



Clingendael

Netherlands Institute of International Relations

New Threats, New EU and NATO Responses

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Abbreviations

A2	Anti-Access
AA	Association Agreement
AD	Area-Denial
AWACS	Airborne Warning And Control System
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CDP	Capability Development Plan
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
EUAM	European Union Advisory Mission
EUFOR RCA	European Union Force to the Central African Republic
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FSJ	Freedom, Security and Justice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLCM	Ground-Launched Cruise Missile
GMES	Global Monitoring for Environment and Security
HR	High Representative
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IS	Islamic State
ISTAR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFA	Macro-Financial Assistance
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRF	NATO Response Force
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RAP	Readiness Action Plan
RPAS	Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SATCEN	Satellite Centre
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Forces Assistance
UN	United Nations

UNHCR
US
VJTF

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United States
Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

1 Introduction

The changes in Europe's security environment raise important questions regarding the responses of the international organisations most concerned, the European Union and NATO. The Russian interference in Ukraine has fundamentally changed the situation at Europe's eastern borders. Article 5, NATO's original core task, has retaken its central position as confirmed at the Wales Summit. However, the hybrid nature of the new threats to the Alliance's East question the value of purely military responses taken under the Readiness Action Plan such as the establishment of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). In addition, conflict has become the norm in large parts of the Middle East and Northern Africa (the MENA area). Islamic State has brought extreme levels of brutal violence; it has mixed irregular and regular forms of warfare, including the use of heavy weapons; and it operates as both a state and a non-state actor. The EU's neighbourhood policy, both to the East and to the South, is outdated. The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), originally designed for dealing with Bosnia-type conflicts, is in need of a review.

In response to the changing security environment the EU and NATO need new strategies or policies. But both organisations will also have to take a new look at their capacity needs. For NATO the focus is very much on the VJTF, but the Wales Summit has also called for a review of the Alliance's 'strategic military posture', including an improvement in robust land forces. At the same time, NATO is struggling with the issue of how to respond to hybrid threats, for which the organisation seems to be ill-suited. The EU, on the other hand, has non-military instruments at its disposal to deal with these threats: diplomatic-political measures; economic, trade and energy policies; and, financial and economic sanctions, etc. In terms of capacities, the EU has progressed well in developing a comprehensive approach, but how valuable is this approach in conflicts where state-collapse is the dominating feature and where fighting between extremist groups goes on? The new EUNAVFOR military operation in the Central Mediterranean is proof of the growing connection between EU external and internal security activities. It has linked the CSDP military actors to the Frontex mission, carried out by civilian security authorities. As CSDP is moving closer to playing a role in EU border security this might also have an impact on required capacities, in particular with a view to civil-military interaction.

This report assesses the consequences of the changing security environment for the EU and NATO. It starts (chapter 2) with an overview of the wide variety of risks and challenges that Europe is facing, with a focus on the eastern and southern neighbourhood. Chapter 3 is dedicated to NATO. What capacities should be available to the Atlantic Alliance in the new security environment? This involves issues like the Alliance's future strategic military posture, both nuclear and conventional. How should the force posture be rebalanced, in particular how should more robust land forces be combined with the requirement of high-speed mobility and deployability? What can NATO do to deal with hybrid threats and by what means should the Alliance prepare itself for hybrid conflict? In chapter 4 the same question about the impact on capacities is answered for the European Union. The EU has all of the tools in house, from CSDP operations to sanctions, trade and energy policies. Yet, applying them in an integrated way – which is highly desirable in response to hybrid threats – remains a huge challenge. Is the EU's comprehensive approach in need of adaptation to a new security environment which is different from the past crisis management context? What does it

mean for CSDP, for example to deal with the situation in the South at the EU's borders? As both the EU and NATO are adapting in response to new security challenges, the issue of their relationship is also back on the agenda. Berlin Plus is outdated. The new world requires a more strategic relationship instead of a set of military-technical arrangements between the EU and NATO. This might also have consequences for the capacities that the two organisations should be able to deploy. What should be the priorities for each of them? How can the capacities of the EU and NATO be synchronised in order to realise a more systematic, coherent and efficient response by Europe and North America to the changing world? These issues are addressed in chapter 5. The report ends with conclusions and recommendations in chapter 6.

2 The challenge: a mixed bag of different threats

The world is not in disorder but its order can be questioned.¹ The geostrategic power shift is continuing and the cooperation of the European Union and the United States with Russia and China remains constrained. The security environment is characterised by a wide variety of risks and challenges. The belt of instability now runs from Central America through Northern and sub-Saharan Africa and the larger Middle East (MENA) area to Eastern Europe. Conflicts occur across the belt, though the combination of driving factors might be different from place to place. In the MENA area religious and political sectarianism dominates. Some states, like Syria and Libya, have collapsed, while others are fragile and challenged by internal conflict or extremist groups operating across national borders. Islamic State (IS) has blurred the distinction between state and non-state actors as it has characteristics of both. To their immediate East the EU and NATO have to deal with a complex combination of local armed conflict and state-level confrontation. In East Asia more traditional interstate tensions are rising as Beijing is expanding its footprint, in particular into the South China Sea. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and missiles also continues to pose threats to security and stability. Europe's security is in danger due to a multitude of threats, but the most pressing challenges are geographically determined: the areas adjacent to its eastern and southern borders.

Russia's new activism

At the end of the Bush administration the US-Russia relationship was back at a low point, in particular due to the Kremlin's armed intervention in Georgia in the summer of 2008. The newly elected President Obama wanted to 'reset' relations with Russia and restore cooperation with Moscow. To give it visibility in the media, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton handed a reset button to her Russian colleague Sergej Lavrov during their meeting in Geneva in March 2009. The button showed both the English and Russian words: reset and *peregruzka*. But a translation mistake had been made: reset in Russian is *perezagruzka*. The word 'perezagruzka' means overcharged. Looking at the status of US-Russian relations in 2015, one could argue that the translation error at the State Department was an omen. Washington expected more from resetting the relationship than Russia would allow. There would be no reset to the pre-Bush administration cooperation with Moscow. The Georgia War was not a one-time exception. It turned out to be just a step in President Putin's campaign to restore the international *grandeur* of Russia – not by cooperating but by confronting the West. In 2014 this became obvious. The Sochi Winter Olympic Games had just finished as the turmoil started in Ukraine. Subsequently, the Crimea is now part of Russia and large parts of the Donbass area in Eastern Ukraine are controlled by rebel forces that are loyal to Moscow. The EU and NATO are not in a new Cold War with Russia, but the temperature of the relationship has dropped to very low degrees. In terms of security, what are the challenges facing Europe to its East?

1 Jan Rood, Frans-Paul van der Putten, Minke Meijnders, *A world without order? Clingendael Monitor 2015*, February 2015.

The hybrid threat

The new buzzword to describe Russia's interference in Ukraine is *hybrid warfare*. The term is confusing as Moscow itself is not conducting war in a classical sense but applying a wide set of confrontational instruments. It would be more appropriate to use the term *hybrid threat* or *hybrid intervention*, which consists of a mix of non-military and military elements, applying both 'soft power' and 'hard power'. The use of 'soft power', however, is fundamentally different as understood in the West, where it is seen as a means to attract other countries to its own community. Opposite to this power of attraction is the Russian view of 'soft power', that is to influence or destabilise countries through non-military actions. Russia's Foreign Policy Concept, issued in February 2013, refers to the use of *myagkaya sila*, which is better translated as 'soft force' rather than 'soft power'. For Russia, the concept "includes direct coercion or destabilisation by means that are not hard, i.e. short of direct military intervention."²

For implementing 'soft force' Russia has many tools at hand. First and foremost, the Kremlin uses propaganda as an important tool to influence public opinion, both at home and abroad. Nationalism combined with anti-Western propaganda dominates in most of the state-controlled Russian TV, radio and newspapers, on the internet and on social media. Although critical voices can still be heard their audiences are limited and it becomes increasingly difficult for them to operate freely and openly. Another non-military instrument is Russia's gas and oil export power. In general, Moscow is reluctant when it comes to interrupting energy flows abroad, as the state's income is largely dependent on gas and oil exports (approximately 80% of GDP). It is striking that Putin has never used the EU sanctions as a reason for retaliation by interrupting energy export to EU member states. However, the Kremlin has not hesitated to use energy as a political power tool to increase the pressure on Kiev. In case of further deterioration of relations with the West, gas and oil dependencies could also make other European countries vulnerable to Russian threats, in particular with regard to their gas imports. This would apply specifically to Russia's immediate neighbours, such as Finland and the Baltic States, who are dependent on Gazprom for 100% of their gas energy needs (see figure 1).

In Eastern Ukraine the Kremlin has not operated by direct military intervention but by 'indirect means' of various sorts: *propaganda* by putting all the blame on the 'offensive' Ukrainian Army; *covert activities* by supporting proxies (local rebels) with weaponry and by sending Russian volunteers disguised as 'green men' or local fighters; and keeping the area somewhere *between war and peace* through supporting the Minsk negotiations on the one hand while ignoring violations of the cease-fire agreements on the other. Moscow's interest is to keep the Donbass area in a *hybrid situation* of neither full-scale war nor a functioning political entity under the control of Kiev. In essence Putin's aim is to keep Ukraine destabilised, thus preventing it from becoming a functioning state ready to set up closer ties with the EU and NATO. It is "to deny Ukraine the baseline it requires for political sustainability, fiscal solvency and structural reform."³ Some have called it "anarchy protection", as Moscow's biggest fear might be having to cope with neighbouring rule-of-law countries which could pose a threat to Russia's own non-democratic, anti-rule of law governance.⁴

2 Keir Giles, 'Russia's Toolkit', in: Keir Giles, Philip Hanson, Roderic Lyne, James Nixey, James Sherr and Andrew Wood, *The Russian Challenge*, Chatham House Report, 2015, p. 42-43.

3 James Sherr, 'A War of Narratives and Arms', in: *The Russian Challenge*, p. 28.

4 General (ret.) James Mattis, former commander of the US Central Command, at a roundtable discussion of the Hoover Institution on 10 March 2015. See: *Hoover Roundtable: Perspectives on Russia's Hybrid War on Ukraine And US Foreign Policy*, Tuesday, March 10, 2015 – Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

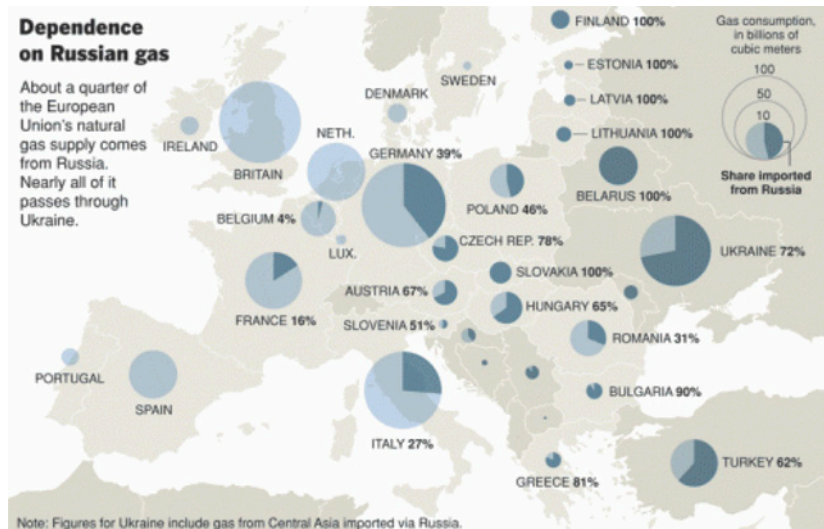


Figure 1 Dependence on Russian gas
<http://beyondthe.eu/gazprom-vs-chevron-a-battle-of-titans-over-the-future-of-an-energy-island/>

Hybrid warfare is not a new invention by Russia. In fact it is as old as warfare itself. Propaganda, economic blockades and covert activities have been used in many international confrontations in combination with full-scale war. Both World Wars in the previous century serve as examples. What is new in the 21st century is the greater effect of hybrid warfare due to the innovation in means and methods combined with increasing economic global interdependencies. The internet and the media offer unprecedented scope for generating domestic support as well as influencing the ‘opponent’. The cyber domain is not just a modern realm for espionage; it can also be used offensively, for example to disrupt communication networks or other essential enablers for combat forces. Distance and time offer no protection against such a threat – this is very different from the classical danger posed by armies and fleets. Also, closing the valve of a gas pipeline can paralyse society in a country that is largely dependent on energy imports. Russia can apply all of these instruments in hybrid conflict. In fact, the *Russian military doctrine* states that modern warfare is conducted by the integrated use of military force, as well as political, economic, informational and other non-military measures.⁵ Thus, ambiguity is part and parcel of conflict with the West: applying covert ‘indirect means’ in the Donbass goes hand in hand with official statements in which the Kremlin denies its involvement in the war. Equally it goes together with Moscow’s willingness to contribute to the Minsk negotiating process. It is this ambiguity in Russia’s challenge to the West which makes it very difficult for the EU and NATO to develop appropriate and effective responses.

The Russian military doctrine provides no further elaboration on how to conduct hybrid warfare. However, already in February 2013 the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, General Valery Gerasimov, published an article in which he provided the military leadership’s views on modern warfare.⁶ According to Gerasimov the lines between peace and war are increasingly blurred. Functioning states can suddenly collapse into chaos; to illustrate

⁵ *Russian Military Doctrine 2014*, paragraph 15.

⁶ General Valery Gerasimov, ‘The Value of Science in Prediction’, *Military-Industrial Courier*, February 27, 2013.

this point he refers to the Middle East. War is no longer formally declared. Gerasimov calls the new type of conflict 'non-linear warfare', in which "the role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness." Gerasimov underlines the importance of operating with special forces, using internal opposition and informational actions. Some have labelled it the *Gerasimov Doctrine*⁷. Other experts hold the view that Gerasimov's theory is nothing new, but is in line with the ongoing reform plan for the Russian armed forces, which argues for the combination of non-linear and network-centric warfare (the latter aimed at copying what the US and its Allies have been working on for a longer period). The Gerasimov Doctrine does not exist as a fixed concept. Hybrid warfare in the Crimea – in particular by using highly specialised GRU (military intelligence) Spetsnaz forces – has been successful, but "the point is that non-linear doctrine and its tactics are in a state of experimentation and evolution – hence, Moscow is unlikely to repeat precisely the same approach or pattern when non-linear warfare is used next".⁸ In fact, the events in the Donbass have already shown that non-linear warfare can also lead to protracted war rather than a quick win. The specific geography of the Crimea – with only one access route from the Ukrainian main land – as well as the surprise effect and the existing presence of Russian bases and troops are important factors that explain the successful take-over. One could indeed argue that "It was a favourable context that enabled Russia's annexation of Crimea, rather than the discovery of a new mode of 'ambiguous warfare' (...)"⁹

Hybrid warfare is neither new nor a fixed doctrine always applying the same tools. But the important conclusion is that Russia is very likely to apply it in one form or another in future conflicts. *Hybrid warfare offers the best option for Putin's Russia* to influence its immediate neighbourhood. It is difficult to counter, in particular if applied in a country like Ukraine, which is not a fully functioning state – while Russia has an autocratic, central power base that has almost complete control over all available instruments.¹⁰ It is also the less risky option, as open warfare might bring Russia into a large-scale confrontation with the West, which would be very costly, risky and uncontrollable.

Modernisation of Russia's armed forces

Hybrid warfare does not exclude the use of regular armed forces – on the contrary. First, they can be used to influence and intimidate the opponent, for example by concentrating forces and exercising them. Second, they can be used in hybrid warfare, in a covert way, in combination with irregular means – as is the case in Eastern Ukraine. Third, the Russian military doctrine does not exclude overt, full-scale war as the ultimate way to win a conflict. Thus, modern regular armed forces are needed. The Georgia War in 2008 revealed the shortfalls of Russia's armed forces in terms of information technology, unmanned aerial

7 Dr. Mark Galeotti, 'The 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and Russian Non-Linear War', in: *Moscow's Shadow Blog*. Galeotti prefers the term 'guerrilla politics' to hybrid warfare.

8 Robert McDermott, 'Myth and Reality – A New Assessment of Russia's 'Hybrid Warfare' Strategy', in: *A Net Assessment of Developments in Eurasia Since the Start of 2014*, The Jamestown Foundation, November 2014, p. 11.

9 Bettina Renz, 'Russia's 'New Way of War?' Asymmetric warfare and the Ukraine Crisis', *Ballots & Bullets*, School of Politics & International Relations, University of Nottingham, January 15, 2015.

10 Oliver Tamminga, 'Hybride Kriegsführung – Zur Einordnung einer aktuellen Erscheinungsform des Krieges', *SWP-Aktuell*, 2015/A27, März 2015.

vehicles and precision-guided munitions.¹¹ The Russian Army's equipment was basically operating with equipment of the Soviet vintage, as very little modernisation took place in the nineties and early years of the 21st century. The poor military performance in the Georgia War led to the 2008 *New Look* reform plan, which aimed at restructuring the armed forces away from the Soviet model of mass mobilisation, which is suitable for large-scale military confrontations, towards a professional force with a much higher level of readiness.¹² Restructuring the Soviet-type 'specialised' divisions (tank and motorised infantry) into all-arms brigades – that are fully manned, ready and with modern weapons – was a central element of the plan. These brigades would be formed on the basis of deployment and warfighting criteria – light, medium, heavy – rather than equipment-driven (tracked or wheeled vehicles). When needed the light and medium brigades could be moved more quickly to hot spots as Russia's long borders with the West and China could no longer be defended by large army formations covering the whole area – due to the downward demographic trend. The other important element of the plan was the modernisation of equipment. In 2011 President Putin launched a \$500 billion rearmament programme with the aim of replacing 70% of the armed forces' equipment by 2020. The defence budget, which had already doubled from 2004 to 2012 (to \$ 80 billion), would further increase. However, the Russian economic recession that started in late 2014 – as a result of lower oil prices and the international sanctions – became a spoiler for rising Russian Government spending. In January 2015 Minister of Finance Anton Siluanov announced a 10% cut across all government expenditure, including defence.¹³ Moscow has no other choice. Defence expenditure accounts for about 35% of all government spending (and 12% of the Russian GDP), which makes it very unlikely that the Russian armed forces will escape budget cuts.¹⁴ In April 2015 President Putin signed an amended 2015 budget with a 2% nominal reduction. Together with the high Russian inflation rate it will result in a real reduction of about 8%.¹⁵ But the more important question is what impact the budget cuts will have in the years 2016-2020. If the *recession* of Russia's economy continues, the *defence budget is likely to be cut* even further. For the moment, Russia remains third in the world rankings for defence expenditure, but it is still far behind the United States and China. In 2014, the US made up 34% of the world's total defence expenditure. China accounted for 12% and Russia for 4.8% (followed by Saudi-Arabia with 4.5%).¹⁶ As many of the Russian armed forces' replacement programmes are underway, it is unlikely that they will come to a full stop. As we have seen in other countries with comparable defence cuts in recent years – such as Germany or the United Kingdom – slicing existing investment programmes is the easiest choice. Equipment orders will be delayed or postponed.

Future budget pressure is just one factor influencing the modernisation of the Russian armed forces. High levels of corruption, the weakness of the defence industry, organisational inertia and unrealistic target setting are other factors which make continued underperformance likely,

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- 11 Carolina Vendill Pallin and Fredrik Westerlund, 'Russia's War in Georgia: Lessons and Consequences', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2009, p. 401.
 - 12 Stephen Gilbert, 'Russian Military Modernization', *Draft General Report, NATO Parliamentary Assembly – Science and Technology Committee*, 24 March 2015, paragraph 4.
 - 13 Stanley Carvalho, 'Russia's military budget may shrink 10 percent in 2015 – Rostec', *Reuters*, Febr. 23, 2015 (www.reuters.com).
 - 14 Tim Worstall, 'Russia Has To Slash Military Spending To Balance The Budget', *Forbes – Economics & Finance*, 30 Dec. 2014.
 - 15 Sergej Goerijev, 'Ruslands defensiebegroting is onbetaalbaar', *De Volkskrant*, 19 mei 2015.
 - 16 Sam Perlo-Freeman, Aude Fleurant, Pieter D. Wezeman and Siemon T. Wezeman, 'Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2014', *SIPRI Fact Sheet*, April 2015.

according to a spring 2015 report for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.¹⁷ The rapporteur considers full implementation of the 2011 rearmament plan to be “extremely questionable”¹⁸, taking into account the already existing backlog in its execution and a range of other factors – not least the lack of modern high-technology industrial capacities. In combination with cancelled deliveries by Western companies (like the French Mistral vessels) this implies that “the technological gap between Russia and NATO military will thus widen in the short and medium term”.¹⁹ It is not the Russian military technological jump which should worry the West. In particular in the area of C4ISR capabilities²⁰ – which are crucial for network-centred warfare – *Russia will stay far behind compared to the US and its Allies*. Another factor influencing the modernisation of the Russian armed forces is demography. The Russian population is shrinking, which makes it nearly impossible to abandon conscript service and create an all-volunteer and fully professional force. The current Russian troop strength is estimated at approximately 800,000 (meaning 20% below the planned level of 1 million), far behind NATO’s total numerical strength of more than three million military. The majority of the Russian armed forces still consists of poorly trained conscripts, who also account for the bulk of the troops participating in big exercises.²¹ *The restructuring plan of 2008 has failed*. The Russian armed forces will not be turned into a full professional force and will continue to be dependent on conscript service. Despite reform measures and the improved image of the Russian Army, analysts expect “that the long-established pattern of failing to meet unrealistic contract-recruitment targets will persist”.²² The military leadership has given up the brigade structure (light, medium, heavy). The Russian Army returns to divisional structures with traditional armoured (tracked vehicles) and motorised (wheeled vehicles) brigades.²³

Box 1 Russia’s nuclear weapons

Nuclear arms take a *central place* in the Russian military doctrine. They provide a key deterrent to any potential aggressor. The doctrine states that Moscow has the right to use nuclear weapons (a) in response to a nuclear attack and (b) in case the existence of Russia is at stake due to a large-scale conventional attack. The latter is not new, but the relative weakness of the Russian conventional forces has raised questions about whether the *nuclear threshold* is now lower than in the Soviet age. The potential use of nuclear weapons is perceived to provide compensation against opponents with superior conventional armed forces. This might be NATO, but it also applies to China.²⁴ This reasoning, however, is based on classical, full-scale war scenarios, which are unlikely to happen with China or NATO. The nuclear arsenal is above all to safeguard Russia as an independent state and a world actor.

17 Stephen Gilbert, Russian Military Modernization, paragraph 64.

18 Ibidem, paragraph 16.

19 Ibidem, paragraph 17.

20 Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

21 Bettina Renz, ‘Russia resurgent? Russian military performance in Crimea and its implications on Western defence requirements’, *Ballots & Bullets*, School of Politics & International Relations, University of Nottingham, November 5, 2014.

22 *The Military Balance 2015*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, p. 163.

23 Ibidem, p. 16.

24 ‘Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two – NATO’, *House of Commons Defence Committee, Third Report of Session 2014-15*, paragraph 16.

One third of the Russian defence budget is spent on the nuclear forces – underlining its importance. *Modernisation* of the Russian nuclear arsenal is *ongoing*.²⁵ There are at least three new intercontinental ballistic missile programmes under way (RS-12/SS-27 Topol, RS-24/SS-27 Yars, RS-26), while research has started on a new ‘heavy’ ICBM²⁶ called ‘Sarmat’. The strategic bomber force, consisting of Blackjack and Bear-H airplanes, is still proving its capability by testing Western airspace. A new strike bomber (the PAK-DA) – the Russian answer to the B-2 wing-shaped strategic bomber of the US Air Force – is under development. The first tests are foreseen for 2019 and there is an initial in-service date of 2025. The introduction of the new Borey-class strategic submarines with the new Bulava SLBM²⁷ is behind schedule, but will continue. New nuclear cruise missiles will be deployed.²⁸ With regard to short-range nuclear systems, modernisation continues and the SS-26 Iskander SRBM has been deployed. Because of their short-range Iskander brigades are stationed close to NATO territory, for example near St-Petersburg. It remains unclear whether Iskander missiles have been moved to a permanent location in Kaliningrad, the Russian enclave between Poland and Lithuania. The same applies to the Crimea. Russia is also modernising its tactical air forces by introducing the nuclear-capable Su-34 Fullback fighter bomber.

Three remarks can be made to put the modernisation of the Russian nuclear arsenal in perspective in comparison to the nuclear weapons of the United States.²⁹ First, Russia had no substantial modernisation programme in the nineties and the early 21st century; it is catching up. Second, the Russian and US modernisation cycles have never overlapped; the US modernised most of its arsenal in the 1980s and early nineties. Washington’s next modernisation cycle will be in the 2020s, more or less after the existing Russian cycle has been completed. Third, Russia has a replacement approach to its missiles, while the US invests a lot in the modernisation and upgrading of existing missiles. The Minuteman III and SS-25 ICBMs – which are considered as counter-systems – may serve as an example. The SS-25 entered into service 15 years later and is already in the process of replacement; most of the Russian ICBMs served one-third of the time served by the Minuteman III.

In 2014, the US accused Russia of testing a missile prohibited under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1987, which forbids ground-launched ballistic missiles and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 km. In its 2015 arms control compliance report the State Department repeated that Russia was in violation of the INF Treaty by developing a Ground-Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM) with a range above 500 km.³⁰

25 The information in this section comes from the Military Balance 2015 of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London.

26 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (land-based, either in silos or on mobile platforms).

27 Sea-Launched Ballistic Missile (based on nuclear-powered, ‘strategic’ submarines).

28 Short-Range Ballistic Missile (sometimes also referred to as ‘tactical’ or ‘theatre’ nuclear missiles).

29 Based on: Sven Pifer, ‘Overblown: Russia’s empty nuclear sable-ratting’, *Brookings Opinion*, March 17, 2015 (www.brookings.edu).

30 ‘2015 Report on Adherence to and Compliance With Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments’, *US State Department Report*, 5 June 2015.

Consequences for the EU and NATO

The conclusion is that Russia's armed forces are *in better shape* than in 2008 during the Georgia War – in particular the well-trained and well-equipped special forces – but they *continue to lag behind modern Western forces*, which are capable of conducting complex military operations on a larger scale. Therefore, Russia is capable of realising limited objectives in military terms, such as the Crimea annexation, exploiting geography, time and surprise. In the Donbass, Russian troops are covertly participating in the war and supporting rebel forces. That does not imply that Russia is capable of launching a broader front. Sustaining its current forces in Eastern Ukraine has already become difficult.³¹ According to another expert, the Ukraine intervention does “not suggest that the Russian military is capable of competing in conventional warfare beyond its ‘near abroad’, nor in a confrontation with NATO”.³²

The *major challenge for the EU and NATO* will be to cope with *hybrid threats*, which is the most likely option that Russia will use first in future conflicts. It is in Russia's interest to avoid article 5 violations “as NATO's military superiority has effectively removed conventional warfare from the suite of practical options”.³³ For that reason the importance of nuclear weapons in Russian military thinking has grown, which also implies that *modernisation of the nuclear stockpile will continue to be priority number one*. But the major challenge for the West will be to respond to the Kremlin's activist hybrid threat, using all available means, from hard power to soft force and from overtly demonstrating with armed forces to covertly using military means.

Chaos in the South

For a long time the ‘Middle East’ used to be a synonym for the area of turmoil to Europe's South-East. After the Arab Spring unrest started to spread across the Maghreb, the geographic term for the area of instability then became the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) area. Today, even MENA is no longer the right acronym to describe the wider zone of instability. Conflicts have spread from North Africa's shores at the Mediterranean to the Sahel (Mali, Niger) and even to sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. northern Nigeria). The Middle East area had already been extended to the East, encompassing Afghanistan and North-West Pakistan.

Geographic expansion is just one feature of the growing chaos in *the wider MENA area*. Another characteristic is the *rise of non-state actors*. In Syria alone some 1,200 armed groups are involved in the fighting. In Libya more than 1,700 rival clans, criminal gangs, tribal factions and Islamist militias are competing for power.³⁴ But with the rise of Islamic State (IS) the distinction between non-state and state actors has been blurred. By proclaiming the Islamic Caliphate, conquering and defending territory and installing state-like institutions, IS gives the impression of being a ‘state’. One of the most important functions of the latter is to collect revenue, not only to finance the armed struggle, but also to pay the salaries of public sector

31 Igor Sutyagin, ‘Russian Forces in Ukraine’, *RUSI Briefing Paper*, March 2015.

32 Bettina Renz, ‘Russian Military Capabilities after 20 Years of Reform’, *Survival*, vol. 56 no. 3, June-July 2014, pp. 78-79.

33 Julio Miranda Calha, ‘Hybrid Warfare: NATO's New Strategic Challenge’, *Draft General Report, NATO Parliamentary Assembly – Defence and Security Committee*, 7 April 2015, paragraph 15.

34 Boris Blazekovic, ‘Instability in the Levant – Challenges to NATO's Security’, *Draft General Report, NATO Parliamentary Assembly – Political Committee*, 2 April 2015, paragraphs 6 and 28.

employees, finance the repair and maintenance of infrastructure and fund social welfare.³⁵ IS is generating income through various sources. Most probably the revenue from oil exports has decreased due to air strikes against facilities and the fall in world oil prices. The capture of Tal Abyad at the Turkish-Syrian border by the Kurdish Peshmerga in mid-June 2015 has also diminished access to the oil export market. By the end of 2014 the revenue from IS' oil exports was estimated at several million dollars per week – it is likely to be lower by mid-2015. Income from the illicit trade of antiquities might amount to \$100 million a year. Bank looting, customs tax, passage fees, business and other taxes, ransoms for kidnappings and external support are other sources of the Caliphate's income in order to finance its annual budget of approximately \$2 billion. On the other hand, IS in many ways acts as a non-state actor, in particular in its armed struggle (see below). IS can be described as a mixture of a state and non-state actor or a *hybrid state*.³⁶ The next feature of the changing character of conflict in this part of the world is the rise of *sectarianism*. In the past the Sunni-Shi'a divide was primarily an interstate power struggle between the Sunni group of states – with Saudi Arabia as the dominating nation –and the Shiites with Iran as the leading country. In Syria and Iraq both groups are now striving for wider influence through armed confrontation. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and also NATO member Turkey continue to fund and arm Sunni opposition groups in Syria, while Iran is providing financial aid, technical assistance and pro-government forces to the Assad regime.³⁷ In early June 2015 approximately 7,000 Iraqi and Iranian fighters arrived in Syria to help to defend Damascus against the regime's opposition forces.³⁸ Teheran also supports Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian war. Saudi Arabia and Iran are conducting their rivalry over dominance in the Middle East by financing proxies with billions of dollars in aid and loans³⁹ – thus turning the fighting on the ground more and more into a sectarian battle rather than state-versus-opposition groups conflicts. As IS has connected the fighting in Iraq and Syria, *international borders are losing their relevance*. Although the risk of redrawing the Middle East map is rather low – certainly it is not in the interest of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey⁴⁰ – the factual disappearance of the border between Iraq and Syria has a wider geographical destabilising effect.

The spill-over effects of the chaos in the wider MENA area are tremendous. First and foremost, the *humanitarian consequences* are staggering. Syrians are now the largest refugee population after the Palestinians, with four million people having left the country and approximately eight million having been internally displaced, together making up nearly half of the country's pre-war population (22 million inhabitants). Turkey hosts 1.8 million Syrian refugees, Lebanon 1.2 million refugees, Jordan 630,000, Iraq 250,000 and Egypt 130,000.

35 'Islamic State Financing and U.S. Policy Approaches', *Congressional Research Service Report*, April 10, 2015. The figures on the Caliphate's income also originate from this report.

36 IS (Islamic State = al-Dawla al-Islamiya), ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) and ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) are the three most used acronyms. In September 2014 the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, introduced the acronym *Daesh*. In his view 'Islamic State' gives the wrong impression as it is not a state and the terrorist group does not represent Islam. Daesh is a 'loose acronym' for Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq al-Sham). The name is commonly used by enemies of ISIS, and it also has many negative undertones, as Daesh sounds similar to the Arabic words *Daes* ("one who crushes something underfoot") and *Dahes* ("one who sows discord"). See: Samantha Rollings, 'France says the name ISIS is offensive, will call it 'Daesh' instead', *The Week* (www.theweek.com), September 17, 2014.

37 Boris Blazekovic, *Instability in the Levant – Challenges to NATO's Security*, paragraphs 10-11.

38 'Iraqi and Iranian reinforcements for Syria', *European Diplomacy and Defense*, No. 800, Brussels, 3 June 2015.

39 'The Sunni-Shia Divide – An CFR InfoGuide Presentation', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2014, www.cfr.org.

40 Erwin van Veen & Nick Grinstead, *Not all is what it seems: 5 Inconvenient 'truths' of the Iraqi crisis*, publication on the Clingendael website, www.clingendael.nl.

Just over 200,000 Syrians have applied for asylum in Europe.⁴¹ The overwhelming majority – some 98% of Syria’s refugees – is hosted by the neighbouring countries.⁴² Second, the migrant flow to Europe has increased exponentially in recent years. It should be noted that migrants escaping from conflict areas only partly account for these numbers. Many migrants, in particular from West African countries, try to reach Europe for economic reasons.

	West-Med	Central-Med	East-Med	Total
2012	6,400	15,900	37,200	59,500
2013	6,800	40,000	24,800	71,600
2014	7,840	170,760	50,830	229,430

Figure 2 Numbers of migrants crossing the Mediterranean

Data from the European Union’s Border Security Agency Frontex, www.frontex.europa.eu

In particular, the increase of immigrants into Italy (Central Mediterranean route) has quickly risen. The overwhelming majority entering Italy crosses the Mediterranean from Libya (141,500 in 2014 or 83%). The number of people dying during sea crossings has also risen: from 700 in 2013 to 3,300 in 2014. In 2015 1,700 people had already lost their lives by mid-April.⁴³ Migration numbers are further increasing in 2015. In the first 6 months, 137,000 migrants crossed the Mediterranean – an 83 percent increase compared to the same period in 2014.⁴⁴ There is a risk of infiltration of human smuggling operations to send jihadist militants on boats carrying refugees to Europe,⁴⁵ although so far this has been a rare exception.

Another feature of the conflicts, which in particular has been on the rise since IS entered the scene, is the increase in *foreign fighters*. An estimated 20,000 jihadists from 90 countries have joined IS or other extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. Most of them originate from non-Western countries, with Tunisia (3,000), Saudi Arabia (2,500) and Jordan (2,089) forming the top three – which could put these countries at risk of a marked increase in terrorist attacks.⁴⁶ In 2015, two attacks in Tunisia, with 59 victims in total, indeed provide proof of this increased danger.⁴⁷ The contingent of foreign fighters from EU countries is estimated at 3,850 or 19% of the world’s total.⁴⁸ The danger of returning foreign fighters should not be exaggerated, as most of them do not return and Western security services are tracking returnees very

41 ‘Syrian Refugees – Inter-Agency Regional Update, 10-25 May’, *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, www.unhcr.org.

42 Boris Blazekovic, *Instability in the Levant – Challenges to NATO’s Security*, paragraph 3.

43 ‘The Mediterranean’s deadly migrant routes’, *BBC News*, 22 April 2015, www.bbc.com.

44 ‘Mediterranean Crisis 2015 at six months: refugee and migrant numbers highest on record’, *UNHCR Press Release*, 1 July 2015 (www.unhcr.org).

45 Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Nathalie Barr, George Willcoxon, Norhan Basuni, ‘The Crisis in North Africa – Implications for Europe and Options for EU Policymakers’, *Clingendael Report*, April 2015, p. 35.

46 Boris Blazekovic, *Instability in the Levant – Challenges to NATO’s Security*, paragraph 36.

47 In March 2015 a terrorist attack was carried out at the Bardo Museum in Tunis (22 killed, 21 wounded) and in June of the same year another attack took place on the beach near Sousse (37 killed, 36 wounded). In both cases tourists from European countries formed the majority of the victims.

48 Piotr Bakowski and Laura Puccio, ‘Foreign Fighters’ – Member States’ responses and EU action in an international context’, *European Parliament Research Service, Briefing*, February 2015.

closely.⁴⁹ Only 10–30% of European foreign fighters return to their home countries.⁵⁰ Terrorist strikes could also hit European targets (citizens, companies, diplomatic representations) in the wider MENA, in particular in countries with weak state structures. Several attacks have been carried out in the past.⁵¹ Hostage taking has also become a standard feature of terrorist acts in the region with the major aim being to get ransom money from parties willing to pay for their release. Foreign fighters also pose security risks inside Europe. Although the number of jihadist terrorist attacks has been limited the psychological effect is enormous – not least due to the wide media attention. The attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels (May 2014, four killed) and that on the office of Charlie Hebdo in Paris (January 2015, 12 killed plus 5 killed elsewhere) dominated most of Europe’s news channels for days. Most of the terrorists involved in the two attacks had been in the Middle East, either for training or as participants in the fighting.

Failed states also provide transit routes for *criminal networks*. Libya has become the transfer place for trafficking not only people but also drugs, weapons, contraband and subsidised commodities. Between 25 and 75% of the drugs, originating from South America are routed through West Africa to destinations in Europe. Libya is used as one of the transit areas into Europe.⁵²

The country has also become a distribution base for arms, offering opportunities to illegal arms traders delivering weaponry to extremist groups in Mali, Niger, Nigeria and elsewhere in the region. According to a UN panel report, Libya is the primary source of illicit weapons – small arms but also shoulder-fired missiles – which are trafficked to at least fourteen countries. Libya is thus fuelling conflict and insecurity – including terrorism – on several continents.⁵³

The threat of Islamic State

IS has emerged as a major security threat to the MENA area and far beyond. Its ‘success’ in armed fighting, and its propaganda encouraging to join the Caliphate’s mission, has not only attracted foreign fighters to the battlefields of Syria and Iraq, but has also resulted in the creation of a growing number of IS affiliates across the region. Some already existing jihadist organisations, like Boko Haram in Nigeria or Wilayat Sinai in Egypt, have renamed themselves to become IS affiliates. In Afghanistan, IS is fighting the Taliban and, reportedly, partly controls six districts in the eastern province of Nangarhar.⁵⁴ In Libya the influence of IS associated groups is growing. The anti-IS offensive of the coalition led by the United States might have stopped further expansion of the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq, but IS is spreading to other parts of the wider MENA area.

49 Daniel Byman, Jeremy Shapiro, ‘Be Afraid, Be a Little Afraid – The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq’, *Brookings Policy Paper*, Number 34, November 2014.

50 According to Peter Neumann, Director of The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), see: www.icsr.info.

51 For example: the January 2013 attack on the Tigantourine oil facility near In Amenas in Algeria and the September 2012 attack on the US diplomatic facility in Benghazi (Libya).

52 Mark Shaw and Liona Mangan, ‘Illicit Trafficking and Libya’s Transition – Profits and Losses’, *The United States Institute for Peace*, 2014.

53 ‘Libya key source for illicit arms, fueling conflicts: U.N. envoy’, *Reuters*, 2014 (www.reuters.com).

54 ‘Gebied in Afghanistan in handen van Islamitische Staat’, *De Volkskrant*, 2 juli 2015.

As stated above, IS is neither a full-blown state nor solely a non-state actor. It is somewhere in between. The same applies to the characteristics of its way of fighting. It is a *combination of many elements*: traditional territorial conquest and irregular or guerilla-type fighting, terrorist acts but also exploiting the internet for recruitment, intimidation and propaganda. A recent analysis of the Royal United Services Institute in London, released after the IS capture of the city of Ramadi in Iraq, points to three lessons learned.⁵⁵ The first lesson is that IS will defend the territory it controls and is bound to expand it – in line with the proclamation of the Caliphate. For this territory-holding aim IS will exploit every opportunity, in particular when facing weak forces – like the Iraqi Army. On several occasions it has been beaten before real fighting started as Iraqi troops simply fled when confronted by the feared black banners of IS. When attacked by military forces that are motivated and willing to fight – as the case of the liberation of Kobane by Kurdish Peshmerga shows – IS defence has been strong, even under air-attacks. To recapture territory from IS, any ground force will have to take heavy casualties. The second lesson is that IS can relatively easily control Sunni territory as the local population might consider anti-Shi'a terror a better option than the only alternative for the moment: the potential cruelty of Iran-backed Shi'a militias, which right now are the only force willing to fight IS in Sunni provinces like Anbar and Nineve. The third lesson relates to geography. IS has created maximum potential for manoeuvring its forces between Iraq and Syria by effectively removing the border between the two countries. IS is not simply acting in a reactive mode. On the contrary: "They seemingly have the knack to move fast, decisively, and operate according to a plan that keeps their many opponents dumbfounded – whether they are Iraq, Iranian, American/allied, Shi'a, Kurdish, or Syrian". With weak Iraqi forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga only able to defend themselves (after reconquering Kurdish territory) IS will continue to be proactive and "we should not be surprised to see further advances, even if coming from a position of significant weakness". According to another analysis,⁵⁶ the Ramadi attack also shows improved tactical sophistication by IS. The battle was well-planned in advance, for example reinforcements were transported from Syria into the Iraqi Anbar province using civil cars to evade US surveillance and air attacks. IS installed a high degree of operational security by silencing its social media and propaganda teams during the attack. At least 27 vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices destroyed the Iraqi forces' defensive security perimeters, frightening the opposing troops. The Ramadi surge shows that IS understands the element of surprise and knows how the coalition can track them. To a large extent, IS' capabilities to plan and conduct sophisticated war operations stem from former (Sunni) Ba'ath Party military officers who left the Shi'a dominated Iraqi armed forces and joined IS.⁵⁷

The wide territory that IS controls, from Palmyra in Central Syria to Mosul in North-East Iraq, raises questions about its *troop strength*. US intelligence has estimated the IS total forces to be somewhere between 9,000 and 31,500 fighters.⁵⁸ Others, like Fuad Hussain, Kurdish Chief-of-Staff to President Massoud Barzani, have estimated the IS number to be as high as 100,000. However, Hussain includes all supporting personnel, police-type forces and other non-fighting personnel. The real fighting forces of IS consist of regular forces (*jund*), elite

55 Professor Gareth Stansfield, 'The Fall of Ramadi: Daesh' Next Move', *RUSI Analysis*, 19 May 2015 (www.rusi.org).

56 Margaret Cooker, 'How Islamic State's Win in Ramadi Reveals New Weapons, Tactical Sophistication and Prowess', *The Wall Street Journal*, May 25, 2015.

57 Richard Barrett, 'The Islamic State', *Soufan Group*, November 2014, p. 20 (www.soufangroup.com).

58 All numbers in this section are mentioned in: Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, 'How Many Fighters Does the Islamic State Really Have?', *War on the Rocks*, February 9, 2015 (www.warontherocks.com).

paramilitary (*inghimasiyun*) troops and death squad (*dhabbihah*) personnel. Another way to look at the numbers is the amount of population to be controlled and 'governed' by IS. In Syria, the towns and provinces controlled by IS have a total population of nearly 2.5 million. Although the actual number might be lower as many people have left their home base, IS will need sizeable forces to maintain its control over such a high number of inhabitants. In Iraq the number (and size of territory) is even bigger: a population of 4 to 4.6 million. Taking the Iraqi and Syrian holdings together estimates of 100,000 armed personnel under the IS banner seem plausible. Finally, the number of casualties also gives an indication. According to US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken, more than 10,000 IS fighters have been killed since the start of the international coalition's air campaign.⁵⁹ If the total IS force strength were to amount to low figures of 20-30,000, this would imply that one third to half of the fighters have already been eliminated. This is not a very realistic outcome. Precise numbers will not become available soon, but the total strength of the IS force is most likely to be in the range of 50,000 to 100,000.

The fighting tactics of IS show a mixed bag of regular and irregular methods, which are reflected in the *wide range of weaponry* at its disposal. Heavy weapons, mostly captured from fleeing Iraqi forces and from their storage facilities, are used both for propaganda and also in armed fighting. IS has at least three different types of tanks at its disposal: the T-55 (100 mm gun), the T-62 (115 mm) and the T-72 (125 mm). It can also field artillery (both self-propelled and towed), a range of armoured fighting vehicles, anti-aircraft artillery, anti-aircraft missiles with a range up to 5 km and multiple rocket launchers. IS even has access to fighter aircraft since capturing the Taqaba air base in Eastern Syria, but most probably the MIG-21s are not airworthy anymore or IS lacks the skills to fly them.⁶⁰ Exact numbers of heavy weapons are difficult to provide. According to the information provided by the US Central Command, 77 tanks and 288 humvees have been destroyed by air attacks.⁶¹ One can assume that IS has increasingly been hiding heavy weapons in urban environments or close to civilian infrastructure and population centres, making it often impossible for pilots to hit them because of the inherent risk of killing civilians. IS has also become more careful in moving heavy weapons between cities and villages as they are very vulnerable to air attacks in open desert landscape. Although surprise attacks by exploiting enemy weaknesses could also occur in the future, overall IS might have to adopt a more defensive posture: "Losing battlefield hardware and capacity for manoeuvre will inevitably erode ISIS's all important momentum".⁶² The more Iranian-backed Shi'a forces are involved, the more IS will be outnumbered for the simple reason that there are twice as many Shi'a as Sunni Arabs in Iraq. Together with the Kurdish forces, "the Islamic State cannot marshal the resources to overwhelm its Kurdish and Shiite Arab opponents, though it will doubtless retain a terrorist and asymmetric capability and control significant parts of Iraq's Sunni-populated areas".⁶³ Suicide car-bomb attacks on Kobane in late June 2015 seem to underline that by using non-conventional tactics IS remains capable of even returning to cities it has previously lost.⁶⁴

59 'Islamic State conflict: 10,000 militants killed in nine months' – *US, BBC News*, 3 June 2015.

60 'As ISIS Continues to Gain Ground, Here's What The Militants Have in Their Arsenal', *Business Insider*, Nov. 17, 2014 (www.businessinsider.com).

61 Steven Ramardie, 'Aanvallen hebben weinig effect op IS', *De Volkskrant*, 10 juni 2015.

62 James Fromson and Steven Simon, 'ISIS: The Dubious Paradise of Apocalypse Now', *Survival*, Vol. 57 no. 3, June-July 2015, p. 16.

63 Faysal Itani, 'The limits of Islamic State expansion', *Brookings*, June 15, 2015 (www.brookings.edu).

64 On 26 June 2015 IS fighters entered Kobane, using car-bomb explosions to cause chaos in Kurdish defensive positions. Several other objects were attacked. A total of at least 145 people were killed.

Although in numbers and resources IS will be outnumbered by its opponents, this in itself will not ensure the collapse of the Caliphate. The deployment of heavy weapons by Iraqi and Kurdish forces is likely to strengthen IS' tactics to avoid battle in the open desert. Their own forces would most likely be annihilated by the combination of air power and heavy weaponry of the opposing forces. Defeating IS militarily will imply first and foremost driving them out of the towns and villages they occupy. In other words, the main characteristic of defeating IS by military means will be *urban warfighting*, which is one of the deadliest ways of (re)conquering territory. Fighting for streets and houses with an ideological and religious fanatic movement like IS is like bringing Stalingrad into the 21st century – as shown in the case of Kobane. IS will deploy all available means, including suicide attacks, booby traps, hostage taking and public executions to influence the will of the opponent. Nevertheless, the Kurdish Peshmerga have already proven to be able to defeat IS in urban warfighting. The Shi'a militias and perhaps in due course the Iraqi Army can realise the same objective. The time factor is against IS as the resource base to sustain its operations will shrink due to coalition air strikes, ground operations and diminishing oil revenues. Internal turmoil within IS cannot be excluded either, including tensions between local IS fighters and foreigners. In the military fight against IS containment is the best option in the short term; in the longer term the chances of successfully 'rolling back' IS will increase. But while in the end the Caliphate might be militarily defeated, this will not imply the end of IS as a religious, ideological and sectarian movement. As long as the root causes – the fundamental fears and grievances of Iraq's Sunni minority and the Syrian minorities' fear of majority rule – are not addressed, IS will have all opportunities to exploit these issues.⁶⁵

The *internet* is part and parcel of IS' mode of operating. *Social media* like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are exploited by IS as a means of incitement to violence.⁶⁶ In Syria and Iraq IS has used the cyber realm to spy on or attacking the opponent. Aid workers have been targeted to find out the hiding locations of refugees. But up to now cyber attacks have predominantly hit Western targets such as the French TV station TV5 Monde and other Western media groups. According to experts such attacks are carried out by sympathisers and not by IS itself. Further expansion of this misuse of cyber space can be expected. There is also a danger of criminal acts being combined with IS-inspired or IS-steered cyber attacks.⁶⁷ Naturally, the internet will continue to be used for public exposure by IS, both to attract and inspire supporters as well as to frighten opponents by placing on it videos of its cruel killing acts.

Consequences for the EU and NATO

The wider MENA area will continue to be characterised by instability for years to come. The *complexity of conflicts is growing* as they are increasingly fuelled by a range of factors: collapsed states like Syria and Libya who have become prime proliferators of insecurity with effects far beyond their own borders; extremist groups, of which IS is now the dominating force, acting as a hybrid state and spreading its influence through affiliate networks across the wider MENA area; and the growing involvement of Shi'a Iran on the one hand and Saudi Arabia plus other Sunni countries on the other, which increases the *sectarian character* of the clashes and leads to further radicalisation of Shi'a and Sunni fighters. European security is affected in quite a different way compared to the challenges from the East.

65 James Fromson and Steven Simon, p. 45.

66 Daveed Gartenstein-Ross e.a., *The Crisis in North Africa*, pp. 34-35.

67 'Warnings over growing IS cyber-threat', *BBC News*, 3 June 2015 (www.bbc.com).

It is not a territorial threat. The instability in the South primarily produces *spill-over effects* like increasing migration, transborder crime and terrorism. It is in its internal security that Europe finds the destabilising impact of the turmoil in the wider MENA area. Therefore, the hybrid character of the threat from the South is *quite different* from the 'non-linear' dangers from Russia. There are certainly comparable elements like the vast use of propaganda and irregular ways of fighting, but they also show essential differences. Extreme violence, brutal killings and other ways of frightening the opponent are openly promoted and shown in propaganda by IS, while by denying any formal involvement in the Donbass War Russia is doing the opposite. IS is mixing conventional and non-conventional warfare – literally showing the flag and its heavy weapons – while Russia is primarily operating with covert forces and by proxies. Religious fanaticism mixed with large-scale criminal activities, growing sectarianism and regional power struggles are dominating an increasingly disintegrating South, while old-style nationalism from one power centre aimed at recapturing some of its lost empire is the main characteristic of the challenge from the East.

3 NATO: more flexible responses required

For more than two decades NATO has focused on crisis management operations, starting in the Balkans in the early nineties and culminating in the largest Allied operation ever in Afghanistan.⁶⁸ The days of these single-sided issues are over. Putin's intervention in Ukraine in 2014 has brought the Alliance back to its core business: territorial defence under article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The Wales Summit in September 2014 marked the turning point:

(We are at) “a pivotal moment in Euro-Atlantic security. Russia’s aggressive actions against Ukraine have fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Growing instability in our southern neighbourhood, from the Middle East to North Africa, as well as transnational and multi-dimensional threats, are also challenging our security. These can all have long-term consequences for peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic region and stability across the globe.”⁶⁹

True to the spirit of this statement, the Heads of State and Government of the 28 member states of NATO approved the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) at the Wales Summit. The RAP introduces measures that together aim to enable the Alliance to respond in a timely and robust way to the new challenges to security in and near Europe, which emanate from the East as well as from the South. The RAP contains two main pillars: the Assurance Measures and the Adaptation Measures. The former contain increased military presence and activity in order to strengthen assurance and deterrence. The latter deal with changes to NATO's long-term military posture and its capabilities. In the words of NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg: “The Readiness Action Plan is the biggest reinforcement of our collective defence since the end of the Cold War. And it is my top priority to implement this plan in full and on time”.⁷⁰

The RAP may very well be the biggest reinforcement, but it certainly is not the biggest change in size. The downsizing of the total force of the NATO member states over the last decades easily outdoes the currently sought after growth. Of course NATO does not need to regain the quantitative dimensions of its forces during the Cold War. However, the Alliance does have an urgent need for reinforcement, which should adequately compensate for the cutbacks made since 1989, as well as provide the proper qualities for NATO to effectively and efficiently act in contemporary crises. Will the nature of the current measures lead to the capabilities needed to counter the new types of challenges to security, or are they too focused on a specific current threat? After all, to counter new threats, the Alliance might very well need new capabilities instead of more of the same tools.

68 At its peak in 2011 ISAF had a troop strength of more than 130,000.

69 *NATO Wales Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales from 4 to 5 September*, paragraph 1.

70 *Joint press point by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas of Estonia*, 20 November 2014 (www.nato.int).

The Readiness Action Plan

The RAP measures aim to convey a strong message: that NATO will stand by its members if and when these are threatened – or actually attacked. It underlines the fact that, although NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes by diplomatic efforts, it is willing and able to perform its erstwhile principal military function: to undertake military operations carried out under article 5 of the Washington Treaty. This message is directed at two different audiences. First, obviously, it is a very deliberate show of force and capability towards the Russian government. Next to that it is particularly aimed at those NATO members that are most concerned about the Russian stance in international affairs – as has become painfully visible in the Ukraine crisis.

The RAP Assurance Measures

The Assurance Measures include the “continuous air, land, and maritime presence and military activity in the eastern part of the Alliance (..) on a rotational basis”.⁷¹ All 28 Allies have committed to actually contributing to the effort. Supposedly these measures can be scaled up or down depending on the security situation. Amongst the measures, the following have been broadcast loud and clear by NATO:

- increasing from 4 to 16 fighter jets for air-policing in the Baltic region;
- commencing AWACS⁷² surveillance flights over eastern NATO territory;
- more ships patrolling in the Baltic, Black, and Mediterranean Seas;
- deploying ground forces to the eastern NATO member states for training and exercises, on a rotational basis;
- conducting over 200 NATO/national exercises in Europe since the Wales Summit⁷³; in addition, several Allies have also sent ground and air forces to Eastern Europe for training and exercises on a bilateral basis.

The RAP Adaptation Measures

The Adaptation Measures are intended to enhance NATO’s military posture and readiness levels. These measures include:

- enhancing the NATO Response Force (NRF) to make it more responsive and capable; taken together, the NRF land forces could be similar in size to a division size force;
- creating – as part of NRF restructuring – a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) of several thousand ground troops supported by air, maritime and special forces, which can be deployed within a few days;⁷⁴
- enhancing Standing Naval Forces with more (and more types of) ships;
- establishing permanent multinational NATO command and control presence as well as reception facilities, on the territories of the eastern Allies (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania), with personnel from Allies on a rotational basis, focusing on planning and exercising collective defence;

71 Wales Summit Declaration, paragraph 7.

72 Airborne Warning And Control System.

73 Major exercises 2014: Black Eagle in Poland (20 Oct.-5 Dec.; 2,000 British and Polish troops). In 2015: Steadfast Javelin I in Estonia (16-23 May; 6,000 troops from nine Allied countries); Noble Jump in Poland (9-18 June; 2,100 troops from nine Allied countries); Steadfast Javelin II in the Baltics, Germany and Poland (2-8 Sept; 2,000 troops from ten Allied countries); Iron Sword in Lithuania (2-14 November; 2,280 troops from nine Allied countries).

74 The VJTF is projected to achieve Full Operational Capability by early 2016; until then a number of members including the Netherlands are cooperating to create an interim VJTF.

- raising the readiness and capabilities of the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin in Poland and enhancing its role as a hub for regional cooperation;
- pre-positioning military equipment and supplies;
- improving NATO's ability to reinforce its eastern Allies through preparation of national infrastructure, such as airfields and ports;
- updating defence plans for Eastern Europe;
- conducting more exercises focussed on crisis management and collective defence.

Contemplations on NATO's Readiness Action Plan

RAP vs. Russia

What the actual effects of these measures will be still remains to be seen. Focussing on the first target audience for the RAP message – Russia – the question is whether the message is understood by the recipient as was intended by the sender. Cultural differences on the strategic level come into play in this case; Russia acts along the characteristic lines for a so-called *modern state*, whereas the majority of NATO states – and through the consensus decision making model therefore NATO as an entity – are *post-modern*.⁷⁵ Modern states apply a strict separation between domestic and foreign affairs, strongly prohibiting external interference in the former. Additionally they claim the right to define what they regard as domestic affairs. With strong executive power for the (central) government, a rather firm dose of nationalism, and the availability of hard power they seek to control the international system, striving for hegemony. The ultimate guarantee of security in this type of state is force, and that includes the changing of borders by use of force if and when that suits national interests. "It is not that, in the modern order, might is right, but that right is not particularly relevant; power and *raison d'état* are the things that matter."⁷⁶ Post-modern states are in many ways almost the exact opposite. The distinction between domestic and foreign affairs is much weaker, up to the point where mutual interference and surveillance of (traditionally) domestic affairs is the agreed rule. These types of states tend to reject the use of force to resolve disputes, even applying self-enforced rules of behaviour. As a result borders become less and less important, approaching irrelevancy. In short, security is based on transparency, interdependence, and mutual vulnerability. As a result of these profound political-cultural differences, a message that is intended to be strong may easily be received as somewhat weak, because it is only strong within the context of post-modern norms of behaviour and responses.

Looking at the Assurance Measures, of the exercises organised as a result of the implementation of RAP, the largest one had 6,000 participants (mostly from the host nation). In that same period, Russia claimed to have approximately 100,000 personnel involved in several large land, naval, and air defence exercises. Added to that, a large number of military personnel was employed on the Crimea, and an unknown – and even vehemently denied – number was engaged in Eastern Ukraine. Even if a staggering 50% of wilful exaggeration (or strategic bluff) is allowed for, this would still mean that some 50,000 troops were exercising and/or training in the same period. This number is known to include unmotivated, nonpaid, scarcely trained conscripts. For nationalistic information purposes however, perception is everything, and facts will be introduced in a way that supports the

75 The terms have been introduced by Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*, 2004.

76 Robert Cooper, p. 22.

Russian narrative. From NATO's post-modern and cost-efficiency driven view, 6,000 is a large exercise indeed. Through the filter of the 'modern state' Russia, the end-score of this match is Russia 1 – NATO 0.⁷⁷ Along the same line of reasoning, there has not been a downscale of unannounced Russian movements through international airspace bordering Alliance members' airspace as a result of the intensified air policing and/or AWACS operations.

Turning to the Adaptation Measures, it is impossible to fail to notice that a large part of these will, either directly or indirectly, lead to a larger NATO military footprint in exactly those Allied countries close to Russia. The expansion of NATO, in number of members or in overall military footprint (both especially on its eastern flank), is a highly sore spot for Russia. The ever-present Russian claim that NATO, in the period of the German reunification, promised that the Alliance would not seek to expand to the East is an evident example of that.⁷⁸ It is irrelevant for Russia whether or not NATO is convinced that its expansion is not breaching promises and/or the Alliance believes it to be a justified response to Russian behaviour. From the Russian perspective, the perception is that it is a breach of trust. Further expansion, geographically (more nations becoming NATO member), or quantitatively (NATO member states allowing a larger military presence) within current Alliance borders, will be seen as proof that the Russian rulers' own mind-set is correct.

Do the observations above lead to the conclusion that NATO should refrain from implementing the RAP? Certainly not; obviously, not fulfilling the measures announced will be perceived as an imminent sign of weakness, and will immediately be exploited by assertive or even aggressive next steps. The challenge is to condition these measures by stating: 'this is a given, what you can do is respond and behave in a manner that will convince us to not take additional steps, or even to evaluate the current ones in proper time'. The additional steps should be made clear and should evidently lead towards an unfavourable situation for the receiver. The 'modern state' does not give in to soft power, is not easily impressed by (unconvincing) hard power, but can be over-challenged. For both the Assurance and the Adaptation Measures, the core element here is that NATO needs to observe *the fine line between 'truly convincing' and 'provoking' in its actions*. That will require the careful but determined orchestration of its endeavours. Based on the continued manifestations in words and deeds by Russia, this line has apparently not been found yet.

RAP vs. NATO internally

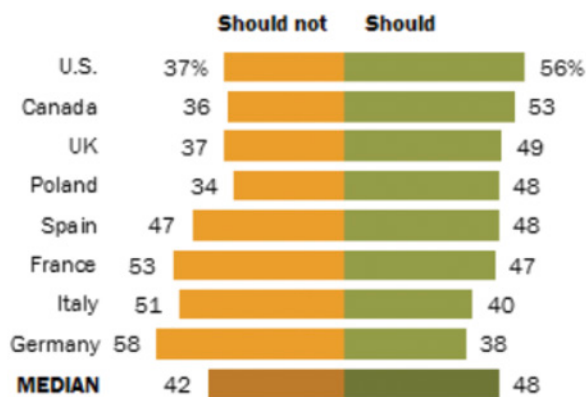
The second target audience for the RAP message consists of the NATO members that have the biggest concern regarding the Russian manifestations. These are by and large the 'newer' member states of the Alliance. For them article 5 of the Treaty was the single most important reason to join. Nevertheless, many of these new members paid their dues by contributing to

77 NATO does strive to further broaden exercises for the second half of 2015, both in scale and frequency. Also it is planned to improve the scope and realism; scenarios will include hybrid threats, cyber events and ballistic missile defence. All of these developments should culminate in exercise Trident Juncture 2015, to be conducted in the autumn in Italy, Spain and Portugal. This exercise will bring together approximately 30,000 troops from 33 countries (NATO and partners), and will incorporate other international organisations – including the EU – and non-governmental organisations. However, the preparation time involved, although completely understandable, comes across bleakly when compared to the Russian 'snap-exercise' approach, and certainly does not convince any audience of the ability of NATO to rapidly deploy.

78 "The topic of 'NATO expansion' was not discussed at all, and it wasn't brought up in those years. I say this with full responsibility. Not a single Eastern European country raised the issue, not even after the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist in 1991. Western leaders didn't bring it up, either." – Mikhail Gorbachev, 15 October 2014, *Rossiiskaya Gazeta and Russia Beyond The Headlines*.

NATO's (or coalition of the willing) crisis response operations – such as the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, sometimes even ‘punching above their weight’ (e.g. the Polish contribution to SFIR-Iraq⁷⁹). Now that they perceive a significant rise in the threat against their sovereignty, they fully expect their Allies to step up to meet the challenge. However, the southern members of NATO have far more pressing concerns regarding the instability in the MENA-region and the spin-off effect that this has on them, such as the influx of large numbers of refugees.⁸⁰ The eastern partners undoubtedly recognise these southern challenges, but in case of conflicting priority arguments they will present the case of Ukraine as ample proof of the urgency of their major concern. The western European members and the transatlantic Allies are then caught in the proverbial middle and will have to balance the Alliance's efforts between the East and the South.⁸¹

Looking at the RAP Measures, it is easy to see that virtually none of these address the priorities of the southern Allies. In times of growing unrest and insecurity, yet limited available funds, diverging priorities are certainly not helping to achieve unity of purpose, let alone unity of effort. This might very well become a *ticking time bomb* under the solidarity amongst Alliance members if it is not addressed in a timely and transparently way. This lack of solidarity has recently become painfully obvious in an international survey,⁸² performed by the Pew Research Center in eight large NATO member states. The public in these states proved to be largely reluctant to come to the aid of an Alliance member state under attack by Russia.



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q52.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 3 Willingness to militarily support NATO partner under attack by Russia

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/nato-publics-blame-russia-for-ukrainian-crisis-but-reluctant-to-provide-military-aid/russia-ukraine-report-46/>

79 Stabilisation Force in Iraq, the US-led coalition that invaded Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 2003 and to which various nations contributed.

80 At present, Turkey for example, NATO member since 1952, hosts some 2 million refugees from Syria and Iraq as a result of the ongoing IS crisis, adding to a substantial number of refugees from previous conflicts and crises in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Italy, as another example, has to deal with an increasing number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean (see chapter 2).

81 The clash between Italian Prime-Minister Renzi and Eastern European political leaders over the issue of distributing 40,000 migrants from Italy and Greece across all EU member states, which reportedly took place during the European Council meeting of 25-26 June 2015, is proof of the security priority division described.

82 www.pewglobal.org.

Apparently the article 5 foundation of the collective security for NATO members is more strongly supported trans-Atlantic than it is in Europe. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that both Great Britain, a traditionally strong proponent of military employment, and Poland, a member that arguably has a larger interest in article 5, do not even cross the 50% mark. The disappointing average across the surveyed countries was a meagre 48%.

Again, should these observations lead to NATO abandoning its RAP? Certainly not; the 'internal' political aspect is highly significant in the context of reassuring those Allies that perceive the largest exposition to Russian power play. The importance of tangible, measurable activities can hardly be overestimated. The current steps also bring actual new, or re-found, operational capability to the Alliance, especially in the field of rapid response. Furthermore, linking to the earlier comment that the RAP could be accompanied by a transparent announcement of further measures pending Russia's response, there is the possibility of expanding the set. The concrete extra efforts should, however, be designed to not have a single direction purpose, but to lead to capabilities that can be employed across the spectrum of threats that the members (might) have face. In that way, the concerns of all NATO partners would be addressed, thus avoiding the conflict of priorities that the Alliance appears to be heading into currently. The crucial element in the development of such multi-employable capabilities is finding the common denominator in the perceived threats to (members of) the Alliance. The description of the mixed bag of threats, in chapter 2 of this study, has already given the direction needed for this search: the commonality between the threats on the eastern and southern flanks of NATO is the application of hybrid warfare.

Hybrid warfare

Even though some might discuss how acute they really are, the threats from the South and the East can rightfully be called existential. This underlines the need for a coherent and consistent strategic response by NATO. In order to design and develop such a response, a true understanding of the strategic environment is necessary. In this context, NATO needs to completely grasp the nature and characteristics of hybrid warfare, and added to that it needs to fully comprehend the 'ends' of its potential opponents; what is it that they want to achieve and why do they want that? Finally, NATO must also be completely aware of its own strong and weak points in the dynamic strategic environment. Chapter 2 has rendered a thorough elaboration on the threats from the East and the South. The following paragraphs will focus on hybrid warfare and how to counter it.

Hybrid warfare⁸³ utilises any and all of the conceptual categories⁸⁴ of warfare, and will employ whichever specific elements of those that will achieve the sought after effects and advantages at a certain time and/or location. The applied mix of means and ways can be adapted constantly, and thus the core strength of hybrid warfare is that it can morph in nature. This transforming nature results in (the possibility of) constantly differing encountered and observed characteristics. The ways and means are certainly not restricted to those available and achievable by a military instrument of power. Hybrid warfare indeed employs all instruments of power,⁸⁵ whether executed by a state or a non-state actor (aspiring to

83 For a more elaborate description of the paradigm shift in contemporary 'armed' conflict see: LtCol Robert J. Hendriks, *Clingendael Strategic Monitor 2015 – Deterrence – Ambiguous Warfare*, The Hague, June 2015.

84 Linear & non-linear; conventional & non-conventional; regular & irregular, symmetric & asymmetric; etc.

85 Diplomacy, information, military, and economy.

become a state or acting as if a state). Hybrid warfare seeks to exploit the seams, or even gaps, within societies, but also within alliances. For NATO this could also mean for instance, that an opponent exploits the seams between collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security.⁸⁶ Hybrid warfare alternately threatens, intimidates, destabilises, disrupts, and destroys. Ultimately, it aims to keep an adversary politically, militarily, and societally off balance, in order to constantly remain in the initiative and thus be able to decide the direction of a crisis for the executor's benefit. These aspects make it highly challenging to come up with an adequate response. *Adaptability* is the key: possessing a range of capabilities that can be employed in differing mixes, and with changing (main) efforts. The RAP Assurance Measures therefore should not be addressing solely the eastern concerns, but the commonality between eastern and southern threats; the Adaptation Measures of NATO should not be fixedly aimed at countering Russian manifestations, but should enable NATO to respond to hybridity in activities by any actor.

NATO and hybrid warfare

NATO conceptually has three main tasks in the face of hybrid threats: deterrence, defence, and de-escalation: *deterrence* of actors that potentially intend to apply hybrid warfare; *defence* against hybrid warfare by actors that cannot be deterred; and, *de-escalation* of armed conflict, after establishing a proper beneficial balance in the situation, in order to solve crises along political / diplomatic lines. The crucial element in deterrence is credibility. If that is not achieved, there is hardly a chance to actually deter (potential) opponents. Not coincidentally, the factors leading to credible deterrence also create the capability for defence. Credibility is achieved by three interrelated factors: *awareness, availability, and apparent preparedness*.⁸⁷

Awareness

With the RAP implementation in progress, even surpassing some of the set deadlines, it could be argued that NATO is fully aware of the threat. However, as pointed out earlier, the RAP largely ignores the threat on the southern flank, making it predominantly a counter-Russian manifestations endeavour. In particular, the version of hybrid threat in the South shows that security for the Alliance sometimes has to be achieved outside of its territory. Yet it seems that NATO is currently more engaged in *fortress-building* in Europe than it is in investing in security globally. This observation leads to the idea that NATO may be aware of the possibly acute current threats, but does not thoroughly understand the persistence and endurance of hybrid warfare as a contemporary way of escalating conflicts. In doctrinal language, there is situational awareness, but not a deeper understanding. In terms of capability it might be said that NATO is, to too great an extent, a political organisation with a mostly military purpose. These characteristics are not per se the most accommodating ones when approaching the field of hybrid warfare. In its current incarnation, NATO should be aware that, even though its members are states and therefore have all instruments of power available, the Alliance itself lacks some actual instruments, especially in the fields of economy and diplomacy. Therefore, not only coordination with the EU, but a fine-tuned, balanced and orchestrated cooperation with the EU is called for to counter the current hybrid threats (see chapter 5).

Instead of remaining an organisation that allows outsiders to give input at specific pre-planned occurrences, NATO could re-align itself to become an entity that truly embraces

86 Prof J. Lindley-French, 'NATO and new ways of warfare', *NATO Defence College seminar-report*, April 2015.

87 LtCol Robert J. Hendriks, *Clingendael Strategic Monitor 2015*, p. 63.

a whole-of-society approach. Since hybrid threats endanger the integral security of the whole of society, all relevant actors should be permanently co-opted in NATO's adapted way ahead. Academia, independent think-tanks, politicians, diplomats, economists, marketing and communication experts, and military personnel should all be involved in the design and development of the Alliance's near-future and future activities. Recognising and acknowledging the common denominator in the current crises, and, from there, understanding that this commonality is what the Alliance should adapt itself to, is the basis for all further thinking and acting with regard to a transformation of NATO. This in turn would enable the Alliance to assume a stronger political posture and to be clear on the strategic direction for which it needs to aim. This awareness is an essential enabling factor for the other two factors: availability and apparent readiness.

Availability

Availability pertains to the capability necessary to create deterrence, and – in extremis – to take appropriate action in case of the failure of that deterrence. Hybrid warfare *is best countered with hybrid warfare*. Hence, actors threatening the use of hybrid warfare can best be deterred by transparently showcasing the availability of policies, concepts, doctrines, ways, means, and skills needed to perform hybrid warfare.

Firstly, this implies that all *classical capabilities* need to be in order, not only because NATO needs to remain ready for (full) conventional threats to its security, but also because these capabilities are part of the hybrid tool-kit. After all, the core strength of hybrid warfare was the potential to combine and interact elements of all types of warfare, including conventional. After decades of downscaling and even downgrading the armed forces of NATO, the availability of conventional capabilities is a point of sincere concern. The currently advocated intensification of international military cooperation, and the more efficient employment of the remaining forces are not enough. These two paths should definitely be taken, if only for the sake of cost-efficiency, but in parallel to such initiatives, a boost of the quantity as well as the quality of the available assets is in order. To render such a boost acceptable for the large group of stakeholders, being the public in the member states, a coordinated effort is needed. It is no longer acceptable that nations within a tight Alliance embark on parallel acquisition tracks resulting in duplication of some capabilities and shortfalls in others. Classical capabilities that ought to be in the forefront of attention include the full spectrum of Anti-Access/Anti-Denial (A2/AD), since a central issue for the member states is, and will remain, their territorial integrity. A2 seeks to prevent opposing forces' entry into a theatre of operations. AD aims to prevent their freedom of action in the more narrow confines of a specific area, and thus includes activities in the air, on land, as well as on and under the sea to contest and prevent an opponent's operations within a defined battle space. It is obviously equally important to cover lines of communication and airspace as well as the potentially disputed specific geographic region. This capability is as useful against state actors employing hybrid warfare as it is against larger non-state actors reaping havoc within (and across) nations.

Furthermore, a rapidly deployable intervention force is needed to project NATO's engagement power quickly and determinedly. Creating the VJTF is a good start; however, the follow-on structures are as important as this 'spearhead'. Much like the 'initial entry' forces in expeditionary operations, these rapid responders can only be expected to be self-sustainable for a limited period. Taking along more stocks and heavier equipment would seriously impede the ability to perform quick strategic movements. This means that the VJTF will always consist of light forces that need to be relieved in place relatively quickly by more robust units.

Pre-positioning stocks and materiel helps in part, but in turn it also hampers the Alliance, since it pre-determines where deployments can be performed. With a limited amount of material to pre-position, locating such stocks in Eastern NATO member states implies that this follow-on necessity cannot be met when engaging challenges in the South.⁸⁸ NATO ought to be ready to respond in both directions, so rather than pre-locating, a *layered follow-on structure* should be created. This also means that serious investments in strategic transport capability are called for. The current NATO Response Forces (NRF) projection design probably needs revisiting, since the resources needed to deploy the VJTF will largely exhaust the overall capacity of NATO for rapid strategic transport. Furthermore, all in all the NATO NRF consists of some 19,000 troops.⁸⁹ That number was impressive for a period when NATO was focussed on employing its force for security operations by choice. However, compared to the overall military headcount of its combined members, it can hardly be called a large response force for the protection of the Alliance's territorial and peripheral security. The announced increase in the NRF to a total of 40,000 troops does not substantially change this conclusion.⁹⁰

The *third* classical capability with a definite requirement to be enhanced is *intelligence* (Intel) in the broad interpretation: executive JISTAR⁹¹, with all of its (re-)sources producing Comint, Elint, Humint, and Masint.⁹² But certainly it also has to encompass a standing NATO analysis capability, which will enable the Alliance to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics in the security environment. A far deeper and broader sharing of Intel amongst member states ought to be aspired to. Naturally, not all intelligence a member state gathers is shareable per se. However, the rule of thumb should become 'share, unless' instead of 'not sharing, unless'. Here, again, a whole-of-society approach would add much value, as opposed to the closed procedures and concepts that are now in use, since it would enrich and complement the conventional Intel channels. Intelligence is of the utmost importance in the contemporary security environment, because of the large number of actors, interests, interdependencies, and layers within conflicts. This is a capability that is central in achieving a thorough understanding of both state and non-state actors that manifest themselves.

Another important capability is that of *Special Forces* (SF). Actually these represent a rather large spectrum of capabilities, and as such, are possibly the most suited element of the classical forces to be employed against hybrid threats.⁹³ Next to the obvious roles for SF when a crisis evolves into a hybrid armed conflict (whether by state or non-state actors), they are extremely suited to perform so-called Security Forces Assistance (SFA) in, and to, non-member states that are drawing unwanted attention from possible aggressors.

88 Ahead of the NATO Defence Ministers meeting of 24-24 June 2015 the United States announced its plan to preposition about 250 vehicles in depots in Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia under the title of "European Activity Set". The depots would contain company to battalion-sized sets of equipment. M2 and M3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles would provide the bulk of the equipment, but it would also include 90 Abrams M1 main battle tanks and 20 M109 self-propelled artillery vehicles.

89 NRF (NATO Response Forces), post-Wales figure is 30,000. Part of NRF is IRF. IRF (Immediate Response Forces), post-Wales figure is 19,000. Part of IRF is VJTF. The VJTF is about 5,000 troops strong. The remainder of the NRF (30,000-19,000=11,000) are the so-called RFP (Response Forces Pool).

90 *Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers*, 24 June 2015.

91 Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition & Reconnaissance.

92 Comint: communications intelligence; Elint: electronics intelligence; Humint: human intelligence; Masint: measurement and signature intelligence. Mostly all used to describe both the actual intelligence as the gathering of that.

93 As reversely proven by the crucial and central role of Spetznaz units in the Crimea campaign.

If employed in a timely way, SFA has the potential to prevent escalation by strengthening the capability of the threatened party. Within the GO TEAM⁹⁴ architecture of the relatively recently developed NATO concept for SFA, SF are almost all round employable. Other units may also be useful for these activities, but SF are most apt across that spectrum. Quite possibly, there is not, per se, a need to enlarge this capability within NATO, but rather for member states to make it more available for NATO employment. This is a challenge, since within nations SF are regarded in the same way as Intel: sensitive, strategic, and too precious to easily hand over.

The final classical, although not conventional, capability that needs undivided attention is the *nuclear capability* of NATO. Some further elaboration on nuclear weapons can be found in the following textbox.

Box 2 NATO's nuclear capability

The nuclear capability of NATO remains a very sensitive topic amongst the Alliance's members. Even in the era of the Soviet Union, with its wide arsenal of nuclear weapons, the public in some NATO member states could not reconcile itself with the thought that NATO possessed a nuclear arsenal to deter opponents or counter actual nuclear strikes. Historically, it could be argued that the mutually assured destruction (MAD) balance kept the relation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact from overheating in times of growing tensions and friction. A set of confidence-building measures, including hotlines, and a range of arms control treaties helped to overcome the risks associated with nuclear weapons during the Cold War. The US modernised its nuclear arsenal in the 1980s and early nineties. Since then the focus of the US (and NATO) has been largely on preventing further proliferation of nuclear weapons (knowledge) and on ballistic missile defence against rogue states that might acquire nuclear missiles.

NATO's often-repeated position is that it will remain a nuclear Alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist. In the Russian doctrine nuclear arms have a central role as a deterrent to any potential aggressor. They can be used in response to a nuclear attack or in case of a large-scale conventional attack threatening the existence of the Russian State (see chapter 2). These options largely pertain to strategic nuclear arms. Recently, the use of tactical nuclear arms has been mentioned by President Putin as being a viable option to solve crises in Moscow's favour. In response to such developments, even allowing for the fact that these messages were mainly aimed at the Russian public, NATO needs to *leave no room for any unclarity*. The Alliance should be adamant that using nuclear weaponry can and will invoke immediate countering with equal measures, thus sending the clear message that Russia will be confronted with unacceptable risks should it threaten NATO countries with tactical nuclear weapons. It also implies that the Alliance should keep *up-to-date nuclear forces in Europe*, both to counter Russia's tactical nuclear weapons as well as to provide the link to the US strategic nuclear arsenal.

94 Generate, Organise, Train, Equip, Advise, Monitor.

The Alliance should continue to be completely transparent regarding its nuclear capability – as this fits in the context of answering Moscow’s propaganda. Equally, the Alliance should continue to *repeat its willingness to reduce tactical nuclear arsenals through arms control negotiations*, despite the lack of Russian readiness to engage in such talks. NATO’s insistence on such negotiations provides another response to the Kremlin’s media campaign. It should be a key element in the strategic communication of the Alliance, to be even further exploited if Russia continues to oppose negotiations on nuclear arms reductions.

Furthermore, rogue states, non-state actors, and non-state actors aspiring to become a state may try to acquire some type of nuclear capability. The risks are generally not estimated to be very high, as the construction of nuclear weapons is deemed to require a sophisticated nuclear industry and advanced technology. However, the unwanted but hardly stoppable proliferation of nuclear knowledge, technology, and material could quite well lead to rogue states with a nuclear weapon capability providing non-state actors with such a capability. In such cases, the capability to counter-strike might be the only convincing ‘language’ that could be used to restrain opponents from actually using nuclear assets.

The Alliance should adapt its current low-key nuclear posture to make it clear that it still grasps the role of nuclear arms in deterrence (and ultimately in self-defence) and that it will certainly preserve its escalation dominance in this field.

A re-strengthening of the role of the Nuclear Planning Group would certainly reinforce that message. Military and political preparedness for this capability also means that the exercise range should include transition scenarios from conventional and/or hybrid to nuclear operations.

Less classical capabilities that are essential if NATO wants to firmly ascertain its stance in a hybrid conflict are: cyber; information operations; strategic communication; key leader engagement; and psychological operations. The exact interdependence of these capabilities can be excluded for the purpose of this report, suffice to say that these functionalities all aim to influence actors in a non-kinetic way, and they all engage in the information environment. A key observation is that NATO and/or NATO members have gathered a large amount of experience with these functionalities in the recent past when engaging in security operations globally. In the multi-layered, multi-actor operational environments of contemporary crises, NATO has tried and tested these capabilities on a large range of target audiences. Unfortunately, these functionalities belong to a toolkit that NATO, at its strategic political end, does not use for article 5 scenarios. They are intended for the other main task that NATO has adopted since its previous large transformation in the early nineties: non-article 5 crisis response operations.

This brings forward a final, but essential, point on availability: quite possibly the biggest change NATO has to go through is a *change of mind-set*. Historically and completely understandably, NATO has differentiated between article 5 and non-article 5 operations.

But these two major blocks currently mainly differ in ‘the reason for NATO employment’⁹⁵ and not in ‘ways and means that could be employed to achieve defined ends’. There is no need to reinvent anything, but there is the need to redefine the correlation between collective defence and crisis management. Given the growing nexus between external and internal security, and the transforming nature and hence changing characteristics of hybrid warfare, it would be better for NATO to *abandon* the – for employment of military power – *artificial differentiation between article 5 and non-article 5 operations*. In that way, the doctrine (concepts, handbooks, directives, etc) on the non-classical capabilities, as described above, would become available as part of an overall applicable toolkit. The urgency for such a re-assessment of NATO’s roles and missions is great, both for the current existential threats and the core appearance of future threats: hybridity.

Box 3 Article 5 and non-article 5 capabilities

Different schools exist on what article 5 and non-article 5 operations imply for NATO’s military capabilities. *One school* argues that the requirements are broadly speaking the same: expeditionary, mobile and multi-functional with enablers like ISTAR, air transport and air-to-air refuelling still need to be further improved. According to NATO’s Jamie Shea, “NATO will have to invest in the enablers and command and control and intelligence assets that can be used for 90% of its likely missions. Even if the Readiness Action Plan was instigated by Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and a need to rebalance NATO back towards collective defence after two decades of out of area operations, its long-term viability will lie in directing NATO’s force planners towards high tech and multi-functional forces, that are needed for any operation, rather than back towards the heavy metal, territorial forces of yesteryear.”⁹⁶

Another school argues that NATO needs to restructure its forces from brigade-sized units to larger formations (corps, divisions) and (re)invest in heavy armour like tanks and artillery. Understandably, these calls can be heard from sources closer to Russian territory. In Poland and the Baltic States, politicians and the military have called for such heavy NATO forces.⁹⁷ These pleas are accompanied by proposals to permanently station troops on their soil, not just pre-positioned equipment like the United States will do. But there are also security and defence experts arguing to fill the gap caused by decades of budget cuts and reductions of heavy weaponry: “(..) the forces of most European countries have been hollowed out to such an extent they are unable to field corps or even divisions in some cases. This leads to the core of the problem: the existence of a dangerous gap in the Alliance’s strategy for the defence of the eastern flank, between (part-time?) tripwires of sorts (i.e. the Readiness Action Plan/Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and US rotational deployments in the Baltics and Poland) and the promise of nuclear deterrence.

95 Arguably, they also differ in the obligation for a member to take part in an operation. However the text of article 5 leaves room for a member to refrain from actual participation in military operations. And on the other hand, the consensus decision-making model gives all members de facto a veto-like position for employment of NATO in crisis response missions (with so-called coalitions of the willing as escape, but not as a NATO mission).

96 Jamie Shea, ‘NATO, the challenges ahead’, *Global Affairs*, Volume 1, number 2, 2015, p. 124.

97 For example: ‘Poland pushes for further change in NATO defence posture’, *European Diplomacy & Defence*, No. 798, 27/05/2015.

To fill that critical gap, NATO and its Member States will need to think beyond readiness and devote considerable time and resources to rebuilding corps and division capabilities.”⁹⁸

The Wales Summit Declaration called for “improving the robustness and readiness of our land forces for both collective defence and crisis response”.⁹⁹ The launching of the VJTF and the NATO ministerial decision of June 2015 to enlarge the NRF (to 40,000 troops) provides substance to this stated objective. But it still raises the question: what else? What should be the composition of follow-on forces? How can the need for mobility be combined with more fire power and protection – both of which are needed when encountering opposing forces with heavy weapons? Eastern European countries are modernising and reinforcing their heavy units. Germany has decided to activate its fifth tank battalion, which might incorporate the 16 remaining Dutch Leopard 2 tanks currently in storage.¹⁰⁰ Berlin will procure more than 100 additional new Leopard 2 tanks.¹⁰¹ The US is prepositioning 90 Abrams M1 tanks and 20 M109 heavy artillery pieces in Eastern Europe. So, it seems that ‘robustness’ has already been translated as *a partial return to the heavy metal of the past* – a message Russia might understand but also a capability which might be needed when confronted with stronger armed irregular opponents in non-article 5 operations.

Apparent preparedness

Apparent preparedness to employ the available (military) power is the final factor contributing to credible deterrence, and in turn to the capability to defend against aggressors. A significant part of such preparedness appears in the availability of concepts, ways (methods) and means as described above. Ultimately, only the actual employment is complete proof of preparedness. The closest situation to real-employment is to openly exercise with the full range of capabilities usable for hybrid warfare. The current range of exercises as launched with the RAP Assurance Measures is completely focussed on the more classical capabilities.¹⁰² These are as necessary as ever before, as explained earlier. However this narrow bandwidth of exploited capabilities will not do either for deterrence or defence. It is because of the realisation that there is little chance of them being victorious in a conventional armed conflict, that the official Russian doctrine has made hybrid performance the cornerstone of its international conflict manifestations. In other words, conventional exercises by NATO will only strengthen the Russian view that hybridity is the way ahead. Much the same can be said for the larger non-state actors like IS; for them hybridity is the only option, since conventional armed conflict only would be a certain dead-end street given the enormous difference in potential.

98 Luis Simón, ‘NATO’s Rebirth – Assessing NATO’s Eastern European “Flank”’, *Parameters* 44(3) Autumn 2014, p. 73.

99 Wales Summit Declaration, paragraph 64.

100 ‘Neue Nato-Strategie: Von der Leyen aktiviert Panzer-Bataillon in Niedersachsen’, *Deutsche Wirtschaft Nachrichten*, 27.02.2015.

101 ‘German army to procure more than 100 additional Leopard 2 tanks’, *Reuters*, April 10, 2015. The number of tanks will increase from 225 to 328 (Germany had 3,500 tanks at the end of the Cold War).

102 As mentioned before, NATO strives to further broaden the scope of its exercises for the second half of 2015 ‘to include hybrid threats and cyber events’.

The *less classical capabilities* (cyber, information operations, strategic communication, key leader engagement and psychological operations) ought not to be included in the exercises; in fact they may *need to be the core elements and main efforts*, just as other instruments of power could be taking part. In that way NATO would not only show that it has these capabilities available, but also that it is willing to employ them in collective defence scenarios. Obviously, including them in the exercises will help to achieve a higher level of aptitude at employing such capabilities, which is a necessity since the level and intensity of NATO involvement in security operations has gone down in recent years. To elevate the current exercise range to this next level will take what actual employment will certainly demand: political and moral courage to create an overarching strategy that will allow the use of all instruments of power, the use of all elements (deemed necessary) from all types of warfare, and the incorporation of a whole-of-society approach. A clear and completely developed construct on how to cooperate with the EU is as important as that strategy, since the EU has more of the other tools that might be needed at its (direct) disposal than NATO does. In the words of NATO's man for 'Emerging Security Challenges' Jamie Shea: "How far can the Alliance engage with the EU and these other bodies to formulate coordinated responses to hybrid challenges (...)?"¹⁰³

Another proof of preparedness is the development of a *decision-making process* for the political arena that would mirror the intensified efforts on the military side to enable a rapid response. It is of little use to have troops on 48 hours notice to move status, when political decisions will take multiple days if not weeks. Estimating that 28 nations will seldom be able to come to a very rapid decision, this may underline the need for a clear mandate for Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) with regard to deployment of (at least) the VJTF. The decision by NATO Defence Ministers to pre-delegate some authority to SACEUR to alert, stage and prepare troops ahead of a political decision by the North Atlantic Council¹⁰⁴ (and thus in member states' capitals) to deploy them is a step in the right direction.

Specifically with regard to 'preparedness', a few comments still need to be made. Inadequate as it may be as a measure for contribution, the 2% of GDP pledge is to be taken seriously by the respective governments of the member states. Although the majority of NATO members are still confronted with a low-growth or even no-growth economy, costly measures are inevitable, given the unstable security environment. Granted, given the domestic challenges, the focus should be on 'more bang for the buck' rather than on simply 'more bucks for the bang', but it can no longer be deemed 'politically safe' to avoid investing in defence. The fact that the United States has re-assumed a strong role in the security of Europe does not mean that the European member states can ignore their own responsibilities within the Alliance with regard to defending themselves.

103 Jamie Shea, p. 122.

104 Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, 24 June 2015.

4 EU: more robust and more integrated

“The security situation in the EU’s neighbourhood has deteriorated significantly” is the conclusion of the High Representative (HR) Federica Mogherini in her report ahead of the June 2015 European Council.¹⁰⁵ The outline of the EU’s response to the new security challenges has become clearer throughout 2014 and 2015, although the ‘new European Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy’ will only see the light of day in June 2016. This new strategy will also assess the extent to which the EU’s instruments are still fit for purpose. The complex cross-border and cross-sectoral nature of the current security challenges makes the EU potentially an organisation that should be increasingly able to position itself as a security provider. In particular, the EU addresses horizontal threats, which are also mentioned in the European Commission’s ‘European Agenda for Security’: terrorism, organised crime, foreign fighters, hybrid threats, smuggling and trafficking of human beings, irregular migration, border management, energy security and cyber security,¹⁰⁶ as well as threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy and climate change.

The tools and instruments that the EU has available to deal with these threats are manifold and cannot all be discussed here. The focus of the following section will be on the military dimension through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the more integrated way in which the EU’s tools and instruments should be applied, particularly in response to hybrid threats.

A more robust Common Security and Defence Policy

In her report to the June 2015 European Council, the HR underlines that the current trends in the security environment will lead to more extensive use of security and defence related instruments with the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) being a substantial part of the toolbox in addressing these challenges. The HR makes clear that the current security challenges require a more robust response in terms of instruments and capacities than has been the case in the last decade. This is also mirrored in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of May 2015, which state that the dramatically changed European security environment calls for a stronger and more effective CSDP. In addition, the Foreign Affairs Council expects that in the HR’s broad European strategy on foreign and security policy issues, “CSDP’s increasingly important role in the EU’s external action would be highlighted”.¹⁰⁷ However, to date it is neither clear nor reflected in the latest policy documents what this increased role of CSDP in the EU’s toolbox will look like. The Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions mainly focus on a revival of the 2005 Feira capability development plan on civilian CSDP capabilities. Although attention to the scarce civilian capacities of CSDP is long

105 HRVP/Head of the Agency report ahead of the June 2015 EC, http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/documents/pdf/report-ahead_european-defence-agency.pdf.

106 ‘Communication. The European Agenda on Security’, *European Commission*, Strasbourg, 28 April 2015.

107 ‘Annex to the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions, Council Conclusions on CSDP’, *Foreign Affairs Council*, 18 May 2015.

overdue, a reversal of the withering away of the military dimension of the EU is crucial for an EU that is facing significant security challenges.

What is lacking so far is an assessment of how the new developments in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East and Africa require a rethinking of the EU's military dimension, embodied by the CSDP. As the HR is likely to draft a broad foreign policy and security strategy, she will probably steer away from fundamentally scrutinising what the EU wants in terms of the military aspects of its foreign and security policy. This is unwise, for reasons to do with the nature and extent of the security threats to Europe's eastern and southern borders (see chapter 2 of this report), while at the same time the 'Obama doctrine',¹⁰⁸ among others, entails that US allies assume greater responsibility for the security of their neighbourhood. Neglecting defence is also unwise, because of the architecture of the security institutions in Europe: NATO seems to be devoting much of its time, energy and capabilities to reassuring its eastern member states and deterring Russia (see chapter 3). The implicit division of labour between the EU and NATO is turning out to mean that NATO concerns itself with territorial defence and a focus on the 'East', while the EU's broadness as a security provider demands a more comprehensive role, to be applied to Northern Africa, the Sahel, the Great Lakes Region, the Horn and even parts of the Gulf.

This situation of greater responsibility demands a *high degree of regional strategic autonomy* for the EU to be able to act in its own neighbourhood without (much) help from the United States. Washington wants the Europeans to initiate and lead crisis management without having to rely too heavily on American assets.¹⁰⁹ Strategic autonomy has been a goal of CSDP from the start in 1999, but various operations in the past have shown that the EU is still very dependent on US enablers, such as intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR). This became painfully clear during Operation Odyssey Dawn, the air campaign above Libya, only a few miles away from the borders of the EU.

The EU has a special responsibility for the security on its own continent. Therefore, it should not shy away from using the full potential of CSDP in its eastern neighbourhood as well. Despite the implicit division of labour between the EU and NATO, the EU should also take into account that hybrid threats are in part also military in nature. Russian incursions into airspace and territorial waters of EU member states are increasing in frequency¹¹⁰ and the Baltic states are getting more anxious about the more than 1,000 km of land border they share with the Russian Federation. To illustrate, in May 2015, some 3,000 Lithuanian troops simulated a response to armed groups, seizing local government buildings to declare a separatist government, actions that pro-Russian separatists carried out in cities across Ukraine in 2014. Municipalities on Latvia's border have also held seminars on how to react to "green men".¹¹¹ Furthermore, the immediate threat is also being felt beyond the Baltic States. A senior analyst from Sweden's Security Service, SAPO, stated that "We see Russian intelligence operations in Sweden—we can't interpret this in any other way—as preparation for military operations

108 Jolyon Howorth and Anand Menon, 'Wake up Europe!', *Global Affairs*, Vol. 1, issue 1, 2015, p. 1.

109 Sven Biscop, 'CSDP What is it Good For?' *Commentary – European Geostrategy*, 31 March 2015.

110 'List of Close Military Encounters between Russia and the West', *European Leadership Network*, March 2014–March 2015, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2015/03/11/4264a5a6/ELN%20Russia%20-%20West%20Full%20List%20of%20Incidents.pdf>.

111 'Baltics eye flashpoints with Russia, guard against 'green men'', *Reuters*, 3 June 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/03/us-baltics-russia-idUSKBN0QJ1G020150603>.

against Sweden”.¹¹² Non-NATO EU-members such as Sweden and Finland should receive EU assistance in patrolling their waters against Russian intrusions. Analogous to the NATO air policing mission in the Baltic States, this could be done by creating a maritime rotation schedule consisting of EU member states’ naval capabilities.¹¹³

Moreover, the state-like features of IS in Iraq and Syria, its increasing presence in North Africa and its ability to conquer vast areas of territory, also against much heavier armed troops, call for a rethinking of scenarios that inform the EU’s capability planning. The EU’s Headline Goal 2010 most robust scenario is the so-called ‘peace enforcement’ one, which entails a CSDP force separating conflicting parties.¹¹⁴ The Headline Goal seems strongly outdated and is in dire need of reform to allow the incorporation of more robust and new scenarios. The further prioritisation for the member states of future requirements is then taken up by the European Defence Agency (EDA) in the Capability Development Plan (CDP). The latest version with sixteen capability priorities was adopted in November 2014 and is able to go somewhat beyond the restrictions of the Headline Goal, because it also made use of the results of questionnaires sent to member states about their priorities (see table 1).¹¹⁵ Although the most recent CDP also refers to maritime and cyber capabilities, it seems not to have fully taken on board the changed and deteriorated security environment in Europe or the more capable potential enemies that European forces might engage in crisis management. In a brochure accompanying the new CDP, EDA comments on the issue of territorial defence versus deployable forces. It argues that modern armed forces require mobility, agility and autonomy, whether they are used for territorial defence or crisis management operations.¹¹⁶ This is a much debated matter, but the point remains that nowadays crisis management scenarios also demand *more protection, more firepower and larger quantities of troops and equipment*.

What is acutely lacking from the Headline Goal scenarios are crisis management scenarios in which state and non-state adversaries have capabilities that are able to deny access to the area of operation. Both the United States and Europe have to depart from the assumption that their military will have unhindered access to the commons (sea, air, space and cyber-space). This will also have consequences for the deployment of CSDP missions. Therefore, increased ‘Anti-Access’ and ‘Area Denial’ threats¹¹⁷ are no longer only a concern for the United States in Asia, but also necessitate a reconsideration of what type of military capacities Europe needs.¹¹⁸

112 Lucy Westcott, ‘Sweden labels Russia as its biggest threat’, *Newsweek*, 18 March 2015.

113 Lo Casteleijn, ‘De Collectieve Verdediging en de Nederlandse Krijgsmacht. De Tijd van Grote Verwachtingen?’, *Internationale Spectator*, 3 (69), 2015.

114 The five illustrative scenarios are: (1) peace enforcement; (2) stabilisation, reconstruction and military advice to third countries; (3) conflict prevention; (4) evacuation operation; (5) assistance to humanitarian operations.

115 Sven Biscop, ‘The State of Defence in Europe: Dependence, Deterrence and Deployment’, *Global Affairs*, Vol. 1, issue 2, p. 175.

116 EDA, *Future Capabilities. Emerging Trends and Key Priorities*, November 2014.

117 A definition of anti-access is “enemy actions that inhibit military movement into a theater of operations, and area denial as operations or activities that seek to deny freedom of action within any or all warfare domains – air, sea, land, space, cyberspace – under the enemy’s control.”, from: Jan van Tol, *A2/AD. What is it and how would it work in Central Europe?*, *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 10 December 2014, p. 1.

118 Luis Simon, ‘NATO’s Rebirth. Assessing NATO’s Eastern European Flank’, *Parameters*, Vol. 44, no. 3, Autumn, 2014.

Table 1

Key priorities, according to the Capability Development Plan, EDA¹¹⁹	
Gaining information superiority	Enabling expeditionary operations
Counter cyber threats	Inter-Theatre Air Capabilities
Provide SATCOM Capabilities	Intra-Theatre Combat Capabilities
Enhance Battlespace Information and Communication Services	Enhance Logistic Support for Deployed Forces
Remotely Piloted Aircraft providing Surveillance (RPAS)	Provide Medical Support to Operations
Protection of forces in theatre	Securing sea lines of communication
Enhance C-IED and CBRNe Capabilities in Operations	Maritime Patrolling and Escorting
Provide Air and Missile Defence for Deployed Forces	Naval Surveillance Systems
Crosscutting drivers	
Energy and environmental protection	Modelling, simulation and experimentation
SESAR	Space based information systems

Another gap in the available scenarios is constituted by naval scenarios for CSDP as threats to the European waters in the North and South are increasing. The growing importance of maritime threats is already reflected in the naval CSDP operations: EUNAVFOR Atalanta has been ongoing since 2008; EUNAVFOR Med was launched in June 2015; and there is the possibility of a future EUNAVFOR anti-piracy mission on the West Coast of Africa. However, if the EU wants to follow up on the EU Maritime Security Strategy of 2014 and its Action Plan, adding a serious focus on naval operations, assets and doctrines is overdue.¹²⁰ Besides the fact that it is very likely that Frontex will be needing military maritime assistance in the future as well, it also has to be taken into account that a large number of European vessels (frigates, corvettes, submarines) are ageing and will soon be in need of replacement.

Lastly, it is also worthwhile including in the capability generation process the notion that CSDP missions will more often than not also contribute to enhancing the capability of local security personnel in crises regions. The so-called ‘Train and Equip’ task is likely to become a prominent feature of crisis management operations, particularly in Africa. While funds for a lot of equipment can be financed through the EU budget, it also has to be taken into account that more specific military training activities and equipment will be difficult to fund from EU resources.

Defence White Book

While the Headline Goal is officially still the basis for guiding member states’ level of ambition, it is clearly ready for an overhaul. The CDP, however, just ‘informs’ member states’ plans and its impact on national planning is very limited. Therefore, a clearer and more detailed set of requirements is needed on what the EU needs to deliver to meet its foreign and security policy ambitions. The new EU Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (expected in June 2016)

119 EDA, Future Capabilities. Emerging Trends and Key Priorities, p. 11.

120 Lennart Landman, ‘The EU Maritime Security Strategy. Promoting or Absorbing European Defence Cooperation’, *Policy Brief Clingendael Institute*, April 2015.

is an excellent opportunity to start translating the ambitions set forth in the Strategy into an EU Defence White Book. Such a Defence White Book is to take the Foreign and Security Policy Strategy a step further by *setting priorities for capacities and capability development* on the basis of the identification of the main threats, responsibilities and vulnerabilities.¹²¹ The ability of the EU countries to collectively be able to autonomously take care of these threats, responsibilities and vulnerabilities should be the starting point. The collective priorities should be fed into individual countries' multi-year defence planning systems. During the planning phase, countries should systematically scan for opportunities to develop, procure and operate these capabilities together.

CSDP: more robust, strategic and effective

In legal terms, there are few limits to the role of the military in the EU. Article 42.7,¹²² the mutual defence clause, speaks of “the obligation (for the Member States) of aid and assistance by all the means in their power”, which is a stronger commitment than NATO's article 5. In addition, since 2009, the Treaty also provides for mobilisation of “all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources made available by the Member States” to assist the member states on their own territory against man-made or natural disasters.¹²³ Also, contrary to what is often thought, CSDP is no stranger to the robust use of force (although on a small scale and for a limited duration), such as in CSDP operations in Congo, Macedonia, Bosnia, Chad and the Central African Republic.¹²⁴ The level of threat in and around Europe calls for a CSDP that is equipped with *more robust capacities* and that is *contributing to safeguarding EU territory and to managing crises in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond*. The new Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy is a good opportunity to revitalise CSDP and make it into a strong and integral backbone of the EU's external action, which is well-coordinated with the other policies and tools that the EU has available.

Besides ensuring that CSDP is able to function autonomously, there are a number of key issues that also need to be solved. The EU must have access to *permanent command structures*: a Military Planning and Conduct Capability.¹²⁵ Moreover, the European Defence Agency should be strengthened to give defence cooperation a boost; the Athena mechanism should be reformed to allow a more common financing of military CSDP operations; and the EU should have more ability to conduct full-scale exercises.

However, at the moment, rather than a return to the essence of CSDP, the more likely trend among policy makers seems to be to consider a mainstreaming of CSDP as an instrument in other external policies. Examples of this are a larger role of CSDP in a new European

121 This had already been proposed by many experts more than ten years ago, for example: 'European Defence: a Proposal for a White Paper', *Report of an Independent Task Force*, EU Institute for Security Studies, May 2004.

122 The full text of the Lisbon Treaty's mutual assistance clause 42.7 Treaty on European Union states that: “if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation”.

123 Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

124 Jan Rood (red), *Een Wankle Wereldorde. Clingendael Strategische Monitor 2014*, The Hague, June 2014, p. 200.

125 Margriet Drent, Eva Maas, Dick Zandee, 'Defence Matters. More Urgent than Ever', *Clingendael Report*, The Hague, May 2015, p. 24.

Neighbourhood Policy and more CSDP in horizontal security issues such as terrorism, hybrid threats and border management.

Hybrid threats

The comprehensive nature of hybrid threats means that, in theory, the European Union is well placed to counter them. In her report, HR Mogherini also underlined that “the potential inherent in the EEAS, the EDA and the Commission must be harnessed to counter these hybrid threats”.¹²⁶ Hybrid threats can be of an unintentional nature, which means that the threats are of a multifaceted and complex nature, crossing over the internal and external security domain, but are not designed by an actor against Europe. The situations in North Africa, in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa are examples of this. However, when an actor uses hybrid tactics to exploit the vulnerabilities of societies, economies, politics, cyberspace and the defence of individual countries in Europe, then the hybrid threat is intentional and it is more apt to call it ‘hybrid warfare’. In the EU-context, however, the word ‘warfare’ is consciously avoided and the more generic phrase of hybrid ‘threats’ is used to refer to the variety of threats of a hybrid nature that Europe is facing today. The ways and means to counter hybrid threats also depend on what kind of threat you are dealing with. Because there is an ‘addressee’ in the case of the Russian Federation’s use of hybrid tactics, different responses by the EU are needed than when dealing with the more diffuse sources of the threats emanating from the South. To complicate things further, IS, in Iraq and Syria, is directing its propaganda at vulnerable groups within EU countries for recruitment purposes. The bottom line is, however, no matter which type of hybridity or the theoretical eligibility of the EU to counter them, the strength of the EU’s counter-measures is dependent on the extent to which Europe manages to coordinate all of the policies, instruments and means that it has available.

The EU’s toolbox against Russia’s hybrid warfare

The annexation of the Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have sharply laid bare the expectations and responsibilities that rest on the EU as a security provider on its own continent. It was not Ukraine’s flirtation with NATO membership, but Ukraine’s imminent signing of the Association Agreement with the EU in November 2013 that triggered Russia’s response. Up to now, the EU’s main response to Russia’s aggressiveness has been the economic and political sanctions,¹²⁷ establishing an Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform (EUAM Ukraine, July 2014), supporting the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (March 2014) and supporting Ukraine in its democratic and economic reforms. Besides these policies and tools, the EU’s box also contains diplomatic efforts, cyber defence measures, strategic communication, the creation of an Energy Union and a stronger security dimension in the Eastern Partnership.

The fragile unity among the 28 member states on how to react to the Russia-Ukraine conflict is a clear vulnerability that is targeted by Russia. While the Association Agreement (AA) was at last signed by Ukraine (along with Moldova and Georgia) in June 2014, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA, which is part of the AA) was postponed

¹²⁶ HRVP/Head of the Agency report ahead of the June 2015 EC.

¹²⁷ The set of sanctions against Russia comprises: asset freezes and visa bans; a suspension of preferential economic development loans to Russia by the European Bank; a ban on trading bonds for certain products; a ban on loans for state-owned banks; a two-way arms embargo; a ban on the export of goods that can be used for weaponry; and a ban on exporting certain energy equipment.

until 31 December 2015 after negotiations between the EU, Ukraine and Russia. The EU Commissioner Karel de Gucht was under pressure by Russia and some member states to take Russia's sensitivities towards an EU-Ukraine Free Trade Area into account. Despite the EU's intention to not give Moscow a veto over its relations with Ukraine, that is what seems to have happened nonetheless.¹²⁸

It is also a missed opportunity that the EU's High Representative for CFSP and CSDP is not representing the Union during the Minsk talks, but that the Chancellor of Germany and the President of France are conducting these negotiations. On the other hand, the Commission seems to have used its considerable power in the area of the common market seriously and in April 2015 it officially filed a charge against Gazprom, accusing it of anti-trust behaviour. This goes beyond a mere technical application of competition regulations, as Gazprom is one of Russia's most effective foreign policy instruments in Europe. The charge had lingered since 2012, which makes the timing of the European Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager officially filing the charge particularly politically meaningful.¹²⁹

Eastern Partnership

With the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Programme the EU potentially has a vehicle for furthering its policies in Ukraine. However, the 4th Eastern Partnership Summit in May 2015 was a disappointment. The Commission and Ukraine did sign a loan agreement for €8 billion in the third EU Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) programme, but neither Georgia nor Ukraine have been granted visa free-regimes with the EU, which was one of their key priorities. The Summit showed the fragile consensus that exists among member states and the caution that rules the weighing of the interests between the EaP-countries and those of the Russian Federation. The EU framework for the six post-Soviet countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) was created in 2009 in the wake of the Russian-Georgian war and is part of the broader European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). With the new developments and security challenges caused by Russia in the East and the spread of extremist movements in the South, the EU member states have decided to review and upgrade the overall neighbourhood policy.

This review process started in 2014 and the consultation phase is expected to be completed by June 2015. The consultation paper underlines four priority areas: differentiation; focus; flexibility; and, ownership and visibility.¹³⁰ Abandoning the one-size-fits-all approach in favour of a principle of differentiation, allowing a case-by-case approach is potentially the biggest change. Another new focus is that on the security aspects of the ENP, as underlined by the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions: "ENP instruments should be used more widely to strengthen partners' capacity to address security threats, notably through security sector reforms. Equally, the on-going ENP review should aim at closer coordination between ENP and wider CFSP/CSDP activities in a comprehensive manner".¹³¹ This points towards a very welcome less technocratic and a *wider strategic and political approach to the neighbourhood*.

128 Ulrich Speck, 'Postponing the Trade Agreement with Ukraine. Bad Move, EU', *Carnegie Endowment*, 30 September 2014.

129 'EU Commission charges Gazprom with abusing market position in Eastern Europe', *Euronews*, 22 April 2015, <http://www.euronews.com/2015/04/22/eu-commission-charges-gazprom-with-abusing-market-position-in-eastern-europe/>.

130 'Towards a New European Neighbourhood Policy', *Joint Consultation Paper, European Commission and High Representative on CFSP and CSDP*, 4 March 2015.

131 'Conclusions on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy', *Foreign Affairs Council*, 20 April 2015.

A larger role of CSDP in the Eastern Partnership countries could entail CSDP missions for Security Sector Reform and CSDP involvement in the 'frozen conflicts' (including a CSDP-mission in Eastern Ukraine to support the OSCE mission).

In June 2013, an Eastern Partnership Panel on cooperation in the area of CSDP was created. This is a promising initiative that needs to be further intensified and developed. The panel currently facilitates dialogue on political and practical aspects of participation in CSDP missions and operations, and provides a forum for sharing experience between the EU, its member states and partner countries on engagement in international crisis management and peacekeeping activities, the development of national capabilities for those purposes, as well as on overall security sector reforms. The EU and some of the Eastern Partners have started regular bilateral staff to staff consultations. Ukraine contributed a frigate to EUNAVFOR Atalanta in 2015 and Georgia and the Republic of Moldova joined CSDP operations for the first time. They both took part in EUTM Mali and Georgia contributed one infantry company to EUFOR RCA (with 156 troops, making it the second largest contributor to this operation). In addition, there are plans to set up a multilateral Trust Fund to support EaP countries' participation in Security Sector Reform.

Role European Commission

The importance of good cooperation and coordination between the Council and the European Commission to keep Russia's hybrid warfare in check cannot be underestimated. Many of the instruments that the EU has available, for instance, creating an Energy Union (to curb the Russian influence on individual member states), financially supporting Ukraine, cyber security, brokering between Russia and Ukraine on energy-debts, and implementing economic sanctions fall within the remit of the European Commission. To ensure that the various policy fields and instruments are coherently brought together, the EU plans to devise a *common policy framework* to help build the resilience of member states and partners against hybrid tactics. The EU can assist and advise the Baltic States on how to further incorporate Russian minorities into their societies. This might be the most effective way to counter Russian hybrid tactics to mobilise unrest among these minorities. Naturally, it will have to include more flexibility for the authorities in the Baltic States on issues like the right to have a passport, own media and so forth.

Strategic communication

The EU and its member states need to catch up with Russian strategic communication. Russian government-funded TV stations, like RT – which broadcasts in English, Spanish, Arabic, German and French – have been steadily expanding their operations, while many Western broadcasters cut back their Russian language services after the Cold War. Russian disinformation targets not only the Russian population, but also Russian-speaking minorities in neighbouring countries and in the EU (the Baltic countries), as well as the wider audiences of neighbouring countries with historic sympathies for Russia (such as Bulgaria). And, finally, they are also aimed at Western audiences, which appear increasingly vulnerable to populism.

The HR was asked by the European Council to prepare an action plan by June 2015 to improve the quality of the EU's strategic communication to counter propaganda by Russia as well as terrorist groups such as IS. The HR established a dedicated communication cell in the EEAS in April 2015.¹³² In a working document, the EEAS recognised that particularly

132 HRVP/Head of the Agency report ahead of the June 2015 EC.

consensus-based organisations, such as the EU, must be very alert to manipulation by information warfare: “By denying or distorting facts, populations can be easily manipulated, politicians dissuaded.”¹³³ It also mentions that a sound communication strategy by both the member states and the institutions is essential. Countering propaganda by delivering the facts, however, is not enough. These facts also need to reach the right audiences and must be packaged to reach audiences both within and outside the EU. Resorting to counter-propaganda could also be counter-productive. First of all, it is important to map the Russian activities of disinformation and to have sufficient media available in the Russian language to be able to transmit and print fact-based and non-partisan information. Assisting independent Russian-language media and creating awareness of which media is biased should also be a priority for the EU. Modern communication channels (internet, social media) should be used, in particular to reach the younger population in Russia.

A new development is that an EU Agency is going to be actively screening undesirable web-based messages to avoid Islamic radicalisation and the recruitment of foreign fighters. Europol is going to track websites by Jihadi to avoid recruitment in the EU by IS and other extremist groups by taking them offline.¹³⁴ This is a task that is relevant to most EU countries and therefore it is logical to initiate a common effort.

The EU’s response to challenges from the southern periphery

It is clear that the extent of the EU’s leverage and options towards Ukraine is larger than that towards its southern neighbours. The pull of possible ‘club-membership’ for Ukraine is absent for countries such as Libya, Mali, Somalia or Syria and Iraq, which limits the EU’s options considerably. The threats emanating from the southern periphery are perhaps also more complex and multifaceted, making the optimal use of the various policies, instruments and tools across several EU institutions even more important. In a nutshell, these threats are terrorism, transborder organised crime, mass migration and failed states. While these threats are also, for a large part, interconnected, of equal concern are the humanitarian catastrophe of the refugees in the Syria-area, the migration problem in the Mediterranean, and the foreign fighters issue. All of these aspects combined make the MENA a very explosive region.

The pressure on the southern EU external borders and the terrorist threat to EU territory are matters that demand the most acute attention from the EU countries. The June 2015 attack on a chemical factory in Grenoble and the ‘IS-style’ beheading there have vividly impressed upon the EU and its member states how external issues can have an impact at home. The fall-out of the Arab spring and the migration pressures of the recent period have spurred on cooperation among Freedom, Security and Justice (FSJ) and external relations institutions within the EU.

Migration

It is clear that the EU has seriously underestimated for too long the extent of the migration problem that has been growing since late 2012. However, at the end of 2014 and into 2015, the matter has been taken up by the European Council, the EEAS and the Commission with much urgency. CSDP is now activated in assisting Italy and Frontex in patrolling, deterring human

133 ‘EEAS, Food-for-thought paper “Countering Hybrid Threats”, *Working Document of the European External Action Service*, 13 May 2015, 731.

134 ‘Islamic State Web Accounts to be Block by New Police Team’, *BBC News*, 22 June 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33220037>.

traffickers and rescuing refugees. The European Council decided on 22 June to launch the naval operation EUNAVFOR Med. Its mission is to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers. However, the sea route and its dangers are only part of the problem. Due to mounting crises, wars, demographic pressure, dismal economic prospects and oppression in the MENA region, the EU will continue to function as a magnet for refugees. Commissioner Frans Timmermans expressed this eloquently:

“As long as there are wars and hardships in our neighbourhood, people will continue to risk their lives in search of European shores. There is no simple solution to this complex problem, but it is clear that there is no national solution. There is only a European solution.”¹³⁵

However, only initiating push back operations and disrupting the ‘business models’ of the traffickers, as Operation EUNAVFOR Med is designed to do, will not solve the migration flows from the South to the EU. A *true comprehensive approach* of tackling root causes, improving regional refugee facilities, enhancing border management in transit countries and a common EU asylum policy is the only sustainable answer to this problem.

To start with, a common EU asylum policy is needed: the competence for immigration law and the asylum system still lies strictly with the individual member states¹³⁶ and while the Commission tries to take the initiative in the matter, national political interests to keep the toxic immigration issue at bay are still dominant. Solidarity among the member states by allowing a fair ‘intra-EU relocation system’ of refugees among the 28 member states is still a distant prospect and only a voluntary distribution plan could be agreed by the Heads of States and Government in their June meeting.

HR Mogherini did underline, when announcing the EUNAVFOR Med operation, that it was part of a broader strategy, which includes addressing the root causes, and cooperation with African partner countries, particularly in the Sahel region. The EU aims to strengthen the long-term capability of the security forces of countries in the Sahel-Sahara region and the cross-border cooperation among these countries. In addition, the EU contemplates CSDP support to Sahel-Saharan Border Management. The EUCAP Sahel Niger mission’s mandate is going to be broadened to include fighting traffickers.¹³⁷ The EU will deploy European migration liaison officers in key countries, set up a programme for the rapid return of illegal migrants from frontline member states, and organise a conference in Valletta with African countries to discuss migration issues (with Pierre Vimont appointed as the personal envoy of Council President Donald Tusk).¹³⁸ In addition, the EU continues to work with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

135 ‘European Commission Stands by Italy on Coping with Migratory Pressures on Lampedusa’, *Press Release, European Commission*, 19 February 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4453_en.htm.

136 Although Article 79 Treaty European Union obliges the Union to develop a common immigration policy “aimed at ensuring, at all stages, the efficient management of migration flows, fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States, and the prevention of, and enhanced measures to combat illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings”.

137 HRVP/Head of the Agency report ahead of the June 2015 EC.

138 ‘Finding Solutions to Migratory Pressures’, *European Council*, accessed 28 June 2015, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/migratory-pressures/>.

The first phase of EUNAVFOR Med focuses on surveillance and the assessment of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean. The second stage provides for the search for and, if necessary, the seizure of suspicious vessels. A third phase, for which the EU is still seeking UN Security Council approval, is to dispose of the vessels and apprehend traffickers and smugglers. The CSDP operation will function alongside two Frontex operations, Triton and Poseidon, which saw their financial resources tripled at the European Council meeting in April 2015. These Frontex operations have a border management mandate, but have now also increased their search and rescue possibilities.

As Frontex relies on member states to provide most of its capacities, it is to be expected that border management related capacities are going to be in high demand. Surveillance equipment, such as remotely piloted air systems (RPAS) and satellite observation are particularly vital as they enable enhanced surveillance coverage of long stretches of land and sea borders. Frontex is already working on the 'Eurosur' surveillance system to improve both its own and member states' situational awareness and reaction capability in order to prevent irregular migration and cross-border crime at the external land and maritime borders. The rationale of Eurosur is to link existing national surveillance systems and it would benefit greatly from RPAS and satellite observation through the EU's Global Monitoring for the Environment and Security (GMES or Kopernicus) services. The Frontex regulation allows the Agency to own and operate its own capacities, which will make it less dependent on the willingness of member states to provide capacities. The Frontex operations and the CSDP naval operation in the Mediterranean demand specific capacities, such as offshore patrol vessels, patrol boats, search and rescue equipment, helicopters, airplanes, and debriefing and screening teams.¹³⁹ Triton has a regional base in Sicily from which Frontex will coordinate the operation and work closely with liaison officers from Europol, Eurojust and EASO (European Asylum Support Office) in support of the Italian authorities. Close coordination between EUNAVFOR Med and Frontex is required for the operational activities. But one could also envisage that *sharing naval and air assets* would be the most efficient way to make optimal use of the available resources.

Border management is almost literally at the interface between internal and external security and the politically salient issue of mass migration is currently pushing the increased coordination of policies and instruments from various EU institutions forward. Work is ongoing to allow the greater involvement of EU Agencies in the FSJ sector, in particular Europol and Frontex, in CSDP missions. A proposal was made by the Commission for a new regulation on Europol to consolidate the enhanced contribution to CSDP. Similar arrangements are being prepared for Frontex. Legal texts have entered into force between the EU Satellite Centre (SATCEN) and Frontex, enabling the establishment of operational cooperation.¹⁴⁰ Intra-institutional, intra-agency and inter-organisational cooperation and coordination will remain the keywords in tackling the complex security issues on the EU's southern periphery.

139 In the summer of 2015, Triton will deploy 3 airplanes, 6 offshore patrol vessels, 12 patrol boats, 2 helicopters, 9 debriefing and 6 screening teams.

140 Drent, Maas and Zandee, *Defence Matters*, *ibid*.

5 Reforming EU-NATO cooperation

Nothing is as simple as it seems. In theory, the EU and NATO have complementary roles to play in strengthening international security. The EU primarily extends security and stability by enlarging membership of a its community based on law and cooperation across all sectors of government. NATO enlargement serves the same purpose, but the focus is on military matters with article 5 – collective defence of the NATO area – being the backbone. The Lisbon Treaty has a mutual assistance clause for cases of an attack on EU member states, but this clause has no practical impact as the overwhelming majority of the EU countries are also NATO members and hold the view that the Alliance should remain responsible for collective defence. However, border security to deal with the increasing flows of migrants, international crime and terrorism is clearly an area of EU responsibility related to the organisation’s internal security agendas.

In its external policies the EU can cover a wide set of instruments in areas like trade, development aid, the energy sector, financial assistance and the strengthening of good governance and the rule of law. In a situation of confrontation many of these areas can be used differently, for example by imposing financial and economic sanctions, by cutting aid or by changing energy import dependency. NATO can only use the military instrument, either in article 5 or in non-article 5 situations. Although step-by-step border security is bringing the use of military capacities to the EU’s frontiers, the Common Security and Defence Policy limits the use of EU military operations to ‘crisis management’, in areas external to the EU. Clearly, there is potential overlap between the EU and NATO’s non-article 5 tasks. In practice, a certain division of labour between the two organisations has developed over time. The EU has strongly focussed on deploying both civilian and military tools – in coordination with non-CSDP measures such as development aid, reconstruction and other state-building activities – in the EU’s comprehensive approach. As far as CSDP is concerned, civilian (or hybrid) missions dominate the EU’s agenda.¹⁴¹ Military operations tend to be relatively small in size¹⁴² and the EU’s military have operated at the highest level of the spectrum, be it limited in scale and duration. NATO’s strength is its military integrated structure and the leadership of the United States with the world’s best high-technology military capacities. The Alliance is capable of conducting large-scale military operations,¹⁴³ if needed, at the upper level of the spectrum. NATO also has wide experience of the comprehensive approach, but has very limited capacities of its own and remains highly dependent on other organisations (like the EU) for the civilian components of the overall effort. Both organisations are increasingly focussing on training and assistance – also known as capacity building activities – but yet again the EU and the Alliance are conducting complementary missions: in geographical terms with the EU focussing on Africa and NATO on Afghanistan, but also in terms of content with NATO providing military and (para)military training while the EU covers a broader scope

141 Since 2003 the EU has launched 32 CSDP operations and missions, of which 21 were civilian, 10 military and one mixed civilian-military. It should be noted that military or ex-military in a civilian capacity often serve in civilian missions, in particular in security sector reform missions.

142 The two largest EU military operations were Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (7,000 troops at the start in December 2004, now 600) and EUFOR Chad/Central African Republic in 2008-2009 with a maximum troop strength of 3,700. In most other cases the numbers are in the hundreds rather than the thousands.

143 At its peak (in 2011), NATO’s ISAF operation in Afghanistan amounted to more than 130,000 troops.

from strictly military to civil-military (e.g. security sector reform, coastguard) and purely civil training and assistance such as for border control and other rule of law related sectors.

So, if there is complementarity in the activities of both organisations. why is the EU-NATO relationship constrained? For what reason or purpose should the link between the two organisations be improved when practically there are few problems? Much has to do with the past and with the behaviour of certain member states, which has little to do with substance but all the more with domestic political agendas. Overcoming the heritage of the past is already a challenge, but it has become even more urgent now the changing international environment presses the EU and NATO to review and intensify their strategic relationship

Overcoming the heritage of the past

The existing arrangements for the EU-NATO relationship originate from another era. After the European Security and Defence Policy was formally launched at the June 2000 Cologne Summit the EU and NATO started negotiations on what became the Berlin Plus package. Entering into force in March 2003, Berlin Plus very much was a NATO-driven set of arrangements for using Alliance assets and capabilities for the planning and conduct of EU operations. It was based on the idea that NATO had all the tools available for crisis management operations and there was no need to reinvent the wheel and certainly not to create a second (EU) military command structure. Berlin Plus basically provided for a 'borrow and lend headquarters' arrangement, thus preventing the EU from creating its own. It was immediately put into practice in spring 2003 – in a way as a test-case – by the EU taking over the small NATO military mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The same smooth handing-over mechanism was used again in 2004, leading to the change of command from NATO's SFOR mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to the EU's Althea operation in December of that year. In both cases continuity was guaranteed as the transfer from NATO to the EU changed essentially nothing in the field – a signal which was highly desirable to maintain stability. In essence the command line also stayed the same by 'EU-nising' part of the NATO command chain and with DSACEUR¹⁴⁴ acting as the EU Operations Commander. At the Brussels level the political steering and control shifted from the North Atlantic Council (NAC) to the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC).

Since the late 2004 hand-over from SFOR to Althea there has been no other EU-led operation under the Berlin Plus arrangements. All other EU military operations have been planned and conducted autonomously, which means that one of the member states takes the lead and provides a national headquarters, which consequently is multinationalised into an EU Operation Headquarters. All of these autonomous EU military operations have been (or still are) in Africa or, if at sea such as Operation Atalanta off the Somalia coast, related to security problems on the African continent. There are many reasons why the *Berlin Plus* arrangements are less suited to the planning and conduct of these EU military operations. Berlin Plus procedures are complicated and the decision-making process, involving two organisations, is very slow. Operating within the NATO command chain makes it more difficult to develop and implement the comprehensive approach with EU civil actors. But the most important blockade is of a purely political nature. The second and last 2004 'take-over' operation in BiH could be agreed by both organisations because Cyprus (EU member since 1 May 2004),

144 Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, a three-star military of European origin, located at NATO's military headquarters (SHAPE) near Mons, Belgium.

under pressure from Greece, swallowed the bitter pill of being excluded from the formal EU-NATO coordination arrangements. This was demanded by Turkey for its consent to the Berlin Plus package, based on the non-recognition policy of Ankara with regard to the status of (Greek-Cypriot led) Cyprus. The exclusion of Cyprus from formal EU-NATO meetings led to politically embarrassing situations, even at the ministerial level. At the Informal Meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Noordwijk during the Dutch EU Presidency in September 2004, the Cypriot Defence Minister was asked to leave the room for the agenda point on the upcoming take-over of the NATO SFOR operation by the EU. Naturally, this created a political incident with the Cypriot defence minister loudly protesting. Besides, the practical effect was zero, as one of the members of the Cypriot delegation followed the discussion in a listening-room, which had no entrance checks on nationality.¹⁴⁵ As a result of Berlin Plus, all formal meetings of the NAC and the PSC in Brussels take place without the participation of Cyprus. The same applies to the EU-NATO Capability Group, which is the body that ensures that the EU and NATO do not duplicate in capability development. Clearly, the exclusion of Cyprus is contrary to the principle that all EU member states have the same rights. Based on this principle it has become impossible to even start a discussion on any other EU military operation that would make use of NATO assets and capabilities for the planning and conduct of EU-led operations. NAC-PSC meetings on Operation Althea still take place – even now the EU operation consists of just a few hundred military, but these have become sterile gatherings where nothing happens. The EU-NATO Capability Group is nothing more than a slide-show theatre where the staff of both organisations explain how they coordinate their capability development work.

Attempts at the highest political level to realise a breakthrough in the political Berlin Plus blockade have failed. Turkey has not shown any flexibility in accepting Cyprus at formal EU-NATO meetings and Ankara is unlikely to change its position until the day a political settlement is reached on the reunification of the two parts of Cyprus. Thus, the diplomatic solution is to organise informal lunches and meetings which can be attended by Cypriot representatives. Also, the regularity and substance of staff-to-staff contact have grown over time, from the highest level between the EU High Representative (HR) and the NATO Secretary General to the expert level, in particular to ensure complementarity in their capability development programmes. This *informal network*, which involves for example the European Defence Agency and its NATO counterparts, functions well. The new EU HR, Federica Mogherini, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg seem to have a much better relationship than their predecessors. Clearly, the optimum use of this informal network, at all levels, has to remain a key element of the future EU-NATO strategic relationship. If EU-NATO discussions with all member states of both organisations on current security issues can only take place in an informal setting, so be it. EU-NATO meetings are not held for formal decision-making anyhow, as this remains the responsibility of each organisation at its own meetings. These informal meetings are not that much different from formal EU-NATO sessions according to the Berlin Plus rules book. However, a cumbersome issue which cannot be solved through reinforcing the informal links is the official exchange of documents. In practice, there is always done through the good offices of member states informing one of the staff, but clearly this is not the ideal situation. *Negotiating a new Berlin Plus*, which takes into account the changed security environment for EU-NATO consultations and interaction, is desirable in theory but should be *avoided* as long as the Cyprus-Turkey issue is not resolved. It would result in painful and endless negotiations – wasting time and human resources –

145 At the time, the co-author of this report, Dick Zandee, was Defence Counsellor at the Netherlands Permanent Representation to the EU. In that capacity he participated in the meeting.

and most likely fail to produce a workable solution. The way forward is to 'just do it' by using all existing available channels, by broadening staff-to-staff contacts, and by applying the informal format to EU-NATO meetings with all member states.

As the Alliance is an intergovernmental organisation and the EU's CSDP is also based on intergovernmental cooperation, capitals are in the driving seat in both organisations. This can be considered a weakness – as shown by the effects of the Cyprus-Turkey issue – but it can also be used in a positive way. So far, the EU's and NATO's approach and measures, taken in reaction to Russia's annexation of the Crimea and its continued support to the rebels in Eastern Ukraine, show a remarkable amount of complementarity and consistency. The primary factor behind this success is the close coordination between the capitals of the major member states in both organisations. If *France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States* agree – it is very likely that all of the other member states will follow. This has been the case up to now, but there are no guarantees that the united front will continue to exist. If the Kremlin were to reduce (but not fully stop) its propaganda and diminish (but not fully end) its support to the Donbass separatists, some EU countries would start arguing over ending at least part of the sanctions while in NATO the willingness to reinforce the defence of the eastern borders of the Alliance would be likely to diminish. EU-NATO cooperation is dependent on a consensus of the main capitals on what action to undertake against external threats and challenges. It implies that the most important factor determining coherent and effective cooperation between the two organisations is not a set of arrangements describing *how they should interact* but a political agreement between a number of key capitals about *what should be done*. Such a consensus is highly dependent on how capitals perceive the challenges and threats to their security. The more Putin barks, the more EU and NATO capitals will agree on what to do versus Russia. The more IS commits and broadcasts its cruel brutalities, the more capitals on both sides of the Atlantic will stick together in their fight against the Caliphate.

A new strategic EU-NATO relationship

As the EU and NATO adapt their capacities in response to the changing international environment, both organisations are equally in need of adapting their strategic relationship. The need to reform EU-NATO links is greater than ever before. It is no longer driven by a negative agenda of avoiding the 3Ds (no decoupling, no duplication, no discrimination) – the famous warning by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright when the European Security and Defence Policy was launched. European defence cooperation will be supported by Washington as long as it leads to better capabilities for Europe, so it can not only take more responsibility for conflict management in its neighbourhood but also reinforce the Alliance's collective defence. But it is not just about improving Europe's military capabilities. Hybrid threats need hybrid responses. For many of the responses (military, cyber, strategic communications), the EU and NATO will have to cooperate closely, while in areas of sole competence of either of the two (e.g. NATO's nuclear weapons and missile defence; the EU's energy policy and association agreements), both organisations should consult and coordinate to synchronise timing and impact. The comparative advantages of the EU and NATO should be used to the maximum extent. This requires a totally new strategic relationship as the agenda is no longer solely dictated by crisis management or non-article 5 operations. The fundamental question now is how to act in a coordinated and consistent way to threats and challenges of a different nature, like Russia's new activism and the chaos in the South, in particular that being caused by IS.

First and foremost, the EU and NATO should transmit the *same strategic message* to their challengers. Both should underline the principles they stand for such as: territorial integrity and the inviolability of international borders, and the equal rights of minorities; freedom of speech and free media; the same human rights for all citizens; and fairly and consistently applying the rule of law. How could this be done? Ideally, the EU and NATO would issue a common statement at the highest political level of Heads of State and Government. A joint informal meeting at Summit level would be the best setting in which to announce such a declaration. Practically, this could be arranged back-to-back with either a European Council meeting or a NATO Summit. In particular, the EU should also guard the application of all of these essential principles internally. In cases of member states deviating from the common principles and rules, there should be room to criticise and apply peer pressure. Without this internal reflection the common declaration would lose its credibility. The impact of the strategic message of all EU and NATO member states could be reinforced if like-minded countries elsewhere in the world were to openly declare their support for such a declaration.

Secondly, in their responses to the immediate threats and challenges posed by Russia's new activism, the EU and NATO should fully coordinate the timing and the nature of steps to be taken – either escalatory or de-escalatory. Such close coordination will transmit the signal of a unified stance and optimise the chances of a real impact. To facilitate such coordination all members of the two organisations should try to agree on *a set of common criteria for escalatory and de-escalatory steps*. In the case of Russia the list should not be limited to already existing criteria like the status of the Crimea or the implementation of the Minsk agreement on Eastern Ukraine. Other criteria relevant in the context of Russia's hybrid threat should be applied as well, for example any notable change in the Russian anti-Western propaganda, the functioning of free media and full implementation of existing arms control agreements. The EU High Representative and the NATO Secretary-General could propose a first draft of such a set of criteria, related to the different and complementary sectors of responsibility of both organisations.

Thirdly, in terms of the responsive steps themselves, both organisations should have a common list of the 'what to do' potential. This would not be about the contents of the measures (as they will always have to be tailor-made for the situation at hand), but rather about the characteristics of measures that can be taken: diplomatic steps, military measures, public information, possible action in the financial, economic, energy and other sectors, etc. The cyber area should be made part of this menu, but also for example the (non-)participation in sports games and other international events in Russia – the World Soccer Championship in 2018 being a prime candidate. Listing all potential measures would result in a *common EU-NATO catalogue of hybrid responses*, which could be used by both organisations in a coordinated way. Again, the HR and the NATO Secretary-General could prepare such a catalogue; they could also act as its common custodians.

Fourthly, with regard to military operations, a more strategic approach is also required. The strengths of both organisations should become the point of departure for better coordination of 'who does what?'. NATO remains responsible for classical territorial defence, while the role of the EU can be supportive and complementary, such as in the case of non-NATO countries like Finland or Sweden. The EU's CSDP continues to focus on crisis management – in particular in Africa, deploying all available instruments in a comprehensive approach to realise short- and longer-term security. Where CSDP comes closer to EU territory – as is visible in EUNAVFOR Med – it is more connected to the EU's internal security instruments and agencies like Frontex. In the same manner CSDP should act in support of handling the

spill-over challenges of the instability and conflicts in the wider MENA area by incorporating elements like anti-terrorist and counter-crime capacities in its missions.

The EU and NATO can become a stronger force by coordinating and cooperating with each other more closely. The new challenges and threats leave no other choice. It is the primary responsibility of all member states of both organisations to make this happen, by setting aside the heritage of the past and by focussing on the strategic needs of today and tomorrow.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

Challenges

1. Europe is confronted with *a multitude of risks and challenges* to its security, characterised by growing complexity and involving an increasing number of state, non-state or semi-state actors. Instability and conflicts have come to Europe's borders in the East and the South – thus the most pressing security challenges are geographically determined.
2. Russia's new activism poses a *hybrid threat* to Europe, which consists of a combination of military and non-military challenges. Moscow is using all available means, from covert military operations in Eastern Ukraine to 'soft force' of which state-run propaganda is the primary instrument.
3. The main objective of the Kremlin's involvement in the Donbass area is *to keep Ukraine in a permanent state of instability* and, thus, reduce the chances for Kiev to set up closer ties with the EU and NATO. Putin's biggest fear is a well-functioning, democratic and stable Ukraine, which could offer an attractive model generating serious opposition to the existing autocratic regime in Russia.
4. Hybrid warfare is not new, but Moscow has modernised it to 21st century standards, making optimal use of modern world-wide and real-time communication tools, including social media. Russia is very likely to apply *hybrid warfare* in one way or another in future conflicts as it *offers the best option for Putin's Russia to influence its immediate neighbourhood* and avoid full-scale armed confrontation with NATO.
5. The modernisation of Russia's conventional forces will continue, but the 2010 plan to replace 70% of the outdated equipment with modern weaponry by 2020 is *unlikely to succeed*, mainly due to further budget cuts, which will become unavoidable if the Russian economy is in recession for a longer period. The *high-tech gap* between Russia's armed forces and those of the US and its Allies *might become even wider*.
6. *Nuclear weapons have priority in Russia*. They play a central role in Russian military doctrine and about one third of the defence budget is allocated to the modernisation of the strategic and tactical nuclear arsenal. The relative weakness of the Russian conventional forces – in comparison to both NATO and China – entails the danger of bringing the nuclear threshold down in large-scale conflicts compared to the Cold War situation.
7. In the South, instability is spreading to the wider Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area. The *complexity of armed conflicts is growing*, with *Islamic State as a hybrid state* blurring the distinction between state and non-state actors. Sectarianism between Sunni and Shi'a Islam has become a central element in the fighting and there is increasing neglect of international borders.

8. The security challenges posed by the South are different compared to the threat of Putin's Russia. *Spill-over effects*, in particular the rapidly increasing number of *migrants* crossing the Mediterranean as well as the *foreign fighters* and *transborder crime* bring risks into Europe, thus connecting external and internal security. However, the region itself faces the most severe consequences in terms of refugees (some 4 million from Syria) and terrorist attacks.
9. IS is capable of conducting *conventional and non-conventional warfare*, applying not only heavy weaponry but also irregular means like human and car-bombs to frighten its enemies. IS forces might be as strong as *50-100,000*, but in the long run it will be outnumbered by its opponents. However, even then, the militarily defeated IS will continue to exist as a religious, ideological and sectarian movement.

NATO

10. The Alliance has returned to its original core business, territorial defence under article 5 of the Washington Treaty. *The Readiness Action Plan (RAP) is the expression of NATO's rebirth*. The RAP (over-)focuses on article 5 deployments. Although RAP capacities like the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) could theoretically also be used for non-article 5 deployments, for the moment they are primarily dedicated to article 5 related activities. The dominating focus on the East might endanger Allied solidarity if it remains unbalanced with little or no NATO attention to the South.
11. A major problem is that Russia and NATO do not have the same strategic cultures and, thus, do not think alike. The RAP sends a *strong signal to NATO Allies in Eastern Europe* like the Baltic States and Poland who are most concerned about Russia's new activism. However, Russia has not perceived the RAP as a NATO measure to which it should respond by de-escalation. The Alliance will have *to further strengthen the RAP in a transparent manner, maintaining a balance between 'convincing' and 'provoking' Russia*.
12. The *RAP has to be broadened* beyond the current focus on solely strengthening military force in order for NATO to deal with hybrid threats in the East and the South. The Alliance should not copy the EU in carrying out civilian tasks, but it must *open itself up to the whole-of-society approach* in order to cooperate with the EU and other actors, and be less militarily dominated in its thinking.
13. In terms of its classical military capabilities the (member states of the) Alliance need to: (i) *strengthen conventional air, land and sea capabilities* to confine the area of operations in a confrontation with state and non-state actors alike; (ii) *reinforce follow-on forces* beyond the already foreseen expansion of the NRF; (iii) continue to *invest in improvement of intelligence capabilities* of all kinds; and (iv) give priority to *Special Forces*, in particular by increasing their availability to NATO.
14. NATO should emphasise that it *remains a nuclear Alliance*, sending a strong message that any nuclear threat will be responded to in kind. *Tactical nuclear weapons in Europe need to be kept up-to-date*, while at the same time the Alliance should more clearly and repeatedly declare its willingness for *reductions through arms control negotiations* – thus exposing Russia as the unwilling party.

15. Cyber, information operations, strategic communication, key leader engagement and psychological operations are *less classical military capabilities* that are essential if NATO wants to firmly ascertain its stance in a hybrid conflict. The experience the Alliance has built up during non-article 5 operations in these areas *should be applied to article 5 situations*.
16. Requirements for *article 5 and non-article 5 capabilities are comparable*, hybridity being the common denominator for the threats posed by potential opponents. Thus, NATO should end the distinction between the two – not in legal and decision-making terms but concerning ‘ways and means’ to realise the stated objectives. *More robustness of NATO forces* serves both situations. The choice is not between heavy metal and lightly armed forces – *mobility and firepower are both needed*, but a return to Cold War structures is not necessary.
17. NATO exercises should move away from solely training classical military employments – they have with little or no effect on opponents posing hybrid threats. The Alliance should *incorporate less classical elements in its exercises and adopt a whole-of-society approach*, which will require much *closer interaction and coordination with the EU*, which has a much wider set of capacities at its disposal.

EU

18. The new EU Foreign Policy and Security Strategy, to be adopted in June 2016, should clearly acknowledge *the importance of the contribution of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)*. Without the military component under CSDP the EU cannot act as a security provider and assume larger responsibilities with regard to security in its own neighbourhood.
19. The EU needs *strategic regional autonomy* in order to deal with the security problems in its neighbourhood. This requires more robust military CSDP capabilities, including an *autonomous Military Planning and Conduct Capability*.
20. Although NATO has the primary role in territorial defence, the threat posed by Russia also requires the EU to show solidarity, in particular with *non-NATO EU members like Finland and Sweden*. A first step could be to create an *EU maritime rotating presence* in the Baltic Sea.
21. In its capability development the EU has not sufficiently taken into account the changed security environment and the evolving nature of the threat. The *Capability Development Plan* should be *further adapted* to the challenges posed by the increasing robustness of opposing forces. The *European Defence Agency* should be reinforced.
22. More robust military forces for CSDP operations require *more fire power, more sizeable troop contributions and increased protection*. More attention has to be paid to *naval operations* beyond the existing anti-piracy emphasis. Supporting Frontex with naval assets and contributing to Train & Equip activities are likely to become CSDP priorities.
23. An *EU Defence White Book* is needed to define priorities for capacities and capability development. The new EU Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy will provide the basis for the identification of the main threats, responsibilities and vulnerabilities. Collective

- priorities should be fed into individual countries' multi-year defence planning systems. Member states should systematically scan for opportunities to develop, procure and operate these capabilities together.
24. To *counter hybrid threats* the EU has a wide range of instruments at its disposal, from sanctions, trade agreements and imposing anti-trust charges to CSDP missions and operations. However, the *effectiveness* of EU counter-measures will *largely depend on successful coordination* of all policies, tools and means available to the EU and its member states. The common policy framework for countering hybrid threats is an important prerequisite for such coordination.
 25. The EU should assist and advise the Baltic States in further reform measures to provide *equal rights to their Russian speaking minorities*. Incorporating these minorities into their societies with equal rights as for the rest of the citizens is the *most effective way* to block Russian hybrid tactics to create unrest among such minorities.
 26. The EU's review of the *Neighbourhood Policy* should lead to *a more strategic approach*, of which security considerations form an integral part. This will also imply the *active use of CSDP tools*. For example, CSDP missions – such as Security Sector Reform – should be considered for 'frozen conflicts', when applicable in support of the OSCE such as in Eastern Ukraine.
 27. The EU and its the member states should develop a *strategic communication strategy* to counter the Russian propaganda. Targetting the right audiences sufficiently using the Russian language and communicating through a multitude of channels (printed material, broadcasting, internet and social media) are important aspects.
 28. The main hybrid threat from the South is the recruitment of foreign fighters and IS inspired terrorist attacks within Europe. *Disrupting IS use of internet and social media* is a way to counter this threat and its potential should be fully explored.
 29. However, most of the threats emanating from the *instability in the South* – migration, transborder crime and terrorism in particular – require more than just counter-measures. The EU will have to address these through *an integrated approach* connecting all internal and external security policies and instruments to address both the root causes and the current negative consequences of the conflicts in its southern neighbourhood.
 30. *Migration across the Mediterranean* will not be stopped by the recently launched EUNAVFOR Med operation. A truly comprehensive approach of tackling the root causes, improving regional refugee facilities, enhancing border management in transit countries and a common EU asylum policy is the only sustainable answer to this problem.
 31. With the EUNAVFOR Med operation, CSDP as the EU's external security instrument has reached European borders, visibly linking up with the internal security agency Frontex. Close operational coordination can be complemented by *pooling & sharing of naval and air assets* in order to make optimal use of available resources.

EU-NATO

32. The EU and NATO need to *redefine their strategic relationship*. Both organisations have done surprisingly well in coordinating their responses to the new security challenges, in particular to Russia's new activism. But success in EU-NATO cooperation is not guaranteed for the future as dividing lines continue to run across the member states of both organisation with regard to security priorities and how to respond to them.
33. *Berlin Plus is dead*. It represents the past of EU-NATO coordination for crisis management operations. Ideally, both organisations would have to agree on a new set of arrangements but the existing Cyprus-Turkey problem would make such an effort a waste of time and energy. The *best way forward now is to 'just do it'*.
34. The *good contacts between both institutions* – HR/VP Mogherine and NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and their staffs – should be fully exploited, broadened to other sectors when needed, and deepened in terms of substance. Also the *informal formats* of meetings involving representatives of all member states of both organisations have to be used to the maximum.
35. A *specific responsibility* lies with the *bigger member states* – France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States – to reach consensus on the coordinated agendas of the EU and NATO. Without agreement amongst the four key capitals, EU-NATO cooperation will fail.
36. EU and NATO have to *fully align their responses to the hybrid threats* from the East and the South. For many of the responses (military, cyber, strategic communications) the EU and NATO will have to cooperate closely, while in areas of the sole competence of either of the two (e.g. NATO's nuclear weapons and missile defence; the EU's energy policy and association agreements) both organisations should consult and coordinate to synchronise timing and impact.
37. The EU and NATO should transmit the *same strategic message* to their challengers, underling *the principles and norms* that both organisations stand for like the inviolability of international borders but equally the rights of minorities. A common statement should be issued at the highest political level of Heads of State and Government on the occasion of a joint informal meeting. This strategic message will be directed at Russia, but to be credible the strict application of these principles by all member states of both organisations should also be adhered to.
38. In direct responses to the immediate challenges posed by Russia, the EU and NATO should fully coordinate the timing and nature of the steps to be taken – either escalatory or de-escalatory. To facilitate such coordination all member states of the two organisations should agree on *a set of common criteria for escalatory and de-escalatory steps*. These criteria should encompass a broad spectrum, including the implementation of all agreements to which Russia has signed up.
39. In terms of the responsive steps themselves both organisations should have a common list of the 'what to do' potential, encompassing possible action like diplomatic steps, military measures, public information, possible action in the financial, economic, energy and other sectors, etc. Also non-participation in big public events in Russia, like the

World Soccer Championship in 2018, should be on such a list. Like in the case of the common set of criteria, this *common EU-NATO catalogue of hybrid responses* could be prepared by the HR/VP and the NATO Secretary-General.

40. *A more strategic approach* is required concerning EU-NATO coordination for *military operations*. The strengths of both organisations should become the point of departure for defining complementarity of capacities. Clearly, NATO has collective defence as its core function, although the EU has to play a security role in the East. In crisis management a geographical division can be envisaged, with the EU primarily focussing on its southern neighbourhood.