

NATO'S LISBON SUMMIT: NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT AND THE MISSILE DEFENCE

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ABSTRACT The Lisbon Summit was important for two reasons. Firstly, the acceptance of a new strategic concept, the seventh since NATO was founded. The new concept comes after the Al Kaide attacks, the Afghan and Iraq wars and a greater threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. In addition, relations with Russia were reset, making them of strategic importance. The second important aspect is the acceptance of a missile defence system whereby all populations, territory and forces will be protected.

Every NATO summit in its own right is important. Yet when a new strategic concept is adopted a summit can be considered as a milestone. The Lisbon Summit adopted the seventh strategic concept since NATO's inception, which means that almost every decade a new concept has been adopted. Given the changing circumstances of the balance of power among states this is inevitable.

After the 1999 Washington summit, The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the menace of Al Kaide necessitated the adoption of a new concept. NATO became engaged in

Afghanistan, the US and some NATO allies invaded Iraq, the proliferation of nuclear weapons became more acute and relations with Russia had to be "reset." The world is no longer unipolar. Power is shifting to the East from the West. Moreover, the global financial crisis and defence costs are inevitably linked. Now NATO forces are engaged in "out of area" actions and their defence requires new force structures and weapons. Giles Merritt, Director of Security and Defence Agenda at the Atlantic Council of Turkey's 18th International Conference in Antalya on December 3, 2010 aptly pointed out that new force structures and



weapons systems are necessary to meet the changing risks and challenges.

Last but not least, the public wants to know why NATO is still needed.

The Strategic Concept

The Lisbon strategic concept is shorter and punchier than the one adopted in Washington and one that the public can better understand. This is an important change, as in times of financial crisis, public and parliamentary support become all the more necessary.

Regarding content, whereas the Washington text listed five core tasks for the Alliance – security, consultations, deterrence and defence, crisis management and partnerships – the new text has narrowed those tasks to three: collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. This numerical change does not mean that consultations are left out, since paragraph five of the new text indicates that NATO remains the unique and essential transatlantic forum for consultations. If one were to search for differences in wording, what catches one's eye is that in the Washington text under crisis management the word consensus exists whereas the new text has

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And this brings me to relations with Russia. Here the biggest difference between the 1999 Washington concept and 2010 Lisbon concept is relations with Russia. Paragraph 36 of the Washington text speaks of NATO-Russia Founding Act as the basis. In paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Lisbon text, much stronger language is used on the importance of close relations with Russia, that cooperation with Russia is of strategic importance. Indeed, this is the consequence of the "reset" of relations between the US and Russia. Russia is not a member of NATO but has a weight almost that of a member.

Similarly, Paragraph 32 of the Lisbon text is much warmer on NATO-EU relations than the old strategic concept, and the EU is now considered an "essential partner." This is meaningful since President Obama has sometimes been accused of ignoring the EU. Here of



course, Turkey-Cyprus relations remains a sticking point.

Missile Defence System

For the implementation of the concept, political guidance will be prepared. Naturally, the Lisbon Summit and the strategic concept should be read together with the summit declaration. Paragraph 37 of the Declaration deals with Ballistic Missile Defence, which was the main menu of the Summit. Conceived in 2002 by President Bush, the system then intended to defend NATO deployed forces and was to be fixed on the ground. It was not a NATO project aimed at protecting from ICBM's. President Obama changed the concept to also protect NATO European populations, territory and forces. President Obama has promoted a less costly, more flexible and phased system of radars and anti-ballistic missiles that will have components in Europe and at sea. (the phases of which are against short range missiles, medium range missiles and long range missiles and ICBM's.) The cost, according to a NATO spokesman, will be 1.5 billion to be managed over ten years. In President Obama's words, for the first time "we have agreed to develop a missile defence capability that is strong enough to cover all NATO European territory and populations as well as the United States."

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According to a document that appeared in the Wikileaks cables, there was a fear that Turkey might spoil the party. There was recognition that Turkey's voice would be louder. Turkey had said three things on the missile defence:

- a) The system should not be placed against a certain country (which means Iran should not be named).
- b) It should cover all NATO territory.
- c) It should be a NATO project under NATO command and control.

According to a cable published by Wikileaks, Prime Minister Erdoğan told President Barack Obama that "the project must be implemented in a NATO context to diminish the political cost that his government will likely bear both in terms of domestic politics and in Turkey's relations with Iran." The American side wondered "how much NATO will be enough for Turkish leaders."

Despite denials by Turks that the US had made a proposal to base an AN/TPY-2 (transportable radar surveillance) and other missile defence assets in Turkey, a secret cable from the US Embassy in Ankara says the opposite. Indeed, the cable reads the following: "We have made the point to the Turks that a decision to not base the AN/TPY-2 radar in Turkey is essentially a decision to opt out of missile defence coverage for Turkey; this would not be a political

consequence, but just a fact based on physics and geometry." Turkey's main concern seems to be relations with Iran as Foreign Minister Davutoğlu, called the Iranian Foreign Minister after the Lisbon Summit to brief him on Summit decisions, which, in my view, is an unprecedented act. Another unmentioned concern on the part of Turkey seems to be whether Israel will benefit from the missile defence system. Turkey believes that this would not be necessary since the system exists already for Israel.

The missile defence system has been the main menu of President Obama's NATO approach strengthening the transatlantic link. If Turkey had vetoed that system at Lisbon, this would have marginalised Turkey in NATO and would have damaged US-Turkey relations immeasurably. Still, tough negotiations are ahead of us until the report on basing, command and control technical details are presented to NATO defence ministers. If the radar is based in Turkey, Patriot and THAAD systems will probably be needed to protect the radars. It is said that radars will be provided by the US at no cost. The US will provide the missiles protecting the radars. Costs of anti-ballistic missiles will be borne nationally as needs of each country

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are different. Should Turkey opt out of the system, this would have political consequences. Turkey has said that it is not threatened by Iranian missiles. However, Turkey was planning to set up its own national missile defence system. If that were not for Iran, then one can legitimately ask who then?

Global NATO

As far as membership in NATO is concerned, membership cannot be global at least for geographic reasons: the Alliance is limited to Europe. But the challenges are global and this forces the Alliance to act globally. To what extent the Alliance will act globally will depend on several factors. The first is the war in Afghanistan. How will Afghanistan and Pakistan look like after Alliance forces leave is an important element. The second, no less important factor, is relations with Russia. If cooperation with Russia goes well then the Alliance will tend to act more freely globally. Perhaps the litmus test lies in Russia's partnership in the missile defence system. If relations with Russia sour, will the latter try to beef up Collective Security Cooperation Treaty Organisation as a rival to NATO? Or will it turn to Shanghai Cooperation Organisation? How will the EU's military capacities fare in the coming decade? The present



financial crisis does not augur well for the EU in the military field. Last but not least is the question of the cohesion of the Alliance. Giles Merritt believes that "unthinking EU support for US 'adventurism' is over; Europeans would support the US when its strength is needed and US policies are acceptable." This is in addition to Turkey's new attitude. The challenges and risks are global; just how global they will be will largely depend on those factors.

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