

The Implications of the NATO Strategy for the European Security Policy



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Introduction

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1 Introduction

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the image of the world was transformed permanently. Not only did new forms of threats to the global security arise (NATO 2012A and EU 2008: 4), but new political structures were formed as a response to the changed political landscape, perhaps culminating in the foundation of the European Union (EU) with the treaty of Maastricht, which became operative in November 1993 (EU 1992). This forced the established peace-keeping forces like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to adapt in order to guard its legitimacy. The shift of focus following those changes may best be observed in the new strategic concept of the NATO (1991), the same trends continuing in the strategic concept of Lisbon in 2010. There they claim to be an instrumental partner of the United Nations (UN) and the EU in the defence of their common values, namely peace, freedom and security (2010: 1).

While the NATO strongly aligns itself to the EU, the European Union on the other hand is more interested in creating stronger ties with the United Nations (EU 2008: 11). In order to understand the strategic concept of the NATO, it is just as important to analyse the security strategy of the European Union, not only because both alliances would like to see a stronger cooperation with each other (NATO 2010: 9 and EU 2008: 2).

While the Swiss media mention the European Union mostly on account of the financial problems the Union faces at the moment (see for example NZZ 2011), it is a powerful agent for security and stability on the European continent, as the strategic report of the EU asserts (2008: 1). On the 19th of April, 2012 Adolf Ogi, former member of the federal council of Switzerland presented the efforts of Switzerland in the context of the partnership for peace (pfp). He stressed how important it is to actively offer cooperation for the sake of a stable and secure world, lest the country be forgotten in irrelevance. In conclusion of the examination the security strategies of both the NATO and the EU, the role of Switzerland in the context of the European security policy is going to be discussed.

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2 The Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

2.1. The History of the Nato

The NATO was originally founded after World War II in 1949 for the following three purposes: *“deterring Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration”* (NATO 2012A), two parts of the main purposes of the NATO were fulfilled after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the establishment of the European Union in 1993. This forced the alliance to find a new role and establish its legitimacy again if it wanted a continued existence. Those changes within the NATO may be exemplified with the publication of the new strategic concept of the NATO in 1991, as it was the first to be made available to the general public, unlike the previous strategic concepts, which were all considered ‘classified’ (NATO 2012A).

This new stance of the NATO reflects how much the global and the European situation had changed, but new developments in the security sector still continued. One pivotal event was the terrorist attacks of the 11th of September 2001, where it was painfully shown how Substate actors could execute violence, which led to a stronger focus on defence against terrorism and increased the interest in propagating peace and stability in foreign countries (NATO 2010 and 2012A). Another such event is the Second Gulf War, where the United States and the United Kingdom invaded Iraq on the claim that the state endangered them through the possession of weapons of mass destruction, which demonstrated that the United States were not able to defeat a hostile state alone, and that their modern army was not able to win an asymmetric war (Bierling 2010 and McMaster 2008).

Those new developments are reflected in the new strategic concept of the NATO of 2010. In the following the ‘new’ strategy of the NATO and its implications for the European security policy are examined.

2.2. The Strategy of the NATO: Active Engagement, Modern Defence

The content of the *“Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation adopted by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon”* (NATO 2010) is going to be analysed through two categories, namely the key security threats and the core mission. The same three categories were used by Lieutenant-General Domröse and allow for the succinct overview of the strategy necessary for further discussion.

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2.2.1. Key Threats

There are seven main areas where the NATO considers its security at risk and wishes to erect a defence:

1. Conventional Threats

While the NATO rates the probability for a conventional military attack against a member as low, the NATO asserts that as long as other countries have the ability to launch an attack, the alliance will remain able to defend against such attacks (NATO 2010: ¶ 7-8).

2. Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

A more acute threat for the alliance is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially of nuclear weapons (NATO 2010: ¶ 9). This is an important issue for Lieutenant-General Domröse, since states with nuclear weapons cannot be held accountable by the international community.

3. International Terrorism

While terrorism was only mentioned once in the strategy of 1991, the topic gained considerable prominence in the wake of 9/11 and is one of the main threats described in the new strategy of 2010 (NATO 2010: ¶ 10 and 1991: ¶ 12).

4. International Instability

The new prominence of terrorism as a security threat has led to the recognition of international instability as a security threat as well, because instability and poverty create a fertile soil for the terrorism and insurgency (NATO 2010: ¶ 11).

5. Cybersecurity

Another emerging threat is cybercriminality, considered to be even more dangerous than terrorism by some, as the following quote from FBI director Robert Mueller illustrates (NATO 2010: ¶ 12 and Mueller 2012): *"I am convinced that there are only two types of companies: those that have been hacked and those that will be. And even they are converging into one category: companies that have been hacked and will be hacked again."*

6. Security of Energy and Infrastructure

The increased dependence on complex international networks like the internet, transport and trade and energy and their vulnerability to disruption makes them another risk factor in the new strategic concept (NATO 2010: ¶ 13).

7. Environmental and Technological Development

The last risk factor, environmental and technological development, is not as acute an issue as for example terrorism, but rather a prospective problem area, which enforces current instability and might spark future conflicts (NATO 2010: ¶ 14-15).

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2.2.2. Core Mission

The alliance identifies three tasks which are central to the mission of the NATO (2010: ¶ 4).

1. Collective Defence

The first and original mission of the alliance as described in the article 5 of the Washington Treaty:

"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security."

NATO 1949, ¶ 5

While originally devised in 1949, article 5 has continued to define the purpose of the alliance and while it has been demonstrated above that the current threats to the members of the alliance have changed, the idea of a cooperative defence against those threats has not. To carry out this mission, the NATO relies on both conventional forces and on its nuclear weapons (NATO 2010: ¶ 17-19).

2. Crisis Management

The second pillar of the NATO strategy is crisis management, where the alliance tries to mitigate global crisis in the hope that increased stability leads to an increased security (NATO 2010: ¶ 4, 20-24). One notable example would be the efforts of nation-building in Afghanistan, where the NATO tried to build a more secure and stable state in order to counter terrorism and insurgency (refer to Goodson 2006 and NATO 2010: ¶ 25).

3. Cooperative Security and Stability

Not only light of smaller military budgets, but also due to the more global challenges, the NATO intends to promote cooperation and stability between non-member countries (NATO 2010: ¶ 4). This includes working closely together with the European Union and Russia as well as through partnerships with smaller states (NATO 2010: ¶ 28-35). As a result, thirteen additional partners were also invited to the meeting in Chicago, namely Australia, Austria, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates (NATO 2012B: ¶ 24, emphasis added). Furthermore, the alliance is committed to the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons (NATO 2010: ¶ 26).

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2.3. The Strategy of the European Union: A Secure Europe in a Better World

The NATO strategy is arguably focused on international cooperation, especially with the European Union. This raises the question, what the view of the European Union on the cooperation with the NATO as a security strategy is. The answer to that question lies in the following analysis of the security strategy of the EU, through the same two categories as before.

2.3.1. Key Threats

The European Security Strategy (ESS) identifies five key threats, which largely correspond to the seven threats the NATO lists, but with quite a different focus.

1. Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Like the NATO, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is identified as one key threat, with the EU willing to name both Iran and North Korea as the two perpetrators (EU 2008: 3).

2. Terrorism and Organised Crime

The EU is also concerned with terrorism, but adds organised crime as a related threat to this area (EU 2008: 4).

3. Cyber Security

The EU also identifies cyber security as an important area for security, and similar to the NATO, they are not able to propose real measures against cyber threats (EU 2008: 5).

4. Energy Security

The EU is even more concerned than the NATO about its dependence on foreign energy (EU 2008: 5).

5. Climate Change

In contrast to the NATO, the EU is also willing to name climate change as a security factor, whereas the NATO only mentions environmental developments as a factor (EU 2008: 5). However, the NATO also mentions technological developments as a factor, resulting in a slightly different perspective in this area (NATO 2010: ¶15).

2.3.2. Core Mission

1. International Stability

The EU is also committed to actively increase stability within Europe as well as around the world, but the EU tries to have more civilian activities than the NATO which is primarily a military organisation (EU 2008: 6-9).

2. International Partnerships

The European Union wishes to strengthen its partnerships with the UN, OSCE, the US and Russia, with the most important partner being the UN (EU 2008:

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10-11). While the EU also wishes to strengthen its ties to the NATO, they are more interested in either cooperating with the UN or directly with local states and organisations (EU 2008:11).

3 Conclusion

While the above provided a broad overview on the strategies of the EU and the NATO, there are many developments which are beyond the scope of this article and the new strategy of the NATO, but which are nonetheless relevant for the future European security policy. One factor would be the the *“Arab Spring”*, which certainly has implications for the NATO (see Ghezali 2012) , another factor would be the economic insecurity, also seen as a global threat (NZZ 2009, 2011).

However, there are many similarities between the strategies of both the NATO and the EU. They identify mostly the same threats to their respective security and they also propose similar solutions. Furthermore, they already cooperate closely and wish to continue to strengthen their cooperation. This convergence may best be exemplified with Lieutenant General Hans-Lothar Domröse, who is the German Military Representative for both NATO and EU (NATO 2012C). The greatest difference between the two is who they mainly wish to cooperate with, because while the NATO tries to cooperate with the EU, the European Union is more focused on the cooperation with the United Nations.

The geographical position of Switzerland in the heart of Europe obviously creates a dependence on the security of Europe for the country, or to put it a little more bluntly: If there is no war within the EU, then there is nobody at war with Switzerland. While the current political situation within Switzerland, forbids the country cannot to join either the EU or the NATO, cooperation with those institutions automatically pursues Switzerland's own interests. Therefore, the question is not if Switzerland should cooperate, but rather how it should cooperate. And there I would argue that because neither of those organisations have conflicting goals, it should be possible to pragmatically chose each area of cooperation with the NATO and EU individually.

An example for the cooperation with the NATO was mentioned in the beginning, where the Swiss army was involved in the PFP. An example for the cooperation with the EU are the bilateral treaties, which affect not only the Swiss security policy, but also other aspects of Swiss policy. And even if the Treaty of Lisbon hinders such a cooperation according to Misteli (2010), it is not realistic for the country of Switzerland to guarantee its own security. Switzerland not only lacks any nuclear weaponry, but the new security challenges like climate change cannot be tackled by a single nation. For the same reasons the NATO and the EU have to emphasise international cooperation as a key element of their security strategy, Switzerland has to integrate itself and offer its cooperation to the international security organisations.

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NATO 2012: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/photos_87609.htm



Abbreviations

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Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
PFP	Partnership for Peace
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NZZ	Neue Zürcher Zeitung
UN	United Nations