UA: UKRAINE ANALYTICA

MEMBERSHIP
TRUST FUNDS
SECURITY
TREATIES
UKRAINE
DILEMMA
REFORMS
THREATS
BALTICS
UKRAINE
SUMMIT
SECURITY
PARTNERSHIP
ALLIES
BRUSSELS
ANP
SECURITY

NATO

TRANSATLANTIC
DEPLOYMENT
EASTERN FLANK
READINESS
COOPERATION
MEMBERSHIP
INITIATIVES
TRANSFORMATION
ANP
TREATS
UKRAINE

- **NATO TRANSFORMATION**
- **NATO AND UKRAINE**
- **VALUE OF PARTNERSHIP**

UA: UKRAINE ANALYTICA

Issue 4 (14), 2018

NATO Transformation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE EU-NATO COOPERATION: PERSPECTIVES FOR MORE AUTONOMOUS EUROPE?

Dr Margarita Mironova
Institute of International Relations,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine)

The recent intensification of EU-NATO dialogue alongside with the major strategic and operational changes within the Common Security and Defence Policy have reopened discussions about the future European security architecture. What is the role of both organisations and what configuration of their relations would be optimal? Will the EU ambition for strategic autonomy make a positive contribution also to NATO or will it lead to further decoupling and fragmentation of the transatlantic bond? The article examines both the challenges and main achievements of EU-NATO relations with focus on the most promising areas of cooperation.

Introduction

The post-Crimean transformation in the international and regional security milieu has had fundamental implications for the security and defence policy of the EU and NATO member states. After 2014, European security has been under threat of both Russia's revisionist agenda and security challenges in the arc of instability in the Greater Middle East region. The strategic context of the Cold War period is again highly demanded; the focus has shifted to the balance of power and "hard security" issues. This situation is not a surprise for NATO, as deterrence and defence were the core tasks of the North Atlantic Alliance for many decades, but it is rather new for the EU. The EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) established at the end of the 1990s was a reply to the EU inefficiency in resolving conflicts in the Western Balkans and was mainly concentrated on crisis management.

A wide range of steps were taken in the period between the NATO summit in Wales in September 2014 and the latest NATO summit in Brussels in July 2018. NATO activities are now focused on both reassuring the Eastern allies by the launch of the Readiness Action Plan and the Enhanced Forward Presence as well as improving its operational capabilities and reform of NATO command structure. However, in the light of new threats it seems important to adapt NATO's strategic foundations. The current Strategic Concept was approved at the Lisbon summit in 2010 and does not reflect the recent changes in the global environment.

Meanwhile, the EU has transformed significantly following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 with its collective self-defence clause. The further development of the CSDP, its military and civilian capabilities, implementation of the "battlegroup" concept, and the European

Defence Agency aimed at strengthening EU defence industry marked a definite shift away from the "civilian power" approach. In July 2016, the EU approved a new document, "A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy", which calls for "strategic autonomy"[1] of the EU. Since then the EU and its member states have undertaken steps to implement this principle, which led to the establishment of the European Defence Fund (EDF) and

> **2016 became a year of the EU-NATO partnership revision**

the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) to support the synchronisation of national defence planning cycles. In late 2017, 25 of the 28 member states launched the Permanent Structured Cooperation on Defence (PESCO) with more binding commitments. By now, a set of 34 projects has been established with a broad range of issues, such as EU Training Mission Competence Centre, Cyber Rapid Response Teams, or a project on Military Mobility.

Reinvigorating the EU-NATO Partnership

2016 became a year of the EU-NATO partnership revision. During NATO's Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO and EU top officials – Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President of the European Council Donald Tusk, and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker – signed a Joint Declaration

between the two organisations with the call "to give new impetus and new substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership". The declaration identified a list of priority areas of cooperation such as countering hybrid threats or enhancing cyber security.

However, the recent developments reflect the previous EU-NATO achievements and setbacks. Their cooperation lasts over 15 years and covers a wide range of issues, including crisis management, capability development, maritime security, etc. The political framework for NATO-EU cooperation was defined in December 2002, when both organisations signed the Declaration on European Security and Defence Policy, which characterised the NATO-EU relationship as a strategic partnership and granted the EU "the assured access to NATO's planning capabilities".[3] The 2003 "Berlin Plus" arrangements outlined the legal and institutional framework allowing the EU to carry out military missions using NATO's assets, planning and operational capabilities.

But serious political obstacles occurred with the EU enlargement in 2004. Cyprus put brakes on Turkey's accession negotiations and blocked its cooperation with the European Defence Agency. Turkey blocked the participation of the Republic of Cyprus in formal EU-NATO meetings and the exchange of security information between organisations. Unfortunately, the Berlin Plus arrangements have been used only for two operations: Operation Concordia in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), which ended in September 2003,

1   *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy,* EU, Brussels, June 2016 [https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf].

2   *Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation,* EU, 08 July 2016 [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21481/nato-eu-declaration-8-july-en-final.pdf].

3   *EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP*, NATO, 16 December 2002 [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19544.htm].

and EUFOR Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a current operation deployed since 2004. As a result of these mutual blockades, the EU-NATO cooperation agenda was significantly limited.

Nevertheless, informal agreements and ad hoc cooperation continued. Despite the absence of any formal bilateral agreement, the organisations were actively engaged in crisis management, e.g. in Afghanistan and Kosovo. Such informal ad hoc interaction and parallel activities appeared to be the most efficient model for cooperation. Both EU missions were civilian and their activities complemented NATO military activities. The EU Police mission in Afghanistan aimed at consulting the Afghan government in institutional building and law enforcement was conducted in parallel with NATO's International Security Assistance Force mission (ISAF). The EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) was established to support NATO's mission (KFOR) in reforming security sector.

The NATO-EU Warsaw declaration of 2016 identified seven priority areas of cooperation (hybrid threats, operational cooperation, cyber security, defence capabilities, defence industry and research, coordination on exercises, defence and security capacity-building) with two sets of implementation actions. The first set of 42 actions was published in December 2016 and the second set of 32 actions was approved in a year.

Top Priorities of the Euro-Atlantic Agenda

Countering hybrid threats is one of the top priorities of the EU-NATO cooperation agenda. Both organisations have already established inter-institutional contacts aimed at studying hybrid threats and sharing relevant information, e.g. cooperation between the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, the NATO Hybrid Analysis Branch, and NATO Strategic Communications Centres of Excellence in Baltic States. The cooperation has been further institutionalised by the establishment of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki in 2017. This case is rather interesting, as the centre is not an EU or NATO institution, but an international body established and financed by the participating states – members of the two institutions. The tasks of the Helsinki Centre are broader than those of NATO Centres of Excellence: In addition to training, exercises, and analysis, the Helsinki Centre has to provide policy consultation.[4] As the activities of the Centre are not limited by the formal EU-NATO agreements, it will be more flexible and effective in building networks between the two institutions and member states.

> **For the past decade, the EU and NATO have developed new forms of operational cooperation in the maritime domain**

NATO-EU coordination on cyber security was established in 2013 when the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence established a liaison with the European Defence Agency to exchange information and avoid research duplication. There is a practice of organising joint cyber exercises including Cyber Coalition and Cyber Europe, which are regarded as a platform for elaborating a joint approach on predicting and responding to cyber threats.

[4] *K. Raik, P. Järvenpää, A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation: How to Make the Best of a Marriage of Necessity*, International Centre for Defence and Security, May 2017.

The next priority area is coordination of operational tasks, including maritime missions. For the past decade, the EU and NATO have developed new forms of operational cooperation in the maritime domain. In December 2008, the EU operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta began supporting NATO Operation Ocean Shield aimed at countering Somalia-based pirate activities near the Horn of Africa and in the Western part of the Indian Ocean. Since 2015, the two organisations have been jointly engaged in tackling the migration crisis and cooperating in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. NATO provides the EU-led Operation Sophia with logistical support; informal civil-military information-sharing mechanisms were established between NATO and Frontex. Both organisations are using actively the mechanisms of the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction Initiative (SHADE) – an international platform aimed at combating piracy and people smuggling.[5]

A very ambitious idea is to expand the bilateral cooperation to other regions, e.g. the Baltic and Arctic regions and the Black Sea. So far, due to the lack of political will little has been done even on individual level of each of the organisations, although NATO activities are more sizeable. Since 2014 the North Atlantic Alliance is trying to adapt its focus on Russian actions in the Baltic region, like the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission. However, there are difficulties in elaborating the strategy for the Black Sea, mainly because of disagreements of Bulgaria and Turkey. In this regard, a rather challengeable proposal is to open a NATO-certified Centre of Excellence on Black Sea

Security in Georgia[6] despite no precedent of similar centres in non-NATO countries. Such EU-NATO coordination is strongly needed as a joint reply to deterioration of the situation in the Azov Sea and Russia's aggression in the Kerch Strait in November 2018.

Since the Warsaw Summit, the progress has also been achieved in the field of coordinating NATO-EU joint capability development with special attention to the following principal areas: threat perception, defence investment structures, and institutional frameworks for joint command and control of forces for exercises and operations. Interoperability is the basic principle of cooperation, mainly in the sectors of defence planning, defence spending and investment. Two organisations have managed to elaborate the interaction mechanisms between the NATO Defence Planning Process and the EU Capability Development Plan; the EU Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD) serves as a complement to the NATO annual plans project. The EU has also developed its concept of the "battlegroups" in close cooperation with NATO and in accordance with its military standards and procedures.

However, the main challenge is to avoid technical duplication and parallel projects. As it is mentioned in the report of NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the best way out can be the use of the so-called regional "hubs" or groups of NATO and EU states:[7] Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC), the Visegrad and Weimar Groups. Such structures of tactical and operational

---

5   *Third Progress Report on the Implementation of the Common Set of Proposals Endorsed by EU and NATO Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017*, NATO, 08 June 2018 [https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_06/20180608_180608-3rd-Joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-eng.pdf].

6   L. Coffey, *Brussels NATO Summit 2018: Renewed Focus on the Black Sea Needed*, the Heritage Foundation, 25 June 2018 [https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/IB4872_2.pdf].

7   *NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw*, Defence and Security Committee, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Brussels, 07 October 2018.

military cooperation as the Franco-British Combined Joined Expeditionary Forces (CJEF) or the British-led Joint Expeditionary Forces with Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands can also be used. The two organisations have to discuss the advantages of using PESCO mechanisms in their interaction.

"The 3 Ds": Resurgence of Concerns

The original Berlin Plus agreements produced a compromise in debates over the EU and NATO future configuration. NATO remained the keystone of European security architecture while the EU security and defence initiative mainly concentrated on "soft security" issues and was regarded as complementary. By proposing "strategic autonomy", the EU raised the level of ambitions and made a step up from the commitments fixed in the early 2000s. The ongoing Brexit negotiations and enhanced institutional developments within the CSDP, such as PESCO and European Defence Fund, have renewed the discussion regarding the European Defence Union. The controversial calls for creating a "true European army" were made by the EU top officials, such as statements of President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and President of France Emmanuel Macron.

The debates, meanwhile, have also raised old fears and concerns of some critics, mainly in the US. The situation is similar to that of the end of the 1990s when the EU Common Security and Defence Policy was at its start. In 1998 then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during a NATO ministerial meeting expressed American concerns regarding future European capabilities, the so-called "three D": decoupling, discrimination, and duplication. In practice, it meant that the US concerns were as follows:

- No disintegration, but indivisibility of the transatlantic bond: New European initiatives had to complement NATO with its principles of Atlantic solidarity;

- Non-discrimination of those allies outside the EU: Non-EU allies should not be excluded from participating in the EU initiatives;

- No duplication of NATO-EU capabilities and resources: The newly created structures would not challenge NATO's efficiency.

Recent trends have revitalised the old political discourse. Yet, the paradox of the ongoing decoupling of transatlantic bonds is that it is now less affected by the EU initiatives but by the US rethinking of its grand strategy and the role of Europe in it. Europe's move to the strategic autonomy is only one of the consequences of the divide. Even more, its necessity is justified by the changing US approach with its pivot to Asia and recent renationalisation of foreign policy. There is an influential group of political thinkers in the US who do believe it is time for Washington to terminate its military engagement in Europe and membership in NATO.[8]

Nonetheless, it is not a mainstream idea in the US by far and the fears of decoupling are exaggerated. Despite the British decision to leave the EU, there is still a large group of the EU member states strongly committed to Atlantic solidarity. Moreover, the primacy of NATO has never been argued even by the advocates of European strategic autonomy and NATO is still considered the foundation of collective defence for its members.[9]

[8] J. Mearsheimer, S. Walt, *The Case for Offshore Balancing. A Superior US Grand Strategy*, "Foreign Affairs", Vol.95 (4), July/August 2016.

[9] See: *Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community*, Article 42 (7), 13 December 2007; *A Global Strategy for the EU Foreign and Security Policy*, June 2016.

Non-discrimination concerns should also be examined thoroughly. Despite the existing mechanisms of non-EU allies' participation in the CSDP, such countries as Norway, Canada, and Turkey are still expressing concerns of not being directly involved in the EU decision-making process and political consultations. The case of Turkey is the most complicated one with regard to the Turkish-Cyprus conflict and de-facto suspended accession. The remarkable fact is that Turkey is NATO's second biggest army and the leading non-EU contributor to the CSDP operations. The non-discrimination issue requires further discussions at the highest political level, specifically the development of possible criteria and mechanisms to ensure the non-EU states' participation in new initiatives such as PESCO or European Defence Fund. Unclear is the level of UK engagement after Brexit, being currently the largest defence contributor in the EU.

> *what fuels more debates is the question of NATO's primacy and competition related to the EU's growing ambitions*

But what fuels more debates is the question of NATO's primacy and competition related to the EU's growing ambitions. The way out of such competition could be the "division of labour" option. This idea dates back to the first EU missions in the Western Balkans having recourse to NATO assets and capabilities; it can be defined both in geographical and functional terms. The contradicting approach of geographical division of labour with the EU focusing on its neighbourhood (Western Balkans, Africa) and NATO/US having global responsibility is, mostly, supported in the USA. The Europeans are critical of it as unproductive, limiting the EU long-term global role.

The functional division of labour, meaning the use of different but complementary strategies and instruments, is taking place. Having different nature and capabilities, the two organisations usually apply different resources. NATO is focused on "hard security", operations with high-intensity combat, and quick deployment, while the EU has mainly "soft security" tools at its disposal and is concentrated on peacekeeping, humanitarian missions, and post-conflict stabilisation. Despite the fact that the CSDP was created with both soft/civilian and hard/military components, most of its 34 operations had civilian crisis management tasks and only 11 of them were military missions. To fill this gap, the EU Battlegroups concept was elaborated in 2007, but it is still on paper. None of the groups has ever been deployed because of the lack of political will to conduct military interventions.

The functional division of labour may have its positive effect, as none of the organisations is able to tackle the recent threats and challenges on its own. The NATO strategy relying upon military deterrence is not so efficient in coping with non-military/hybrid threats such as migration crisis, border management, or transnational crime. But it is only NATO that is able to answer to the new threats posed by Russia's revisionism and aggression against Ukraine by deploying conventional deterrence presence in the Baltic states and Poland.

The EU Strategic Autonomy: Implications for NATO-EU Relations

What are the perspectives of the EU strategic autonomy mentioned in the EU Global Strategy? The core problem lies in different interpretations of this term by both the advocates and critics of idea. The most pretentious approach, which means being capable to defend the EU territory without NATO support, is still the least achievable. The best demonstration of this obvious fact is the comparison of the EU and NATO

member states' defence expenditures. Even though the total EU defence expenditures have increased significantly up to 214 billion Euros last year, it is only 1.4% of GDP. Only four of the 28 EU member states, all of them being "double members", spent on defence more than 2% of GDP[10], which is NATO minimum requirement.

A bigger challenge for both NATO and EU is the efficiency of the expenditures, as up to 30% of the defence budgets per country may account for social payments such as military pensions. Defence-related research and development is a negligible part of military budgets in all countries except France and the UK. According to the 2018 EU Capability Plan, the EU still lacks key military capabilities such as intelligence and satellites, enhanced logistics, military mobility, air-to-air refuelling, strategic air transport, ballistic missile defence, etc. – areas where dependence on NATO/US capabilities remains crucial.

A less demanding but prevalent understanding of the EU strategic autonomy is to increase reliance on EU capabilities and to be able to undertake military operations on its own, if necessary. The CSDP will definitely be developed as a compromise between the member states willing to enhance defence cooperation and those devoted to Atlantic solidarity. Having in mind the Irish case of ratifying the Lisbon Treaty, one should take seriously the position of neutral/non-bloc states. The participation of neutral states in the CSDP dilutes the collective self-defence clause of the Lisbon Treaty and makes the EU non-competitive compared with NATO. The current threat perception in Europe, especially for Eastern European allies, revolves around Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and relevant US inputs.

The fears of the EU developing as an alternative to NATO seem groundless, although it does not solve the problem of duplication. The EU and NATO in their further dialogue should concentrate on greater synergy. The challenge is that the CSDP is a complex multi-level network of initiatives and institutions, with different engagement level and obligations of EU member states, the best example of it being PESCO initiative. So the NATO-EU dialogue should also be based on the principles of flexibility, differentiation, and multi-speed approach. To summarise, the rationale of inter-institutional cooperation is obvious: Euro-Atlantic partners are facing similar threats while having limited resources, so only complementary, coherent, and well-coordinated cooperation will strengthen NATO and EU credibility.

Margarita Mironova, *PhD, associate professor at the Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The main research focus is European integration, EU foreign policy, and transatlantic relations.*

---

[10] *Defence Data Portal*, European Defence Agency [https://www.eda.europa.eu/info-hub/defence-data-portal].

[11] *Capability Development Plan: Factsheet*, European Defence Agency, 28 June 2018 [https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-factsheets/2018-06-28-factsheet_cdpb020b03fa4d264cfa776ff000087ef0f].