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THE (POST) WARSAW NATO STRATEGY AND THE EASTERN FLANK: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE SOUTH

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The Warsaw Summit was held on 8-9 July 2016 with the assumption of “an essential Alliance in a more dangerous world” both in the eastern and in the southern flanks. Bearing in mind that the allies gathered in “a defining moment for the security of our nations and populations”, this contribution aims to analyse the main decisions of the Warsaw summit towards a ‘new’ NATO 360° full spectrum approach based on agility, flexibility and readiness. Moreover, as collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security remain the key core areas of NATO, this paper will also explore some critical insights to address eastern flank challenges from the southern perspective. We will conclude that an enhanced cooperation and full engagement between NATO and the EU as agreed in the final communiqué are crucial for security and defence of all borders.

Introduction — Eastern and Southern Changing Security Environment

In the last couple of years, we all have been witnessing unprecedented challenges in the East of Europe (annexation of the Crimea, destabilization of eastern Ukraine, military build-up in the Baltics1) as well as a growing dramatic emergency in Europe’s external and internal borders (radicalization of religious extremism, brutal attacks by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da'esh, refugees and migration exceptional flows or trans-national illegal activities). In fact, the security environment of both European eastern and southern borders has been considerably and rapidly deteriorating with a twofold challenge: due to its unpredictable nature, those threats will surely remain for a long time; and because of their transnational character, any possible solution can only be searched in cooperation, complementarity and synergy between origin, transit and destination countries, as well as security providing organisations and non-governmental institutions.

As Federica Mogherini, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has been recalling, we live in a “more connected, contested and complex world”2. Such transnational risks as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failed states, transnational organized

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1 The Baltic region represents a major challenge for NATO as expressed by D. A. Shlapak and M. W. Johnson (Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO’s Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics, RAND Corporation, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1200/RR1253/RAND_RR1253.pdf)

crime and hybrid war models that security providers such as NATO and the European Union are facing today require a broad multidimensional security concept that goes beyond geographical borders.

In the context of NATO, the eastern European security demands a major commitment from the allies in air policing, reassurance measures and readiness action plan (RAP). In its turn, NATO’s southern flank urges a holistic approach towards the structural problems of the (failed) state actors. Non-state actors are in fact taking advantage of the ‘arc of instability’ that is expanding from the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and Maghreb to Sahel. Therefore, structural profound political, economic, social, environmental and security changes that those regions have been facing for a few years now have exposed how their challenges spread to the entire transatlantic area.

Acknowledging the need to balance the NATO approach towards both the east and the south is thus crucial to tackle the (new?) security environment through a 360º approach, with an enhanced cooperation and full engagement between NATO and the European Union.

RAP was one of the most significant accomplishments in the 2014 Wales summit to reinforce the Alliance response to new security challenges from the east and the south. Originating at the 2014 Wales Summit, it was only in Warsaw that it was implemented and agreed upon as part of the post-cold war strategy in terms of deterrence and defence.

A holistic approach assumes that a wide range of instruments should be at disposal to enhance allies’ security.

For a more detailed study, please see the project from the Center for strategic & International Studies "Militancy and the Arc of Instability in the Middle East and North Africa", available in https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/past-projects/militancy-and-arc-instability-middle-east-and (last accessed on 20 October 2016).

The events known as Arab Spring (2010-2012) somehow nourished the illusion that democracy would lead to stability and development, but soon the turn of events in Libya or Syria developed with such surprise and uncertainty that the effects are still being faced in the entire region. Please see for a foresight analysis F. Gaub & A. Laban (eds.), Arab futures: Three scenarios for 2025, "ISSUE Report", no 22, Institute for Security Studies, 2015

E. Barbé (1997) argues how important the balance between the east and south must be perceived as a priority for all member states. (E. Barbé, Balancing Europe’s eastern and southern dimension, "EUI Working paper", Robert Schuman Centre, 1997)

both the East and the South started to be disseminated through ambassadorial and ministerial speeches all over Europe. That was the case of L Eriksen Søreide, Defence Minister of Norway (NATO needs an upgrade, http://europesworld.org/2016/07/08/nato-needs-upgrade/#.WBDUa9KL7cs) arguing a “political unity and the will to defend allies against any adversary applies to threats from any direction, and in different geographic areas”. Also NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow at the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria Conference on Black Sea Security, Sofia, Bulgaria in April 2016 argued that “NATO takes a 360-degree approach to deterring threats and, if necessary, defending Allies. Our situational awareness is comprehensive – alert to all potential threats from all directions — and our capacity to respond is the same. Experience has taught us that we cannot allow them to be anything less”. (http://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato Crane/ opinions_130340.htm, last accessed on 28 October 2016)

A comprehensive approach (similar to ‘holistic’) combines political, civilian and military instruments to address today’s complex security environment. For more information, the official assessment by NATO can be found in http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51633.htm (last accessed on 28 October 2016)
On one hand, the Common security and defence policy, as framed by the Lisbon Treaty, is perceived as an essential pillar of the EU’s external action towards a credible regional and global security provider. On the other hand, NATO and the European Union share 22 of its members, common values, and strategic interests and have been expanding their cooperation on crisis management, capability development and political consultations within the European space, its immediate neighbourhood and even the Western Balkans, Libya and the Middle East. In fact, in the 2010 Strategic Concept (following the Lisbon Summit), the Allies committed to improve the NATO-EU strategic partnership in crisis prevention, conflict management and post-conflict stabilisation. Along with operations and capability development, the EU-NATO cooperation has been growing in other areas with a potential for further growth: assistance for the growing refugee and migrant crisis in Europe, combat terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, hybrid threats, energy security and cyber defence.

Therefore, bearing in mind that the instability of the immediate and extended neighbourhood is no longer border limited and involves a broad spectrum of threats and challenges, this contribution argues that the rising complex strategic environment must be regarded as an opportunity for the EU and NATO to enhance their cooperation and full engagement through a 360° approach towards both the southern flank and the eastern flank. The two organisations must thus agree on mutual conceptual tools and policy instruments based on agility, flexibility and readiness, acknowledging that this cooperation is unique and essential to address the current institutional framework of security and defence.

**Strengthening the European Project: NATO’s Role**

The European Union and NATO are essential partners in crisis management and capability development. The two organizations share the majority of its members, strategic interests and common values, as well as demanding challenges in its southern and eastern neighbourhoods.

The key underlying principle of this relationship has always been perceived as a matter of indivisibility of the security dimension, refusing subsidiarity and duplication. In fact, EU-NATO cooperation added value is in the complementarity between collective defence (the pillar of the transatlantic organisation) and crisis management (range of autonomous instruments framed by the European Security and Defence Policy).

Although NATO-EU cooperation dates back to the mid-1990s in the Western

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10 “The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) enables the Union to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU’s comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets.” (https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-cspd/431/the-common-security-and-defence-policy-cspd_en)

11 With the crisis in Ukraine, both organisations have regularly exchanged and complemented views on their decisions regarding Russia Consultations.

12 In February 2016, NATO defence ministers decided to deploy a maritime force to the Aegean Sea to conduct reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance of illegal crossings, supporting Turkish and Greek authorities and the EU’s Frontex agency.

13 Both institutions have already exchanged information on their activities in the field of protection of civilian populations against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks. NATO and the EU also cooperate in civil emergency planning by exchanging inventories of measures taken.

14 In February 2016, NATO and the EU concluded a Technical Arrangement on Cyber Defence, which provides a framework for exchanging information and sharing best practices between emergency response teams.
Balkans, it was only after both the NATO Summit in Washington (1999) and the Nice European Council (December 2000) that the foundations were first agreed upon. The NATO-EU Declaration on the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)\textsuperscript{15} was signed later, on 16 December 2002 underlying both the EU assured access to NATO planning capabilities for the EU's own military operations and the determination of both organizations to strengthen their capabilities. These capabilities were founded on the following six principles: partnership, which mutually reinforces two organisations of different nature; effective mutual consultation, dialogue, cooperation and transparency; equality and due regard for decision-making autonomy and interests of the European Union and NATO; respect for the interests of the Member States of the European Union and NATO; respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations; coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of military capability requirements common to the two organisations. Those six principles were guided by three main objectives:

first, the European Union will ensure the fullest possible involvement of the non-EU European members of NATO within ESDP;

second, NATO will support ESDP and give the European Union assured access to NATO's planning capabilities;

third, both organisations will adopt arrangements to ensure the coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of their common capability requirements.

In its turn, signing the landmark «NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP» has paved the way for «Berlin Plus» arrangements, concluded on 17 March 2003, that form the basis for practical work in crisis management between the two organizations by allowing EU access to NATO's collective assets and capabilities for EU-led operations, to which NATO as a whole is not committed.

The main seven elements of these “Berlin Plus” arrangements can be summarised as follows: assured access of the EU to NATO planning capabilities with a view to effective use in the context of military planning of EU-led crisis management operations;

post of Deputy to the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) — who will command EU-led operations (and who is always a European citizen) — and NATO European command options;

assured access to NATO’s collective assets and capabilities (communication units, headquarters, etc.) for EU-led crisis management operations; NATO-EU agreement on security (exchange of classified information under the rules of mutual protection);

procedures to follow for the management of NATO assets and capabilities (release, monitoring, return and recall);

NATO-EU consultation arrangements in the context of EU-led crisis management operation calling on NATO assets and capabilities;

integration in NATO’s longstanding defence planning system of military requirements and capabilities, which may be needed for EU-led military operations, in order to guarantee the availability of well-equipped forces trained for either NATO-led or EU-led operations.

\textsuperscript{15} NATO-EU relations Factsheet, Available at http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pd-f_2016_07/20160630_1607-factsheet-nato-eu-en.pdf (last accessed 10 October 2016)
So, in brief, if the 2002 NATO-EU Declaration on the European Security and Defence Policy defined the NATO-EU relationship as a strategic partnership, since 2003 the “Berlin Plus” arrangements have provided the basis for the NATO-EU cooperation in crisis management in the context of the EU-led operations that make use of NATO’s collective assets and capabilities, including command arrangements and assistance in operational planning.

Therefore, still in 2003, the EU-led Operation Concordia took over the responsibilities of the NATO-led mission, Operation Allied Harmony, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and it became the first “Berlin Plus” operation in which NATO assets were made available to the EU. Also in 2004, following the conclusion of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU deployed, under the “Berlin Plus” arrangements, Operation EUFOR Althea. Moreover, in Kosovo, the NATO peacekeeping force KFOR works closely in the field with the EU’s Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and in Afghanistan, the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission and its predecessor, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), have cooperated with the EU’s Rule of Law Mission (EUPOL). Moreover, since September 2008, NATO Ocean Shield and EUNAVFOR Atalanta have been deployed side by side off the coast of Somalia for anti-piracy missions.

In the Lisbon (2010), Chicago (2012) and Wales (2014) summit declarations, a close cooperation between NATO and the EU has always been perceived as an important element in the development of an international “comprehensive approach” to crisis management and operations, which requires the effective application of both military and civilian means. However, the Warsaw (2016) Summit is particularly important, not only because it has the longest conclusions ever of all summits (139 paragraphs) where we can find several references to the EU-NATO cooperation, but especially because the two organisations agreed on joint communication and acknowledged an urgent need to “build the defence and security capacity and foster the resilience of our partners in the East and South in a complementary way through specific projects in a variety of areas for individual recipient countries, including by strengthening maritime capacity.”

17 Please see paragraphs 2 and 11 that encourage the Secretary General to continue to work with the European Union High Representative and to report to the Council on the ongoing efforts in time for the NATO Foreign Ministers’ meeting in April 2011.
18 Please see paragraphs 12 and 34 on the Kosovo reform efforts regarding the NATO’s ongoing role with the Kosovo Security Force in cooperation with all relevant actors, including the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the EU Special Representative, as agreed, and the Kosovo authorities.
19 Please see paragraph 102 to 106, where NATO recognizes that the EU remains a unique and essential partner for NATO, the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence and the need for a strengthened strategic partnership in issues of common concern, including security challenges like cyber defence, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counter-terrorism, energy security, maritime security and hybrid threats.
20 Please see paragraph 22 on the commitment to a continued coherent international approach and paragraphs 121 to 125 on further enhancement of the relationship between NATO and the EU. Also, there is a specific mention in paragraph 93 on the agreement on a possible NATO role in the Central Mediterranean, to complement and/or, upon European Union request, support, as appropriate, the EU’s Operation Sophia through the provision of a range of capabilities including Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, and logistics support; through contribution to capacity building of the Libyan coastguard and navy, if requested by the legitimate Libyan authorities and/or the EU; and in the context of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2292 on the situation in Libya, in close coordination with the EU.
21 Joint declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on July 8, 2016
On the side of the European Union, on 28-29 June 2016 European council\textsuperscript{22} agreed that "Our relation with NATO is part and parcel of a wider and active CSDP partnership policy, consisting of policy dialogue, participation of third states in missions and operations and capacity-building through CSDP missions". Moreover, "[t]he further development of security and defence cooperation to live up to the Union's commitments and responsibilities across the world by strengthening the Common Security and Defence Policy, in full complementarity with NATO; by ensuring that Member States maintain and develop the necessary civilian and military capabilities, including through pooling and sharing; and with a stronger European defence industry».

The European Council also welcomed the EU Global strategy\textsuperscript{23}, clearly illustrating the commitment of both organizations towards collective security:

"When it comes to collective defence, NATO remains the primary framework for most Member States. At the same time, EU-NATO relations shall not prejudice the security and defence policy of those Members, which are not in NATO. The EU will therefore deepen cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance in complementarity, synergy, and full respect for the institutional framework, inclusiveness and decision-making autonomy of the two. In this context, the EU needs to be strengthened as a security community: European security and defence efforts should enable the EU to act autonomously while also contributing to and undertaking actions in cooperation with NATO".

\textbf{Concluding Remarks and Recommendations}

NATO's Warsaw Summit and June 2016 European Council both represent a step forward to strengthen and enhance the relationship and concrete cooperation between both organisations and to proceed in areas such as strategic communication, information exchange, the ability to counter hybrid threats, cyber defence, civilian and military planning and capabilities of pooling and sharing.

Therefore, a holistic and comprehensive approach is required, based on partnerships with neighbourhood countries, as well as in multilateralism and coordination among local, regional and international players, addressing the root causes of conflicts along with prevention and state building. The EU-NATO partnership must then be acknowledged as strategic in order to face the changing nature and the multiple threats of the opponent, counter them and build more resilience. In fact, we can emphasise four key points to summarise and conclude:

First, the new impetus in EU-NATO strategic partnership should focus on enhancing and developing common areas of cooperation, also through EU's participation in NATO crisis management exercises, as well as in joint exercises, in order to test


the procedures agreed between the two organizations and adjust the force structures at all levels.

Second, they should concentrate efforts on capacity building of countries, including understanding roots of the problems. A comprehensive approach can be very useful to the defence dimension of those responses, also through information gathering.

Third, it is important to assure complementarity and synergies between NATO and the EU in the new dimensions of defence, namely cyber and space, as well as in the area of maritime security, taking advantage of the lessons learned by both NATO and the EU in these regions.

At last, it is needed to adapt decision-making processes to the new security reality and develop a communication strategy on countering terrorism and other threats that have an impact on the daily life of the EU and NATO member states’ citizens.

In brief, it is worth to remember how the expression ‘an international order based on effective multilateralism’ has been a part of the security international organizations narrative with a particular emphasis in the last few years24. Undoubtedly, the EU and NATO cooperation is a major proof of how effective multilateralism is only successful if member states agree on a comprehensive 360° approach that respects all the geographical priorities and concerns. In fact, despite the regions of allies’ strategic priorities, both Eastern Flank assists in tackling southern threats and Southern Flank is involved in Easter flank security improvement25. One of the best examples is the Nordic-Baltic region, where the air forces of 16 different NATO member states have been involved since 2004 in securing Baltic air space. Moreover, NATO is cooperating with the European Union’s border management agency Frontex to deal with the current refugee and migrant crisis, along with human trafficking and criminal networks. In fact, multinational, integrated maritime forces made up of vessels from various Allied countries are contributing to stem illegal trafficking and illegal migration in the Aegean Sea, through intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in the Aegean Sea and at the Turkish-Syrian border.

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24 For example, in the 2003 European Security Strategy as well as in the 2008 Implementation report.
25 Portugal, for instance, has developed a solid F16 program with Romania. For more details, please watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJcE_4-bapc (last accessed 28 October 2016)