must make it clear that they will continue to regard an attack on any NATO member as an attack on all. This does not require building up forces along alliance borders with Russia. Under current circumstances, this would be provocative and

unnecessary. It would be called for only in the case of a future Russian buildup of forces facing NATO countries.

Today, the most important responses to challenges from Russia are largely political. NATO will have to continue to hold out the hand of cooperation, even when it is not taken by Russia. NATO will have to continue to look for areas of international security policy where Russia and NATO countries can work together to prevent or terminate conflicts.

At the same time, NATO as well as NATO and EU member states should continue to let Russia know that its desire to be seen as an international partner will be affected by its policies in the area of energy supply, cyber attacks, and human rights at home. NATO nations will also have to make clear their perspective that no state deserves or should attempt to impose zones of control or influence on other sovereign states.

The task of dealing with Russia is a complex and important one, but the rest of the list of security challenges is equally daunting. The catalogue of missions for NATO is long and seemingly growing: command of the ISAF in Afghanistan, continued security presence in Kosovo, interdiction of piracy off the Somalia coast, and more. Here, the tasks call for more effective military responses and capabilities, as well as better non-military actions to deal with challenges of international terrorism and failed or defeated states.

Since the end of the Cold War, it has been increasingly clear that the security of the Euro-Atlantic nations would be challenged in the future by sources well beyond European borders. The United States, Britain and France even during the Cold War had a force projection mentality: partly as a result of geography, particularly for the United States, given its commitment to European defense and its involvement in Asia; and partly due to history, as in the case of France and Great Britain. Most European countries, however, notably Germany, concentrated almost exclusively on border defense – a logical and necessary focus during the Cold War.

In the 1990s, as most countries breathed a sigh of relief, cut defense spending and reduced military capabilities, the need grew for military forces that could travel some distance from national bases to operate in a wide variety of climatic and topographic conditions. Allied navies, having operated on a more global scale, were quite well-prepared to adapt to the new circumstances. Many allied air forces proved relatively flexible. However, most allied armies were far from adequate to make meaningful contributions in conflict environments.

Conclusions

The task for NATO nations today is to attempt to raise, train, equip and deploy military forces that have the capability and flexibility to operate in the new global circumstances. In addition to the need for equipment that provides better force protection and mobility, troops of NATO states need more effective training focused on the societies and conditions in which they will be operating. They will benefit from pre-deployment preparation that is based on “lessons learned” from the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan of fighting opposing forces that have intimate local knowledge and support from some elements of the population.

The task of NATO, as an organization, is to provide the force goals, standards, structures and training that will facilitate the operation of national forces in combined operations. Nothing that is said in the strategic concept or proclaimed by other NATO documents will produce the forces required for the new and demanding missions. This is a task that depends on member governments keeping their commitments and making the efforts suggested by NATO-agreed goals. This task not been well performed to date and undoubtedly will suffer more setbacks in a depressed international economic environment.

The threats and challenges facing the NATO nations are numerous and complex. The response calls for high quality and flexible military forces, but also for sophisticated political judgments and actions. The quality of political judgment and initiative can either increase or diminish the demand for military responses. Without appeasing threats to the security of the alliance, the allies have to find as many ways as possible to limit threats through active diplomacy and other non-military instruments of national influence. However, the history of international relations reveals that diplomacy is much more effective when it is fully supported by credible military options.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge to the alliance is the fact that, in Afghanistan, the burdens and risks have not been shared equally among the allies. Some allies, including the Netherlands, have put their troops in harm's way to be able to deal directly with the threat from al Qaeda and Taliban forces. Others, led by Germany, have limited their involvement to important but less dangerous tasks and regions. The caveats on the use of German forces and those of some other allies have reduced the effectiveness of the ISAF and produced a serious casualty differential between allies. This is one of many divisions that cuts not just across the Atlantic but also divides European states. The simple fact is that neither the alliance nor the process of European integration will thrive in the future if such inequitable sharing of burdens and risks continues.

Policy Recommendation

The Government of the Netherlands should advocate striking a balance in the new strategic concept between creative diplomacy, for example in relations with Russia, as well as in dealing with international terrorism, and credible policies of deterrence and defense efforts. It should also be a strong proponent of the concept of an alliance in which burdens and risks are shared equitably among the Europe allies as well as between Europe and North America.

In addition to keeping up its own alliance commitments, the Government of the Netherlands should exert "peer pressure" on other allied governments to ensure that current gaps in capabilities and risk-taking are mitigated in the future.

NATO's Transformation

Discussion

Given the nature of the challenges NATO has faced since the end of the Cold War, it is not surprising that the topic of how to “transform” the alliance has come front and center in recent years. The concept was developed originally with the thought that NATO militaries needed to transform the contingency plans, capabilities, equipment, and training to move away from border defense and toward force projection. The NATO nations even dedicated a major command to the transformation task when, in 2002, they converted the Allied Command Atlantic in Norfolk, Virginia to the Allied Command Transformation (ACT).

The ACT describes itself as “NATO's leading agent for change; enabling, facilitating and advocating continuous improvement of military capabilities to enhance the military interoperability, relevance and effectiveness of the Alliance.” In a vacuum, this might have been a spectacular undertaking to occupy NATO and member state militaries for many years. However, as has been said many times, “life is what’s happening when you are doing other things.” In the real world, NATO military interventions in the Balkans and then in Afghanistan demonstrated the need for transformation and, at the same time, made it more difficult.

One panelist in The Hague conference suggested that operations had killed transformation. The suggestion was that the real world had intruded on NATO’s classroom exercise to make it almost academic. Perhaps the response to this judgment is that NATO must use its real world experiences as the main drivers for transformation, rather than looking at them as getting in the way. The fact is that the experience in Iraq, as troubled as it was, has been a transformational experience for the United States military. US forces encountered serious asymmetric responses from Iraqi and al Qaeda fighters, particularly the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) against allied troops and armored vehicles. The threat forced changes not only in tactics but also in equipment, leading to a new generation of armored vehicles that are more resistant to IED attacks.

Much of the discussion of the failures and successes of transformation revolve around the story of the NATO Response Force (NRF). The concept of such a force was developed in think tank studies, and originally was supposed to bring together highly-capable American forces with forces from European allied militaries. The goal was to produce a force with high-tech systems that would be able to respond quickly to contingencies before other forces could be mustered. In addition, it was thought that such an integrated NATO force would help spread American know-how and technological sophistication to allied militaries.

When the allies approved the NRF concept in 2002, it more or less followed the plan that had been developed by experts, but did not include extensive US contributions to the force, in part because Afghanistan and Iraq were already American preoccupations. From the perspective of the George W. Bush administration, the NRF became a challenge to the European allies to transform their forces to make them more relevant to contemporary security threats and responses.

Several participants in The Hague discussions expressed concern that the NRF had become more of a distraction than a help to the alliance’s ability to perform its missions by

holding back for NRF purposes forces that were desperately needed in Afghanistan. A NATO ACT senior officer responded that the forces assigned were not “locked up in a drawer,” and could be used as necessary by the states from which they originated. The main problem for the effectiveness of the NRF and the success of transformation, it was suggested, is the absence of sufficient political will.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that NATO’s military forces still require substantial transformation at all levels. As suggested in The Hague discussions, the main obstacle is the lack of political will in national capitols to devote the priority and resources to the necessary upgrading and re-orientation of military forces.

Over the past 20 years, a number of factors produced this lack of will, including the desire to realize the post-Cold War peace dividend, the constraints imposed on discretionary spending, notably including defense, by the deficit spending limits imposed by European Union monetary union, and differences with the United States over the best mix of hard and soft power to deal with international security challenges. Today, even though the allies no longer have the “Bush alibi” for limiting their defense efforts, one can add the global economic downturn to the list of factors that will make political leaders unwilling and, in some cases, unable to support even current levels of defense spending. Only a handful of NATO’s members currently make the informal alliance goal of spending at least two percent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defense. The estimated average for NATO Europe in 2008 was 1.7 percent of GDP; the Netherlands came in at 1.4 percent.

This suggests that, in order to maintain capable and relevant military forces, NATO nations will have to be particularly creative and efficient. Perhaps the most important requirement, as one panelist argued, will be for nations to establish clear spending priorities, and to make those priorities consistent with transformation requirements.

Another obvious conclusion is one that has been around for at least three decades: small and mid-size NATO allies need to look more closely at developing cooperative military programs and units with other allies. The 2002 Prague Capabilities Commitment pointed in the right direction, and the NATO-EU Capability Group helps put the necessary focus on the fact that NATO and EU programs should move along the same axis. Some progress has been made in this area, witness the European Expeditionary Air Wing, in which The Netherlands is a key participant. But stronger political will is required to make more progress.

There is still strong resistance in most NATO nations to giving up elements of force structure that may no longer make strategic sense. This is somewhat inconsistent with the fact that countries already depend to varying degrees on their EU and NATO partners for ultimate assurance of their well-being, but traditions die hard. The PCC walked tenderly around the question of task specialization and multi-national programs, but current economic conditions suggest that new efforts may have to be considered in this area. Most importantly, when countries face financial circumstances in which they may be forced to abandon defense

programs, units or missions, they should do so as part of a plan developed in cooperation with allies rather than unilaterally.

Policy Recommendation

The Government of the Netherlands should use its position as a small country that is serious about defense to elevate the priority given to bilateral and multinational cooperation among NATO and EU states to make defense expenditures more effective and productive of defense capabilities. The Hague could propose that, in the process of developing a new strategic concept, the allies should assemble a new catalogue of possible cooperation projects among small and medium-sized allies that could potentially produce better defense efforts at reduced costs.

The Need for a Comprehensive Approach to Security

Discussion

As NATO moved beyond collective defense and into the world of crisis management – first in the Balkans and now in Afghanistan – the allies discovered that the alliance did not have all the assets required to deal with complex political, economic and social realities in defeated or failed states. This is not to say that NATO member states did not have sufficient assets or competence, but rather that NATO, as an organization, had neither the mandate nor the organizational means to deal on its own with the diverse challenges posed by terrorist threats and failed or defeated states.

The expertise and organization to deal with these non-military aspects of security rested in a great variety of institutions. The United Nations, for one, has a wide array of institutional structures that can respond to the needs of societies and states that are being re-constructed or even re-constituted. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been filling a number of gaps in this field, but its area of operations does not extend beyond the organization's membership. Many diverse and capable non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are effective in dealing with specific needs, whether they be humanitarian assistance, development, education, or a variety of other fields. The European Union, which includes many NATO members, has proven itself to be able to call on a wide variety of non-military tools that can be helpful in dealing with turbulent conditions in Europe or beyond.

The challenge, identified specifically during The Hague discussions, is the absence of any coordinated approach to the use of these institutions and resources. NATO has acknowledged the need for better coordination, and has in recent ministerial and summit declarations articulated the need for a “comprehensive approach” to security. The Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration reiterated that “Experience in the Balkans and Afghanistan demonstrates that today’s security challenges require a comprehensive approach by the international community, combining civil and military measures and coordination.” This assertion was followed by statements about progress made in this regard in coordination with the United Nations and the European Union.

However, NATO does not seek the role of “coordinator” of a comprehensive approach, nor would other organizations want the alliance to take on such a leadership role. NATO is perceived by key players at the United Nations as a US-dominated organization, and they therefore do not want UN programs subordinated to NATO. In some respects, the same dynamic applies in the European Union, where some officials have been reluctant to expand the non-military role of the EU in Afghanistan – where help is sorely needed – because they do not want the EU to be working under a dominant NATO and US role. Non-governmental organizations largely believe that their effectiveness is enhanced by the absence of any hierarchical relationships with governments or intergovernmental organizations. These attitudes may have been mitigated to some extent by the end of the George W. Bush administration and the advent of the Obama presidency, but they by no means have disappeared completely.

On the other hand, NATO would not want its military programs to fall under the guidance of either the United Nations or the European Union. The difficult experience with an ineffectual UN in the Balkans in the 1990s is still a vivid memory for NATO members. The United States and other NATO members would object to any dominant EU role that affected NATO’s missions.

Conclusions

While everyone concerned agrees that contemporary security challenges cannot be met with military responses alone, nobody has found the silver bullet for a “comprehensive approach.” The dilemma deepens when one considers that effective performance by non-military operations (intergovernmental or NGO) in a place like Afghanistan or other areas of conflict rely on a degree of protection from NATO, the United States, or some other friendly entity. This frequently means that non-military assistance does not appear when needed, or is eventually chased off by violence against the providers (as happened dramatically with the United Nations in Iraq).

The United Nations some day may provide an answer to this problem, depending on the political evolution of two key Security Council members: Russia and China. Today, however, it appears that the best chance for effective coordination would be among the members of NATO and the European Union, in spite of the fact that there are well-documented obstacles to making that connection effective.

Policy Recommendation

The Government of the Netherlands should propose the convening of a summit meeting among all NATO and EU member states at which, among other things, the states would agree to establish a Euro-Atlantic Comprehensive Approach Coordinating Group as part of the NATO/EU Strategic Partnership. The Group would be responsible for coordinating the military and non-military contributions of NATO and EU members to conflict and conflict prevention operations, and for developing effective working relations in those situations with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the OSCE, and with non-governmental organizations.

NATO's Relations with the European Union

Discussion

The recommendation for creation of a Euro-Atlantic Comprehensive Approach Coordinating Group clearly would require closer cooperation and mutual trust between the EU and NATO than has been seen in recent years. From the beginning of the alliance, one of the greatest challenges to effective transatlantic cooperation has been the tension between Eurocentric and Atlanticist perspectives on the transatlantic relationship. The fact that NATO and the European Union still do not have an effective working relationship is one of the greatest failures, indeed tragedies, of transatlantic relations.

In recent years, the most fundamental challenge to management of the NATO-EU relationship has been the combination of a United States drifting toward unilateralism and the European temptation to create an "autonomous" defense policy. Such natural but ominous tendencies could have fed on one another, creating circumstances that might have led to an existential crisis for the alliance. Now, the Obama administration's positive attitude toward allies and alliances combined with France's return to NATO's integrated military command structure could reinforce the tendency to see the process of European defense cooperation as building a pillar that supports European integration and transatlantic security rather than a pole that provokes tension and division within Europe and across the Atlantic.

By some accounts, the EU is second only to the United States in measures of deployable soft and hard power. The EU countries have impressive resources that they can call on to affect international affairs: well-trained and capable diplomats, development assistance expertise and resources, police training capabilities, military units prepared to take on relatively modest missions on short notice, and a senior official who acts like the EU's foreign minister, even if the position is not endowed with significant independent decision-making powers.

The unilateralist character of US foreign and defense policy under George W. Bush led some Europeans to favor using integration in the European Union to "balance" US power in the international system. This multi-polar temptation, like the US unilateral temptation, threatened trans-Atlantic cooperation and therefore international stability.

The failure of the EU Constitution to win approval in France and The Netherlands undermined the argument that Europe could effectively balance US power, and strengthened the case for building Europe in parallel with maintenance of a cooperative transatlantic relationship – a position favored by several EU members led by the UK and many of Europe's new democracies.

The "Reform Treaty" negotiated in Berlin in June 2007 – a more modest version of the EU constitution – if approved, would confirm the continuity of the process of integration. But it would also confirm the judgment that the emergence of anything like a United States of Europe remains for future generations to manage. French President Nicolas Sarkozy still talks about a multi-polar world, but makes it clear that this neither requires Europe to balance American power nor France to submerge its sovereignty in an EU framework.

Perhaps now it would be more appropriate to talk about a “multi-player” international system, in which the European Union is an important player in many policy areas. But advocating a “multi-polar” system implies competition, shifting alliances and balance of power politics – a system that would serve neither American nor European interests.

Conclusions

For the next period of history, the European Union will neither be transformed into a United States of Europe nor fall apart at the seams. It will continue to evolve toward a “*United Europe of States*,” rather than a “*United States of Europe*.” Someday, the members of the European Union may decide to create a unitary political state but, until that day, the member states will retain ultimate control over their foreign and defense policies. The process of European integration has not necessarily reached its end-state. But, barring some transformative crisis or war, the process seems to have reached the point where further progress will be made in slow and small steps, rather than rapid large ones.

The return of France to full participation in the alliance helps make the point that European integration and transatlantic cooperation can and should be compatible and mutually reinforcing. This is the only way that the allies can deal with the near-term challenges posed by Afghanistan and the longer term challenges of international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the task of nurturing stable and cooperative relations with Russia, China and other important players in the international system.

The European Union is already an important participant in a multi-player world. A continuing trend back toward a position of a “pillar” in the transatlantic relationship and away from “polar” pretensions would augur well for both the United States and Europe.

Policy Recommendation

The Government of the Netherlands, as a member in good standing of both NATO and the European Union, should be a leading proponent of overcoming the issues that block much-needed cooperation between NATO and the European Union. As part of the process leading up to agreement on a new strategic concept, and in the context of the NATO/EU summit suggested above, The Hague should seek agreement on a joint NATO/EU declaration on the need for an interdependent and mutually-reinforcing relationship between European integration and transatlantic cooperation.

Membership, Partnerships and Relations with Russia

Discussion

The 20-year process of opening NATO membership to former Warsaw Pact states, former Soviet republics, and other European states that sought such membership and met the conditions for joining has made a major contribution to the stability, well-being, and democratization of Europe. The requirement in the 1995 NATO Enlargement Study for aspiring members to establish democratic civilian control over the military, and NATO’s assistance to

partners in this area, has been a significant factor in the democratization process for many of Europe's new democracies. For many countries, the process has operated hand-in-hand with that of enlarging the membership of the European Union, another major contributor to the goal of making Europe "whole and free."

In spite of NATO's efforts to create special partnership status for Russia, Moscow has from the beginning been uncomfortable with the fact that former Warsaw Pact allies and even former Soviet republics were becoming members of what had been the opposing Cold War alliance. After four decades of tension and competition between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Russian leaders and the public had been well-conditioned to view the United States and its Western allies through an enemy-image prism. In addition, the Russian leadership still views what it calls its "near abroad" as legitimately within its sphere of interest, even if Moscow no longer dominates that region. The NATO enlargement process directly threatened these perceptions of Russian security interests, even if, from the point of view of its former allies and neighboring republics, it was fully within their right and even in their vital interests to join NATO (and the European Union).

The issue has come to a head in the past decade. The accession of the Baltic states to NATO had been viewed in the 1990s as a step that could lead back to a new "Cold War" environment. But there was little that Russia could do when NATO's "big bang" expansion took place in 2004. The crunch did not come until both Ukraine and Georgia began moving closer to membership at a time when Russia was feeling more confident about throwing its weight around once again. Moscow used various forms of pressure, including restrictions on access to gas supplies that flowed to and through Ukraine, to lobby Ukrainians against joining NATO, and helped two Georgian regions declare independence and then invaded Georgia to make it stick.

During The Hague conference, as noted above, a number of respected Dutch commentators called for NATO to be more cautious about offending Russia, and to put a higher priority on improving relations with Moscow. They argued that this approach would bring the greatest value for European and global security.

Other voices, however, suggested that while Moscow's legitimate security concerns should be acknowledged and taken into account in NATO's policies, the alliance should not bow down to every Russian preference.

Determining the legitimacy of Moscow's concerns, of course, is a subjective task. However, the influence of Russian domestic politics needs to be weighed in this equation. It seems likely that the resurgent authoritarian tendencies in Moscow are intended to ensure that Russia does not itself fall apart, as did the Soviet Union. The goal of preserving Russia's integrity is understandable, but the consequences of re-centralization and limits on basic freedoms are inconsistent with the values that are required for Moscow to be a trusted partner of NATO countries.

In addition, it is well-established that governments, and authoritarian regimes in particular, sometimes use real or imagined foreign threats to help control domestic opposition.

In Moscow's case, NATO and the United States make convenient whipping boys to help quell complaints about restrictions on free speech, freedom of the press, and other basic civil rights.

Another issue that will confront the strategic concept drafters is the question of whether or not membership in the alliance should be offered to states, such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of South Korea, which make important contributions to NATO missions, particularly in Afghanistan. The idea has largely American roots, including advocacy by the new Permanent Representative to NATO, Ambassador Ivo Daalder. Most European allies have doubts about the wisdom of this proposal, and it remains unclear whether or not the Obama administration will place a high priority on it.

Conclusion

Taking all these considerations together, NATO faces a true dilemma: cooperation with Russia is a key element of future European and international peace; but the values for which NATO stands – democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law – and the interest of the members in defending their security as well as these values – must remain at the heart of the alliance's purpose.

The fact that the allies have promised that “one day” Ukraine and Georgia will become NATO members limits the alliance's room for maneuver. However, it is a commitment that, depending on the decisions made by those countries and their preparedness for membership, will have to be sustained in alliance proclamations. Neither country today meets the requirements for membership as laid down in the 1995 NATO Enlargement Study. In order finally to qualify for membership, both Ukraine and Georgia will have to work hard to establish conditions in which their application for membership would be approved.

On the issue of opening membership to like-minded democracies from other regions of the world, the split in the alliance on this question suggests that such states should, at least in the near term, be offered meaningful “global partnerships” rather than full membership. This could involve, as some have recommended, creating a “Global Partnership Council” bringing together representatives of NATO countries and “like-minded” states beyond the North American, European and Mediterranean regions to discuss operations in which those countries participate as well as future security objectives and concerns. The new Global Partnership Council could replace the current Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC).

Policy Recommendation

The Government of the Netherlands should be a strong proponent of NATO's open door policy, which means that qualified states wishing to join the alliance should receive positive consideration. The Government should nonetheless be clear that joining the alliance is not a right, but a privilege and obligation, and the requirements in the 1995 Enlargement Study should be followed religiously. The Hague should also make it clear that current members of the European Union that are not NATO members would be welcome in the alliance, and that global partnerships should be developed with states from other regions that make contributions to NATO missions and wish to have a stronger association with the alliance. Creation of a Global

Partnership Council could serve as an effective compromise between those who would like to extend membership to like-minded states and those who oppose stretching NATO membership so far from the original area.

At the same time, The Hague should encourage the alliance to explore every possible angle for cooperation with Russia. Russia and NATO share a number of interests, including the necessity of dealing effectively with threats posed by international terrorism. The alliance, however, should not allow Russia's definitions of its security interests to dominate alliance decision-making. The Dutch government should insist that NATO be guided by the values that are the foundation both for Dutch democracy and for the transatlantic alliance.

Arms Control Issues

Discussion

Armaments and arms control issues have not been nearly as prominent in NATO deliberations in recent years as they were during the Cold War. This is true in part because arms control became one of the most important instruments for ensuring that the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation did not lead from Cold War to a hot war.

When the Cold War ended, the allies faced many decisions concerning whether NATO strategy still required a nuclear component and what should be done about new threats from terrorists and rogue states for which traditional deterrence might not work. Beginning in 1989, the allies focused particularly on countering nuclear proliferation. At the same time, they reaffirmed that nuclear weapons remained central to NATO's deterrence strategy. In the early glow of the post-Cold War era, the allies called them weapons of last resort, although they subsequently backed away from this description and put more emphasis on the constructive uncertainty that NATO's nuclear capabilities would raise in any potential adversary's mind.

Throughout the 1990s, the allies dramatically reduced NATO nuclear weapons beyond the cuts called for in arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. However, in terms of transatlantic relations, nuclear weapons policy was "the dog that didn't bark." The allies chose to move carefully and quietly on nuclear weapons policy, perhaps reflecting the concern that dramatic changes could begin to unravel the transatlantic bargain in which nuclear weapons had played such an important role.

As for non-nuclear arms control, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) has remained a contentious issue between Russia and the alliance. The CFE treaty was negotiated on a "non-bloc-to-bloc" basis, but nonetheless reflected the reality of two opposing alliances that still existed when the treaty was signed in 1990. Over the years, the foundations for the CFE treaty have crumbled with the demise of the Warsaw Pact, disintegration of the Soviet Union, deterioration of Russian military forces, and the membership of former Warsaw Pact and Soviet republics in NATO. The treaty was adapted to take some of these changes into account, but the NATO countries have refused to ratify the accord while Russian troops and equipment remain in Moldova and Georgia. Russia has suspended compliance with the treaty. Final approval of the treaty might still be important from a confidence-building perspective, but is largely irrelevant to

contemporary security relations in Europe. In addition, there are serious questions about whether the process of such arms control negotiations tends to reinforce enemy images and relationship structures rather than enhancing possibilities for partnership.

Today, the largely quiescent question of NATO's nuclear weapons could return to the fore, in the context of the debate on the new strategic concept. In particular, the issue could arise regarding the continued role of the alliance as a deterrent against Russia – an aspect of the alliance that is of primary importance to the more recent members of the alliance who not long ago escaped Russian domination in the Soviet Union and who feel potentially threatened by a more ambitious Russian foreign policy.

The question could come to a head in discussion of the several hundred (currently estimated at 350) nuclear warheads that remain deployed in several European countries, including the Netherlands. These free-fall bombs, which would have to be delivered on target by allied fighter-bombers, have become virtually irrelevant militarily. And, in a time of constrained resources, their maintenance, which in coming years will include modernizing the aircraft intended to deliver the bombs as well as maintaining the security of the warheads, may be a questionable use of limited defense funds.

The United States would not choose to use these free-fall bombs if it became necessary to use nuclear weapons in the future. Politically, however, it is another story. One reason the weapons were left in Europe at the end of the Cold War was to serve as a “place-holder” in case it became necessary in future circumstances to deploy more modern weapons in their place. Perhaps a more important reason was that the deployments gave European members, particularly those where the weapons are deployed, a louder voice in discussions of NATO nuclear policy. Now, new members of the alliance tend to see these weapons as an important symbol of the ultimate guarantee of their security, and would likely oppose their withdrawal at this time.

The broader political framework has also been complicated by renewed discussion of the elimination of nuclear weapons altogether – the “global zero” proposal that recently was conditionally supported by President Obama.

Finally, plans to deploy anti-missile systems in Poland and the Czech Republic to shoot down potential future Iranian strategic nuclear missiles flying toward American or European targets have been opposed by Russia and are controversial in Europe. Those plans have been put on temporary hold by the Obama administration depending on developments in relations with Iran.

In the meantime, Russia has proposed a European security pact to create a new security and arms control architecture on the European continent based on bilateral relations among European states – in other words, without acknowledging NATO's European security role and replacing that of the OSCE. Some European states have expressed interest in this Russian initiative, while other NATO members find the proposal all too reminiscent of the Soviet Union's self-serving call for a “European house” in the 1980s.

Conclusions

While forward-deployed nuclear warheads may become an issue in drafting the new strategic concept, the primary arms control concern for NATO today is the threat of additional proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology. The nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) has proven inadequate to the task of preventing proliferation. The fact is that proliferation occurs when countries decide that their security interests require, or would benefit from, becoming nuclear weapons states. The most important avenue to non-proliferation therefore is conflict resolution and security assurances, while technical controls of the NPT at least complicate and slow down the proliferation process.

The questions of nuclear weapons in Europe, deployment of an anti-missile system on European territory, and endorsement of a “global zero” could become serious complications in preparation of the new strategic concept. Technical issues, for example whether or not the missile defense system would work as planned, will be important. However, the political aspects would likely be more significant. Those countries that fear Russia the most place a high value on such symbols of the commitment to their defense.

The political reality, as noted by one of the presenters in The Hague, is that the strategic concept will be required to include an arms control element to balance the inevitable calls for defense improvements. What the content of the arms control element should include, however, is a more difficult question.

Policy Recommendation

The Government of the Netherlands should pursue strong provisions in the new strategic concept regarding non-proliferation, including efforts to negotiate settlement of regional disputes that provide incentives for proliferation.

As for the nuclear weapons deployed forward in Europe, the Netherlands faces its own dilemma in that hosting American nuclear warheads under dual-key arrangements gives Holland a seat at the NATO nuclear table, while at the same time absorbing funds that might better be used improving Dutch non-nuclear capabilities.

Under the circumstances, however, the Government of the Netherlands probably should not be out in front on this issue, but should, as suggested earlier, seek to be an honest broker on the issue to help find approaches that will preserve alliance unity on a basis that honors the interests of all NATO members.

Concluding Observations

Preparation of a new strategic concept is both a challenge and an opportunity for the alliance and the Government of the Netherlands. It will be important for the new concept to start from the very strong foundation provided by shared values and interests and the many areas of policy on which there is alliance consensus. The process will then be required to reflect on all that has changed since the 1999 concept was prepared, and to ensure that the changes are

captured in the new document. To the extent that the exercise can move the alliance consensus forward, it must be done in a way that accommodates the diverse interests of all alliance members – no easy task!

This suggests that NATO's purpose must continue to serve the values and interests of its members, as specified in the North Atlantic Treaty. Today, this means that NATO's strategic vision must respond to the territorial defense needs of its members but must also serve on a more global level to defend against threats to the security interests of its members even when the roots of those challenges are found far from Europe.

The opportunity in this exercise, and one that the Government of the Netherlands should grasp enthusiastically, is to present the true face of this alliance to the publics and parliaments in NATO countries as well as to the world, which now is much more aware of the alliance's problems and potential. The public diplomacy function of the new concept could therefore be just as important as the strategic guidance that it provides for the alliance's future.

The aim should be to win as many people and countries as possible over to the perspective that the Euro-Atlantic alliance is a force for good both in the Euro-Atlantic area and internationally. Most importantly, new generations of voters and leaders in NATO countries are at a growing distance from the critical role played by transatlantic cooperation for their nation's security and well-being following the Second World War. In this regard, the Government of the Netherlands should advocate enhancing NATO-government as well as alliance-wide programs intended to inform successor generations in NATO countries of the continuing benefits of the transatlantic alliance and Euro-Atlantic cooperation more generally.