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## **The role of NATO in shaping the global security system. Reflections on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the organization**

### **Abstract**

NATO has survived until its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, essentially in the same condition as practically every year of its existence. According to commentators and external experts, the Alliance seems to be in a constant crisis, and every new version of the crisis is seen as final and deadly. By contrast, for those who are active internally, NATO seems stronger than ever before - it is engaging in more places than ever before, presenting new initiatives at an unprecedented pace and in ever-longer summit declarations. The problem situation presented in this way allows us to formulate the main research problem: What role does NATO play in shaping the global security system? The research problem formulated in this way consists of detailed problems formulated in the form of questions: 1) What are the current challenges for NATO? 2) What are the current threats to NATO? 3) What is Donald Trump's policy towards NATO? The aim of the presentation is to present an analysis of the role of NATO in ensuring collective security in the context of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the organization. The research process uses methodological methods of scientific cognition, mainly analysis and criticism of literature.

**Keywords:** NATO, security, Russian Federation, Donald Trump

### **Introduction**

NATO has survived until its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, essentially in the same condition as practically every year of its existence. According to commentators and external experts, the Alliance seems to be in a constant crisis and every new ver-

sion of the crisis is seen as final and deadly. By contrast, for those who are active internally, NATO seems stronger than ever before - it is engaging in more places than ever before, presenting new initiatives at an unprecedented pace and in ever-longer summit declarations. Now that the Alliance has returned to its inherent collective defence mission its future has long since seemed so secure. This dichotomy will undoubtedly lead to a debate that will be reminiscent of what the Alliance experienced when it celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There will be those who highlight the factors that cause divisions while others will highlight what unites. Some will analyse global strategic trends and argue that the Atlantic is expanding and the days when Europe could rely on North America are gone. Others will see the worsening security conditions and the rise in the power of anti-liberal authoritarian leaders as factors pushing transatlantic partners to work together as they represent a shrinking part of the world's population and economic power (URL1). Some will be convinced that NATO is a victim of history and the pressure exerted on multilateralism and an on international order based on recognised principles. Others will see the Alliance as a valuable barrier against these destructive forces and as a guarantee that liberal democracies can still emerge from this clash with a defensive hand. The 21st century is a turbulent century characterised by competition of the great powers, rising military spending and a willingness to use the threat of force, rapid and far-reaching technological innovations that put greater, destructive potential in the hands of more potential villains; and a series of hybrid actions aimed at dividing and destabilising Western societies and influencing their political and economic systems. More than in the past, Alliance members face challenges from within and outside its borders, from multiple directions at the same time. Death from a thousand minor injuries may not seem as horrible as sudden death, but the effect remains the same. The problem presented in this way allows us to formulate the main research problem: What role does NATO play in shaping the global security system? The research problem formulated in this way consists of detailed problems formulated in the form of questions: 1) What are the current challenges for NATO? 2) What are the current threats to NATO? 3) What is Donald Trump's policy towards NATO? The presentation aims to show an analysis of the role of NATO in ensuring collective security in the context of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the organization. The research process uses methodological methods of scientific cognition, mainly analysis and criticism of literature.

## Challenges

For most of the past decades, NATO has been in a relatively luxurious position because it has had to face one challenge at a time and place. On its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Alliance focused solely on changes to the USSR. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary coincided with the air campaign in Kosovo, and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary was dominated by discussions about the leapfrogging increase in the number of forces in Afghanistan. However, this time it is different. NATO is in its seventies and has to deal not with one but three strategic fronts, not only geographically differentiated, but also with different types of threats and responses. In the East, a resurgent and aggressive Russia has raised the pressure in the Alliance's eastern Member States and the situation demands that the Alliance - after a break of almost 30 years - be capable of deterring, defending and defeating an equal opponent with a modernised armed force, rich military experience and technically advanced weapons (URL2). In the South, fragile states are vulnerable to extremism, militias and criminal gangs, which pose a whole range of security threats, from terrorist attacks to humanitarian crises and uncontrolled migrations. These problems require regional knowledge, development, and long-term capacity-building partnerships involving a wide range of actors. At home, we see the polarisation of many Western societies that are struggling to control the dependencies created by globalisation. Moreover, the all-encompassing technologies have given sinister actors a new set of hybrid tools to spread confusion or influence. These challenges hit Alliance members in different combinations and come from different sources. However, all members expect NATO to listen equally to their individual concerns and provide solutions. What is therefore unique about the current situation of the Alliance, what is that it threatens to get out of control? One of the problems is strategic overload. Another is that poorly solved domestic crises or the inability to create a barrier against provocations such as cyberattacks or chemical attacks below the threshold of Article 5 (NATO collective defence) could encourage opponents to make territorial demands as well. Equally, allowing these opponents to trample human rights and sow corruption and bad governance in the South - all in the name of restoring order - could encourage them to try the same tactics in the eastern neighbourhood of the Alliance. Therefore, for the first time in seven decades, NATO must deter and defend itself against both internal and external enemies. As we have seen since the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, from now on, Article 5 could be applied much more to threats to transport, power supply infrastructure, satellite communications, pipelines, IT networks and civilians sitting on park benches than to tanks crossing borders. Solidarity will no longer be a rare requirement waiting for

a potentially catastrophic but extremely unlikely armed blurred message. Rather, it will be an almost daily necessity in response to provocations that do not pose an existential threat, but which cannot be tolerated by civilised societies. This is a fundamentally new and extremely urgent issue that Alliance leaders must debate if they want NATO to have a future at least if as in the past. How, instead of preparing for one type of attack, can the Alliance make its Member States (and some key partner countries) fully resilient and capable of responding effectively to the 21st century model of excessive interference and ubiquitous competition?

This does not mean that the topics that dominate NATO's current political activities are not relevant. Burden-sharing is at the heart of the US President Donald Trump's concept of the Alliance's usefulness to the US, and any future US administration - whether republican or democratic - is likely to insist on this as well. Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defence of the democrat administration, gave a speech in Brussels in 2011, its sharpness, and the emphasis on the urgency of European capability shortages was a harbinger of the rhetoric of the Republican Trump, half a decade before the latter entered the White House. The participation of the United States in burden-sharing of the of collective defence and, more recently, Article 5 operations outside NATO have always been disproportionate and unfair. Europe's prolonged dependence on the United States was one of the main reasons why some US senators wanted to limit the duration of the NATO Treaty to just ten years when it was presented for ratification in 1949. Europeans have constantly promised to eliminate this discrepancy in a series of burden-sharing and balancing initiatives, but they have not done so. As Europe became wealthier and wealthier, aspired to equal treatment on the global stage, its inability and unwillingness to put money into its defence became increasingly incomprehensible. So, instead of being the most reluctant to return to the debate on burden sharing, Europeans should perhaps congratulate themselves on being so lucky that Canada and the United States were willing to insure Europe's defence during peacetime longer than any of the founding fathers of NATO would have thought possible - and desirable. Europeans simply need to increase their defence budgets to two percent of GDP, not because the United States is demanding this as a precondition for maintaining NATO, but because Europeans are living in an increasingly difficult and threatening neighbourhood. Under these conditions, these two percent will provide Europeans with the necessary capabilities so that they do not have to make difficult choices between deterring Russia and fighting extremism in the Sahel, or put a high-ready division above the development of more powerful cybersecurity and research into the emerging areas of artificial intelligence, robotics and hypersonic missiles (URL3). Now that the Defence Investment Commitment of the Alliance Summit in Wales has stopped the decline in

defence spending and brought about a real increase in it, Alliance members must unequivocally sustain these efforts. However, they also need to develop a narrative to explain the relationship between money, capabilities and security. The figures in the media may seem a little arbitrary. An additional USD 100 billion by 2020 is a large amount, but NATO must show the public what this means in terms of real improvements in equipment, readiness and training. It also needs to focus more on the achievements of individual countries. Ability to combat threats such as cyber-attacks, armed disruptions to space capabilities, terrorism, border security, data manipulation, protection of critical infrastructure and supply chains and humanitarian crises caused by extreme weather events may be more in line with public expectations than traditional military assets such as tanks and artillery. This should encourage NATO planners to take a broader view of capability requirements. Two percent of GDP should be a target for both the European Union and NATO . If the United States were to turn its back on NATO one day or limit its involvement to territorial collective defence against Russia, two percent should be the minimum that would guarantee European strategic autonomy (URL4). Consequently, the Defence Investment Commitment should progressively evolve from efforts largely enforced by the United States to actions that Europeans will demand of each other. On the other hand, NATO's function is not primarily to ensure justice - equal benefits for equal contributions. Achievements, i.e. the benefits of membership, will always be more important than investments. Individual investments must contribute as much as possible to our common success. The diversity of Alliance members (large and small, with different resources and influence networks) means that they will always contribute in different ways to the common goal. The role of NATO must be to promote activities and to find ways of combining different contributions in order to achieve maximum strategic impact. This is more effective than formulating guidelines for standard contributions, which could make NATO too strong in some domains and too weak in others. When NATO takes on the challenges of the 21st century, it can be argued that a broad and diverse spectrum of multiple resources, skills and knowledge and capabilities will give the Alliance an advantage over its opponents. I see four areas where the Alliance must become a better playmaker.

## Threats

First, we need to intensify the inter-agency dialogue. China, for example, will have a much greater influence on international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than Russia and will exert that influence in a very different way. China is al-

ready leading the way in setting technological trends in artificial intelligence and bioengineering, as well as in 5G connectivity, which will be the cornerstone of the Internet of Things. They are increasing their investments in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East and sending more soldiers to UN peacekeeping missions. Even now, those NATO members are discussing the advisability of allowing Huawei to join their IT networks, they can see that China can divide them up while Russia, in general, usually unites them. Since the 'Chinese model' will be the main competitor of liberal democracy, the key question will be: how will Alliance members deal with China? The point is not to see China as another military challenge, but to best understand the country and involve it in joint action. Perhaps the time has come to set up a NATO-China Council or, at the very least, to have a strategic dialogue. In the past, cooperation in the areas of the joint fight against piracy in the Gulf of Aden and assistance to the UN and the African Union in capacity building have shown the potential of NATO-China relations (Burles – Shulsky, 2000). To begin with, NATO should appoint some prominent diplomats or officials to focus on China and establish a network with the Chinese People's Liberation Army and civilian leadership. Apart from China, other key issues must be more systematically addressed by the Alliance. For example, although NATO is developing its space policy, the Alliance has still not declared that space is an operational area, nor has it looked at the seriously growing dependence of navigation, time calibration, tracking and target-setting on space assets. Yet 58 countries have put satellites in orbit and most of the space-based services on which NATO depends have a dual-use (civil/commercial and military). The development of missile defence, hypersonic missiles, drones and data processing, not to mention early warning and cyber-security capabilities, will all make competition in space more competitive. Satellites will be more vulnerable to manipulation, disruption, and destruction, and conflict resolution will increasingly depend on who makes better use of space. That is why the United States has recently established a Space Force and is planning to establish a space command.

Other issues that need attention are Russia's role in exerting influence outside Europe, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, and the emerging importance of entities such as India and Saudi Arabia. But not only traditional states with traditional potentials are changing the nature of security. Equally important are the issues that need to be addressed: How will the decisions of large technology companies shape and control the future of the internet and social interaction? How will ISIS/Daesh be regrouped and how will it define a new business model for the post-caliphate? Or how does organised crime weaken governments and fuel corruption?

NATO cannot rely on rare ministerial meetings or occasional briefings presented by national diplomats passing through Brussels. Recent crises like the one between India and Pakistan in Kashmir show how quickly events can get out of control and have global consequences. NATO needs to think about how to better match its situational awareness and consultation mechanisms to rapidly changing and unpredictable security conditions. The alliance should not be considered solely as an organisation dealing with a limited set of issues in a narrow way, and only in its immediate neighbourhood. The second area in which the Alliance must improve its performance is the deterrence of threats below the threshold of Article 5. Hybrid warfare is complicated because the boundary between what is legal and what is illegal is thin. When do normal business transactions become a form of hostile state interference? How can we stop our opponents from using technology we have created against us? Some commentators have declared that deterrence cannot be effective against hybrid threats because they are multifaceted and simply reveal the polarities and divisions that are already so prevalent in our societies.

There is certainly no easy and immediate solution that would allow effective deterrence in a hybrid area such as the acquisition of nuclear weapons to neutralize an opponent's nuclear potential. Indeed, the first step is to deter by negating the benefits or depriving the opponent of the fruits of aggression through immunity and rapid regeneration of potential. However, the reaction to Russia's chemical attack in Salisbury last year showed a whole range of other steps that could be taken. The perpetrators have been identified and condemned through the disclosure of intelligence material, and a large number of Russian diplomats have been expelled in a coordinated manner. NATO and the European Union have united their actions and the two organisations have undertaken to analyse their preparedness and resources to respond to chemical and biological attacks.

## **Will NATO survive Donald Trump's policy?**

Donald Trump has not spared criticism of NATO. It is also a common belief that the sudden abandonment of allies in Syria speaks volumes about the situation of US allies around the world. In NATO in particular. We know for sure that Donald Trump spoke publicly about NATO, that it is 'obsolete', and that he has quietly, at least several times, raised with his colleagues the issue of the possible departure of the US from the Alliance (URL5). This will probably not happen formally - the president's view that the Alliance is unnecessary for the USA, and few people, apart from him, share it in Washington. However, we are



undoubtedly witnessing the weakening and unsealing of NATO. The majority of Europe and America are parting more and more quickly. Today, this is the biggest problem of international politics in the West. For countries such as Poland, which are medium-sized but have an extremely difficult geography, this is a fundamental problem. There is a conviction in Europe that we are protected from catastrophe by the fact that the President of the United States does not decide on foreign policy alone (URL6). It is true that not many of the people who today co-decide on the policy of the superpower would, like President Trump, say that Europe is an 'enemy'. However, more of them do not like Europe, almost all of them do. Naturally, the Americans are right in their criticism of Europe. Most European governments spend too little on defence, others, like the PIS government, hide their expenditure on roads and VIP aircraft in their military budgets. Not all allies are in solidarity - Germany, for example, is openly flirting with Russia over the Nord Stream II gas pipeline or the Italians and Hungarians. However, America also often, or rather more often, does not show solidarity, and for Trump, moreover, it shows solidarity on a particularly regular basis. Suffice it to mention the unilateral withdrawal from the USA and Europe's agreement with Iran.

It is the USA, that is Trump, who disregards above all the foundations of NATO, that is to say, the common values. The preamble to the Washington Treaty states that members are to protect 'a common heritage and civilisation based on the principles of democracy, individual freedom, and the rule of law'. The current US Government does not pay attention to this. Turkey is sometimes less criticised than the European Union or Germany. The criticism of Law and Justice is not about rules, but only about matters that America cares about: disputes with Israel or attacks on TVN (owned by a company from the USA). This is the case with everything: Trump's America treats everyone, including its allies, exclusively in terms of narrow interests and even trade: you can give, you will get something. He does not see that the advantage of the USA and the whole West in the world, starting from the Second World War, consisted of something else: politics based on common principles (even if sometimes bent) and working out unity (even if difficult). After the initial shock, the majority of Europe developed a two-track 'Trump strategy'. First, to get along in those fields where possible - either with the president himself or, more often, with his environment and other members of the government. The same game is played by the Law and Justice government, for example in talks on increasing the presence of American troops in Poland. Secondly, the response of the EU or countries such as France, Germany, or Scandinavia is stronger intra-European coordination and seeking closer ties with third partners such as Canada, Australia, or Japan. Our



government is doing the opposite - it is throwing itself into the arms of Trump's America with everything and unconditionally, as evidenced by the last anti-Iranian conference in Warsaw. A characteristic - and sad - style of the world's reaction to America's new, selfish as never before, policy is also characteristic. It is not only the Polish President ( 'Fort Trump' ), but also larger partners - for example Emmanuel Macron - who tried this tactic without success. Recently the Prime Minister of Japan shocked the whole country and half of the world when a hidden message leaked that Trump had nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. It is even more interesting in Washington, D.C. itself. Professionals who have sometimes told him the unpleasant truth are disappearing from the environment of the US President, and those who have no problem with flattery are doing well. In his speech in Munich, Vice-President Pence mentioned Trump over 30 times. This is much more than the deputy of the Chinese First Secretary Xi Jinping mentioned in his speech in Munich. How will the West differ from the East - Putin's or Chinese - if it is governed by the same poor, sometimes embarrassing rules? Exaggerated? Perhaps. But what if the extravagant president has been ruling the White House for not two but six more years? Trump has, yes, a record-breaking unpopularity in the US. But its political opponents, the Democrats, have no one who would be more popular (URL7).

## Conclusions

In conclusion, deterrence can be gradually built against hybrid campaigns by credibly identifying, naming, and condemning the perpetrators. Through proportionate responses that do not escalate but show that hybrid attacks will be consistently resisted in a collective and coordinated way. It is also important to identify and remove weak elements in NATO's critical infrastructure spectrum, both materially and virtually. These reactions will include trial and error phases when the Alliance checks what will best encourage the opponent to rethink their intentions. They will also require the creation of a common catalogue of measures - both existing and new - and a knowledge of how they can be applied in a targeted way against both the states and the pawns they are using. The daily image of NATO - which deploys new forces in its eastern Member States, organises powerful exercises, fights cyber threats and terrorism, conducts training and capacity-building missions in places such as Afghanistan or Iraq and welcomes new members - will be in startling contrast to the political and academic rhetoric that presents NATO as obsolete and its members as a burden on low return assets. In a word, optimists will not see the need to reform the Alliance,

and pessimists will see that reforming the Alliance is not possible. As has often been the case in history, this will boil down to a choice between deeds and words and a discussion about what is most decisive for NATO's credibility in the long term. If the glass is half-full and half-empty, both sides are right, and we are not moving forward. However, to repeat this somewhat fruitless discussion on NATO's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary would be a waste of opportunity - perhaps even a historical mistake. Extreme opinions that everything is fine or nothing is fine with NATO to distort reality and do not reflect the essence of the matter. Indeed, the Alliance is not doing so badly if we take into account the criticism and doubts that hit so many other institutional pillars of the post-war international order. It is not difficult to find good news about NATO, and impressive concrete achievements overshadow the frustrations of the last two summits. Overall, they show how great the commitment of 29 members to NATO is still expressed in the financial expenses, capabilities, and sacrifice of the soldiers, as well as in the speeches. However, without falling into shallow patterns that prophesy the crisis, we must also face the fact that the Alliance is now operating under the most complex security conditions it has ever faced in its history. It is facing, more than ever, a diverse range of threats. Of course, they may not be as extreme as the nuclear holocaust during the Cold War, but they are nevertheless acute and uncontrollable, they can bring to an end liberal societies and individual freedoms that are now taken for granted by the citizens of the nations. Above all, NATO will have to develop a culture of permanent readiness, reliable intelligence, and the ability to make a whole lot of small decisions regularly and quickly, rather than great decisions being made rarely and too late. However, if NATO can operate more effectively below the threshold of Article 5, it will be less likely that it will have to face threats above that threshold in the future.

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