



The Multiple Futures Project Interim Report on Security Implications

Aim

This Interim Report provides both the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and Military Committee (MC) with initial insights on the security implications facing the Alliance derived from engagements with NATO nations, partner countries, and a variety of international, governmental, and non-governmental experts. The report focuses mainly on security implications and their potential consequences for the Alliance which can be used to inform the strategic dialogue with regard to the future role of the Alliance and the capabilities required.

The report presents four initial insights and associated consequences which represents a clarion call to action. The first of these four insights touches upon the cornerstone of our defence structures by focusing on why and how the evolving nature of threats will pose new challenges for reaching a consensus on what constitutes an Article 5 response. The second insight reflects on the need for the Alliance to examine its responsibility to act outside NATO's traditional areas of engagement to preclude or minimize conflict with pro-active, integrated, and comprehensive approaches. The third insight is centered on the understanding that readily available advanced technology will enable determined adversaries to attack Alliance vulnerabilities in new and unexpected ways, thus requiring NATO to consider changes in its operating concepts, capabilities, and future force structure. The fourth insight suggests that enhanced communications and increased interaction with international partners will be required to positively shape and influence values, ideas and events in an increasingly globalized world.

The initial findings of the report convey the message that the security environment will continue to evolve and be subject to a variety of unforeseeable and dynamic political, social, technological and military developments. Therefore, the Alliance will have to maintain existing, and in some cases, develop new capabilities to grapple with these emerging security challenges. It is this complex nature of the future that reinforces the importance, and need for, strategic unity, solidarity and coherence of the Alliance.

Initial Insights and Consequences.

Insight 1: The evolving nature of risks and threats to vital interests will pose new challenges for achieving strategic unity of the alliance, maintaining solidarity, and reaching a common understanding of what constitutes an Article 5 attack.

Consequences

- In an increasingly complex security environment, the nature of risks and threats will continue to evolve, and so will the understanding of collective defence. This will challenge the Alliance's ability to reach a timely decision regarding when, where and how to respond.
- Alliance solidarity will be threatened by competing values and ideas from actors who promote alternatives to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Maintaining solidarity in the face of shared threats must remain the Alliance's highest priority.
- Risks and threats to the Alliance's territories, populations and forces will be hybrid in nature: interconnected, unpredictable and a combination of traditional warfare mixed with irregular warfare terrorism and organised crime.
- The Alliance may face attacks that do not fit the traditional interpretation of Article 5. These attacks will have a direct effect on the Alliance, e.g., massive communications disruption, pandemics, cyber attacks on economic or social infrastructure. These attacks may emanate from states or from non-state actors, individuals and/or small groups who are difficult to identify and are highly adaptable and willing to operate outside the internationally accepted laws, values, norms and conventions.
- Some nations with different ideologies and worldviews will rise as economic, technological and military powers. While some will cooperate, others will try to reshape or reject the international system. These nations will generate competition for strategic influence, values and ideas in areas of strategic interest for the Alliance.
- Shifting demographics and corresponding value systems within Alliance Nations, that oppose Alliance action, will make a response to diffused and complex threats more challenging.

- **Changing interpretations of national identity, softening allegiances, eroding social cohesion and demographic shifts will influence member nations' perceptions of threat and the preparedness for the use of military force.**
- **Nations will face recruitment and sustainment problems and a substantially reduced national support for the defence sector as a whole.**

Insight 2: Increased interaction with non-NATO nations and other international actors will create opportunities for the Alliance to extend its role in enhancing security and stability outside traditional areas of engagement.

Consequences

- **The Alliance will have to transform itself from a predominantly defence-based military Alliance into a comprehensive political and military security community.**
- **The network of global governance designed to meet 21th century challenges will continuously adapt to recurring demands emanating from the evolving nature of threats discussed in previous insights. This includes the establishment of new governance bodies, adapting the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the actors within the existing structure of governance, and the tailoring of international law.**
- **The trends point to a multi-polar world where numerous actors will take an increasing role in global governance. Each of these changes will impact the Alliance, and NATO will need to continuously review the governance landscape to ensure clarity in its supported/supporting roles and its responsibilities related to defence/security, civil/military, public/private partnerships, and relationships with other nations.**
- **The Alliance may have to decide whether to act outside the traditional NATO's role due to growing competition in ungoverned areas such as the Arctic, denial of access to resources, space and maritime commons, spill-over of regional conflicts when one or more of the actors have nuclear weapons, and threats to NATO from radical nations and non-nation state actors who are willing to use nuclear and**

tailored biological weapons - or willing to create chaos for the purpose of destabilizing fragile governments.

- The destabilisation, or absence of governance in strategically significant areas, may require NATO to intervene to protect vital Alliance interests or avoid further regional instability, mitigate the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction/Effect (WMD/E), prevent the disruption of vital resources, and address large-scale migration, regional wars, ethnic cleansing or genocide.
- The legitimacy on which NATO actions are based will need to be developed further to deter opportunistic actors with a clear and credible threat of military force.
- Alliance Nations must forge new, or strengthen existing, relationships to form a comprehensive approach to crisis resolution by engaging government agencies, notably law enforcement, border protection services, judiciaries and public health authorities.
- NATO will also need to adapt its internal organizational structures, authorities, and composition and decision-making process, as well as revise its policies for releasing information and cooperating with non-NATO bodies.
- The Alliance will have to strengthen its ability to fulfil its mandate in increasingly complex crises areas, such as hybrid warfare and support to humanitarian relief operations, where it would have to function alongside various other international actors establishing a safe and secure environment.
- The Alliance will have to form a comprehensive partnership policy that will enable full use of its expertise in the fields of Security Sector Reform (SSR), Education, Training and Exercise, focussing on increasing cultural awareness and improving interoperability through the use of the NATO education and training centres.
- The Alliance's supported/supporting roles and responsibilities will need to be addressed regarding its role in contributing to enduring solutions to failed states, i.e., institution building, Security Assistance, police training, security for ungoverned areas, infrastructure and energy security, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and associated consequence management. Additionally, the delineation of roles will be essential when addressing security threats involving hybrid warfare. This will require a complementary approach with the EU.

Insight 3: Determined adversaries will attack Alliance vulnerabilities in unexpected ways enabled by readily available technologies requiring the Alliance to consider changes in the character of military operations and warfare.

Consequences

- **Advances and open availability of technology and the risk of WMD/E proliferation enable adversaries like never before. Alliance Nations must therefore maintain the technological advantage and ensure the security of technology.**
- **The enemy will focus his efforts against perceived weaknesses – which will magnify and compound uncertainty, ambiguity and surprise. The combination of networks, miniaturization, robotics, swarming, precision, and nanotechnology will pose new and unexpected challenges to conventional warfare -- and individuals and small groups will be more effective and lethal with easily developed, concealed, and transported disruptive and destructive capabilities.**
- **Adversaries can and will take the initiative, in any domain, to attack Alliance populations, territories, or interests. Threats will come through a hybrid form of warfare, where conventional, irregular and criminal capabilities are integrated operationally and tactically at the lowest level possible in urban environments and locations, where the Alliance lacks established support systems.**
- **NATO's military posture must not be geared to a single preclusive vision or doctrine of future warfare. It will need to achieve and sustain sufficient conventional and nuclear capabilities with adequate responsiveness and sustainability to deter and defeat those who threaten Alliance security. To effectively respond to surprise and hybrid warfare these capabilities will need to be flexible and adaptable.**
- **In the context of future risks and threats NATO needs to formulate appropriate new concepts and doctrines. Maritime security, the use of space and the protection of space assets and the continued expansion of cyber defence capabilities are examples that will require further examination.**
- **The nature of future operations will emphasize the importance of multinational, joint and expeditionary capabilities able to succeed in demanding geographical and climactic environments. As such, efficient military operations will require flexible, adaptive, deployable forces with ethical and moral grounding, and an understanding of how enemies may use technology against the Alliance.**

- **NATO's level of ambition must ensure the Alliance's ability to conduct the full range of its operations and missions concurrently, ranging from collective defence operations, a greater number of demanding stabilisation and reconstruction operations and large-scale high-intensity operations.**
- **Success in the future will be measured also by the Alliance's ability to educate and train forces, focusing on the efficacy of military and civilian leadership, ensuring they are knowledgeable and capable of strategic foresight, well-educated in the nature of past, present and future warfare.**

Insight 4: Increased interaction with other international actors will provide NATO the opportunity to positively shape and influence ideas, values and events in a globalised world.

Consequences

- **The Alliance will have to ensure its abilities to anticipate, sense, and shape the security environment, achieve a common understanding of perceived risks and threats and better share these perceptions with the Alliance populations.**
- **Maintaining a credible defence posture and corresponding military capabilities will continue to be necessary. Lacking a well-defined and unifying adversary and the increased number of domestic non-security concerns can result in inattention and apathy with regard to matters of defence.**
- **Enhanced strategic communications, both internal and external to the Alliance, will promote public understanding of the Alliance's positive contributions to peace and stability and help ensure NATO's ability to maintain a credible defence posture with the proper mix of military capabilities.**
- **NATO will need to effectively communicate the inter-relationship between security and defence – and NATO's role, in relation to other governance bodies, both Alliance and non-Alliance.**

Commander's Assessment:

The unpredictability and complexity of the future security environment will strain the Alliance's most powerful tools: strategic unity of values and goals, solidarity among Allies, burden-sharing and commitment to its decisions.

The Multiple Futures Project is designed to "sweep" the strategic horizon to gain fidelity from nations and international organisations on the future threats to the territory, population and forces of the Alliance. The security challenges and implications being uncovered by the Multiple Future Project point to a need to redefine many of the assumptions and strategies we have been operating under for the last decade. With this in mind, I believe the Multiple Futures Project can contribute to the debate on the Declaration of Alliance Security and possibly a new Strategic Concept. Ultimately, it can support answering the fundamental question: "what is the future purpose of NATO?"

Against this background, I would like to highlight several key issues addressed in this Interim Report:

- There is a strong need for a fundamental strategic dialogue about NATO's future direction.
- The Alliance will maintain collective defence at its core; however, the nature of the challenges that could prompt an Article 5 response will continue to evolve.
- Increasingly asymmetric and unconventional threats of the future security environment will be the future operational environment of the Alliance: NATO must develop new concepts to deal with these emerging threats.
- Comprehensive Approach will be the foundation for NATO's success. Only improved partnerships can enable the Alliance to meet the complex threats of a rapidly changing security environment.
- The Alliance will have to transform itself from a predominantly defence-based military Alliance into a comprehensive political and military security community.

The Interim Report's aggregate message is that the future presents NATO with unprecedented opportunities to positively influence ideas, values and events in a globalised world – while at the same time maintaining and improving its agility and flexibility to respond to unpredictable and complex challenges.

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