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## The Wales Summit and NATO's Deterrence Capabilities *An Assessment*

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In September 2014 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization held a successful summit meeting in Newport, Wales. As part of this event, NATO released the longest summit declaration in its history, a wide-ranging document that exceeded 13,000 words in length. Given the political and financial realities of trying to keep an alliance of 28 sovereign nation states together, and to agree on a common set of responses to the myriad challenges NATO is expected to meet in today's turbulent world, it is indeed remarkable that the Alliance achieved any consensus final report for the Wales Summit. The communiqué marked some modest progress in showing a strong, united face to the world. It made clear that the Alliance will respond to Russian assertiveness on the international stage in a firm but measured manner, attempting to avoid a return to the Cold War with its dramatic force build ups, its reliance on nuclear weapons, its expense, and its emotional toll on both sides. This is an admirable goal. But that means that the Alliance must be realistic about what it can do. It has to focus on the biggest issues, the largest threats. The Ukraine crisis has reminded the Alliance of the importance of collective defense and the need to invest in capabilities to successfully achieve that leg of the mission set. This is a requirement it has neglected to some extent for 20 years, and a responsibility which was only a theoretical issue when the 2010 Strategic Concept was written. Unfortunately the communiqué has so many disparate ideas, addressing so many challenges, threats, requirements, partners, and adversaries that it waters down the central problem today: the possible return of an aggressive Russia on its eastern borders.

Compared to most summit meetings of NATO the hype leading up to the 2014 summit was at a higher pitch than in recent years. This was understandable, given the array of challenges facing the Alliance: Russia's aggressive behavior in the Crimea, the rise of an insurgency in Ukraine, the appearance of ISIS on the southeastern borders of the Alliance, a large-scale human migration across the Mediterranean, the end of a decade of military operations in Afghanistan, a continuing financial crisis, renewed emphasis on burden sharing within the Alliance, and ongoing questions over North America's commitment to the 28-nation security organization. Pundits and analysts were calling the September 2014 meeting in Wales "a watershed event," "the most important summit since the end of the Cold War," "one of the most pivotal moments in its 65 year history," and other headline-worthy titles.<sup>2</sup> Did the Alliance succeed in meeting those high expectations? The initial answer to this question must be a qualified "somewhat." On

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2 Examples of some particularly valuable pre-summit studies, minus the hyperbole, include: Kathleen McInnis, "Four Questions NATO Must Ask," Chatham House online, 29 Aug 14, at [www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/15611](http://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/15611); Stephen Walt, "NATO Owes Putin a Big Thank-You," *Foreign Policy* online, 11 Sep 14, at [www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/09/04/nato\\_owes\\_putin\\_a\\_big\\_thank\\_you\\_russia\\_ukraine](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/09/04/nato_owes_putin_a_big_thank_you_russia_ukraine); Heidi Reisinger, "Die Mission nach dem Krieg," *Cicero*, July 2014; Jacob Stokes, Julianne Smith, Nora Bensahel and David Barno, "Charting the Course: Directions for the New Secretary General," Center for a New American Security, September 2014; Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer and Brune Lete, "Rethinking NATO's Strategy in a Changing World: Recommendations for the Next Secretary General," Foreign Policy Program, Policy Brief, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, September 2014; and Karl-Heinz Kamp, "NATO's 2014 Summit Agenda," Research Paper No. 97, NATO Defense College, September 2013, at <http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/series.php?icode=1>

the one hand the summit was seen as a great success by the governments of most member states and the world at large; on the other hand, many major issues remain unresolved, or were papered over in the communiqué.

The summit communiqué language is full of strong words and heady commitments to partner nations, particularly Ukraine. In addition, there are several new initiatives that should advance the cause of conventional force readiness in the newer member states of the northeastern quarter of the Alliance. But at a time when the Alliance is potentially facing the return of its former adversary, which would bring with it the largest military threat to the West in over 20 years, there is remarkably little on the force requirements and political commitment necessary to carry out the collective defense mission that is enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Such efforts would simultaneously provide enhanced deterrence against those threats and assurance of NATO's new member states that are closest to Russia and may perceive a threat to their security.

To consider the results of the summit, this paper addresses six areas of particular interest for NATO's military deterrence capabilities, each of which was addressed to some extent in the final communiqué from Wales.<sup>3</sup> These are by no means all the subjects that the Allies tackled in the weeks leading up to the summit or in the final communiqué. This reflects the global breadth of subjects that affect and interest the Allies.

## 1. Russia and Ukraine

*"NATO has no idea what Russia will do, but Russia knows very well what NATO will not do."*<sup>4</sup>

Russian behavior in Ukraine, where it forcibly annexed the Crimean Peninsula in the spring of 2014 and has been supporting, albeit disingenuously, an insurgency involving indigenous pro-Russian quasi-military factions that call for the independence of the easternmost provinces of Ukraine, has been met with only modest reaction in the West, including by NATO. There are deep splits within the Alliance as to the nature and degree of the threat posed by Russia to the eastern borders of the Alliance. This is obvious in the communiqué's wording, which carefully chooses its phrasing so as not to overreact or antagonize Moscow. Despite the gravest challenge in 20 years to the idea of a unified Europe, and the first instance of one European country usurping the territory of a neighboring state since World War Two, the Alliance has chosen to parse its words carefully.

The potential of further Russian use of hybrid warfare tactics in some NATO member states cannot be ruled out. Estonia, with its large ethnic Russian population, is perhaps most vulnerable. There are very few Alliance military forces stationed in the region. NATO's efforts at reassuring Tallinn and its neighboring member capitals through forward deployments of forces, air policing, enhanced border security, and maritime patrols, for example, have been quite modest so far. The communiqué does introduce several new initiatives to assure its newer members along its eastern frontier, including the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), as explained below. Yet these have not engendered further confidence on the steadfastness of the Alliance in planning to meet this potential threat. However one might feel about Russia, or its actions in Ukraine, or the potential for feigned Russian outrage at Alliance initiatives to shore up its defenses, it is nevertheless easy to identify a weak spot in the Alliance's perimeter defenses. Common sense would dictate that a reasonable response by a military alliance whose primary purpose is to ensure the territorial integrity of its members would be to shore up those walls. This could mean sending troops, tanks, airplanes and warships to the Baltic States as a prudent military measure, and as a means of signaling intent to Moscow. All of this would enhance deterrence of any Russian action. Yet there is little in the communiqué to suggest that such moves are in the cards for the immediate future. Arguments that the Alliance has plenty of conventional forces, or charts showing how Alliance spending on defense significantly exceeds that of Russia, do not answer the question of whether it has those forces in the right place, in the right numbers, or at the right time.

In its communiqué the Alliance states that it "poses no threat to Russia." This wording is reversed from that

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3 See North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Wales Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales," NATO Press Release (2014) 120, 5 Sep 14, at [www.nato.int/eps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm](http://www.nato.int/eps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm)

4 Quip by a senior NATO official at a workshop on the summit results, September 2014.

in the 2010 Strategic Concept, which said that Russia posed no threat to the Alliance. Does this change of perspective mean that the Allies now recognize that Russia may indeed pose a threat, or that by signaling benign intent the Alliance is simply trying to be non-provocative and ease tensions in the East? Former Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen made it clear on many occasions that NATO's steps to reinforce its collective defense mission, small though they may have been, have all been defensive and in no way justify any Russian reaction in response.

## 2. Conventional Readiness

*“Russian peacekeepers are aptly named—they find a piece of land they want, and they keep it.”<sup>5</sup>*

Taken together, NATO states currently provide more than 100 combat brigades to the Alliance's arsenal. But those are scattered across the member states and beyond. Many of them are involved in operations far from home, and many are in uncertain states of readiness. Furthermore, across the Alliance over the past decade the average reduction in national defense spending has been approximately 20 percent. There is continued overreliance on one ally, the one that Europeans assume will show up when needed. But given US domestic political and financial problems, ongoing crises around the globe that involve the United States but not Europe, the announced plan to re-balance its forces and commitment toward the Asia-Pacific region, and general war weariness, it is quite possible that in some future crisis the United States may choose not to participate. At that point Europe will need to have the capacity to act on its own, or its conventional forces may prove to be a Potemkin village.

In the conventional realm, the Wales summit did lead to several new initiatives that should enhance Alliance readiness, assuming they are all implemented. These are indeed welcome additions to the Alliance's capabilities playbook. Some, however, build upon the concept of the NATO Response Force (NRF), a good idea from an earlier time that never really got off the ground, and has only been activated rarely in response to natural disasters or to support civil-military operations; never for combat. Still, the Alliance continues to pay lip service to the value of the NRF, while admitting that a new approach is needed. That need will be filled by the Readiness Action Plan with its two parts: assurance measures for the Alliance's eastern member states, and an adaptation leg that will create the more concrete Very High Readiness Joint Task Force. The VJTF will be a brigade-sized, 4,000 man body within the NRF that will be able to respond in a matter of days anywhere in the world. Its focus will be on deploying to member states along NATO's periphery. The NATO Standing Naval Forces will also be given greater emphasis. In addition, the Alliance agreed to continue air policing over the Baltic States, and it will beef up its multinational corps headquarters in Poland. The RAP was the key deliverable of the Wales Summit. It calls for a continuous rotational air, sea, and land presence and “meaningful” military activity in the eastern part of the Alliance.<sup>6</sup>

In major exercises prior to the Ukrainian crisis, Russia showed that it has the ability to move large numbers of personnel and equipment over long distances quickly. This is a glaring weakness for NATO. The implication is that if the Alliance wants to be ready to defend its borders, it needs to place its forces in the right location well before they are needed. But the summit chose not to pursue such an approach. Instead, the Alliance will continue to rely on the NRF, using the new mechanisms of the RAP and the VJTF to provide small teams of responsive forces for low-intensity scenarios.

## 3. Deterrence and the Appropriate Mix

*“If we let a sleeping dog lie for too long, we may discover that the dog is dead.”<sup>7</sup>*

A commonly heard refrain from Alliance insiders is that “we do not want to return to the Cold War.” At first blush, this is a seemingly reasonable statement. Yet, cold war is certainly better than hot war, which could be the result if the Alliance lets down its guard in the face of a great power that has the capability, if not yet the confirmed will, to pursue an aggressive foreign policy. As in the case of conventional forces, this implies a need for well thought-out

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5 Comment by a senior European official during a speech at the NATO Defense College, September 2014.

6 The phrasing: “continuous rotational presence” is intentional. This is not the same as “permanently based” forces, and is meant to serve as another way to avoid appearing provocative to Moscow.

7 Comment from a new member state participant at a NATO seminar on nuclear policy, September 2014.

responses, including military preparedness. It is important to remember that the West only gets one vote in whether it returns to a cold war; it must also respond to how its adversary decides to proceed.

The Alliance did respond to the Ukraine crisis, although in a quite measured and limited way. It deployed some modest conventional forces to the Baltic States and Poland in an effort to restore confidence in its Article 5 commitments on the part of Allies and the potential adversary. The United States also deployed two B52 strategic bombers to the United Kingdom and to an exercise in the Baltics during the height of the tensions. It is unclear whether this was meant to be a signal to Russia. The combination of these activities, as well as statements from senior leaders of the Alliance, make it clear that the focus on the three core pillars of Alliance security—collective defense, cooperative security, and crisis management—has shifted to an enhanced emphasis on collective defense, at least for the short term. This may imply the reversal of a two-decade long trend that witnessed regular pronouncements about how Article 5 remained the core responsibility of the Alliance, while at the same time some states were reducing the forces necessary to conduct that mission and neglecting plans for Article 5 contingencies. Further, some members were known to be critical of those member states who wanted to bring the attention of the Alliance back to collective defense, which the critics considered outdated thinking.

The Wales communiqué repeats the standard NATO liturgy that the Alliance relies on an “appropriate mix” of forces: conventional, missile defense, and nuclear. But upon closer examination, there appears to be a problem with that equation and its levels of emphasis at the summit. As mentioned above, the Alliance’s conventional forces are not pre-positioned in the right place in the right numbers to meet the current threat and assure those member states that feel threatened. This reflects, in part, conscious decisions by the Alliance over the past two decades to restructure, reduce numbers, reduce readiness, and create a different kind of military force from the kind it had during the Cold War. It also reflects the commitments made to Moscow at the time of the first NATO enlargement that the Alliance would not station significant forces in the new member states.<sup>8</sup> This was meant to be a confidence building measure for Russia. Yet it is a political commitment, not a legally binding international agreement. If circumstances change, the Alliance has every right to revisit this commitment.

For 20 years, Alliance communiqués have minimized any threat in Europe, calling Russia a “strategic partner” with special benefits, including its own forum for direct communication with the Alliance (the NATO-Russia Council). Members derived a peace dividend through the overall diminution of military forces. At the same time, the Alliance created a military better-suited to out-of-area operations that required greater responsiveness, greater flexibility, a smaller footprint, and ease of transportation. This meant fewer main battle tanks, armored vehicles, medium and long range missiles, medium and heavy bombers — in sum, none of the old-fashioned expensive equipment that the Alliance previously had to keep on hand in large numbers in Central Europe to deter or respond to Soviet aggression. That means there is very little of that kit left in Europe at a time when the Alliance might wish it had some to deploy to the weak spot on its perimeter.

The second leg of the appropriate mix of forces is missile defense. NATO continues to emphasize its

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8 According to the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997: “NATO reiterates that *in the current and foreseeable security environment*, [emphasis added] the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces. Accordingly, it will have to rely on adequate infrastructure commensurate with the above tasks. In this context, reinforcement may take place, when necessary, in the event of defence against a threat of aggression and missions in support of peace consistent with the United Nations Charter and the OSCE governing principles, as well as for exercises consistent with the adapted CFE Treaty, the provisions of the Vienna Document 1994 and mutually agreed transparency measures. Russia will exercise similar restraint in its conventional force deployments in Europe.” See *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France*, at [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_25468.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm). See, for example, “NATO’s Eastward Expansion: Did the West Break Its Promise to Moscow?” Uwe Klußmann, *Spiegel Online International*, 26 Nov 2009, at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/nato-s-eastward-expansion-did-the-west-break-its-promise-to-moscow-a-663315.html>. For the counterargument, see Michael Rühle, “NATO Enlargement and Russia: Die-Hard Myths and Real Dilemmas,” *NDC Research Report*, NATO Defense College, 15 May 2014, available at <http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/series.php?icode=3>; “NATO Enlargement and Russia: Myths and Realities,” *NATO Review* online at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Nato-enlargement-Russia/EN/index.htm>; and Mark Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Moscow,” *The Washington Quarterly*, April 2009, at <http://dialogueeurope.org/uploads/File/resources/TWQ%20article%20on%20Germany%20and%20NATO.pdf>.

requirement for a robust layered missile defense system, and rightly so. Given the continuing push for a nuclear weapons capability in Iran, and the unsettled nature of the entire region of the Middle East and North Africa, it is appropriate that a security alliance would want to protect its citizenry from the possible threat of missile attack. The European Phased Adaptive Approach is well underway and on track, with interim operational capability announced at the Chicago Summit in 2012. Plans continue to deploy ground-based AEGIS ASHORE batteries in the Balkans next year, and to continue to build improved command and control and early warning installations across the southern and eastern reaches of the Alliance. AEGIS ships are also now deployed permanently in the Mediterranean. All these capabilities, while impressive, would have little applicability against the type of threat that Ukraine had to face this spring: so-called hybrid warfare, an approach not dissimilar to low intensity warfare, involving guerrillas, non-uniformed militias, and conventional military equipment, with no need for missile defense.

That leaves the Alliance with the third leg of the deterrence triad: nuclear forces. Russia's national security doctrine since the end of the Cold War now resembles NATO's old Cold War strategy: first use of nuclear weapons if necessary to control the escalation ladder (called, paradoxically, "de-escalation" in Russian papers).<sup>9</sup> Russian nuclear doctrine also calls for early nuclear use on a conventional battlefield. Indeed, some analysts report that however good Russia may be at hybrid warfare and signaling via snap exercises, its conventional capabilities at the operational level remain weak. That would imply that in a conventional conflict which appeared not to be going their way, one might anticipate a jump to nuclear use. As in the scenario about returning to cold war, in a conflict the Alliance similarly gets but one vote in determining whether the fighting remains conventional.<sup>10</sup> Is NATO prepared to consider this possibility?

One would think that the nuclear leg would have become *more* important after the realization that the Alliance was no longer prepared to meet a direct threat with conventional forces in Eastern Europe, and that missile defense had little relevance in such a scenario since it was not designed to deal with Russia or short range systems. Surprisingly, however, there has been very little reaction to this realization within NATO, and no desire to emphasize nuclear capabilities for reasons both financial and political. It appears the Alliance is once again more focused on "not rocking the boat" than on an informed public discussion over nuclear matters.<sup>11</sup>

If thinking about a return to cold war is unwelcome within the Alliance, thinking about any role for nuclear weapons is anathema. The perceived value of nuclear weapons has dropped significantly within Alliance circles over the past 20 years. The few short paragraphs in the communiqué dealing with this subject are simply cut and paste repeats of nuclear language that has been used in such reports for over a decade. Furthermore, the remaining wording for the first time dropped all reference to US non-strategic nuclear warheads stationed in Europe. However the decision was made on what to include in the communiqué, from the results it is obvious that the Alliance chose to minimize this element of Alliance policy, at least for public consumption. NATO needs to have a dialogue, but that requirement has been discouraged by some members who fear the possible spillover effects of a debate over the future of nuclear forces, or are genuinely anti-nuclear but do not wish to be seen as opposing the big three nuclear powers, or worry that discussion over nuclear policy would appear provocative to Moscow. Granted, there are certainly valid arguments that can be made for taking this non-confrontational approach and minimizing any discussion on nuclear matters. But in the midst of a crisis involving the world's second largest nuclear power, it is striking to note how little has been said about nuclear deterrence capabilities—at least on the western side of the crisis.

There is, however, an alternative, more optimistic hypothesis. It is possible that the value of NATO's Article 5 commitments and its existing deterrent capabilities remain strong, in Moscow's eyes, as was shown by the fact that

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9 For a summary of Russian nuclear policy today, see Nicolai Sokov, "Why Russia Calls a Limited Nuclear Strike 'De-Escalation,'" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 13 March 2014, at <http://thebulletin.org/why-russia-calls-limited-nuclear-strike-de-escalation>

10 See Jeffrey Larsen and Kerry Kartchner, eds., *On Limited Nuclear War in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Palo Alto, CA, Stanford University Press, 2014.

11 "Don't rock the boat," or "let sleeping dogs lie," are two commonly heard aphorisms in debates regarding NATO nuclear policy. These are not new perspectives. For an explanation of the use of such terminology, see Jeffrey A. Larsen, *The Future of US Non-Strategic Nuclear Forces and Implications for NATO: Drifting Toward the Foreseeable Future*, final report of the 2005 Manfred Wörner Fellowship Program, 31 October 2006, at <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/05-06/larsen.pdf>

Russia has not yet attempted to make trouble with the Baltic States or Poland. This line of argument would suggest that Moscow does still respect the Alliance's collective defense capabilities and political will. Nuclear weapons remain the ultimate insurance policy for the West. The size of that policy may be less important than its existence. If that is the case, the restrained language in the Wales summit communiqué was quite sufficient as a subtle reminder of those red lines.

#### 4. Partnerships

*"A concept that is highly regarded but deeply flawed."*<sup>12</sup>

NATO continues to place high value on its global partnership programs. This is evident in the fact that one quarter of the Wales communiqué addresses partners and partner programs. There is a question as to whether the Alliance's emphasis on partners over the past two decades has hurt its ability to focus on collective defense. This goes back to the larger debate on the three pillars of the Alliance and their relative priority.

The Alliance has not heeded suggestions from some analysts to revise the current geographically based alignments into either a functional taxonomy or a series of concentric membership circles representing levels of premier status.<sup>13</sup> But NATO appears to be headed in the direction of more functional approaches by announcing two new initiatives for partner states. The Partnership Interoperability Initiative will emphasize enhancements to partners' abilities to take on security challenges with NATO. Five states were initially invited to join. In parallel, a new Defense and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative was launched with three partner nations. The avowed purpose of this second initiative is to allow NATO to project stability into regions without having to send NATO member combat forces, relying instead on the regional partner. Neither initiative was explained in much detail.

One topic that was not addressed in the communiqué is the underlying concern by some partners about their ability to rely on NATO in times of trouble, given the lack of an immediate response to events in Ukraine this spring by the Alliance. Certain partners had apparently assumed that partnership implied some sort of security guarantee by the Alliance. If they believed that, those hopes were dashed by the initial hands-off response from Brussels regarding Ukraine. Indeed, one of the key lessons for Alliance members from a major NATO conference in April 2014 was the need to make clear that partners should expect no such security commitment. There is a two-way street in cooperation with partners, but that does not include any express or implied promise of military support to the partner on the part of NATO. In this area, the Alliance has made its position known.

#### 5. Enlargement

*"The Ukraine crisis has shown us the limits of enlargement."*<sup>14</sup>

Enlargement was a major element of the Wales communiqué, but it is apparent that this reflects bureaucratic momentum rather than excitement about the process. It was not made clear why further enlargement is important to the Alliance, beyond remaining loyal to previous commitments. There is little proof that any of the potential member states would add to the security of the Alliance, nor that they are security providers. Rather, it seems as if some of the statements were merely carried over from previous commitments, and the Alliance did not want to hurt anyone's feelings by changing those to account for the changed international situation. This is true in the case of Georgia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,<sup>15</sup> and maybe even for Montenegro. In one nod to realpolitik, the communiqué goes out of its way to deflect Ukraine's desire for membership, but Kiev had already withdrawn its application in 2010 anyway. There is no need for Allies to pretend the 2008 offer to Ukraine is even still valid. In essence, the communiqué attempts to manage expectations on the part of several applicant states. In some cases, it is attempting to smooth over dashed hopes. "Fully supporting the aspirations" of applicants is a long way from

12 Summary of the communiqué positions on partnerships by a speaker at the NATO Defense College, September 2014.

13 For example, see Karl-Heinz Kamp and Heidi Reissinger, "NATO's Partnerships after 2014: Go West!" *Research Paper n. 92*, NATO Defense College, May 2013, available at <http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/series.php?icode=1>

14 Comment by senior NATO official speaking at NATO Defense College, October 2014.

15 Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

considerations of true membership. It would appear in this latest document that politics trumps pragmatism, or at least that in public statements diplomacy trumps plain language.

During the Cold War NATO's "open door" membership policy was never tested. It worked during the 1990s and 2000s because the Alliance moved away from collective defense as its core mission, thus making it easier to accept new members. Now, however, with a return to emphasis on Article 5, it may prove more challenging to bring in new members. This is unfortunate timing for some aspirant states who were hoping for better news from this summit.<sup>16</sup>

## **6. Other Strategic Issues**

There were four related strategic issues mentioned briefly in the communiqué: European missile defense, cyber security, arms control, and nonproliferation. Given recent events, all of these have taken a back seat to more pressing issues. Yet they remain important aspects of the Alliance's holistic approach to security.

### *Missile Defenses*

The communiqué goes to considerable length to explain the importance of missile defenses to the Alliance, building on the Strategic Concept's call for such a system, the announcement of an interim capability made at the Chicago Summit, and the continuing development of additional capabilities. But the eight paragraphs in the communiqué provide much repetition from previous documents. The big change at the Wales Summit was the acceptance that there are no longer any opportunities for cooperating with Russia on missile defense development.

### *Cyber Security*

The discussion over cyber threats papers over a serious question: when would a cyber attack become an Article 5 collective defense issue? The communiqué simply says that this will be decided on "a case by case basis," which may be politically expedient in garnering consensus, but is unsatisfying as an answer for analysts and planners.

### *Arms Control*

Arms control in Europe is moribund. Russia has stopped abiding by the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, there are no talks underway or planned between Russia and the United States on strategic nuclear weapons, and the United States has accused Moscow of violating the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. In this realm of strategic relations, things seem to be backsliding. It appears likely that Russia has in fact violated the INF Treaty, and may actually be considering withdrawal from that agreement. Despite this realization, the communiqué simply calls upon Russia to abide by its commitments to the Treaty, and asks them to allow verifiable compliance measures.

### *Proliferation*

The issue of WMD proliferation is also treated at considerable length in the communiqué, focusing on Iran, North Korea, and the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The area of greatest immediate concern for the Alliance is Iran, since that has served as the rationale for much of NATO's missile defense requirements. Yet the wording in this year's communiqué is fairly mild when it comes to asking Iran to cooperate with the IAEA and abide by Tehran's international commitments.

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<sup>16</sup> For example, see Marco Overhaus, "Impossible Promise: The Ukraine Crisis and NATO's Enlargement Dilemma," *European Geostrategy Articles*, 22 October 2014, at <http://www.europeangeostrategy.org/2014/10/impossible-promise-ukraine-crisis-natos-enlargement-dilemma/>.

## Conclusion

*“The Wales declaration presents a rosy picture of what can be agreed rather than what reality is.”<sup>17</sup>*

The goal of the Alliance must be to retain enough capability to deal with crises, and to protect its borders to the east, south, and southeast. This will require continued contributions by all member states. The nature of NATO’s wide-ranging interests reflects an underlying belief, or at least the hope, that the Ukraine crisis is a temporary aberration on the road to a Europe whole and free, and that Moscow will eventually settle back into a more docile state and resume its previous role as a strategic partner of the West. This would allow NATO’s members to once again focus on domestic issues, including the continuing reduction of their defense establishments. NATO’s member states are in full consensus that they want peace. The difference between the three sets of NATO members, however — Eastern, Western, and Mediterranean — is in their perception of the types of dangers threatening that goal, and on the means of maintaining peace and sovereignty. Those differences continue to challenge the Alliance as it attempts to develop policies and a strategy acceptable to all 28 members for dealing with a new Russian adversary. Such differences are understandable, since NATO per se is not the first priority for most member nations. Rather, each must focus first on domestic requirements and national security responsibilities, and only then determine where NATO can play a role.

The Alliance still has the chance to get its strategy and commitments right. But it needs to act soon and act decisively. Waiting for the Ukraine crisis to subside, and for Moscow to revert to its formerly benign posture, may not be a solution that ensures the security and territorial integrity of all the member states of the Alliance. To quote an old military truism, hope is not a strategy. The Wales Summit, to its credit, did make significant commitments to pursue a more balanced approach to ensuring the success of all three pillars of Alliance security, including collective defense. It is now a question of political will on the part of all 28 member state capitals to ensure that those commitments are implemented.

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17 Statement by a speaker at the NATO Defense College, October 2014.