Occasional Paper

NATO's Agenda: Key Issues Facing the Bucharest Summit

A RUSI Transatlantic and European Security Programme Study

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About RUSI

RUSI was founded in 1831, the oldest such institute in the world, at the initiative of the Duke of Wellington. Its original mission was to study naval and military science, what Clausewitz called 'the art of war'.

It still does so: developments in military doctrine, defence management and defence procurement remain central elements in the Institute's work. But in recent years RUSI has broadened its remit to include all issues of defence and security, including terrorism and the ideologies which foster it, and the challenges which we face from other man-made or man-assisted threats and natural disasters.

RUSI is a British institution, but operates with an international perspective. It has amassed over the years an unequalled expertise in its field and an outstanding reputation for quality and objectivity. RUSI's heritage and reputation, its location close to the Ministry of Defence and other ministries in Whitehall and its range of contacts with key opinion formers both inside and outside government, gives unique insight and authority.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), I take great pleasure in introducing this timely and relevant report which offers policy suggestions on key issues for the Alliance ahead of the Bucharest Summit in April 2008.

With the Alliance approaching its 60th anniversary next year, Bucharest offers an unprecedented opportunity to effect real and lasting changes in Alliance policy on key issues. Included on the agenda are the topics of Energy Security, NATO in Afghanistan and Security in the Balkans.

In conjunction with the Romanian Government and many Romanian NGOs, RUSI has jointly organised three conferences on these topics. The conferences, and subsequent reports presented here, offer the key conclusions and recommendations drawn from the discussions.

Summits are, of course, for heads of state and government; all our institutions can do is highlight the key issues which preoccupy the academic community and practitioners within the Alliance.

I would like to thank the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NATO Bucharest Task Force and the Romanian NGOs for their support in the creation of these reports.

Yours faithfully,
Michael Clarke

Founded in 1831
Patron Her Majesty The Queen
President HRH The Duke of Kent KG
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Regional Security, Energy Security and NATO: Future Problems and Possibilities

Introduction

In order to help implement strategy and policies to be further developed at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008, NATO and the Romanian Government, RUSI, the EURISC Foundation and Euro Atlantic Council collaborated on an international conference in Constanta, Romania on 19/20 February entitled 'Regional Security, Energy Security and NATO: Future Problems and Possibilities.' This report presents the main findings and recommendations from the conference.

Background

NATO and its partners comprise 13 per cent of the world's population, but account for 50 per cent of global energy consumption. It is therefore natural that NATO member states should be contributing to discussions on energy security: their dependence on resources is greater than any other alliance or trading bloc, and their responsibility for ensuring stability and prosperity is just as great. Furthermore, there is a clear need to enhance political consultation in order to facilitate a constructive dialogue on the subject. Although the discussion on the role of NATO in energy security is still in its infancy, all NATO member nations agree that the complex issue of energy security is growing in importance. And there have been some moves to co-ordinate joint approaches: the Alliance's 1990 Strategic Concept, the Comprehensive Political Guidance, and NATO's Riga Declaration last year all mentioned Energy Security. For example, paragraph 45 of the Riga Declaration states that NATO members can assist in critical energy infrastructure, thereby giving the Alliance its first clear tasking on energy security.[1] However, although the Allies have discussed energy security in the Senior Political Committee, a consensus on such matters still appears elusive. Be that as it may – and while accepting all the political difficulties – NATO cannot afford *not* to be actively engaged in the energy security debate.

NATO must develop a common *perspective*, and it is evident that this must be in concert with the European Union, to which most of the NATO member states also belong, and which has greater and more precise legal responsibilities for the marketing and consumption of energy products.

The differences between the EU and NATO are well known. Nevertheless, both institutions accept that the North Atlantic community (broadly defined) is facing similar challenges. Producing countries (mostly not NATO member states) claim that there is no problem, while consuming countries (the overwhelming majority of the Alliance) fear interruptions in supply and the political implications of a dependency on a single producer or supplier. Either way, it is obvious that the days when such matters could be simply left to bilateral negotiations

[1] 'As underscored in NATO's Strategic Concept, Alliance security interests can also be affected by the disruption of the flow of vital resources. We support a coordinated, international effort to assess risks to energy infrastructures and to promote energy infrastructure security. With this in mind, we direct the Council in Permanent Session to consult on the most immediate risks in the field of energy security, in order to define those areas where NATO may add value to safeguard the security interests of the Allies and, upon request, assist national and international efforts' Paragraph 45, Riga Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Riga on 29 November 2006.

are over. The discussion must assume a wider strategic approach.

Growing Global Energy Needs

Although there is broad agreement that topics such as the securing of resources and the diversification of supply are not issues to be handled at the NATO level, it is still important to recognise that global energy needs are likely to grow steadily for at least the next two decades and that this growth is of a similar magnitude for all the current members of the Alliance. The world's primary energy needs are projected to rise by 55 per cent between 2005 and 2030, meaning an average annual rate of 1.8 per cent. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions will continue to grow in importance due to their critical oil and natural gas reserves. The potential instability in that region and the considerable uncertainty about the future development of countries such as Iraq should serve as a reminder that increasing production capacity in these areas is far from certain. Western governments must act at the national level to help mitigate some of the world's rising energy needs. And more than two-thirds of this growth in world energy use will come from developing countries. The IEA estimates that demand for oil will rise from 92 million barrels a day (b/d) in 2010 to 115m b/d in 2030.

EU oil imports are mainly from Russia/CIS (38 per cent), Middle East (22 per cent), Norway (15 per cent), North Africa (14 per cent) and other countries (11 per cent). We have to take into account that more than 80 per cent of current European oil and gas production is offshore, mainly in the North Sea, but also in the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Black Sea, all this with declining production and rising costs.

Complex Dynamics

It is generally agreed that ad hoc and often bilateral arrangements have until now worked more often than larger, more institutionalised deals. Producing countries are naturally weary of dealing with trading blocs and alliances, be these military or political. Furthermore, the obligations of Western countries are different: while NATO has a role in the security arrangements of its member states, it is the EU which co-ordinates the regulatory framework for energy distribution and consumption, and it is within the EU that member states have agreed to cap their consumption. Furthermore, it is the EU – and not NATO – which is promoting a variety of 'energy corridors' on the continent. NATO's role in this area is, therefore, limited by powers which member states have given this institution, and by the large degree of variance which exists in energy dependency between the North American part of the Alliance, and its European part.

EU – NATO

In Europe, NATO must always bear in mind Russia's potential to use oil and gas supplies as an instrument of Moscow's foreign policy. Some NATO countries have already been adversely affected and many other European states suffered (albeit temporarily) as a result of the dispute between Russia and the Ukraine in 2005. Nearly 80 per cent of Russia's supply of gas to Western Europe flows via a central pipeline through the Ukraine, making that country integral for European access to natural gas and oil. So, although NATO and the EU have differing powers and responsibilities, the question of security of supplies from Russia and the quality of the relations with this country have an impact on both institutions.

Such an agreement will have a direct impact on the Black Sea Area which must be seen more as a corridor from the Caspian Sea over the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The recent EU documents referring to the 'Black Sea Synergy', Energy Security and relations with Central Asia have contributed to a better understanding of the complexity of the region and created the framework for an improvement of regional and international co-operation.

The complex pillar structure of EU institutions and the diverse opinions of the twenty-seven EU Members and twenty-six NATO Members continue to make co-ordination difficult. But there is no question that, at least in one area – Critical Infrastructure Protection – a division of responsibilities between NATO and the EU is essential. The task can be accomplished by the EU or by NATO or, more likely, by the two institutions combined. However, an agreement on the division of responsibilities will have to be reached.

EU – NATO – Russia

Russia is receptive to discussions on energy security through the G8. And Moscow claims to want to develop the widest possible co-operative relationship with the EU. Many EU member states, however, feel that long-term energy dependence on Russia is dangerous, giving Russia a disproportionate influence on European affairs. There has been some success in EU-Russian relations, but difficulties remain, and they apply to both the EU and NATO. As the foremost military alliance, NATO is still distrusted by the Russians. And, for different but often complementary reasons, the EU has not succeeded in enhancing its relationship with Moscow either, at least not as much as Brussels originally hoped. Links are further complicated by and dependent on the relationship between Moscow and Washington. And, although the transition of leadership in the Kremlin may provide the impetus for new diplomatic initiatives, three conclusions are evident:

- The EU and NATO's rocky relationship with Russia is likely to continue
- Europe's dependency on Russian oil and gas deliveries is an ongoing process
- European and trans-Atlantic energy co-ordination efforts will not be enthusiastically received by Russia.

Resource Nationalism

One hotly debated theme of the conference was 'resource nationalism'. The fact that most of the energy-producing countries rely on state-controlled companies for their trade means that energy supplies will be tied to political considerations much more than 'regular' trade. Furthermore, there have been numerous examples where interruptions in supplies, or the promotion of alternative energy supply routes, were fully intended to signal a political, rather than a purely market-based intent. This is the case with the interruption of Russian oil supplies to some countries, the disputes over the transit of Russian oil and gas via Ukraine, and Russia's attempt to trounce Europe's plans for the Nabucco project through the creation of its own South Stream pipeline project with Italian, Greek and Bulgarian interests. The North Stream project, currently being built by Russian and German commercial concerns, is also viewed by other European partners as politically motivated: while it provides Germany and a few other customers with assured supplies of energy resources, it also tends to bypass Central European nations, who must then negotiate with Moscow from a position of

inferiority. Indeed, as one Russian participant at the conference readily admitted, the Kremlin has made a strategic choice in the selection of its energy partners, based almost entirely on broader political – rather than purely economic – considerations.

Therefore, while most of Europe and North America continue to view energy problems as essentially a challenge for public-private partnerships, it is clear that role of the state – as a regulator and as a protector of supplies – remain very large indeed. The debate about the protection of pipelines is a case in point: while energy companies do provide – and pay – for some of this protection, the wider security responsibilities still lie with sovereign governments, and they can be exercised either through NATO or the EU or, probably, through the involvement of both institutions.

The issue is more complex if the discussion is extended to critical infrastructure: not only pipelines, but also roads, railroads, power grids, internet connections, business continuity, quality of life, and so on.

NATO's 'Value Added'

NATO should not and is not pushing to exercise a lead role in energy security. Other countries do not want NATO to impinge into areas of other specialised organisations, and NATO wants to have a very specific and not necessarily 'lead' role. A specialised and limited role is ideal, considering the differential strengths of the various members as well as the diverse reactions to newly emerging security challenges. As NATO members vary in their energy needs and abilities, it will be much more feasible to maintain a division of labour; the key task is reaching agreement on how these responsibilities are exercised, and whether there can be transparency in the discussions between national governments, both inside the EU and inside NATO.

While NATO will most likely maintain a low-profile in the area of energy security, there are a few specific areas where potentially NATO may add value, particularly in mitigating risks to the existing critical infrastructure. One such role is in intelligence-sharing and surveillance. NATO has access to the world's best surveillance systems, satellites, and unmanned aircraft which could all aid the protection of critical infrastructure. Additionally NATO's considerable human intelligence resources could also help prevent terrorist and trans-border organised crime attacks and other disruptions to global energy supplies. The dissemination of this vast set of information would contribute to the overall security of energy supplies while avoiding tricky Alliance-led commitments.

NATO also has the ability to help project stability through its well-developed network of partners. This could be accomplished through the engagement of the Mediterranean Dialogue, or through NATO's dealings with individual countries in the Gulf region, to use just two examples. Given Europe's dependence on Russian reserves, it is essential that a dialogue is established which includes all the relevant stakeholders. NATO should also continue to develop partnerships with states in Central Asia and the Caucuses to enhance stability in the region's vital 'energy corridor'.

NATO also has a potential role in consequence management, for example through the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Co-ordination Centre (EADRCC). The EADRCC acts as a full-time focal point for NATO members to co-ordinate their disaster relief efforts. Thus far its missions have been in response to natural disasters such as flooding, forest fires, earthquakes and hurricanes. It would not be beyond its remit, however, for an EADRCC force also to respond to a pipeline attack or oil

tanker spill, whether due to accident or attack by terrorist groups.

NATO has a limited (and still controversial) role in Maritime Security Operations, including the protection of the maritime environment and the patrolling of shipping lanes, under Operation Active Endeavour. And lastly, NATO should seek to devise best practice guidelines in this area with members and partners.

Conclusions

The Alliance will shortly celebrate its sixtieth anniversary. To remain relevant NATO must address today's security concerns. Of critical importance to all members is energy security, and the protection of related critical infrastructure. In this regard, the following key conclusions and recommendations emerged from this conference:

- Producers are using energy for political reasons.
- 'Energy nationalism' is affecting all producers; there is a political element to the delivery of commodities like oil and natural gas.
- Europe will become more dependent on foreign energy resources.
- There should be a link, or at least a dialogue, between the EU and NATO on energy.
- The economic sector has an important role to play; this is not just a government or private sector role, both national and multinational. The interaction between government control and commercial considerations remains a key area of concern.
- A freer and more competitive energy market is in everyone's interest: the more state monopolies are a feature of the energy sector, the higher the price everyone pays, in both political and monetary terms.
- The European Union Member States governments are already committed to more competition; most agreements are already in place.
- The EU Commission does actually have much power in the area of regulation and deregulation
- More international presence and transparency of Russian officials and energy co-ordinators at the international level are necessary to inform and explain their decisions on energy issues and to give more predictability to this sector.

There was a lack of consensus on the following issues:

- Whether producers were justified or not in using energy for political reasons
- The precise division of labour between NATO and the EU.
- The role of economic agents, of private companies including those with Russian capital participation; there is a big dispute inside the Commission itself as well as among the Member States about functions and responsibilities
- How to deal with Russia, whether at the EU, NATO or bilateral levels. Everyone seeks good relations with Moscow, but there is no agreement on how this can be achieved, and no agreement on what concessions, if any, should be offered to Russia, at the political or economic levels.

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NATO in Afghanistan: The Romanian Contribution to Global Peace and Security

Introduction

The Comprehensive Political-Military Strategic Plan for Afghanistan will be the thorniest item on the Bucharest Agenda. In order to help implement strategy and policies to be further developed at the NATO Summit in April 2008, NATO and the Romanian Government, RUSI, the CPC-EW and Euro Atlantic Council collaborated on an international conference in Iaşi, Romania on 25/26 February entitled 'NATO in Afghanistan: the Romanian Contribution to Global Peace and Security.' Although the conference does highlight Romanian contributions in Afghanistan specifically, the panellists and participants all contributed to a broader debate about the role of the Alliance in Afghanistan as well as its strategic role worldwide. This report presents the main findings and recommendations from the conference.

Background

As NATO approaches its sixtieth anniversary, the Alliance finds itself involved in a complex mission in Afghanistan ranging from peace-enforcement to all-out war-fighting. To complicate matters further, the larger strategic battle plays itself out in the media. This has placed a strain on the Alliance and led to widespread criticism of its role on the ground in Afghanistan. Much criticism has been exaggerated or ill-informed. If the current media coverage is to be believed, NATO teeters daily between securing Afghanistan and protecting the very future of the Alliance. 'Failure' is often the term used to describe operations on the ground.

The road to this current state of affairs has been a complex one. NATO's recent involvement in Afghanistan began when, for the first time since the organisation's creation in 1949, its Member States unanimously invoked Article V in support of the United States in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The US chose not to avail itself of the Alliance's offer, but Washington did proceed on its own to remove the Taliban government of Afghanistan through Operation *Enduring Freedom* (OEF), which had shielded the terrorists. Subsequently, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorised the creation of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). For several months, the ISAF mission was undertaken on a voluntary basis until NATO took over command and co-ordination in August 2003. It has since been involved in assisting the government of President Hamid Karzai in re-establishing its authority across all the provinces.

The international community has been looking to NATO to co-ordinate a multitude of civil-military tasks, while NATO keeps waiting for its individual members to provide or improve their capabilities. The civilian and NGO community are suffering from a major lack of resources which is compounded by the lack of overall clarity in the mission and overall goals. Furthermore, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a small footprint and remains too small to provide effective civilian support which can complement the NATO military presence. Indeed, as one conference delegate put it, what is needed now is not a light footprint, but the right footprint.

Romania's Role in Afghanistan

Secretary of State Corneliu Dobritoiu

emphasised that, while the civilian component needs to be strengthened, NATO members should also strengthen their military efforts. Romania has contributed to the mission in Afghanistan since 2002, initially working under Operation *Enduring Freedom*, and later as part of the ISAF mission beginning in 2003. Of particular note is the fact that Romania was not a member of NATO when the operation began and, as such, was the first non- member to participate in operations in Afghanistan. Romanian forces have been engaged in some of the most difficult areas such as Kandahar Air Field (KAF) and have been operating without any national caveats, often leaving as little as 20 per cent of their forces inside the base. They have been involved in co-ordinating the security of the region as well as taking part in broader stability and support operations. Romania is also one of the few members of the Alliance with strategic lift capability. Secretary Dobritoiu announced that Romania will be doubling the number of personnel (currently numbering approximately 650) it has on the ground in order to improve operational readiness, hopefully setting an example for the other members of the Alliance to follow. Secretary of State Mrs Raduta Matache also announced that Romania will be opening a diplomatic mission in Kabul, thereby reinforcing its commitment at both the military and political levels.

Conceptual struggles

Some participants argued that it may be a mistake to peg the credibility of the Alliance as a whole to the variations of operational tempo in Afghanistan. A lack of clarity in the overall mission was highlighted by many speakers as the main difficulty with operations today. It was suggested that Alliance members agree on neither the overall mission nor the deliverables. The challenge is to establish clear responsibilities in the tasks of civil-military co-ordination, reconstruction and the implementation of integrated planning, as part of an overall comprehensive approach. Political direction is essential, a better strategic communications policy should be adopted and the long-term nature of the mission must be effectively communicated to the wider public. The international community needs to speak with one voice instead of many, and so does the Afghan Government.

NATO Operations for Security and Peace Support: Progress and Challenges

As Secretary Matache pointed out, 'Afghanistan is a mission of necessity: we are there because we have to be there'. What is needed in Afghanistan is a new comprehensive political-military strategic plan that stresses co-ordination, cohesion, capabilities and 'Afghanisation'. The plan for the future of Afghanistan does not have a kinetic solution; it must be a mainly civilian plan.

Challenges remain in several key areas:

- The operational environment in Afghanistan has regressed from a permissive to a non-permissive one
- The remit of the Karzai Government does not extend beyond Kabul, leaving the provinces mostly to the whim of local tribe leaders and warlords
- The opium economy is starting to outweigh the licit economy
- A lack of public support among electorates back home in the contributing nations can seriously undermine the mission, unless it is swiftly addressed

Now is an ideal moment to face these challenges.

- After the elections in Pakistan with the losses by Islamist parties in the north, a new regional dynamic has been created which may have an effect in Afghanistan
- The deadline for the renewal of the UN Mandate is rapidly approaching; this provides opportunities for a renewed commitment by the international community and is, perhaps, a good time to reconsider a formal memorandum of understanding between NATO and the UN
- Although the British nomination for the post of the Senior Civilian Representative position was not accepted, the appointment of such a person is still required if the international community is to speak with one voice
- Finally, the Bucharest summit offers world leaders a chance to formulate a new and invigorated plan.

All the participants of the conference agreed that this plan (in whatever form it takes) *must* be include participants outside NATO. And, while not all participants agreed on what this plan should include, one suggestion was that it should take the format of an overarching strategic framework anchored in the UN, and implemented *with the help* of NATO, the EU and other international organisations.

International Security, NATO and Afghanistan

In this new age of asymmetric warfare waged by amorphous non-state actors, the international community has struggled to determine the best response. Ad hoc, badly co-ordinated efforts have so far proven unsuccessful. However, the consequences of inaction – namely a global counter-insurgency and pockets of terrorism around the world – are too great to ignore. Everyone in the international community has a stake in this conflict, and that is why the Bucharest Summit remains an ideal moment to try and consolidate international efforts.

The opponents the Alliance faces in Afghanistan are not only unconventional but also multi-dimensional and extremely adaptable. Panellists at the conference underlined the fact that in order to prove successful, it is necessary to build up Afghan capacity in addition to garnering more support from the NATO allies. The balance between civil and military forces needs to be made more even, and civilian capacity in particular needs to be expanded. The long-term nature of the mission means that building a competent and resource-rich civilian base will remain the key to success. The military naturally expects to hand over the reconstruction and development tasks to civilian leaders, but this cannot happen until the environment is secure enough for civilians to operate without much protection, and the civilian components are capable of assuming leadership. This includes Afghan civilians as well, not just Allied forces. The yardstick for success must be an Afghan one, not one determined exclusively by the international community.

Corruption is a major problem in Afghanistan. There is no public trust in the government and until this problem is addressed, the international community's aid and reconstruction will be compromised. This corruption is systemic and, although its causes are understandable (and, at least in principle, not alien to other countries) the effects are pernicious, and the scale of the corruption is far greater than in

many other states. The Afghan government used only 40 per cent of its budget last year because it was unable to allocate resources properly. Until these problems are addressed, progress in Afghanistan will remain painfully slow.

Global NATO: An Alliance to Meet Future Challenges?

Despite the difficulties in Afghanistan, participants at the conference agreed that NATO should continue to strengthen its partnership network with like-minded nations. Partner countries such as Japan and South Korea have already contributed actively to operations in Afghanistan. Japan has given over 2 billion yen (almost $19 million) to NATO PRTs, and nine Japanese NGOs are currently operating in Afghanistan. South Korea has recently taken command of a PRT. Examining the idea of a 'Global NATO' is part of the transformation from past operations, a process in which the Alliance members must adapt to the concept that defence of allied interests is not necessarily or not always just the defence of allied territories. NATO's greatest asset is its ability to help countries to transition from security consumers to security providers; that is what the Alliance did in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s. Participants at the conference supported the possibility of further NATO enlargements.

Life in Afghanistan Before and After the Taliban

Panellists highlighted their experiences on the ground, often reinforcing complaints about enduring poverty and corruption. Some of the governors appointed by President Karzai fail to implement existing national regulations. Trained Afghan police officers officially receive a nominal salary of $70 per month: by the time the money reaches them, real payments amount to approximately $30. Teachers receive approximately $40-$50 per month, and even then will take holiday during poppy harvesting season to supplement their income. As one of the panellists pointed out, education is secondary in a country where people have little to eat. An ISAF translator will receive $250 per month and judges earn anywhere from $110-$350 per month. The problem with these salaries is that they are instituted within an ISAF framework, and remain utterly dependent on ISAF's continued presence.

The population of Afghanistan is very young. The average age is 17, but life expectancy is just 44 years. The average Afghan lives on only $1 per day, and there is an astronomic 40 per cent unemployment rate. The average adult literacy rate is 28 per cent (43% male, 12% female).

Narcotics are still the main threat to the country's health – 1.5 million young people are addicted to opium, posing more problems. Eradicating the supply of drugs overnight would not only destroy what little income many farmers depend on, but also wreak havoc on addicts. The solution to this problem is not a simple one, although one panellist noted that the only positive outcome is at least an increased international awareness of the difficulties.

NATO's Role in the International Order: Building Ever Stronger Regional and Global Relationships

For the first time ever, all the stakeholders in Afghanistan will gather in Bucharest in early April, including representatives from NATO, the EU, the UN and partner countries such as Georgia, Japan, New Zealand and Australia.

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has faced the challenge of going 'out of area or out of business'. NATO therefore enacted an agenda of transformation beginning in Prague in 2002, followed on with the decisions taken in Norfolk in 2004 and also developed a transformation agenda at the Riga Summit in 2006. NATO is indeed still in business, although its future relationship with other international institutions remains uncertain. One of the most important relationships is with the EU, and participants at the conference noted that NATO and the EU actually work very well together in the operational environment, but less so in the political context. But this is not reflected in the public's perceptions. Overall, Europeans tend to believe that NATO is not succeeding in Afghanistan because there has been too much emphasis on a military presence, while Americans believe that problems persist because there has not been enough emphasis on a stronger military presence. NATO members must reconcile these differences in order to make progress at Bucharest.

Conclusions

- An overarching strategic plan should be implemented, and this is best provided by an international coalition primarily involving the UN, NATO and the EU
- There must be a renewed focus on local development in Afghanistan
- Better organisation of the international community's effort is needed to address issues of
  - national caveats among contributing nations
  - difficulties of NATO military support to the Afghan National Army
  - difficulties of NATO military support to the EU Policing Mission
- The Alliance leaders must try and find a way to generate greater cohesion across NATO for the operation
- Mission plans should be realistic, based on availability of resources and not idealistic expectations
- There should be a strong EU presence that can effectively integrate with other forces
- Part of the solution is regional – we cannot 'fix' Afghanistan without addressing the problems of Pakistan too

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NATO in South Eastern Europe: Reconstruction & Security in the Balkans

Introduction

On 3-4 March 2008, security experts as well as foreign policy and military officials from NATO and the South Eastern European region met in Timisoara, Romania for a seminar entitled 'NATO in South Eastern Europe: Reconstruction & Security in the Balkans'. This international conference was co-hosted by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) in partnership with the Romanian Government. The agenda for the seminar was intended to stimulate discussion and highlight areas of consensus with regards to NATO's role in securing the continued stability of the Balkans, and identify policy areas ahead of the next NATO summit in April 2008 to be held in Bucharest.

Assessing NATO's role in promoting democracy in the Balkans

More than just a military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has always had a political dimension. From the outset, the purpose of the Washington treaty was to protect governments and their citizens in the West from the threat of the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Cold War, and through successive rounds of enlargement, countries in Central and Eastern Europe have now joined the group of democracies which the Alliance represents. For many in the Balkans region, membership of the Alliance represents a guarantee both in terms of political stability and security, with accession also carrying with it the symbol of re-uniting with the rest of Europe.

NATO's role in launching political reform in South Eastern Europe has thus been essential. For such countries as Bulgaria and Romania, for example, the prospect of NATO accession played a large part in sustaining democratic change. Some perceived need to meet political and social criteria for entry – along with the more specific areas of military reform – played an important part in shaping peoples' minds during the accession procedure. Furthermore, by firmly placing the military sector at the heart of the wider process of reform – often in itself a national symbol – the process of political transition took root all the more easily. Democratic control and parliamentary oversight over the armed forces therefore leading to a democratisation of the security sector as a whole.

Participants at the seminar described the process of Euro-Atlantic integration and NATO/EU enlargement as the key driver of democratic change in the Balkans region. This tended to happen best in the following order: first NATO, then the EU, as it was deemed that meeting the criteria for accession of the Alliance was perhaps more specific and as a result achievable far sooner.

Public opinion within the Balkan communities towards the Alliance has suffered from the fact that they themselves have been the focus of NATO military operations. With troops having repeatedly been deployed in the Balkans for peacekeeping operations, but also engaging at times in hard power/peace-making activities, NATO has de facto been both judge and party to the process of post-conflict reconstruction. In comparison, NATO demonstrated mostly soft power in terms of successfully attracting former Warsaw Pact nations to join its ranks, and thereby encouraged them to adhere to the same democratic and social values. The difficulties which the UN, NATO, and the

EU alike all face in terms of affecting 'positive peace' in the region (diminishing the risk of conflict), as opposed to 'negative peace' (purely characterised by the absence of conflict), generated according to participants a lack of trust in international organisations amongst certain states.

The Balkan conflicts have provided much of the backdrop for the development of NATO's strategic concept over the years. During this time, the Alliance has undergone a strategic shift, moving away from its traditional Cold War mission of territorial defence to crisis management beyond its borders. Through its efforts to bring peace to the region and provide a stabilised environment for political and social activity to resume, the objective of NATO in the Balkans has thus been to affect the process of political transformation.

International Co-operation in the Region

The Balkan conflicts have provided one of the most relevant frameworks for international co-operation, with NATO, the European Union and the UN all sharing a strategic interest in furthering political, economic and social stability in the region. Such international co-operation has largely been part of a learning process, however, rather than the result of a concerted approach. With the end of the Cold War – and the changes this involved on the international scene – international organisations have sought to reform their structures and redefine their operations, while at the same time dealing with events the region as best they could.

Notwithstanding some of the international community's successes in responding to conflicts and tensions in the Balkans since the 1990s, this ad hoc collaboration has also led to some of our most damaging failures, when the mechanisms for such collaboration were unsuccessful: Srebrenica, the 'UN safe area', will forever stand as a desperate symbol of this breakdown. Participants stated that the failings of the international community negatively affected public opinion in the region.

As in all operational theatres, partnership between the different parties in the Balkans – whether governmental or non-governmental, but also at the sub-regional level – is all the more necessary in terms of co-ordinating the various activities on the ground. Each organisation employs its own strategy according to a perceived competitive advantage or particular mandate, and practical as well as strategic imperatives require us to work together in an effort to achieve the overall objective. Beyond structured mechanisms, there are frequent bilateral consultations and there is generally much manoeuvring at the operational level if the key players are committed to a culture of co-operation. At the level of the individual finally, a personal commitment to the region is often based on the common experiences of those involved.

In terms of NATO-EU relations, the success of various military and policing ESDP missions, themselves following-on from NATO operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM[1] and Kosovo,[2] seems to have established a pattern for transition in peacekeeping terms which offers many valuable lessons. During Operation Concordia in FYROM from March to December 2003, and as part of the ongoing EUFOR Althea mission in Bosnia-

[1] Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.
[2] The Republic of Kosova, as recognised by some NATO member states.

Herzegovina, the European Union took over from NATO's previous military operations using the Alliance's own planning capabilities and under command of DSACEUR. Again in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the EU's follow-on mission allowed the Alliance to transfer forces onto other engagements, with troops drawn down from 60,000 during NATO's IFOR operation, to 2,500 as part of the current EU mission.

Despite the easy transition and success of these EU follow-on missions using Alliance capabilities – demonstrating that the Berlin Plus arrangements work very well in practice – any observer of NATO/EU relations will know, however, that there is little appetite within the EU for such mechanisms to become standard, let alone be used again in the future. Indeed, all subsequent EU operations within the Balkans and elsewhere have drawn instead on national Operational Headquarters, while several within the European Union aspire to the creation of an autonomous joint operational planning structure, arguably duplicating capabilities held within SHAPE.

Much of the framework and scope for international co-operation is subject to formalised agreements at an institutional level, which in turn tends to restrict the scope of collaboration. While at the human and operational level there are many efforts made to find arrangements in order to work around these obstructions, the mechanisms for this co-operation are limited to very specific areas and often thwarted due to the fixed positions of certain states. Participants agreed that we can only but encourage such political barriers be lifted by the countries themselves, as well as oppose a certain degree of institutional protectionism also at play, as each organisation strives to establish the contours of their respective activities.

The Alliance members have been fully aware of these obstacles, and began to look at methods of fostering a culture of co-operation. The Comprehensive Approach first made an appearance in the form of the 2004 'NATO Strategic Vision: the Military Challenge' article and in the Effects-Based Approach to Operations proposal. After an initial period of opposition from some of the members, the atmosphere among NATO members has gradually changed to one of cautious acceptance. NATO leaders agreed at the November 2006 Riga Summit that a comprehensive approach was necessary to meet the challenges of operational environments such as the Balkans, and in June 2007 NATO defence ministers stated that 'these proposals should be completed as a matter of priority'.

NATO defines the Comprehensive Approach as a concerted international effort by the whole of the international community, in order to sustain progress made by individual parties during operations. Transferring success in the military field to settling the wider strategic objective of political, economic and social reconstruction requires the involvement of several actors. A common misconception is that it is a single plan by NATO to which everybody must adhere, yet it is not about the co-ordination *of* allies, but rather the co-ordination *with* all the stakeholders involved.

The formulation of a new strategic concept – able to address NATO's relationship with organisations such as the UN, the European Union and the OSCE – would be most welcome in terms of developing better international co-operation. While the imperatives of the mission sometimes benefit from ad hoc arrangements, a

working agreement would benefit everyone in terms moving beyond 'collaborative emergency response' to a co-ordinated and more effective partnership. In addition, the lessons learned from operations in the Balkans is more than sufficient evidence that NATO needs to achieve better co-ordination with international organisations in other theatres such as Afghanistan.

Kosovo: Discussing Final Status

The question of dealing with Kosovo's final status drew much attention throughout the conference and discussions reflected a strong mix of attitudes amongst participants. For several, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence on 17 February 2008 marked the end of a necessary and inevitable process, which all parties should now recognise and avoid dwelling upon. Others, on the other hand, stated that they would continue to contest or avoid recognising such independence, considering this to be in violation of International law, as well as legitimising unilateral secession. The prospect that this set a dangerous precedent was widely expected to come back and haunt the international community sometime in the future, with the possibility of further unsettled borders throughout the region or the wider world.

The path leading us down the route of such contested independence is made up of several missed opportunities, which may have contributed to minimise the political consequences of what was always likely to be a difficult outcome. A contradiction was pointed out regarding the readiness of some countries to uphold Serbia's claim over Kosovo while it was under a communist dictatorship in 1999, and the determination to recognise Kosovo's independence now Serbia has become a democracy. Mistakes made by Serbia and the international community alike were recognised, such as a failing to resolve the issue over final status at the time of Milosevic's fall or discouraging Serb minorities' participation in local elections, thereby not giving any negotiated arrangements a chance. Discussions remained constructive at all times, however, and tried to reflect the need to deal with facts on the ground and identify a common 'historic future' for the region.

The political- and security-related implications of Kosovo's declared independence were then discussed, with the Alliance having come out of the first round of recognition a little further divided than it was before,[3] as well as facing uncertainties over what the implications might be concerning other matters in the region.

The continued commitment of all countries to the KFOR operation – including Serbia and other Allies who have not recognised Kosovo's independence – was welcomed by all as an effort to preserve a peaceful and secure environment. A strictly neutral KFOR is essential today in order to meet a number of security challenges in Kosovo; for example, making citizens feel secure, upholding police services or providing infrastructure protection (i.e. border posts). The success of the operation now rests on constraining any outbreaks of violence, while preserving local perceptions that KFOR soldiers remain a neutral party. Although fears that some countries would pull out of KFOR over Kosovo's independence have proved unfounded, a warning over future force caveats being imposed on the KFOR mission as a result of non-recognition remains to be heeded. Consensus within the Alliance is necessary

[3] For example the US, Britain, France and Germany have recognised Kosovo's independence, while Spain, Slovakia, Greece and Romania have not.

to avoid further policy disagreements of the kind proving so divisive in Afghanistan.

NATO and the European Union will stay for many years to come in Kosovo, with security in the region dependent on the presence of large numbers of forces for the foreseeable future, and the international community likely to be heavily involved in running the affairs of the new state with its own administrators and advisers. In order to ensure that relations between Serbia and NATO do not deteriorate finally, efforts on both parts are required. Unless concerted efforts are made to avoid increased marginalisation of Serbia on the international scene, the West runs the clear risk of pushing Serbia ever further into Russian spheres of influence.

NATO Enlargement: Accession of New Countries from the Balkans to the North Atlantic Community

The question of the Balkans' integration within Euro-Atlantic institutions is one that has been addressed at each major NATO summit in recent years. During the last summit in Riga, the NATO heads of state and government declared that the Alliance intended in 2008 'to extend further invitations to those countries who meet NATO's performance-based standards and were able to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security and stability'. All participants agreed that the future of the Balkans lied within Euro-Atlantic integration.

Three countries (Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) are hoping to be formally invited to join NATO in Bucharest, and have engaged – with varying degrees of success – in both political and security sector reform to meet the relevant criteria for accession:

- Progress made by Albania in terms of military reforms was deemed to be good, whilst further issues in the civil and judiciary sector remained to be improved, such as addressing problems of corruption and human trafficking, rule of law, as well as minority rights. The political will to deal with these issues was clear, however, and was more reflective of a question of time/resources rather than dedication.
- Croatia has made good progress in modernising its military, benefits from good public support and has pledged full co-operation with the war crimes tribunal in The Hague.
- It was considered that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had played a constructive role in regional security; however, its membership to NATO is in danger of being blocked by the dispute with Greece over the name of the country.

The sustainability and irreversibility of the reforms engaged by the candidate countries was identified as an important factor in the admission process, and it was felt as a result that countries of the Adriatic Charter had kept up their commitment to reforms, both individually and collectively.

Candidate countries have also shown welcome solidarity with the Alliance through direct participation in NATO or US-led military operations in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, thereby demonstrating their readiness in terms of contributing to Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

Having joined the Partnership for Peace programme in 2007, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina may well aspire also for deeper engagement, while Georgia

and Ukraine look to the Summit for a positive signal.

Perspectives for Bucharest?

The most fundamental consideration for the Balkans agenda during the NATO Summit in Bucharest will be whether or not Allies are able to develop a common transatlantic vision regarding NATO's continued commitment to security in South Eastern Europe. Part of the answer to this question may of course depend on whether NATO will embrace and accept the membership applications from countries such as Croatia, Albania and FYROM in order to strengthen its presence in the region. Along with operational concerns in Afghanistan, NATO Enlargement is one of the key issues for the Summit in Bucharest this April.

The timing of the summit and fact that Romania is the host nation, provides a clear opportunity for countries neighbouring the Balkans to discuss regional security issues of mutual concern, as well as refining some of NATO's geostrategic interests in Eastern and Southern parts of Europe. Understanding how far NATO can be encouraged to advance stability and security in the Black Sea region and the Western Balkans, as well as defining its relations to its Eastern neighbours, will be of particular relevance in Bucharest.

Conclusions

- The Balkans have defined the process of NATO Transformation and served as a testing ground for the international community.
- Although NATO can not solve all the problems of the region, making political and military transformation in the Balkans irreversible is one of the greatest assets of the Alliance.
- While the next round of enlargement encourages further Euro-Atlantic integration, *enlargement in itself* should not be the purpose of NATO.
- South Eastern Europe needs to change its own mentality and move forward together. Brussels is not an Olympus with all the answers.
- NATO is the sum total of its member states; all have to actively engage in NATO's Transformation agenda.
- Poor EU/NATO relations and the political barriers which hinder better co-operation between these two organisations are some of the largest obstacles affecting security in South Eastern Europe.

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