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CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

Transatlantic Security in the 21st Century: Do New Threats Require New Approaches?

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Testimony

Since the end of the Second World War, the transatlantic alliance has been the backbone of American foreign policy. Post-war, the indivisibility of Western European security from that of the United States heralded a sustained period of Western peace and unprecedented economic growth. The fall of the Soviet Union just over twenty years ago, and the triumph of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe thereafter has extended the breadth of European peace and prosperity at almost unimaginable speed.

The post-war political, economic and security successes enjoyed by Western Europe and the United States and by the Euro-Atlantic area more broadly after 1990 are well known. How the West triumphed over the Soviet Union is equally clear: the unwavering leadership of President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher combined with the steadfastness of NATO and the European Single Market to undermine the evil empire militarily, ideological and economically.

Therefore, it seems incredible that there is now serious talk of demolishing the very architecture which underpinned this extraordinary success story. Whether it is the European Union's ham-fisted attempts to duplicate NATO's roles and structures, or Russian proposals for an entirely new European security architecture, supplanting NATO with either, will kill the goose that laid the golden egg of transatlantic security.

Do New Threats Require New Approaches?

The question of whether new threats require new approaches is largely a question of whether current institutions are working or not; and whether new arrangements would work better.

With regard to NATO, this is a rehash of a 20-year old discussion: is NATO relevant anymore? The answer is unequivocally, yes. The extraordinary security enjoyed in greater parts of Europe than ever before is in no small part because of NATO. When the countries of Central and Eastern Europe emerged from the iron fist of the Soviet Union it was NATO they headed to in their droves. Thereafter NATO focused on new threats and challenges. It is currently active on three continents in missions ranging from counterinsurgency to counter-piracy. The reason NATO has so easily adapted to new mission is because it was always an alliance of two things: a defense alliance and an alliance of values. Unless the transatlantic community has decided that neither security nor values matter, there can be no rationale for downgrading NATO.

NATO is not a perfect alliance; it has failings, epitomized not least of all by the inequitable burden-sharing among the allies in Afghanistan. It is probably crunch time in addressing these long-standing failings too, since President Obama seems to have less

forbearance than his predecessors in tolerating them. But the perfect can not be the enemy of the good. Reforming and revitalizing NATO is the answer to addressing existing and future threats, not abolishing or undermining it.

Reforming and revitalizing NATO will be a massive undertaking requiring American leadership and an Administration committed to a NATO-first agenda. Without American leadership, NATO will fail. The golden opportunity to rejuvenate NATO is in the lead-up to the NATO Summit in Lisbon at the end of this year, where NATO's latest strategic concept will be unveiled. NATO's strategic concept outlines the alliance's purpose, organization, and tasks and it will be based on an updated threat perception. NATO, like any truly strategic organization, has built-in mechanisms to recognize and address the changing security environment, as it did with new strategic concepts in 1991 and 1999. Just as the OSCE molded itself to the post-Cold War environment under the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, so did NATO, hence how new threats can be addressed by existing institutions.

It is vital that in recognizing new threats, such as cyberterrorism and ballistic missile proliferation, NATO does not merely pay lip service to them. Resources and political will are required to confront the vast range of symmetrical and asymmetric threats facing the alliance. It is equally vital that NATO does not overburden itself with threats which it has neither the will nor the mandate to address, such as climate change. There are certain threats and challenges, while important to some members that simply do not belong in NATO's basket of responsibilities.

Above all, the United States must reinforce the primacy of NATO in Europe's security architecture. If the primacy of NATO in the transatlantic security architecture is not upheld, little else can be achieved. Neither the European Union nor Russia is capable of supplanting America's leadership role on the Continent in a stable, productive or healthy way.

NATO-EU Relations

In terms of economic development, the European Union has a role to play, especially in its near-abroad. But in security terms, its efforts have been dreadful. Since the creation of a separate European defense identity in 1998, overall European defense spending, military capabilities, and deployable manpower have decreased, creating fierce competition for limited resources. The European Security and Defence Policy (now known as the Common Security and Defence Policy) has provided NATO with little or no valuable complementarity, and the creation of an EU army or a permanent EU military headquarters can only come at NATO's expense.

After eight years of tortuous negotiations, the EU recently passed the Lisbon Treaty. The EU proclaimed that the Lisbon Treaty would answer the question famously attributed to Henry Kissinger: "Who do I call if I want to speak to Europe?" It further claimed that it would allow the EU to speak with one voice on the international stage and more meaningfully contribute to global security missions. However, after just three months, it

has become clear that confusion remains rife across the EU in foreign policy terms and that the institutional changes secured in the Treaty have not created additional political will among the members to genuinely affect change on the ground. During the crisis in Haiti, the Lisbon Treaty did not magically give the EU the ability to stride across the world stage. In Afghanistan, the EU police training mission has been a staggering failure. And under EU leadership of the Iranian issue, the bottom line stands that Tehran is far closer to getting a nuclear weapon now than they were when the EU assumed leadership of the issue.

In this respect, NATO must remain the cornerstone of Europe's security. The EU has not yet resolved the elite-driven centralization tendency to craft Europe as a counterbalance to the United States, rather than to complement it. Therefore, in terms of redefining the NATO-EU relationship, the United States should adopt six simple principles:

- NATO's primacy in Europe's security architecture is supreme;
- The EU should be a civilian complement to NATO rather than a separate military identity;
- The EU should not duplicate NATO assets, including any separate EU operational planning and command capabilities;
- NATO must maintain at least one Supreme Command in the United States;
- NATO must reserve all resources exclusively for NATO missions; and
- The assets and resources for exclusively EU missions must be provided in addition to—not instead of—the members' contributions to NATO.

More Equitable Burden-Sharing

If the EU wants to act in areas of the world where NATO does not, NATO should not be expected to provide its resources for these missions. If the EU genuinely believes that global security is enhanced by engaging in military missions without NATO, then it should pay for such missions exclusively from European budgets and use European assets and manpower.

NATO clearly has its own problems to deal with in terms of equitable burden-sharing. How to more fairly share NATO's burden is a perennial issue, and one which has vexed even the most ardent supporter of the transatlantic security alliance. European leaders seemed shocked last month when U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates stated that the alliance faces a "crisis" because of pitiful Continental defense budgets, and demilitarized political attitudes.

The only shocking thing about Secretary Gates' comments is that it hasn't been said earlier by this Administration. Only four European members of NATO spend the benchmark of two percent of GDP on defense; few European troops are capable of long overseas deployments; transformational initiatives are stalled in many countries; and America still provides the vast majority of high-end military equipment for NATO missions. Although there have been some stunning contributions in Afghanistan—from

the UK, Denmark, and Poland in particular—there have been some equally underwhelming efforts—from France, Germany, and Spain for example.

In Afghanistan, Continental Europeans have provided too few combat troops, with too many operational caveats, too little equipment and too little money. Neither have they stepped up to the plate in terms of civilian reconstruction efforts: Embedded Training Teams, Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams, Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Police Mentoring Teams all remain understaffed. Within NATO there now exists a two-tiered alliance which Secretary Gates bluntly describes as, “some allies willing to fight and die to protect people’s security and others who are not.”

While a radical departure for NATO, new burden-sharing rules could be adopted. Traditionally, NATO has operated better behind the scenes, with frank diplomatic exchanges generally resolving its major disputes. But with an expanded alliance of 28 members, radical solutions may be necessary. Specifically, the benchmark of spending at least two percent of GDP on defense by NATO members could be made an enforced requirement for gaining membership and for retaining full voting rights within the alliance.¹

Russia

Another important element of revitalizing NATO is ensuring that the alliance’s Article V guarantee is credible. However, Russia sees calls to strengthen Article V as a zero-sum game: there is an intrinsic assumption in Moscow that anything which makes Article V stronger will make Russia weaker. Russia is deeply dissatisfied with NATO, and to a much lesser extent the European Union. As Russia’s Ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin has stated: “we’re told by the West that they like NATO and the EU as it is, they suit us fine. Well, they do not suit us. We don’t like it.”²

However, some European leaders, including French President Nicolas Sarkozy, are willing to seriously consider Russia’s concept of reorganizing Europe’s security architecture. This policy is likely to be dictated by France’s competition with Berlin over Russian markets, as well as Paris’s desire to sell to Russia advanced military equipment, such as the assault ship, *Mistral*.³ Incredibly, this comes in the wake of Russia’s recent simulation of a nuclear attack on a NATO member (Poland).⁴ The French position also

¹ Sally McNamara, “Principles and Proposals for NATO Reform,” *The Heritage Foundation*, December 11, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2008/12/Principles-and-Proposals-for-NATO-Reform> (March 14, 2010).

² Dmitry Rogozin, “Russia, NATO, and the Future of European Security,” *Chatham House*, February 20, 2009, at http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/13622_200209rogzin.pdf (March 13, 2010).

³ Ariel Cohen and Owen Graham, “French Russian Rapprochement... Again”, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 10, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142405274870478490457511292346578052.html> (March 15, 2010).

⁴ Matthew Day, “Russia ‘simulates’ nuclear attack on Poland,” *The Daily Telegraph*, November 1, 2009, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/6480227/Russia-simulates-nuclear-attack-on-Poland.html> (March 14, 2010).

disregards the tremendous extent to which Euro-Atlantic institutions are already open to Russian participation: the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; the NATO-Russia Council; the EU-Russian Partnership and Co-operation Agreement; the Council of Europe; and, of course, Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

When Moscow unveiled the text of its proposed legally-binding European Security Treaty in November, it seemed almost benign:⁵

- Respecting members' territorial integrity;
- Establishing new processes for conflict prevention and resolution, including the inadmissibility of the use and threat of force; and
- Establishing new forms of cooperation for dealing with new threats and challenges.

These are all surely good things; in fact, they are core principles of the international system writ large; and they are all possible within existing security arrangements. What is less clear is Russia's willingness to take them seriously: Moscow unilaterally withdrew from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe in 2007; it signed, but has not ratified the Energy Charter Treaty; it redrew Europe's borders by force when it invaded Georgia in August 2008; and it remains in permanent violation of the EU-brokered ceasefire to the war by unilaterally recognizing the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It seems almost comical that Russia claims the existing security structures are not working on the grounds that they were 'provoked' into invading Georgia. There are reasons to believe that a new European Security Treaty drafted on Russian principles would make Russia an even more problematic partner than the existing architecture allows for.

Furthermore, the detailed proposals surrounding Russia's draft European Security Treaty reveal the truer nature of this proposed restructuring. The invasion of Georgia demonstrated Russia's inclination toward military adventurism. It affirms its "zone of privileged interest" policy, announced by President Medvedev in the aftermath of the Georgia War. Moscow believes it is entitled it to interfere, militarily and politically, in the affairs of its border states. Beyond that, Russia is seeking to reassert its global reach, reverse and contain the expansion of the Euro-Atlantic community and most importantly, weaken the global position of the United States. Russia ultimately strives to abolish NATO and weaken the OSCE.

President Obama has shown a greater willingness than almost any other President to accommodate Russia under the rubric of 'resetting' U.S.-Russian relations. The abandonment of the third site missile defense installations in Poland and Czech Republic—on the 70th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland—was a particularly stunning concession to Moscow. Abolishing—or undermining—NATO as suggested by Russia will undermine vital American security interests and will be another bridge too

⁵ "European Security Treaty," *President of Russia*, November 29, 2009, at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2009/11/223072.shtml#> (March 14, 2010).

far; revitalizing NATO, and standing behind its treaty commitment to enlargement, including Eastwards enlargement, must be red-line issues which Washington will not concede to Moscow.

Conclusion

The ultimate question for transatlantic security in the 21st century is not whether new institutions are required but whether Russia intends to be a constructive partner *per se*. Russia has never experienced more peace and security on its Western border. Russia's proposed European Security Treaty would achieve four primary goals: legitimize Moscow's sphere of privileged interest policy; reduce American influence in Europe; eradicate the indivisibility of transatlantic security; and project greater Russian influence internationally.⁶

It is ironic that Russia has proposed a new security architecture, even though it does not play fair within existing structures. The European Union remains a flop in security terms. NATO—even with its problems and stresses—remains the heart of the transatlantic security alliance. A new U.S.-Russian relationship should be based on practicable, deliverable goals, such as Russian support of the U.S. and NATO effort in Afghanistan and the joint work to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons—a goal that Moscow says its shares with Washington. However, a new European security treaty should not be on the agenda. It is a thinly veiled attempt to rebalance Europe's geopolitical map and kill NATO.

I would like to conclude with a quote from President Obama,

"NATO stands as an example of how the United States can advance American national security--and the security of the world--through a strong alliance rooted in shared responsibility and shared values. NATO remains a vital asset in America's efforts to anchor democracy and stability in Europe and to defend our interests and values all over the world."⁷

⁶ Donald N Jensen, "The US Reconsiders Transatlantic Security," taken from *The Indivisibility of Security: Russia and Euro-Atlantic Security*, NATO Defense College, Rome, December 2009, at www.ndc.nato.int/download/downloads.php?icode=143 (March 14, 2010).

⁷ Senator Obama, "Obama Statement on NATO Summit in Romania," *United States Senate*, March 3, 2008.

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