



SDA Roundtable Report

Redefining NATO and the transatlantic relationship



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Redefining NATO and the transatlantic relationship

Roundtable – 27 October 2010
Bibliothèque Solvay, 12:00-16:00

Session I - 12:00-13:30

Do America and Europe still share the same strategic interests?

What is the purpose of the transatlantic alliance in the strategic landscape of the 21st century? Is there a role for NATO as the geopolitical centre of gravity shifts toward Asia and the Pacific? How best can an alliance shaped by the Cold War adapt to the challenge of engaging the developing world as well as the emerging geopolitical strengths of China and India? Are American concerns about Europe's "demilitarization" and under-performance in Afghanistan reasonable and can Europe and the United States develop a shared understanding of military power in world affairs? As the Obama administration approaches its first mid-term elections, is the U.S. commitment to the alliance solid or at risk of being sidelined in favour of new arrangements?

Speakers

H.E. Mr. Dumitru Sorin Ducaru, Romanian Ambassador to NATO

Michael Horowitz, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania

Thomas Wright, Executive Director for Studies at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Director of the Security & Defence Agenda

Session II - 14:30-16:00

Could Afghanistan become a challenge to NATO's future?

NATO's counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan have been bedevilled by a variety of constraints; from defence commitments elsewhere that are a hangover from the Cold War to divergent national approaches. Disunity within ISAF and much-publicised leadership debates in the U.S. have contributed to rising public scepticism in NATO countries. What does NATO need to do to enlarge and improve its counter-insurgency capabilities, regain the initiative in Afghanistan and prepare for possible future challenges? If Afghanistan is to be the forerunner of similar asymmetric security problems, how radical an overhaul of NATO does that imply?

Speakers

Brian Jenkins, Senior Advisor, RAND

John Nagl, President, Centre for a New American Security (CNAS)

Emile Nakhleh, Former US Senior Intelligence Officer

Rumu Sarkar, Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown University

Moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Director of the Security & Defence Agenda

Redefining NATO and the transatlantic relationship



Barely three weeks before the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon, the Security and Defence Agenda (SDA) roundtable entitled ‘Redefining NATO and the transatlantic relationship’, addressed the important question of what direction and role NATO will have to grow into in the strategic landscape of the 21st century.

“We are experiencing the rapid emergence of a multi-polar world.”

The security balance in the world is changing, began **Giles Merritt**, Director of the Security and Defence Agenda, and political pressures and constraints on both sides of NATO’s transatlantic relationship will figure more prominently as the global security paradigm continues to shift from the common goals of the Cold War era.

The question of the relationship between the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) was at the heart of the discussion during the first session. With the emergence of new and varied threats to global security, this relationship must be re-structured, the participants agreed.

“It needs to be recognised that we are experiencing the rapid emergence of a multi-polar world,” explained **Dr. Thomas Wright**, Executive Director for Studies at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. “In this context, NATO will need to place much more importance on building new partnerships and strengthening old ones; the architecture can then follow.”

In the second session, the roundtable discussed the shifting nature of global security concerns as embodied by the current NATO mission in Afghanistan. Soon to be entering its tenth year, the mission must come to terms with the fragmented nature of conflicts in the 21st century.

“The broader sense of the War on Terrorism is that it comprises many diverse conflicts which take many forms on many fronts,” offered **Brian Jenkins**, Senior Advisor at the RAND

Corporation. “No insurgency is a single war, but a hundred wars, a fact which becomes even more complex as we consider peace talks in the future.”

In light of the pressing need for NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to reconstruct Afghanistan and help in the transition to stable Afghan governance on a sustainable basis, NATO and its allies must work towards shifting from high-intensity to low-intensity and non-kinetic warfare, added **Professor Rumu Sarkar**, former Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown University, and Senior Legal Advisor, CALIBRE Systems, Inc..

Do America and Europe still share the same strategic interests?

“It is always difficult to understand the future role of any organisation,” began Wright, providing the example of the seemingly reduced importance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 18 months before the recent financial crisis hit. Since the crisis, the IMF has been refunded and its importance as the centre of global financial reconstruction has been renewed, he explained.

In a similar manner, the West should be wary of prematurely writing off the Alliance as an ineffectual dinosaur left over from the Cold War. There is a growing view in the US that Europe will become much less relevant to US strategy, as the centre of geopolitical importance moves towards the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, as well as the Middle East, he added.

This view, Wright continued, is fundamentally wrong. Over the post-Cold War period (1991 – 2008), the world has seen several trends that seem to highlight the relevance of the transatlantic relationship. Firstly, he said, the financial crisis which hit in 2008 has had a great impact on defence budgets, particularly in European NATO member states, and has resulted in fiscal constraints on both sides of the Atlantic.

Secondly, he continued, there needs to be recognition that there is a geopolitical restructuring occurring in the world,

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resulting in the rapid emergence of a multi-polar world and a more complex multilateralism. China, he offered as an example, is becoming more assertive, and by defining and pursuing its own interests is diverging from the West.

Furthermore, there has been a paradigm shift with regards to threats, related to the rapid emergence of new technologies over past decades. Access to the global commons is increasing, he admonished, opening up vulnerabilities that did not previously exist. The recent rise of cyber attacks on military and industrial targets as well as the fragility of satellite systems in the domain of outer space were cited as examples of this trend.

To these three alarming trends, Wright added a fourth, optimistic, one. Following the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan in the last decade, there has been a resolution to the debates about the use of pre-emptive force. “While America set the bar exceptionally high in Iraq, there is now some general acceptance of the rules for these types of engagements,” he concluded.

In short, during the post-Cold War period, NATO was redefined by an era of overseas stabilisation missions. These missions, though still relevant, “will not be the only prism through which to view the Alliance. New issues for NATO will remain military but also be informed by politics and will deal with how to ensure that multilateralism is advanced as multipolarity emerges.”

Increasing partnerships in a multi-polar world

With NATO’s Lisbon Summit quickly approaching, **H.E. Mr. Dumitru Sorin Ducaru**, Romanian Ambassador to NATO, offered an insider view of discussions surrounding NATO’s New Strategic Concept and the essential elements which are likely to be decided on in the upcoming attempt to redesign the Alliance. In software terms, if we had a “NATO 1.0” version at the creation of the Alliance in Washington in 1949, and a “NATO 2.0” version after the end of the Cold War, we are now moving towards the “NATO 3.0” for the 21st century.

One important element of the discussion will be NATO’s contribution to the idea of cooperative security. “NATO is, on the

one hand, a defence alliance,” he said, “but in the new world of globalized security threats and challenges, this alliance must also have this new focus on cooperation.” Linked to this notion of cooperative security is the need for a comprehensive approach, both in future missions as well as in the broader sense of NATO planning structures.

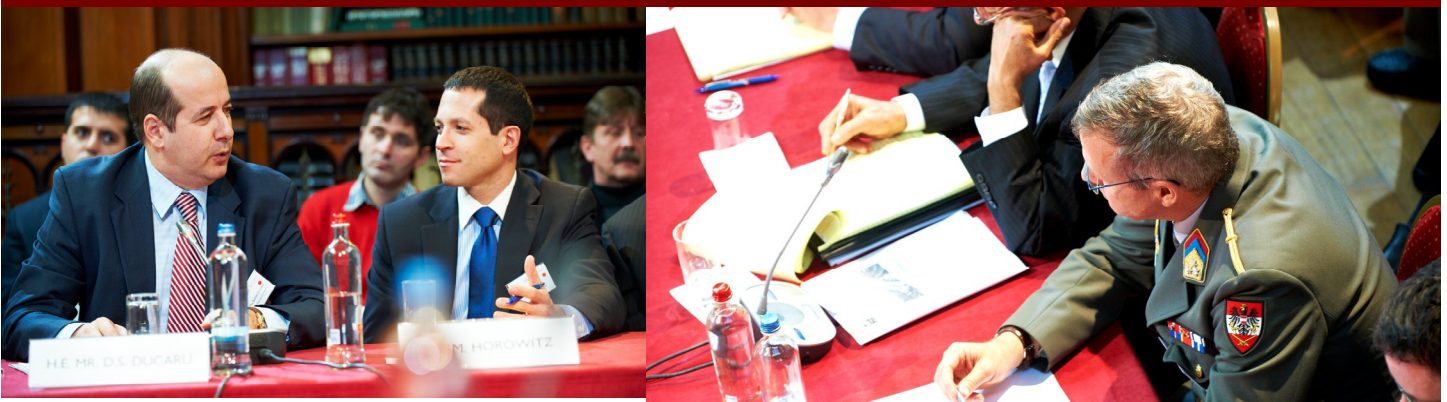
While NATO plans to improve relations with civil actors by integrating civilian dimensions into its operational planning, there will likely be a strong emphasis on developing partnerships with non-NATO countries. “Launching NATO’s partnerships is one of the important evolutions in the post-Cold War NATO,” he offered, “in that they represent the combination of soft and hard power which the Alliance must strive for in order to remain relevant. We are looking forward to a mission statement from the Lisbon Summit outlining how to implement concrete policy and actions in this direction.”

“Launching NATO’s partnerships has been one of the most important evolutions in the post-Cold War NATO.”

One of the more prominent partnerships in discussion is the NATO-Russia partnership, Ducaru continued. NATO’s general approach to engaging with Russia is complex. It takes as its starting point the idea that there is a strong common interest for pragmatic cooperation, but also that on certain issues the two must “agree to disagree.” Though reconciliation between the underlying stances of NATO and Russia is difficult, much can be done on the practical side to respond to common interests and build trust.

One area of cooperation which shows some promise is missile defence. Ducaru cited NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen as referring to this area of cooperation as a “common security roof”. The upcoming NRC meeting at the highest level in Lisbon will indicate the degree of openness for future cooperation in this domain.

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One potentially overlooked set of actors that could help foster improved partnerships with NATO are regional organisations, contributed Sorin Sterie, Senior Advisor on Security, Defence, Justice and Home Affairs policies with the Regional Cooperation Council.

Regional cooperation is well situated to serve as a bridge between inter- and trans-national organisations and partner countries who could serve a role in the changing global security paradigm. In the case of South-East Europe, he explained, there is investment in the region from both the EU and NATO, with certain countries joining, or proposing to join, either of the two organisations. These countries, sharing a regional link with non-members, can serve to strengthen ties between all parties involved while also highlighting the value to NATO of the EU's soft power of diplomacy.

"Regional cooperation can be extremely valuable," agreed Ducaru. "There are issues that are dealt with in regional contexts that would otherwise be too heavy to deal with on the NATO level." Looking into the future, he concluded, there are good signs of growing trends for a reinvigorated partnership policy which will be open to an increased interaction with partners across the globe.

"In the past, the world has taken it for granted that the US, in its dominant role, would protect the global commons."

While hopes are high for stronger partnerships in the world, Wright urged that this optimism be tempered with caution. Over the past year, the Obama administration has re-assessed the idea that the new relationships they seek will be as potent as past ones.

Partnerships on this scale are built upon shared interests and,

he continued, with the possible exception of the South Pacific partnerships being constructed, "the US and the EU have more shared interest now than at anytime since the end of the Cold War. Following World War II, NATO was created to fence in the USSR but also to build Western society." It is this second element that still binds the EU and US together as they moves towards dealing with new security challenges in the 21st century.

New challenges, new opportunities

As NATO transitions into the 21st century, there are three major challenges that confront it, the roundtable heard. The first is an increased need to protect the global commons, areas of the world not covered by national territory, comprising sea, air, space and cyber.

"In the past, the world has taken for granted that the US, in its dominant role, would protect the commons but as new challenges emerge, we see that threats in areas previously considered secure – cyberspace, in particular – are increasing," contributed **Dr. Michael Horowitz**, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania.

"One of the essential elements of the draft of NATO's new strategic concept is a resolve to deal with the global security environment," added Ducaru. "This is the first time that NATO is explicitly concerned with cyber, energy security and missile defence."

The cyber attack on Estonia in 2007 and the worldwide spread of the Stuxnet virus in 2010 have demonstrated the vulnerability of global computer networks to cyber attacks, the roundtable heard. "In order to promote a global response to address this global issue," Horowitz told the participants, "we need to reinvigorate cooperation. Cyber is not about military capital – tanks are not the answer – instead, it is more about intellectual, human and financial capital. NATO members can work together in this area, since the interconnectivity between our systems means that we are already all linked together."

The second major challenge to be overcome is the changing

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character of warfare; from conventional war to asymmetric threats. In the past decade, two new challenges have arisen in the arena of asymmetric warfare: the growth of global terrorist movements and the increase in piracy, informed Horowitz. Piracy affects the safe transit of goods across borders, a factor critical to the economic security of NATO allies and partners.

Paul Flaherty, Deputy Permanent Representative, Joint Delegation of the United Kingdom to NATO, suggested that the financial crisis and the ensuing NATO member defence budget cuts be used as an opportunity to refocus defence efforts, leaving aside the ‘comfort zone’ of conventional warfare and recalibrating materials and attitudes to meet the needs of emerging and future challenges.

In response, several of the participants questioned this course of action. Diego Ruiz Palmer, Head of the Strategic Analysis Capability Section/ECSD of NATO, asked if it was wise to dismiss the possibility that large-scale conventional conflicts had disappeared. “The view in the West, whether true or false, is to concentrate on asymmetric warfare on the tactical level,” he said. He suggested that the defence community should examine how other powers outside of NATO consider the issue and not to assume that they have reached the same conclusions. The consequences, if proved wrong, of such an approach as NATO is adopting could be disastrous.

NATO was created to deal with one specific threat, added Jenkins, which no longer exists. Outlining a list of military operations since the end of the Cold War, he urged caution about the future of the Alliance resting on defence policy and decision makers’ abilities to predict what future threats may exist.

Though valid, the difficulty of predicting future threats is in itself a reason to focus on the “unknown” element of asymmetric threats, countered Horowitz. “It is true that conventional conflict may still pose a threat,” he elaborated, “but it is a fact that the current asymmetric model is inevitable. It is simply too difficult to build and feed modern armies and, with the spread of robotics and technology, we are seeing a shift in the character of warfare.”

“We must be careful in our decisions to balance our core task

of common defence while adapting to new threats,” agreed Ducaru. “Emerging powers will not necessarily have the same approach as us, which means that we need to be able to credibly respond to old threats while at the same time building new bridges and partnerships.”

“Understanding domestic constraints and operating within them is the making of a good strategy.”

The third major challenge facing NATO as it transitions into the 21st century is a reality check concerning new political and economic pressures. In response to this, the new strategic concept will emphasise constant adaptation and reform of its administrative and command structures, offered Ducaru.

“NATO has recognised the need to respond to today’s paradigm while being more cost-effective and efficient,” he added. “In order to maintain an appropriate level of resources and funding, we must communicate this new vision to the public in our various member states.”

“Understanding domestic constraints and operating within them is the making of a good strategy,” agreed Wright. This notion should apply not only to decision makers in a national context but should become a pillar of mutual understanding between NATO members. “It is extremely important to accept the constraints on all sides,” he concluded, “and not to attempt to force our partners to overcome them. We urge a more realistic understanding of the conditions on both sides of the Atlantic.”

Improving the transatlantic relationship

Having discussed the challenges facing the Alliance in the lead up to the Lisbon Summit, the roundtable considered the changing nature of the relationship between the US and its European partners in NATO. As the global focus on security issues con-

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tinues it shift towards emerging regional powers and conflicts, many have criticised the relevance of the transatlantic relationship.

“NATO’s greatest interest now, as it has been since its establishment, is the preservation of world order,” Wright said. “It is this shared interest which lay the foundation for the transatlantic relationship and, though the specifics have changed, this is no different today.”

In today’s world, he continued, understanding interests is more important than understanding threats. “The diversity in strategic perspectives is an asset that should be utilised. We must have shared interests but divergence can offer good opportunities,” he added. As an example of how divergent US and EU perspectives could be beneficial he offered the difficult relations between the US and China on the one hand and between the EU and Turkey on the other, suggesting that both circumstances could be resolved by strengthening ties between the US and Turkey and likewise the EU and China.

There are three important areas where the EU and US have shared interests, offered Horowitz. If cooperation in these areas is not fostered, however, there are potential risks to continued beneficial cooperation.

The first area is the easiest to agree on, he continued, that is the protection of the territorial integrity of its members. While the threats to NATO member territories is lower than during the Cold War, the dramatic decline in defence spending in Europe and questions about US spending in wake of the financial crisis has begun to foster doubts on either side of the Atlantic about the abilities and willingness of the other to adhere to the notion of collective defence.

“From an American point of view, I’d like to make clear how important it is that our European partners just show up. It is not necessarily about how much they are contributing to missions, but that we can recognise that we are doing it together,” he said, explaining that there is a broad array of public opinion data that demonstrates the effect of European involvement in missions on American public support for military actions.

The second area of shared interest is protecting the global commons. As the world becomes more globalised, these traditionally US-dominated areas become integral to the functioning of the world economy, to the benefit of all NATO members.

“NATO’s greatest interest now, as it has been since its establishment, is the preservation of world order.”

Thirdly, Horowitz continued, is the interest shared between the US and EU in helping to defeat oppression in the world and promote the freedom and prosperity which is the norm in the West. Though the general sentiment is shared on both sides of the Atlantic, there exists the risk that divergent opinions on how best to tackle this challenge may alienate these partners.

“While the EU reduces defence spending and threat perceptions, there is a concern in the US that our partners will continue to talk about great ideas but be less willing to help out in the world,” he added. “In contrast, there seem to be many in the EU who think that the US could possibly be helping too much,” creating more problems in the world than it solves.

Recent opinion polls in the US show a decline in the American public’s interest in promoting freedom worldwide, he concluded. This trend may be countered by working more closely with European countries under the auspices of NATO.

Practically, the EU and US are particularly united in the war against terrorism, opined **Dr. Emile Nakleh**, Former US Senior Intelligence Officer. Though their approaches differ, the shared interest in this area means that countries on the two sides of the Atlantic could work more effectively together.

Terrorism cannot be defeated by force alone, he explained, and must be considered in the context of a greater conflict. Anti-Israel terrorism, for example, must be considered in the con-

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text of the greater Israel-Palestine conflict. In order to combat terrorism at its roots, NATO members must all work to reach out diplomatically to Islamic parties around the world.

“In some ways, we are witnessing the conflict between a state-

“If we reduce the transatlantic relationship to a mechanical approach, we lose the benefit of our common history.”

centric viewpoint and multinationalism; between competing and converging interests,” offered Ducaru. “We must work to generate convergence and overcome our beggar-thy-neighbour approach.”

“We speak as if policy was made by policymakers but we live in democracies, where policy is influenced by public opinion,” remarked Merritt. Politically, the West is leaning more to the right while becoming more isolationist, he added. He asked the panel to conclude how NATO may rise above these shifting popular and political priorities.

“If we reduce the transatlantic partnership to a mechanical approach,” responded Horowitz, “we lose the benefit of our common history. Because we live in democracies, more robust education and exchanges is one way to combat the declining attention in the US towards the EU.” He urged the participants to accept that strategic interests on either side of the Atlantic have not always been in line with one another and to recognise that disagreement can exist within the framework of NATO.

“Investment in cross-society exchanges and understanding is absolutely key,” agreed Ducaru, adding that more can be done to promote awareness in the public mind.

Could Afghanistan become a challenge to NATO’s future?

Merritt opened the second session by stating that Afghanistan has become ever more relevant to the 21st century global security paradigm as the centre of a crucial region for security relationships.

“Central Asia, China and Russia will be central in security thinking for the next 25 years,” he said, “and Afghanistan is the nerve point for serious instability and security issues for the future.”

The conflict in Afghanistan, with its fractured insurgency, illustrates the broader social factors that can underpin a violent uprising. “There has been violence in the region for decades and for decades to come,” he added. “In this contest, it is not firepower but staying power that counts.” This has become a real challenge for NATO’s recent strategy of increasing troop numbers to deliver a knockout blow.

“Central Asia, China and Russia will be central in security thinking for the next 25 years.”

“Afghanistan has become a real strategic challenge for NATO and the transatlantic relationship,” agreed Nakhleh. Underlying this challenge are some key questions, namely: what are the objectives of the war? Who is the enemy? Finally, how can the West succeed in engaging Muslim communities in the midst of this, and other, ongoing conflicts? The manner in which NATO leaders address these questions will greatly impact the results of the Afghan challenge, he concluded.

Jenkins questioned whether NATO, a military alliance created to defend against the threat of the USSR, can be reorganised in such a way to defend against non-state, irregular forces. “If the answer to this question is no,” he concluded, “we will have to shift the discussion from ‘changing NATO’ to ‘changing the missions that NATO will choose to undertake.’”

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Considering the poor results thus far in Afghanistan, a new perspective is needed, agreed **Dr. John A. Nagl**, President of The Center for a New American Security (CNAS). However, rather than deciding which wars it will fight, he countered, NATO will have to adapt itself to the changing nature of warfare.

“You do not get to choose the wars you want to fight, the enemy gets a vote.”

“You do not get to choose which wars you want to fight, the enemy gets a vote,” he elaborated. “Considering NATO’s strength in conventional warfare, our enemies will force us into asymmetric wars of attrition. It therefore behoves us to become as good at fighting this new style of war as we are at fighting conventionally.”

A new perspective on the war in Afghanistan

A large part of the Afghan challenge facing NATO has been the fragmented way in which the mission was undertaken, explained Jenkins. The original mission, launched in 2001, was sent in to overthrow the Taliban and pursue Al Qaeda. Following this invasion, ISAF moved in to help defend and develop the fledgling Afghan government. Primarily concerned with nation building rather than fighting, ISAF was not in a position to combat the growing insurgency, which finally prompted the response from the Obama administration to send 30,000 new troops to Afghanistan.

With this range of goals, the question of defining victory or defeat in Afghanistan has become murky, the roundtable heard. “The US’ primary goal in Afghanistan is to deny safe haven to Al Qaeda,” offered Nakhleh, “while the secondary goal is to degrade the Taliban and build Afghan capabilities.”

For NATO, however, the outlook is not so clear, suggested Lieutenant General Jean-Paul Perruche, Research Director at

the Institut de Recherche et Strategie de l’Ecole Militaire (IRSEM). He told the roundtable that, in the event of a NATO victory in Afghanistan, it is likely that the credit will go to the US, who have contributed the vast majority of troops and financing during the last ten years of conflict.

In this case, the European members of NATO are likely to see themselves as dependent on the US, leading to a further drop in defence expenditures. If the Afghan mission results in failure, he continued, there is the danger that NATO members will rationalise this defeat as inevitable in the context of the new paradigm of asymmetric warfare and, as a result, will be less inclined to intervene in such conflicts in the future. To avoid this, the war in Afghanistan should be considered an opportunity to learn about the consequences of failing to develop new capabilities, he concluded.

In many missions, it is inevitable that the US will have a larger contribution, responded Jenkins. This was true in the case of Kosovo, he explained, but the resulting victory was seen as an EU effort. “If NATO member contributions to a mission are measured by firepower alone, the US clearly dominates. However, if the measure is local knowledge and other areas of expertise, the US will not always be the primary partner.”

It is clearly becoming essential, he continued, to discuss missions in terms of conflict management and containment. While this perspective is not under the purview of traditional NATO capabilities, it should be seen as a positive, sustainable way to conduct future missions. “The Taliban is not worried about 30,000 new troops,” he offered, “but they would be dismayed by the realisation that the Alliance could remain on the scene for another thirty years.”

“It befits NATO to develop new capacities for nation-building and conflict-management,” agreed Nagl, “and to intervene early in order to not become engaged in challenges as wrenching as Afghanistan. We have to find the balance between deploying early and cheaply and waiting until situations get out of control and require a long term intervention.”

Nagl offered an example of this working successfully in the current US engagement in Yemen. With very few soldiers but

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robust intelligence and economic development assistance, the US is keeping Al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen from reaching a point where it will take a large scale intervention to restore a failed Yemeni state. The shift from high intensity to low intensity warfare will play an important role in NATO missions for the future, he concluded.

The New Soldier

The US Counter Insurgency (COIN) Manual offers four steps for fighting an insurgency, explained Sarkar: securitisation, stabilisation, transition and reconstruction. "During his tenure in Afghanistan, General McChrystal accomplished a lot in protecting the Afghans but very scant attention has been given to the transition and reconstruction." These roles, she added, have become by default the responsibility of the military, rather than civilian corps who are unable to move into the theatre due to a highly unstable security situation. To this end, she introduced the concept of the 'New Soldier' to the debate.

Though the details of the New Strategic Concept are not completely known at this point, it is certain that NATO will continue to engage in both article five and non-article five missions in the future, Sarkar offered. In order to fulfil its role, NATO will need to develop new forces for peacekeeping and stabilisation missions outside of the North Atlantic arena.

As these new forces will be responsible for all four stages outlined in the COIN Manual, they will need to be trained with a different skill set and be prepared to fight, offer humanitarian assistance and aid in the process of rebuilding. "The new soldier is a traditional soldier with traditional skills; but he/she also has cultural understanding and compassion," she explained. Soldiers with this training will be able to use non-kinetic warfare to define and resolve, rather than win, future conflicts.

"A decade of engagement in Afghanistan has failed to resolve the underlying conflict," she added, "while at the same time, NATO has been keeping an eye on violent conflicts that have been flaring up in Somalia, Yemen and Cambodia, to name a few." In order to resolve asymmetric conflicts in the 21st cen-

ture, NATO must consider new skill sets to train soldiers to "not only map out the physical terrain but the social and psychological terrain as well."

"It befits NATO to develop new capacities for nation building and conflict management."

Responding to several participants' doubts about the effectiveness of training 'soft' soldiers, Jenkins said that he "does not see a contradiction between the traditional soldier and the new soldier." In his experience of the Vietnam War, he elaborated, whilst working with small military teams dependent on indigenous forces, it became a matter of common sense survival to integrate traditional kinetic (lethal) skills alongside non-kinetic ones, such as negotiation skills or less-than-lethal force. "The decision to use force or not is a calculated decision based on pragmatism. In a situation where one is heavily dependent on locals, one must act accordingly."

The reality of the situation, Jenkins continued, is that civilians do not have the capacity to protect themselves as well as soldiers do. Those providing humanitarian aid need rifles, so it should be soldiers that provide this aid.

"NATO has reaffirmed its pledge to be a collective defence organisation," concluded Sarkar. "At the same time, it has also recognised that asymmetric threats may be posed by non-state actors and may affect more than one of its member states. This requires both a collective and asymmetric response. In my view, the new soldier provides an asymmetric, non-kinetic tactical response that may be incorporated into an overall strategic response, addressing future global terrorist threats."

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Who is the enemy?

One of the greatest challenges that the ongoing counter-insurgency in Afghanistan – and indeed the greater war on terrorism – has brought into focus is the question of who NATO is fighting. “If the enemy is the Taliban,” said Nakhleh, “they can be fought and defeated. If these goals are met, however, what is to stop the war from moving to a different battlefield?”

The “enemy” in Afghanistan is not narrowly confined to the Taliban, offered Sarkar, but to those persuaded by a false narrative of the ideology of hate. All too often, she continued, groups who commit acts of terrorism globally are painted with the same brush. It is important that one should make a distinction between Jihadi terrorists and others – for example, Palestinians, Western Saharans or Filipinos – who are responding to other pressures.

“NATO must become a political framework for North America and Europe to think through these big global insecurities.”

The enemy, agreed Merritt, increasingly appear to manifest amongst the global poor, but this may in fact be the expression of the inequalities that underlie the current world order. Posing a tough question about the motivations of extremist non-state enemies, Merritt asked, “In a world growing to nine billion people, what can the West do to shape its security mindset to confront people who are envious of us?”

The answer proposed by Nakhleh is that NATO members, partners and global institutions need to engage developing world communities in order to provide hope to the growing numbers of alienated poor and young people. It is also important to engage the Muslim world. “The principal response in

the Muslim world to the global war on terrorism is that it has become a war on Islam. This is one of the big issues that President Obama and his administration have been dealing with,” he added.

With its stockpile of soft power, Nakhleh and others envision a role for the EU in opening up dialogue and paving the way for better understanding between the West and the Muslim world. “I look to Europe for engagement in the broader issues of education, health and improving quality of life,” he explained.

Conclusion

Ultimately, if NATO can respond to the challenges facing it and succeed in redefining the transatlantic relationship, the EU will have a role to play in incorporating large Muslim countries such as Turkey and Indonesia into the global architecture. From this beginning, it will become possible to undercut the paradigm of extremism and work to improve the lot of the world’s poor and disenfranchised.

“The problems in Central Asia and indeed the world are intertwined,” concluded Jenkins, “and the notion that we can leave Afghanistan and not have dangerous consequences in the region is simply not viable.” Though Afghanistan presents a serious challenge for NATO, the partners on either side of the Atlantic need to work together to develop a new framework to address it and other challenges in the future.

In his closing remarks, Nagl asked: “what does America want from the EU?” Answering, he told the roundtable that the EU should be a partner, a critic and a conscience: a partner in Afghanistan, a critic on Iraq and a conscience on climate change.

“We tend to think of NATO as solely a military framework or a convenient way to work with the US,” concluded Merritt. “I think, however, that what we need to do is to see that NATO becomes a political framework for North America and Europe to think through these big global insecurities.”

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