

NDC Research Paper

Research Division – NATO Defense College – Rome

Projecting Stability: Elixir or Snake Oil?

edited by
Ian Hope



Research Division

No. **01**
Dec 2018



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NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE

NATO Defense College Cataloguing in Publication-Data:

Projecting Stability: Elixir or Snake Oil?

(NATO Defense College 'NDC Research Papers Series')

NDC Research Paper 1

Edited by Ian Hope

Copy-editing: Mary Di Martino

Series editor: Thierry Tardy

ISSN: 2618-0057

ISSN: (online) 2618-0251

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NDC 2018



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Printed and bound by

<http://www.lightskyconsulting.com/>

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Foreword

NATO's internal security is intrinsically linked to external stability, and its quest for optimal security for its member states' citizens therefore requires a presence at its periphery. This is what Projecting Stability is about.

With this concept and activity, NATO takes stock of the indivisibility of security that is no longer composed of two distinct spaces. This is probably not new. After all, NATO's crisis management and cooperative security efforts over the last 25 years have had a lot to do with handling the consequences of the internal-external security nexus. To a large extent therefore, NATO has been in the business of Projecting Stability since the end of the Cold War, just as Molière's Mr Jourdain was speaking in prose without knowing it.

Nonetheless, the Projecting Stability agenda was formalized at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, and is now being run in parallel with Deterrence and Defence as NATO's main effort.

This poses at least three sets of questions. First, beyond the above-mentioned internal-external security nexus, what is it that Projecting Stability is really about and aims to achieve? How does stability relate to security, and how can one "project" it? Does it contain a value-promotion agenda, or is the concept a retrenchment from the ambitious democratization goals of the past?

Second, to what extent can Projecting Stability be prioritized, given the prominence of the Russian threat and therefore the necessity to "deter and defend"? Can NATO do both? And how much consensus is there among NATO member states on the need for Projecting Stability?

Third, where is Projecting Stability supposed to happen, with what local buy-in and level of intrusiveness, and through what sets of instruments? Does the activity carry potential unintended consequences by which, in lieu of Projecting Stability, the Alliance's presence would bring instability? Are there any past activities that attest to this risk, and about which lessons must be learned?

Overall, is Projecting Stability an elixir, i.e. the appropriate response to a well-posed question, or is it rather some sort of snake oil, i.e. a false solution or a concept that is doomed to stumble against innumerable political and operational obstacles?

These issues are what Ian Hope's edited volume *Projecting Stability – Elixir or*

Snake Oil? aims to explore. It does so through a collection of chapters, authored by a group of scholars and NATO officials, which offer an open analysis of the potential and challenges of Projecting Stability.

This *NDC Research Paper* is the first issue of a new series created by the NATO Defense College. *NDC Research Papers* deal with NATO-related issues from a multiplicity of angles that can be historical, political, operational or prospective; they can have an obvious research – or, even more so, policy – angle; they are analytical in nature, and must be relevant to the understanding of NATO’s challenges and policy making.

May this *NDC Research Paper* be the first of a long list of analytically sound, thought-provoking, and academically rigorous publications by the NDC Research Division.

Thierry Tardy
Series Editor
Director, NDC Research Division

List of Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AU	African Union
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BI	NATO's Building Integrity Program
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EPC	European Political Cooperation
EU	European Union
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Turkey recognizes FYROM by its constitutional name)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
ICI	Istanbul Cooperation Initiative
IPCPs	Individual Partnership Cooperation Programmes
IFOR	Implementation Force
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JFCNP	Joint Force Command Naples
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MANPADs	Man-portable air-defense systems
MD	Mediterranean Dialogue
MEDO	Middle East Defense Organization
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MESA	Middle East Strategic Alliance
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMI	NATO Mission Iraq
NSC	National Security Council
NSD-S	NATO's Strategic Direction South
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission Afghanistan
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCM	Partnership Cooperation Menu
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SRBM	Short-Range Ballistic Missiles
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States

Executive Summary

This *NDC Research Paper* attempts to unpack the emerging concept of Projecting Stability, and assess its potential utility and some possible pitfalls to its application. It is the product of a year's effort by seven scholars and policy-makers to track the evolution of the concept and to offer critical analysis. Some authors remain skeptical about it, viewing it akin to “snake oil” in a fancy bottle. Others see Projecting Stability as a potential “elixir”, a conceptual framework to align and synchronize a wide variety of disparate Alliance activities being conducted with partner nations without proper coordination with international organizations, and without direct linkage to greater Alliance security.

Seven distinct chapters constitute the bulk of the paper. These are arranged in order from general and historical aspects of the Projecting Stability concept to the current and specific issues of its utility and application. Following an introductory chapter, the second chapter by Ian Hope tracks the tortured history of NATO attempts during the Cold War to craft policy adequate to the challenges of acting collectively “out-of-area”. It argues that there are deep-rooted institutional limits to Alliance action outside of Europe that are by design not accident. At the same time it highlights that, since its inception, NATO has expressed desire and a sense of obligation to influence, shape, and act beyond its territorial boundaries. The third chapter by Benedetta Berti and Ruben-Erik Diaz-Plaja examines more closely the genesis of the Alliance's emerging Projecting Stability concept, revealing that it was the actual strategic effect sought by NATO in the 1990s, and that current focus is therefore one of continuity as much as change. As such it has the potential to deliver a coherent guideline for Alliance activity that can truly enhance the way that NATO does business.

Jeff Larsen provides specific details about the Alliance's first efforts in Projecting Stability in Chapter 4, cataloguing how NATO adapted after the Cold War by shifting emphasis away from collective defence to engage in various forms of activity to stabilize Eastern Europe and the Balkans; then attempting the same for the South. While reinforcing the idea that Projecting Stability is more continuity than change, this chapter also emphasizes the institutional limits to such efforts, and raises the issue that NATO may be fulfilling roles best suited for other organizations.

Kevin Koehler's Chapter 5 brings us from the historical to the present, revealing the difficulty currently posed by the term "Projecting Stability", and the challenges of applying it to NATO's southern periphery. He questions the tendency to describe it in terms of low-level "means-focused" activity, perhaps missing the opportunity to achieve truly strategic or regional effects. As a remedy, he recommends a coherent NATO policy for Projecting Stability in the South as a necessary precursor to implementing a military concept or strategy in the region.

Guillaume Lasconjarias takes us from the general to the specific. His Chapter 6 examines one of the key activities in the Projecting Stability concept, Security Force Assistance. Looking critically at NATO's efforts to conduct capacity building and assistance in Afghanistan, he exposes several of the challenges that the Alliance will always face when attempting to build defence institutions abroad, while at the same time highlighting their importance.

In the final chapter, Jean-Loup Samaan provides further insight on the potential utility of Projecting Stability. He highlights its possible use to harmonize a wide variety of extant Alliance activities to enhance regional stability. Specifically, he focuses on NATO's ability to help partners in the Middle East meet the challenges posed by the proliferation of missile systems through the auspices of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. This is a case of using deterrent and defence instruments (missile defence), as well as cooperative security activities and crisis management planning, to enhance stability on a regional scale.

Together, these chapters reveal the most significant aspects of the emerging concept of Projecting Stability, and assess some of the potential impacts on Alliance activity out-of-area. A provocative conclusion from this combined research project is that the combination of NATO's renewed interest in Deterrence and Defence, and the Projecting Stability initiative, can be seen as a *de facto* new strategic concept for the Alliance.

Introduction

Projecting Stability: Elixir or Snake Oil?

Ian Hope

Throughout the Cold War the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) faced challenges of instability along its peripheries but failed to articulate policy to effectively deal with it. Since 1991 the Alliance has achieved some success in crafting policy to enhance stability “out-of-area”; but there remains a problem of consistency and harmonization of effort, as well as challenges of misperceived intentions and oscillating political will. Crises in Libya, Syria and Iraq, terrorism imported from abroad, and unregulated migration resulting from domestic and regional instability in parts of Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia have led to renewed interest within the Alliance to assist in dealing with state and institutional fragility within partner nations.

In May 2016, NATO Foreign Ministers endorsed a report - PO(2016)0328 - assessing how to enhance the Alliance’s contribution to international community efforts to project stability and strengthen security outside of its territory. The document defined objectives for enhancing Alliance efforts using both crisis management and cooperative security activities, which at the time were not being as effectively synchronized between disparate offices. At the following Warsaw Summit, NATO leaders tasked the North Atlantic Council to evaluate how Alliance Projecting Stability efforts could become better organized and supported, and made more sustainable. In particular, the management of the Alliance’s partnership programme had become convoluted, as many International and Military Staff offices shared stakes in it. So did individuals and offices throughout the NATO command structure, somewhat fragmenting staff effort. Further complicating this was a lack of connectivity between crisis management and cooperative security

stakeholders, and inter-organizational liaison offices, in NATO headquarters and commands. This has led to sub-optimal coordination of Alliance activities and operations with those of other agencies.

Subsequently, an exchange of papers commencing in May 2017 between the International and Military Staffs has resulted in a Military Committee-approved “Military Concept for Projecting Stability” (MC 0655), which at the time of writing rests with the office of the Secretary General. According to the concept, Projecting Stability is defined as: “a set of proactive activities, coherently articulated and comprehensively developed, which influence and shape the strategic environment in order to make it more secure and less threatening”.

These activities can be military and non-military, and applicable at 360 degrees, in any area of strategic importance to the Alliance.

The NATO Defense College Research Division in concert with other scholars began gathering information related to Projecting Stability in late 2017, and commenced writing this *NDC Research Paper* in February 2018, while at the same time monitoring the evolution of the concept as it was being exposed in various NATO bodies. In full disclosure, the researchers started with a degree of skepticism while analyzing information related to this emerging concept. Some felt that the concept was potentially more “snake oil” than “elixir”. Proving or disproving this notion became the unspoken question guiding the gathering and analysis of information, while our stated objective was to unpack the emerging concept of Projecting Stability and to assess what its potential impact upon the Alliance might be.

A first challenge facing the Alliance with this new initiative is to come to grips with the awkward term “projecting stability” itself. It does not translate well into other languages and lacks clarity of meaning, even in English. NATO has defined “stability” as a situation where a society creates conditions that reduce the potential for conflict; but the Alliance has not adequately defined what is meant by “projecting” efforts to stabilize societies at risk. The use of such a verb form can be construed as meaning compulsion by the Alliance, when in actuality the projecting stability concept is entirely about activities done at the request and in the interests of partner nations and regional organizations, and only in support of other international community efforts. Given its previous usage and the traction that it now has in NATO, we live with the term, while acknowledging that “promoting stability” or “enhancing stability” or merely “stability” or the more traditional term

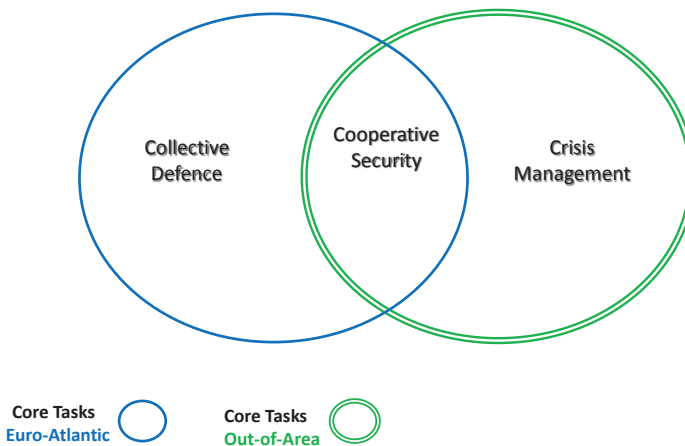
“stabilization” might have served the Alliance better in transmitting its intent.

This research project comprises six separate chapters on different aspects of the concept, from the general to the specific. Together, the chapters aim to assist the reader to understand the challenges but also the potential of the Projecting Stability concept. This research recognizes that the Alliance has had since 1949 both the need and the desire to work out-of-area, albeit for limited objectives, but has lacked an umbrella concept for all such activity. When combined with the other emerging concept of Deterrence and Defence, we realize that the Alliance is once again defining its *raison d'être* in terms of strategic effect, very much akin to the Harmel paradigm. Sustained deterrence and effective defence are the effects required by Alliance activity to match challenges from Russia and state and non-state actors who would attack NATO member states and properties. However, the most effective defence should include “shaping activities” beyond NATO’s boundaries; activities which enhance security on the peripheries, that pre-empt crisis, and that manage crisis with a view to having enhanced stability around the perimeter. Interestingly, the marriage of Deterrence and Defence on the one hand, and Projecting Stability on the other, *de facto* constitutes a new strategic concept for the Alliance.

A new *de facto* Strategic Concept?

While there is no public admission of it, the three core tasks of NATO articulated in the 2010 Strategic Concept (See Diagram 1) – collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security – have proven inadequate in dealing with a wide range of security challenges posed by state and non-state actors in NATO’s “strategic neighbourhood”.

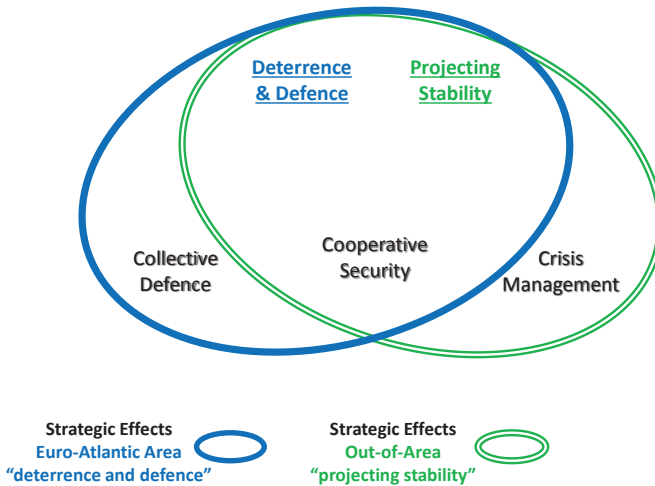
Diagram 1: Strategic Concept 2010



Threats from unconventional forces using an array of hybrid and cyber actions, terrorism and insurgency and illegal activities, when combined with more conventional and even nuclear threats by certain states, have pushed NATO thinkers to subordinate the core tasks below the strategic effects desired from them.

Collective defence is being situated within a broader conceptual framework of deterrence and defence. The lukewarm success of NATO expeditionary operations in Afghanistan and Libya, and the fear that instability is rising along Europe's peripheries have forced a reconsideration of cooperative security and crisis management activities under the new umbrella of Projecting Stability, and added the potential for Deterrence and Defence activities to also work to enhance stability (See Diagram 2).

Diagram 2: NATO's *de facto* Strategic Concept



While not desiring to formally commence rewriting its 2010 Strategic Concept, NATO is in reality redefining its conceptual operating framework to permit more relevant Alliance responses to emerging threats to North Atlantic security. At this early stage of concept formulation, Projecting Stability may appear more novel in nuance than actuality, perhaps snake oil. Yet, it is distinct in that it is more pre-emptive than reactive and more inclusive than compartmentalized. Crisis management has involved NATO action out-of-area in response to extant security threats or attacks. Cooperative security aims at enhancing partnership outside NATO boundaries to improve regional security mechanisms in more benign environments, and even to

offer membership options. Projecting Stability, in contrast, involves both of these tasks and more. It is a conceptual guide for the coordinated use of military and non-military activity and interventions in neighbouring regions. Its purpose is not solely to provide mutual benefit to partner nations, but to shape the environment in regions where the Alliance has strategic interests. It seeks to prevent or pre-empt the emergence of threats to stability and security. It guides changes to authorities granted to various principals within the NATO command structure to coordinate a broad range of activities: military dialogue to attain a degree of strategic awareness of threats to partner nations or regional stability; education, training and exercises, and defence capacity building; changes in Alliance posture, to anticipate missions; and possibly the conduct of operations.

Theoretically, Projecting Stability could be as minor as a military-to-military conference, or as major as Alliance efforts were in deploying the Implementation Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina in December 1995, involving 60,000 personnel. In principle, Projecting Stability does not exclude the employment of deterrence and defence options; anything to influence and shape the strategic environment to prevent instability developing in regions vital to Alliance security interests. It can also embrace enlargement. After all, NATO's most successful effort in projecting stability out-of-area was the absorption of former Eastern European adversary states into the Alliance as members or partners. The inclusiveness of the Projecting Stability concept, when considered as a counterweight to Deterrence and Defence, might indeed be an elixir, an essential part of NATO's new, yet undeclared, strategic concept. But this can be realized only if, as many of the contributing authors assert, the Alliance fosters collective political will and is ready to provide adequate resources and authorities to the stakeholders charged with stabilization efforts. Otherwise it might become snake oil after all.

NATO's Institutional and Political Limits to Projecting Stability

Ian Hope

NATO's current aspiration to "Project Stability" falls logically into the long and bedeviling history of Alliance attempts to determine how exactly it might influence or shape geo-political and socio-economic conditions on its periphery, and beyond. Policy makers at the Washington Preparatory Talks could not avoid discussing the requirement for something other than collective military effort to safeguard Western Europe. The resulting Washington Treaty committed the members in Article 1 to follow a specific approach in their individual foreign policies. Article 2 was crafted to guide member state diplomacy and economic policy in *all* international relations. Article 4 promoted a "habit" of consultation leading to anticipation of collective dialogue for out-of-area events and responses. NATO military action in accordance with Article 5 was constrained by the geographic limits set in Article 6, but consultation and individual members' foreign and economic policy and diplomacy alignment were not affected by this article, again opening space for consideration of out-of-area action. Indeed, since inception, while perceptions within NATO about what should be the Alliance's role out-of-area have oscillated significantly, the desire to have such a role has been consistently present.

This chapter examines the Alliance's new emphasis on the idea of "Projecting Stability" in the context of NATO's seventy-year history of debate regarding what it should do out-of-area, and reveals perpetual and strict limits to Alliance action beyond NATO's perimeter. The analysis is delivered chronologically. The first section reviews Alliance out-of-area activity from 1949 until 1965, an era defined by American reluctance to support the continuance of European colonial empires. The second section looks at the period from 1965 to 1990, when Europeans showed reluctance to engage in out-of-area endeavours on behalf of US interests.

The final section speaks generally of events since the London Declaration of 1990, highlighting the ambition for Alliance collective action beyond NATO boundaries during the Post-Cold War era, the successes of NATO efforts to project stability throughout eastern Europe and subsequent failures to deliver upon this ambition beyond Europe; failures largely due to the exact same limitations experienced by the Alliance during the Cold War.

Three themes emerge from this examination. The first is that efforts to involve NATO out-of-area always reveal overriding different national perspectives and interests that impede formulation of any unified NATO policy or strategy for what are discretionary operations and activities. The second theme is that, absent any unifying policy and strategy, NATO activity out-of-area is limited to doing just what is needed to sustain Alliance credibility. The third theme is that because the NATO Command Structure is not suited for out-of-area activity, NATO actions are subject to manipulation by coalitions or lead nations who provide the strategic framework for such activity.

The conclusion from this examination is that while formalizing NATO's out-of-area role is long overdue and will benefit from the Projecting Stability initiative, the Alliance must also acknowledge the limitations to unified action beyond NATO geographic boundaries revealed throughout its institutional history.

European aspirations of out-of-area support vs. American reluctance

Both the desire for, and the constraints to, a NATO out-of-area role were shaped by the realities of 1940s geopolitics. Europeans suffered the burdens of war debt and decolonization. The Soviets threatened the existence of western democracy in Europe, and expansion of communism throughout the world – especially into post-colonial societies. The United States wanted both security in Europe and for Europeans to disassemble their empires, while at the same time containing global communist expansion. They viewed NATO as a regional security arrangement conforming to Article 51 of the UN Charter (collective action in self-defense not needing Security Council approval). They distinguished this from any potential NATO intervention out-of-area under Chapter VII of the UN Charter – which would require Security Council approval.

American perspectives on NATO limitations out-of-area also served their

security interests. They wanted Europeans to concentrate upon their defense and were concerned that European attempts to retain colonies would dilute that effort and draw the US into conflicts related to colonial issues. The Joint Strategic Survey Staff Report of May 1948 warned that the US must "...not be committed to any military plans that might unduly influence or even jeopardize optimum overall global strategy..."¹ Their subsequent insistence on Article 6 definitions of NATO's operational geography was in part an attempt to pre-empt any larger-than-required Alliance commitments which would constrain US flexibility to respond globally to challenges.² In 1949 they put pressure on the Netherlands to divest colonies in Indonesia to anti-communist nationalists and arrested Marshall Plan funding until the Dutch complied.³ Similar pressure was put upon other European governments. American desire to keep NATO as strictly a regional alliance was further reinforced by the National Security Council's *Objectives and Programs for National Security* (NSC 68), which articulated the US policy of flexible global containment through a series of regional pacts and multiple bilateral arrangements.

Many Europeans felt that NATO might have broader utility and desired some measure of "collective assistance" for their foreign endeavours outside of Europe. The Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom (UK) were trying to manage colonies at a time of immense turmoil caused by rising nationalism, communist insurgencies, and civil unrest. There were initial aspirations that NATO could provide an institutional response and share these burdens. This was first manifest in efforts to form a Middle East Command, and then the Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO), between 1950 and 1953. London wanted NATO to help in this regional security effort, but Washington declined and the initiatives waned until replaced by the UK-led Baghdad Pact between Turkey-Iraq-Iran-Pakistan in 1955 which evolved into the ineffectual Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The US assisted with funding while NATO was omitted from the pact.

The French held similar aspirations of NATO support out-of-area, first in French Indochina and later in Africa. France succeeded in gaining approval for unilateral action in a NAC resolution of December 1952 recognizing the war in

1 "Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC) on the Position of the United States with Respect to Support for Western Union and Other Related Free Countries" (JCS 1868/6, dated 19 May 1948) in *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, part 2, reel 4, 0102.

2 "Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC) on the North Atlantic Pact" (JCS 1868/40, dated 5 January 1949) in *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, part 2, reel 5, 00234.

3 G. Treverton, "Defense beyond Europe", *Survival*, Vol.25, No. 5, 1983, pp. 222-223.

French Indochina, justified as an “essential contribution to the common security of the free world”.⁴ Members’ reluctance to assist France out of Europe frustrated President De Gaulle. The French were keeping 160,000 troops tied down in Algeria, withdrawing forces from NATO central front commitments to address the unrest.

In the wake of the Korean conflict the United States began to soften its position on NATO out-of-area actions. On 4 May 1956 Secretary of State Dulles addressed the NATO Ministerial Council emphasizing the Soviet threat to territories beyond the Treaty area.⁵ This in part subsequently shaped British and French belief that the US would remain neutral in Suez the same year, that as Alliance partners the US would prefer not to oppose them. Both nations were very surprised when Washington opposed the intervention and mobilized NATO to condemn the operation. Many European NATO allies blamed the UK and France for drawing attention and resources away from the Soviet threat, manifest at exactly the same time as crisis in Hungary and Poland. France and the UK felt betrayed;⁶ from their perspective they were doing what needed to be done out-of-area to the benefit of all, because NATO would not act. The expectations and limits of Alliance action out-of-area became a central question and NATO unity was challenged as a consequence.

At the same time, the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation – Lester B. Pearson, Gaetano Martino, and Halvard Lange (the Three Wise men), respectively Foreign Ministers of Canada, Italy and Norway – recommended broad Alliance consultation on extra-regional problems in order to avoid national interest taking the lead and forcing action that could fracture or weaken the Alliance. This frustrated the Americans, whose 30 plus non-NATO defense arrangements globally could not be held hostage to Allies’ desire for consultation.⁷

The Eisenhower administration was reluctant to align with European colonial countries, but did not oppose them too actively. That changed with President

4 Resolution of the NAC Ministerial Meeting, Paris, 15-18 December 1952.

5 “Telegram from the United States delegation at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial meeting to the Department of State” dated 5 May 1956, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, vol.4, *Western European Security and Integration*, Washington, DC, USGPO, 1986, pp. 61-62.

6 Treverton, “Defense beyond Europe”, p. 216.

7 “Report of the Committee of Three on non-military cooperation in NATO”, 13 December 1956, accessed 22 September 2018 at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17481.htm; see also “Telegram from the United States Delegation at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting to the Department of State” dated 13 December 1956, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, vol.4, *Western European Security and Integration*, Washington, DC, USGPO, 1986, pp. 132-145.

Kennedy, who wanted distance between the United States and colonial powers; first with the proposed “Stevenson Plan” in the UN in February 1961 to remove all foreign soldiers from the Congo. This prompted Belgium to use NATO allies to caution the US. Portugal did the same that Spring when the US supported a UN resolution targeting Portuguese administration of colonies,⁸ and in a NATO Ministerial Meeting in Oslo where the US criticized Portuguese policy in Angola. Portugal mobilized support within NATO, and threatened NATO/US use of Azores basing. This jeopardized forward defense planning and exacerbated what was an emerging crisis in Berlin, forcing the US to back down.

In 1960 De Gaulle called for revision of NATO’s Treaty articles. He sought to broaden the geographical limits for principal members of the Alliance to use military activity under a NATO mandate: “there must be a certain organization (from the point of view of the Alliance), with respect their political behavior, and eventually their strategic behavior outside Europe... particularly in the Middle East and Africa. Moreover, if there is not agreement among the principal participants of the Atlantic Alliance toward other countries outside Europe, how will it be possible, indefinitely, to maintain the Alliance in Europe?”⁹

American aspiration of out-of-area support vs. European Reluctance

By 1963 the Americans were coming to understand De Gaulle’s idea, forced by instability in the Third World. As the US committed more and more to Vietnam they began to request European (NATO) assistance at precisely the same time that Europeans accepted the limits of their reach and became more concerned over this new American pull. Secretary of State Dean Rusk stated his belief that Third World instability was a direct threat to both US and Western Europe and therefore constituted a common interest that should unify the Alliance in collective desire to meet the threats out-of-area, including having NATO accept defense of the Aleutian Islands.¹⁰

8 Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Survey of international affairs, 1961*, London, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 478-479.

9 Quoted in G. Whitman, “Political and military background for France’s intervention capability”, *International Affairs Bulletin*, 6, 1, 1982, p. 17.

10 “Rusk here urges close NATO ties”, *New York Times*, 3 December 1967, p. 13.

In reversal of roles the Americans criticized Europeans for not putting the Third World high enough in their hierarchy of interests just when America had finally accepted it. In December 1964 the US proposed holding regular ministerial meetings on out-of-area problems. Ironically France blocked the proposal (a reversal of their earlier global NATO idea of the 1950s).¹¹ The UK was lukewarm, declining to send a contingent to Vietnam.

The reaction was that the US increasingly drew forces away from Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s to meet requirements in Vietnam, President Johnson's and Nixon's preoccupation. They justified this using the policy of *détente*. Europeans countered using the same policy, questioning the need to contain communism out-of-area. Once again Alliance action outside of Europe was impossible for competing perspectives on *détente* and on priorities. Nixon voiced his view, stating that "our interest must shape our commitments rather than the other way around".¹² And Henry Kissinger reinforced, stating that NATO "can no longer afford to pursue national or regional self-interest without a unifying framework... with burdens equitably shared".¹³ Real crisis followed when member states showed a lack of support for US effort to help Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Kissinger felt that Europe had used a "legalistic argument" to avoid any obligations for Middle East stability: "When close allies act toward one another like clever lawyers if they exclude an area as crucial as the Middle East from their common concern, their association becomes vulnerable to fluctuating passion".¹⁴

Once again Alliance soul-searching could only produce agreement on the need to consult as envisioned in the Washington Treaty's Article 4. The June 1974 Ottawa Declaration stated that "the Allies are firmly resolved to keep each other fully informed... by all means which may be appropriate on matters relating to their common interests... bearing in mind that these interests can be affected by events in other areas of the world".¹⁵

11 G. Ball, *The discipline of power*, Boston, Little Brown, 1968, pp. 64-65.

12 Report to the Congress by President Richard Nixon, *US foreign policy for the 1970s: building for peace*, Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 28 February 1971, pp. 35-36.

13 H. Kissinger, "A new Atlantic Charter", speech to Associated Press in New York, 23 April 1973, reprinted in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, Bristol, Keesings Publications, 1973, p. 19.

14 H. Kissinger, *The White House years*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979, p. 711.

15 R. Hill, Political Consultation in NATO, *Wellesley Papers* No. 6, Toronto, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1978, pp. 131-134; see also Sir P. Hill Norton, lecture to Royal United Services Institute, London, 28 November 1974, "Military development in NATO", *Royal United Services Institute Journal* 120, No.1, 1975, pp. 18-19.

The Venice Heads of State Summit in June 1980 considered the impact of Third World conflicts on western security. But Americans and Europeans remained divided over perspectives on *détente* and what that meant with regard to countering Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and Africa, and the Iranian revolution's threat to the Gulf. Europeans saw out-of-area interventions as jeopardizing *détente*. The US saw a need for Europe to help security in the Middle East, perhaps even using the Rapid Deployment Force, or at least to granting access, overflight and transit rights to US forces heading to the Gulf, and replacing US forces in Europe (the "compensation crisis") should need arise.¹⁶ Specifically, the US wanted European nations to increase their military reserve forces, their capability to transport American troops out-of-area, and assist in maritime security operations in the Mediterranean and North Indian Ocean.¹⁷ They also wanted Europeans to use economic and political influence in the Middle East and even contribute NATO quick strike forces if required.¹⁸

American insistence and European reluctance characterized the 1980s. The Reagan administration raised expectation of allied assistance in global crises, reiterating NATO statements made in the December 1980 NATO Ministerial Conference communiqué. Relying less and less on *détente*, leaning more on the deterrence mechanism of massive retaliation, Reagan adopted a policy of counter-offensive contingency options to any Soviet intervention in the Third World. Secretary of State Alexander Haig proposed at the NATO Foreign Ministers Conference in late 1981 that NATO have firm policy against Libya, only to have Europeans favour the European Community's decision to be moderate with Libya. This reflected a growing acceptance in Europe in the 1980s that the US should not be the sole interpreter of western interests outside of Europe.

Emerging European self-confidence also reflected their growing economic wealth; something that the US Congressional Budget Office analyzed as a result of America paying for European growth since 1950 at great economic expense. There was a feeling in Washington that perhaps more could be done out-of-area. The NAC Communiqué of April 1981 stated that "a number of Allied countries possess or are to acquire the capacity to deter aggression and to respond to requests

16 H. Kissinger, *Years of upheaval*, Boston, Little Brown, 1982, p. 713.

17 C. Kupchan, "Regional security and the out-of-area problem", in S. J. Flanagan and F. O. Hampson, eds., *Securing Europe's Future*, Dover, Mass., Auburn House, 1986, p. 288.

18 S. Lunn, "Burden-sharing in NATO", *Chatham House Paper* No. 18, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1983, p. 31.

by nations for help in resisting threats to their security and independence".¹⁹ The French agreed, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing proposing a European Rapid Reaction Force, but to be deployed out-of-area on behalf of Europeans; not for US interests.²⁰

As the decade progressed a consensus grew in NATO that member nations with means to act out-of-area to deter threats on behalf of common interests of other members should do so with consultation of allies and that states should facilitate their deployments if possible. But these were viewed as national and not Alliance endeavours, precluding collaboration beyond small measures, and always hampered by differences of perspective on the nature and extent of threats. Therefore military collaboration was casual, low-level and occasional. At the same time Europeans showed greater acceptance for European economic cooperation (even collaboration) out-of-area, seeing European Political Cooperation (EPC) efforts as more logical, especially in the Middle East. In 1987 the Western European Union did manage to align UK, France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands to send policing maritime forces to the Gulf. These forces cooperated loosely and outside of both the NATO and US umbrellas.

A common policy towards collective military action out-of-area remained unachieved as states without foreign holdings opposed the idea, states with interests and ties external to Europe wanting mutually supporting action, and weaker European states calling for the use of more diplomatic processes where there was greater equality of effort. Variances in threat perception, economic and social ties to ex-colonies and trade partners, desires to retain individual state freedom of action and flexibility and good old-fashioned self-interest prevented NATO from achieving any coherent policy for out-of-area action. This was so until 1989, when NATO began to realize that the Alliance was on the cusp of a new strategic direction commensurate with, and shaped by, a thawing in Western-Soviet relations.

The post-Cold War and the genesis of NATO Stability Projection

The end of the Cold War lifted the yoke that had restricted Alliance efforts to find common perspective for out-of-area activity since 1949. But this occurred incrementally. NATO's out-of-area focus was at first limited to accommodating

19 *NATO Review* 29, No. 3, 1981, p. 27.

20 V. Giscard d'Estaing, "New opportunities and new challenges", *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1983, p. 192.

Eastern European states into a new regional security order. In 1989 President George H.W. Bush declared that NATO had acquired a “new mission” to assist in the creation of a Europe “whole and free”,²¹ a sentiment reaffirmed in both the London and Rome Summit Declarations of 1990 and 1991. The Alliance stated that it would work with other European organizations as “an agent of change” for “building a new, lasting order of peace in Europe...”²²

The most successful aspect of Projecting Stability in the 1990s came with the accumulative efforts to incorporate Eastern Europe into a new European security architecture, buffeted by a zone of partner states. However, the issues that constrained Alliance out-of-area action in the Cold War remain active as we reach the geographic limits of partnership and the open door. NATO is not completely united on the issue of enlargement, member differences regarding the entrance of Georgia and Ukraine in 2008 revealed that individual state interests still limit collective action for any initiative out-of-area. And the absence of enlargement incentive to countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region creates its own dynamic.

So too are there limits to partnership. While it continues to mutually benefit the Alliance and most partners alike, the stagnation of the Russian partnership, and division amongst Alliance members about how to proceed with Russia, demonstrates again that anything out-of-area contains an internal problematic. Russian resistance to NATO designs for enhanced partnership and enlargement in the Balkans has induced stagnation there. Decisive Alliance action to overcome this is unlikely given the varying perspectives on investment into Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. In an age of growing national sentiment amongst Alliance partners, creating consensus on further partnerships and enlargement cannot be assumed. Another factor limiting activity with partners is the fragmentation of staffing such activity between the various NATO staffs and Headquarters. It is perhaps in this domain that grouping collective action under a unifying principle of Projecting Stability may lead to positive staff restructuring.

The second cornerstone of the Projecting Stability concept is operations under the moniker of crisis management. They comprise occasional humanitarian missions, and since 1991 numerous maritime and air security monitoring missions,

21 R. R. Moore, *NATO's new mission: projecting stability in a post-Cold War world*, Westport, Praeger Security International, 2007, p. 1.

22 D. S.Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, Washington, DC, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014, p. 10.

four distinct air campaigns aimed at coercion through bombing strikes, and three large ground interventions which saw dozens of thousands of NATO troops deployed into conflict zones. In all but the most benevolent of these missions the Alliance had significant difficulties creating true consensus that could produce the troop contributions and unity of effort required to ensure decisive success. The issues which had surfaced during the Cold War to prevent any collective action out-of-area have resurfaced on each major crisis management operation to exact strict limits upon the size, duration, scope of mandate and freedom of action of national contingents. This is exacerbated by the fact that the NATO Command Structure is not suited to conduct large-scale crisis management operations out of the Euro-Atlantic area where SACEUR has little authority. Therefore the structure often only serves as a force generating mechanism, delivering contingents to support United Nations, US combatant command or other coalition operations. As a result, the track record for crisis management is mixed. This has more to do with the original structure of the Alliance being inherently restrictive to out-of-area operations than any other dominant factor.

To compensate somewhat, NATO has shifted its efforts from large troop commitments geared to stabilize conflict situations by mere presence, to more economical efforts to build partner capacity in the security sector, to train and assist partner military capability and to build or reform partner defense institutions. This is being done in tandem with financial support to partner security efforts in the form of large trust funds. While these efforts are by and large supported and resourced by Alliance members, they are by no means without controversy, nor do they invoke a guarantee of consensus. Alliance member interests in a particular partner's country or region still determine, or at least shape, what position that member takes on any defence capacity building initiative, and with 41 NATO partners there are wide margins for divergence of opinion amongst the 29 Alliance members.

The promise and reality of Projecting Stability

This paper has examined the inherent structural limitations to collective action out-of-area that are in part enshrined in Alliance organization and procedure, in part in a legacy of practice. It reveals that the Cold War Alliance could not find commonality of purpose for out-of-area endeavours because of divergent member interests for anything beyond collective defense, deterrence and dialogue *vis-à-vis* Russia. The

primacy of individual member interest did not disappear with the dissolution of the Soviet threat. But what NATO really lacked in the Cold War and Post-Cold War eras was a unifying strategic concept that might serve to contextualize collective action out-of-area. The new initiative to balance deterrence and defense with Projecting Stability will go a distance to correct this. It may make logical and more streamlined the processes NATO uses to conduct *shaping* activity out-of-area, and enhance the Alliance's ability to react with greater unity, more rapidly, and perhaps pre-emptively and decisively in pre-crisis situations.

The Projecting Stability concept will not eliminate the friction that has historically come with any discussion of out-of-area commitments. But it might be adequate to assist the Alliance to re-examine how it can best formulate effective military strategy for, and command of, theatre-level out-of-area operations. It might assist in improving the current command structure, doctrine and procedural practice, and add coherency to NATO's expanding efforts to shape socio-economic condition on its peripheries.

Two ages of NATO efforts to Project Stability – Change and Continuity

*Benedetta Berti and Ruben-Erik Diaz-Plaja**

“Projecting Stability”: context and evolution

The term “Projecting Stability” was first employed in the run up to the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit, the second meeting of heads of state and government since 2014, a year marked by the annexation of Crimea, the war in Eastern Ukraine, the fall of Mosul and the proclamation of the Caliphate by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). 2014 was a watershed year for the Alliance; it stressed how NATO had to be prepared to simultaneously face a set of conventional, hybrid and non-conventional challenges ranging from Russia’s assertiveness and destabilizing activities in Ukraine, to the wave of state fragility, conflict and rise of violent extremist organizations on the southern flank, following the 2010-2011 revolutions in the Arab world.

To adapt to this complex security environment, the Alliance adopted a so-called “360 degree” approach, focused on the need to pursue policy and posture adaptation to be able to effectively respond to *all* these challenges, including those from NATO’s southern neighbourhood. Indeed, as preparations for the 2016 Summit got underway, the complex nature of the challenges stemming from the Middle East and North Africa region became more readily apparent. These included both prolonged armed conflict and extensive humanitarian crises in countries like Syria and Yemen; as well as territorial and military consolidation of violent extremist organizations like ISIS, with both influxes of foreign fighters from Europe and increased terrorist plots in Europe by radicalized individuals. The context of violence and instability also fuelled a regional refugee crisis with direct implications for Europe. Within the European Union, this put the Schengen border

* The views expressed in this chapter are the responsibility of the authors.

regime under severe strain, and placed the refugee crisis on the electoral agenda in a number of European countries. NATO was drawn into the management of the Aegean refugee crisis when a naval observation activity was launched at German, Turkish and Greek initiative in March 2016.

It is in this context that NATO began to refer to its contributions as “Projecting Stability”. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg previewed the concept in a policy speech in Washington, DC, in April 2016, whose title explicitly linked “NATO’s future” with “Projecting Stability”. In the speech, he enumerated the challenges emanating from civil war, state collapse and terrorism, and argued for a strong response by the international community, specifying that “to protect our territory, we must be willing to project stability beyond our borders” and that “if our neighbours are more stable, we are more secure”. Projecting Stability encompassed several elements, including using force to defeat groups such as ISIS, but also “using our forces to train others to fight”, arguing that “it is more sustainable to enable local forces to protect their countries than it is to deploy large numbers of our own troops”. For these purposes, the Secretary General called for NATO to “strengthen its ability to advise and assist local forces”, step up support for Iraq in particular, and deepen its cooperation with regional partners.¹

Three months later, at the Warsaw Summit, much of this concept was taken up in Allied agreed documents. The Heads of State and Government “Warsaw Declaration on Transatlantic Security” promised that “NATO will be stronger in deterrence and defence, and do more to project stability outside its borders”, thus placing Projecting Stability on a rhetorical par with Deterrence and Defence. Later in the same document, the Allies reproduced Stoltenberg’s words verbatim, noting that “if our neighbours are more stable, we are more secure”.² In the more detailed Summit Communiqué, the Allies concluded that “we seek to contribute more to the efforts of the international community in Projecting Stability and strengthening security outside our territory, thereby contributing to Alliance security overall”, though noting that this would be “based on a broad and strengthened deterrence and defence posture”.³

1 “Projecting Stability: charting NATO’s future”, Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to the Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, 6 April 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_129758.htm, accessed on 29 September 2018.

2 NATO Heads of State and Government, “The Warsaw Declaration on Transatlantic Security”, 9 July 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133168.htm, accessed on 29 September 2018.

3 Warsaw Summit Communiqué, para. 80, 9 July 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_

The rhetorical equivalence of, on the one hand, “Defence and Deterrence”, and on the other, “Projecting Stability”, was taken up again in a policy speech made by the Secretary General in September 2016 at the Harvard Kennedy School. Taking a historical perspective, Stoltenberg argued that NATO had seen “three ages” in its history. The first, NATO’s first 45 years, was devoted to deterrence and defence; the second, after the Cold War, to “Projecting Stability”; and since 2014, a “third age”, “[w]here we must do both collective defence and manage crisis and promote stability beyond our borders. We do not have the luxury of choosing one or the other. We must do both at the same time”.

The 2018 NATO Summit confirmed this framing, with the Brussels Summit communiqué outlining further what, in NATO’s view, constitutes “Projecting Stability”:

We will continue to strengthen NATO’s role in this regard, helping partners, upon request, to build stronger defence institutions, improve good governance, enhance their resilience, provide for their own security, and more effectively contribute to the fight against terrorism. This investment in partners’ security contributes to our security. We, including with partners where appropriate, will continue to help manage challenges – before, during, and after conflict – where they affect Alliance security, in accordance with NATO policies and procedures and with consideration of political implications.⁴

In this formulation, the notion of Projecting Stability encompasses both kinetic and non-kinetic crisis management missions, as well as capacity and institution building with the purpose of enhancing the quality of governance and resilience of neighbouring states.

This definition reveals a number of important assumptions that contribute to better understand NATO’s overall strategic outlook and ambition when it comes to “stability projection”.

First, the Alliance has effectively adapted to an increasingly inter-connected world, recognizing that “[t]he geography of danger has shifted”; and that “more often than not, the challenges we face are global”. This means that: “In a globalised world... we are not immune to events elsewhere. Economically. Politically. Or militarily”.⁵ The

texts_133169.htm#outside-nato, accessed on 29 September 2018.

4 Brussels Summit Communiqué, para. 50, 11 July 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm#50, accessed 29 September, 2018.

5 Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Japan National Press Club, 31 October 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_148125.htm?selectedLocale=en, accessed on 7 October, 2018.

notion of Projecting Stability is linked to this broader understanding of security as being more often than not trans-national and requiring to look beyond the Alliance's "core" area of operations in order to fulfil the Organization's role to provide territorial defence. In this sense, "stability" of NATO's neighbours – which should be seen not only as a negative absence of conflict but also as a positive affirmation of security and protection for citizens, grounded in good governance and the rule of law – becomes a key security interest and a strategic objective for the Alliance.

Second, the concept – as formulated since 2016 – stresses the preferred means to fulfil the Projecting Stability agenda. Albeit the recommended policies are broad and diverse, they are nevertheless all underpinned by the conceptual assumption that state fragility and the absence of effective governance are key drivers of instability in the Alliance's closest neighbourhoods. Thus, the main policy prescription is to invest in capacity-building and in focusing on effective statehood as a vector of stability. This also effectively means thinking about "Projecting Stability" as an essentially cooperative effort, one where local partners are the ones with the main agency, local knowledge and responsibility; and one where NATO can assist and contribute to their broader efforts.

This approach leads to a recurring emphasis on capacity building and training work through bilateral partnerships, in Ukraine, Georgia, Jordan, Tunisia, Iraq, Afghanistan, among others; as well as on regional cooperation, for example through NATO's partnership initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa region.

A third assumption that can be derived from the evolving definition of Projecting Stability is that the Alliance's thinking is shaped by the understanding that ensuring stability and defeating terrorism are broad social, political and military efforts in which NATO can only offer one piece of the overall puzzle. As stated by Secretary General Stoltenberg in his 2018 speech at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York: "We have many different tools in the fight against terrorism and we need to use them all. . . . To bring an end to conflicts which fuel terrorism, we need political, diplomatic, and economic efforts".⁶

Thus, since 2016, NATO has developed a fairly complex conceptual construct to describe a range of activities addressed at stabilization of its neighbourhood and key regions.

6 Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, New York, 26 September 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_158298.htm?selectedLocale=en, accessed on 7 October 2018.

This said, NATO had arguably been “Projecting Stability” before 2014, in the period after the Cold War. In the next section, the chapter examines how NATO thought about “stability” in this period, and in so doing tease out similarities – and differences – between the two “ages” of Projecting Stability.

Back to the future? Projecting Stability in the post-Cold War era

As documented in other chapters of this volume, “stability projection” has a longer pedigree than might be imagined. After more than four decades of a fairly single-minded focus on defence and deterrence, the beginning of the 1990s obliged NATO to explore and implement a number of new initiatives, with the wider purpose of shaping and projecting stability in a rapidly changing world.

This broad range of measures, aimed at effectively contributing to stabilize a neighbourhood in transition and support democratic consolidation, are analogous to today’s “Projecting Stability” agenda.

Specifically, NATO’s “Projecting Stability” policies pursued through the 1990s focused on shaping the emerging European new order and structures in two major ways. First, the Alliance invested in promoting structure-wide cooperation, transparency and trust-building mechanisms: it participated in bloc-to-bloc arms control and confidence-building negotiations in the late 1980s; it established diplomatic positions around the development of a new Europe-wide security organization – the Conference and then Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE);⁷ and it shaped pan-European cooperation and dialogue formats, initially for arms control issues, such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991.

These structural and regional mechanisms would later develop – with the launch in 1994 of the Partnership for Peace – into NATO’s formalized partnerships architecture, which continued to contain a significant multilateral architectural component. A few years later, in 1997, the Allies launched a new forum, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), bringing together NATO and a number of non-NATO European states. This corresponded to a clear ambition to project

⁷ See, for instance, the detailed position set out by the Allies at the London Summit on the development of future Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) structures, NATO, 5-6 July 1990, “London Declaration on the future of a transformed Alliance”, para. 21 and 22, <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c900706a.htm>

stability by shaping a geopolitical environment; or, as the 1999 Strategic Concept put it, to “shape new patterns of cooperation and mutual understanding across the Euro-Atlantic region”.⁸

Second, these partnership mechanisms would, in some cases, eventually become preparatory instruments for joining the Alliance. This was a further variation of the Alliance’s “architectural” approach to projecting stability in this period. To understand this, one has to recall how the Alliance saw itself as a stabilizing mechanism to structure relations *among its members* (and not just with the external world). The 1991 Strategic Concept speaks of the ambition to continue to “enable the Allies to enjoy the crucial political, military and resource advantages of collective defence, and *prevent the renationalisation of defence policies without depriving the Allies of their sovereignty*” (italics added). It goes on to list a number of arrangements that the Allies consider essential to preventing this renationalization.⁹ There was thus an explicit appreciation of NATO providing a security architecture for and among its membership. In this context, it is not surprising that enlargement should have been conceived, in the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*, as a “unique opportunity to build an improved security architecture in the whole of the Euro-Atlantic Area” which would “provide increased stability and security for all”.¹⁰

In this sense, there are clear resemblances between NATO’s reflections on stability in the 1990s and the post-2016 Projecting Stability agenda. Both efforts build on the understanding of security interdependence. Indeed, NATO’s activities in the 1990s arguably grew out of a well-established preoccupation with the shape of an entire geopolitical system, and the understanding that this emerging order would directly impact on the Alliance’s own stability. On the cusp of the changes in Eastern Europe, at their 40th anniversary Summit in 1989, NATO Allies had stated their objective of moving beyond the division of Europe and shaping a “just and lasting peaceful order in Europe”.¹¹ In other words, NATO was already primed to

8 NATO, “The Alliance’s Strategic Concept”, Washington, DC, 24 April 1999.

9 *Ibid.*, para. 37. This includes “collective force planning; common operational planning; multinational formations; the stationing of forces outside home territory, where appropriate on a mutual basis; crisis management and reinforcement arrangements; procedures for consultation; common standards and procedures for equipment, training and logistics; joint and combined exercises; and infrastructure, armaments and logistics co-operation”.

10 NATO, “Study on NATO enlargement”, 3 September 1995, para. 1, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24733.htm, accessed on 30 September 2018.

11 “Declaration of the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council”, 29-30 May 1989, <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c890530a.htm>, accessed on 29 September 2018.

think about stability in structural, geopolitical terms. The Alliance was therefore well placed to use its tools to *shape* the *structural conditions* of the European state system so as to ensure greater stability. When, at the London Summit of 1990, the Allied Heads of State and Government declared that “we recognise that, in the new Europe, the security of every state is inseparably linked to the security of its neighbours”,¹² they seem to predate the language of interdependency used by their successors in Wales and Warsaw a quarter of a century later.

What is more, while the repertoire of actions taken in the 1990s were innovative (arms control, partnerships, cooperation), by combining diplomatic and military actions, they did not represent a fundamental departure from the integrated politico-military strategy that the Alliance had been pursuing since, at least, the Harmel Report in 1967. This had codified the doctrine of combining “military strength and political solidarity” and “to pursue the search for progress towards a more stable relationship in which the underlying political issues can be solved”.¹³

The notion of security interdependence with the use of political and military tools very much echoes the later debate on Projecting Stability, in spite of some differences.

First, the scope of the 1990s debate was more geographically restricted. Also, and more substantially, there was a definitive “structural” dimension to the interdependency argument as framed in the 1990s that is arguably less present in NATO’s 2014–2016 Projecting Stability approach. Similarly, the emphasis on the link between democratic consolidation and stability is far less developed in the post-2016 approach. The difference becomes clear when reading the first post-Cold War Strategic Concept, in which the Allies declared the Alliance’s “fundamental task” was to provide “the indispensable foundations for a stable security environment in Europe, based on the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in which no country would be able to intimidate or coerce any European nation or to impose hegemony through the threat or use of force”.¹⁴ Along similar lines, the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement* argued that the

12 NATO, “London Declaration on the future of a transformed Alliance”, 5–6 July 1990, para. 4, at <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c900706a.htm>, accessed on 29 September 2018.

13 “The future tasks of the Alliance”, Report of the North Atlantic Council, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_26700.htm, accessed on 29 September 2018.

14 NATO, “The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept”, 7–8 November 1991, https://www.nato.int/cps/em/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm, accessed on 29 September 2018.

“benefits of common defence and such integration are important to protecting the further democratic development of new members”.¹⁵

Drawing the lessons from the past

From the above analysis, it is possible to detect a number of ways in which NATO’s efforts to “Project Stability” in the mid to late 2010s have resembled and differed from NATO’s prior age of “Projecting Stability”.

Both eras saw NATO respond to new and unforeseen geopolitical shifts and react to the risk of destabilization in its immediate neighbourhood. In both eras, the Alliance developed a policy response based on its awareness of the interdependency between its own security and the stability of its broader neighbourhood. In doing so, the Allies crafted strategies that drew on and developed diplomatic, political and military measures, setting out a “Projecting Stability” approach that combined cooperation as well as kinetic crisis management. Both efforts also share a conceptual assumption that stability is linked to stable statehood – witness the emphasis, both in the 1990s, and 2010s, on institution and capacity building and good governance.

That said, there are also a number of important differences between the two “ages”. Both efforts share a concern with the state as a fundamental actor in international security; but while the post-2014 initiatives predominantly focus on assisting individual states, the 1990s policies were embedded in a wider concept of rebuilding, reshaping or creating an inter-state security architecture in Europe. For states that would remain outside NATO, the Alliance would focus on contributing to transparency, predictability, trust, and confidence building. For those who were to join NATO, the Alliance proffered its own system of structuring relations among states. Thus “Projecting Stability” in that period had a decidedly “architectural” dimension, whereas the post-2014 efforts would appear to be more targeted at individual situations or states at the same time. Similarly, whereas the link between the contribution to “stability projection” and democratic consolidation plays an important role in shaping policy initiatives in the 1990s, it is decidedly not a key component of the post-2016 approach to regional stability.

There are various reasons for this difference, including the need to pursue tailored partnerships and approaches to fit the widely distinct security challenges

15 *Ibid.*, para. 2.

faced by NATO's local partners, such as Ukraine, Tunisia, Iraq, or Jordan. What is more, whilst the "structural/balance of power-driven" focus of the 1990s is largely rooted in the statecraft of the Cold War, the focus of the post-2016 debate has been more on how to address the problem of so-called fragile states. Arguably, the post-2014 vision of Projecting Stability is influenced by the legacy of this framework of analysis, which sees ungoverned spaces or weak states as a primary security problem.

Thus, in taking forward "Projecting Stability", it might be relevant to consider NATO's 1990s efforts in the same domain, and to reflect more broadly on some of the yet unresolved questions behind this agenda; including the relationship between local and regional security and security architecture on the one hand, and between security-driven policies and good governance, rule of law and democracy on the other hand.

Projecting Stability in a New Cold War: a NATO Mission?

Jeffrey A. Larsen

In 2014 NATO found itself surprised by the sudden emergence of a renewed threat from Russia on its Eastern flank, threatening the sovereignty and security of the member states and their home territories. As a result, the Alliance was forced to turn its attention back to Europe and its core missions of collective defense and deterrence. This signaled the reverse of a 20-year period in which the general assumption was that since Europe was free from traditional military threats, the member states were therefore free to pursue larger ambitions on a global scale.

The end of the Cold War had removed the military threat from the USSR, but also contributed to the emergence of crises in the Balkans periphery of the Alliance, which led to the first wave of NATO out-of-area operations. The perspective that Europe no longer faced an existential threat was clearly formalized in the 2010 Strategic Concept, which emphasized three pillars for NATO strategy: collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. While each was nominally equal in importance, in reality the Alliance and its member states had for nearly a generation pursued the latter two pillars at the expense of the former.

One would have expected a retrenchment as a result of the events in Crimea and Ukraine of 2014, given that during that interregnum nearly all NATO's national military forces had become much smaller and less prepared for the mission of collective defense in Europe. But there was considerable push-back against having to re-arm. The refrain of "no-return to the Cold War" was heard regularly in NATO circles for nearly two years, until the Warsaw Summit declaration in July 2016 made the requirement to focus on collective defense once again the primary responsibility for the Alliance. Still, some today argue for a new emphasis on out-of-area issues by Projecting Stability, especially to counter threats emanating from the South,

reflecting the previous mindset of preferring such post-Cold War missions rather than those with a more traditional military emphasis. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg highlighted the value of Projecting Stability in a speech in Washington in 2016, where he claimed that “if our neighbors are more stable, we are more secure”.¹

Others contend that NATO has been Projecting Stability outside its borders for a long time – in fact, since the first days of the post-Cold War era – and thus the concept is hardly new. Indeed, a 2007 book with the intriguing title “NATO’s New Mission: Projecting Stability in a Post-Cold War World”² referred to the Alliance’s decisions to go out-of-area in spreading stability around the world, in hopes that by so doing it would reduce conflict, improve the living standards of the recipients of such stability, and thereby increase Europe’s and NATO’s own security by damping down dangerous tendencies along its periphery.

However, examination of NATO’s strategic concepts after the end of the Cold War reveals that none made explicit reference to Projecting Stability. In the 2010 Strategic Concept, the substantive idea of securing Alliance territory by stabilizing the environment in the periphery was visible in the fact that the classical core task of collective defense was complemented by an emphasis on crisis management and cooperative security; however, Projecting Stability *per se* was not mentioned.³

Therefore the topic was really first labelled in the 2016 Warsaw Summit Declaration, which immediately elevated the concept of “Projecting Stability” as one of the most important missions for the Alliance, on a par with collective defense and deterrence, to ensure the sovereignty of member states in Europe.

But is this so-called “new” concept really new? As discussed in the second chapter of this volume the idea of member states acting in alignment out-of-area goes as far back as Article 2 of the founding Treaty. Yet even though the idea of Projecting Stability is two decades old, it still lacks focused political reflection on what it means, and furthermore speaks more about ways and means than about

1 Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Atlantic Council, 6 April 2016, <https://www.w-c-span.org/video/?407763-1/nato-secretary-jens-stoltenberg-remarks>. See also speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Graduate Institute, Geneva, 2 March 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/opinions_141898.htm

2 R. Moore, *NATO’s new mission: Projecting Stability in a post-Cold War world*, London, Praeger Press, 1997.

3 “NATO 2010, active engagement, modern defense”, https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/official_texts_68580.htm

ends. What is the purpose of Projecting Stability? Are there historical precedents for this approach? And are such missions the best fit for a political-military alliance, or would they not be better served by other organizations, such as the European Union, the United Nations, or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)?

Projecting Stability to the East: policy and operations

The genesis of Projecting Stability began immediately upon the end of the Cold War. In the early post-Cold War years of the 1990s, a belief arose that even though Europe was now peaceful, facing no imminent threats, it could not be truly secure if instability reigned along its periphery.

At NATO's London Summit in July 1990, the Alliance members made a pledge to construct a new security environment in Europe. They declared that the Soviet Union was no longer an enemy. These efforts may have been, in part, a way for NATO to counter some of the initiatives of Mikhail Gorbachev, who was seeking to win the global public relations game with his policies of openness and economic freedom. It was also a way to maintain Alliance cohesion in an uncertain time, by providing a new mission for the Alliance. The narrative also provided a new home for the nations of the former Warsaw Pact by telling them that they were all part of the greater Europe. For all of this to work, however, the Alliance would have to project stability and democracy to its former enemies in the East. As Vaclav Havel put it, "If the West does not stabilize the East, the East will destabilize the West".⁴

Many of NATO's member states felt that instead of fading away with the end of the Cold War, the Alliance should now take on a new role: helping erase the divisions of the Cold War, and creating a Europe that was whole, free, and at peace. This new world order would be based on NATO's core values and shared beliefs: democracy, personal freedom, the rule of law, and a just international order. As an American publication opined, it was "time to transform NATO from an alliance based on collective defense against a specific threat into an alliance committed to projecting democracy, stability, and crisis management in a broader strategic sense".⁵

4 V. Havel, "NATO's quality of life", *The New York Times*, 13 May 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/13/opinion/nato-s-quality-of-life.html>

5 R. Asmus, R. Kugler, and F. Stephan Larrabee, "Building a new NATO", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1993, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/southeastern-europe/1993-09-01/building-new-nato>

The idea of Projecting Stability was born from this context, based on the idea that, as US Senator Richard Lugar put it in 1993, NATO had to go “out of area or out of business”.⁶ The new initiatives towards NATO’s eastern neighborhood were concrete efforts to project stability.⁷ As the US permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council put it in 1995, NATO enlargement is “part of a strategy for Projecting Stability into Central Europe”.⁸ The aim was to fundamentally transform the security environment in Central Europe.

At the Rome Summit in 1991, the Alliance had declared that it would pursue dialogue and cooperation as well as security. This statement reflected the Harmel Report from a quarter century earlier. As tangible results of this decision, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council was created (later renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council). In 1994 the Alliance created the Partnership for Peace, which grew to include 21 member states, including all the independent republics that came out of the former USSR, and all the neutral states of Europe. In 1997 the Alliance signed the NATO-Russian Founding Act which put relations between the two on a more equitable footing.

In addition to policy statements, and the development of new partnership opportunities, the allies also conducted a series of out-of-area operations to the East. At the time these generated considerable debate on both sides of the Atlantic, as experts and politicians considered the future role of the Alliance, whether it should be conducting operations outside its traditional area, whether it should be conducting offensive military operations at all or remain a defensive alliance, whether an Alliance decision obligated all members to comply, and so on. But in the end these existential considerations did not prevent the Alliance from taking action when it saw a pressing need to do so. Some of its actions included:

- *Allied Goodwill I and II*, humanitarian aid and medical expertise provided to Russia and former Soviet states, 1992
- Operations *Maritime Monitor*, *Sky Monitor*, *Maritime Guard*, support to UN arms embargo in the Adriatic and no-fly-zones, 1992-93
- Operation *Sharp Guard*, support to UN embargos, 1993-96

6 R. Lugar quoted in S. Rosenfeld, “NATO’s last chance”, *Washington Post*, 2 July 1993.

7 R. Hunter, “Enlargement: Part of a Strategy for Projecting Stability into Central Europe”, *NATO Review*, 43(3), 1995, pp. 3-8; also D. Yost, “The New NATO and collective security”, *Survival* 40 (2), 1998, pp. 135-60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.1998.10107846>

8 *Ibid.*

- Operation *Deny Flight*, support to no-fly-zone in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1993-95
- Operation *Deliberate Force*, air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs, 1995
- *Implementation Force* (IFOR), stabilization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1995-96
- *Stabilization Force* (SFOR), stabilization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1996-2004
- Operation *Allied Force*, air campaign over the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1999
- *Kosovo Force* (KFOR), stabilization in Kosovo, 1999-present
- Operations *Essential Harvest*, *Amber Fox*, and *Allied Harmony*, stabilization in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM),⁹ 2001-03
- NATO Headquarters in Skopje, FYROM, 2002-present

Each of these missions included operational air, sea, and land military forces of multiple NATO member states, which greatly extended the Alliance's view of itself, its purpose in the new world order, and its ability to conduct relatively small-scale military operations in the pursuit of stability in Europe and in its immediate neighborhood.

NATO has also sent humanitarian missions to support areas hit by natural disasters, such as after Hurricane Katrina in the United States (2005) and a major earthquake in Pakistan (2009). And they have provided additional security for major events, such as the Olympics in Athens in 2004 (Operation *Distinguished Games*).

Projecting Stability to the East: partnerships and enlargement

Concurrent with NATO's first operations designed to project stability into the Balkans, the Alliance commenced the first of a series of partnership initiatives – Partnership for Peace (PfP). This initiative effectively brought most of the former Soviet Bloc nations under the influence of NATO, assisting in making the militaries of these nations remain under civilian control and enhancing their inter-operability with the Alliance. This, and subsequent partnership programs – Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, Partners around the Globe, as well as close relations with the EU, the UN, and the OSCE – were created as a way of enhancing cooperative security beyond Western Europe, and each has served the Alliance in many ways. While achieving the effect of promoting domestic stability, the 41

⁹ Turkey recognizes the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

official partner nations have also served as force multipliers in NATO operations.¹⁰ In fact, partners have been critical to the success of some missions. For example, at one point there were 51 nations represented in the International Security Assistance Force – Afghanistan (ISAF), including all 28 NATO members and 23 others. Each nation provided expertise, military forces, funding, or other contributions to the effort to stabilize Afghanistan and coordinate military operations there.

The Alliance has created several Enhanced Partnership Interoperability Programs with those countries that primarily train, exercise, and deploy with NATO. In addition, at the 2014 Wales Summit NATO announced a Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative with Georgia, Moldova, and Jordan.¹¹ The hope, not yet proven, is that partnership with NATO and its democratic member states will rub off on the partners, and thereby advance the Western orientation and values of those states. In addition, NATO members may contribute to NATO monetary trust funds dedicated to projects in the areas of demilitarization, defence, and growing partner capacity for PfP members. NATO efforts in Ukraine are an example.

The ultimate step in Projecting Stability, beyond partnering with NATO, and perhaps the best way to confirm the success of that effort, is when a partner nation is invited to join NATO as a full member. This was the logic of the argument behind the enlargement debates of the 1990s. There were particularly rancorous debates that questioned the original *raison d'être* for the Alliance and its purpose in a post-Cold War world. Further, enlargement antagonized Russia. While it was too weak to do much about it in the 1990s and early 2000s, the results of that frustration are found in Russian behavior in Georgia, Ukraine, and elsewhere since 2008. Indeed, President Putin made this linkage quite clear, as when he was quoted in 2014 saying that “When the infrastructure of a military bloc is moving toward our borders, it causes us some concerns and questions. We need to take some steps in response”.¹²

The original thinking behind enlargement was founded on liberal principles. It was believed that enlargement would be a beneficial contribution to the democratization

10 NATO's 41 partners still include Russia, which is currently not a partner in good standing. NATO has had no practical cooperation with Russia since April 2014.

11 Wales Summit Declaration, Heads of State and Government, 5 September 2014, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

12 See “Putin: NATO enlargement pushed Russia to annex Crimea”, *Huffington Post*, 17 June 2014, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/17/putin-nato_n_5165232.html

and hence pacification of Eastern Europe. New members were required to abide by the norms espoused by NATO. This concept had a political purpose as much as military expediency. The lure of membership would create a positive link between the development of a state's foreign and defense policies and its prospects for membership. The Membership Action Plan (MAP) became the roadmap for states wishing to become members, but it also served as a tool for outreach and a way of projecting the values of the Alliance. As such, NATO's renewed commitment to its Open Door policy for all European states, in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, in itself contributed to Projecting Stability.

Three states – Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary – were invited to join NATO at the Madrid Summit of 1997, and became members at NATO's 50th anniversary summit in Washington in 1999. The Prague Summit of 2002 added seven more members: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria. In 2009 Croatia and Albania were invited to join, and in 2017 Montenegro became the most recent member. The 2018 Brussels Summit invited “Northern Macedonia” to begin accession talks, assuming the issue of its name is resolved. There remain several aspiring member states, primarily in the Balkans and further east. Further enlargement may, however, run into more strident Russian objections.

The success of Projecting Stability to the East can be explained in part by the fact that European partner states were motivated by the possibility of eventual NATO membership. In contrast, the MD and ICI partnership programs are hamstrung to some extent since they do not carry the same incentivizing aspects of future membership, thus making cooperation with NATO more pragmatic and primarily seen in military-to-military programs.

Projecting Stability South: partnership, missions, and humanitarian operations

The notion of Projecting Stability has undergone a renaissance of sorts since the 2016 Warsaw Summit – this time with an emphasis on the South. In the early 2000s there were calls for NATO to do for the Middle East what it had done for Eastern Europe: help create the conditions for regional stability.¹³ This turned out to be another new mission on which the Allies could agree. And it was also seen as a way to restore Alliance cohesion and cooperation after several incidents in the 1990s

13 See R. E. Díaz-Plaja, “Projecting Stability: an agenda for action”, *NATO Review*, March 2018.

that had hurt both. The latter included the failure to respond to Turkey's request for defense against Iraq, and the coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003 that caused considerable damage to internal Alliance relations.

In 1994, as a result of hopeful signs in the Middle East peace process and the seeming success of the Oslo Accords, the Alliance adopted the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) as a partnership organization for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The idea was to create a new regional security infrastructure based on dialogue between some of the main actors in the Mideast peace process. The MD created a loose network of moderate states who have benefitted from closer ties to NATO, including training and defense capability enhancement.¹⁴

In 2004 the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) attempted to create a similar network of like-minded small states in the Persian Gulf. However, there are only four members of the ICI, and there has never been much in the way of multilateral activity among them.¹⁵ The purpose of both the MD and ICI was to embrace a less Euro-centric vision of the world, and to build bridges to the South and to Central Asia.

The Alliance also began a series of interventions and missions in the MENA and Southwest Asia regions. The largest and longest-lasting of these was ISAF in Afghanistan. The operation ran from 2003 to 2014 in conjunction with the US-led Operation *Enduring Freedom* deployed in Afghanistan after 9/11 and mandated to fight Al Qaeda, the Taliban and later, the Islamic State (ISIS).

The ISAF mission saw a repeat of NATO's concept of Projecting Stability in the Balkans, less focused on political matters and peacekeeping to one prepared for robust military action. In 2015 ISAF was replaced with a purely training mission called Operation *Resolute Support*.

In Iraq the Alliance had a NATO Training Mission from 2004-11, and provided AWACs in direct support of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/Daesh in 2016, becoming a full member of the coalition in 2017. At the Brussels Summit in July 2018, the Allies created a new training mission (NATO Mission Iraq, NMI), mandated to provide technical advice to Iraqi defence and security forces.

In the Mediterranean region the allies first undertook Operation *Agile Genie*, the AWACS reconnaissance mission to counter Libyan military activities in 1992. From

14 MD members: Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, and Israel.

15 ICI members: Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE.

2001-16 it carried out an Article 5 maritime operation – Operation *Active Endeavour* – as a counterterrorism measure. This was taken over in 2016 by Operation *Sea Guardian* that conducts maritime security capacity building, support to maritime situational awareness and maritime counter-terrorism.

In Africa NATO has been particularly busy in the past decade. In 2008 it conducted Operation *Allied Provider*, a counterpiracy mission off the coast of Somalia, which transitioned to a similar mission in the Indian Ocean in 2009 (Operation *Allied Protector*), and then Operation *Ocean Shield* until 2016. NATO also supported the African Union mission in Sudan with airlift support from 2005-07, and a similar mission in Somalia from 2007 to present.

More strategically, and more controversially, NATO undertook Operation *Unified Protector* over Libya in 2011 to provide, first, no-fly zones, which then morphed into a series of air strikes against the Ghaddafi regime and its military forces.

Finally, in 2017 the Alliance agreed to create a Strategic Direction South – Hub for regional awareness based within Joint Force Command Naples. While NATO has now formalized a structure with a view to the South, the effectiveness to date of Alliance activities to project stability is, at best, limited.

Should NATO be doing this?

In an international alliance that has grown to 29 nations, achieving consensus is challenging, especially on matters of grave import, such as the concept of Projecting Stability. As a result, one hears counter arguments to the official line that NATO can pursue both defense and dialogue with equal vigor; or that the two goals of European security and Projecting Stability are manageable, affordable, and desirable by this Alliance of nearly one billion people.

For one thing, the ability to project stability outside NATO's borders must be based on an initial assumption of a Kantian peace in Europe. If the Alliance has to worry about its own borders and the security of its populations, how can it continue to pursue out-of-area operations and other activities to project stability abroad? This question has been reinforced by the perceived end of the peaceful period with renewed Russian aggression starting in 2014.¹⁶ Yet this has not prevented the Alliance

¹⁶ Or perhaps even earlier, such as the 2007 Putin speech to the Munich Security Conference, or the Russian incursions into Abkhazia and South Ossetia, both in Georgia, in 2008.

from committing to Projecting Stability, as is seen in recent summit communiqués and in all current documents, speeches, and meetings. The arguments for this new initiative are both practical and political, and may reflect Alliance coherence as much as it does the value-added from actual cooperation with states in the region. Some members of the Alliance may believe that with the strong response to Russian challenges in Northeastern Europe – including the Enhanced Forward Presence (forward deployed multinational forces in the Baltic region), increased air policing, the creation of new command structures for reinforcements and for the North Atlantic, the enhanced NATO Response Force, and so on – the problem with the Eastern frontier is “fixed”. With that done or at least addressed, goes the thinking, the Alliance can now turn its attention to the South, and Projecting Stability seems to be the way to try and deal with the serious problems arising in the MENA region.

But how can NATO do it all? The Alliance is once again expected to provide significant conventional defense and conventional and nuclear deterrence forces in Europe; to perform cooperative security and collective defense missions; and now to project stability to the South. There is little appetite within allied nations for increased defense spending, increased force sizes, or new forays of operational missions in faraway places. The long war in Afghanistan took its toll on popular support for such military operations. At the same time, much of Europe’s military force structure and capabilities, as well as America’s role in European security, were on a steady decline from 1991 to 2014. The political leadership and the populace both liked the new world, where they did not have to worry about sudden conflict breaking out in their region. Hence the common phrase, heard even within the hallways of NATO in 2014 and 2015, that “we don’t want to return to the Cold War”. A reasonable desire, but the Alliance also has to respond to the ones who *do* want to return to a cold war, or perhaps even a hot conflict.

This philosophical difference between knowing the Alliance needs to provide necessary forces to stand up to an adversary, and wishing that it were not the case, has created divisions within the Alliance itself. There is a divide between those who believe the existential threat facing the West comes from a recidivist, nuclear-armed Russia, and those who believe that the more serious and proximate threats are those coming from the South, including terrorism, unchecked migration, and general instability, with potential catastrophic socio-economic consequences to the Mediterranean basin. Without the resources or will to deal with both, it is disingenuous to proclaim that both are equally important.

There are also divisions within the Alliance over the scope and nature of its post-Cold War activities. All nations agreed to maintain NATO after the Iron Curtain fell. And the allure of the Alliance remains strong, as shown by the continuing interest in membership or partnership status by many other countries. But is the Alliance overextended? Is it risking its internal integrity if it partners with nations that do not share its Western values? What are NATO's real vital interests? Is stability provision one of them? These are questions that have not yet been fully addressed by the member states and that shape the current debate.

Finally, is NATO the best organization for handling such out-of-area missions? Even if the answer is positive, does that mean it has some sort of moral obligation to do so? Why can't the larger organizations like the United Nations, the OSCE or the European Union be responsible for Projecting Stability? If Alliance members feel that it is the right organization to tackle Projecting Stability, it still begs the question of the purpose. NATO is a regional security organization created to ensure the security of its member states in Europe and North America. If Europe is "whole, free, and at peace", isn't that enough? Has not NATO met its Treaty obligations?

Grandiose vision?

The Alliance, and by extension its national members, wants to do it all.

The 2016 Warsaw Summit declaration amplified this point: "NATO must retain its ability to respond to crises beyond its borders, and remains actively engaged in Projecting Stability and enhancing international security through working with partners and other international organizations".¹⁷ The questions still unanswered for the Alliance remain, however. How "global" should NATO become? Should it retain its original core functions as a regional organization created for collective defense of its homelands? Or focus more on out-of-area missions that fall under the headings of crisis management or Projecting Stability? Can it do it all? Should it continue to try? To do all these missions, NATO will need a better understanding of the concept of Projecting Stability to the South, including a policy and strategy that articulate clearly its ultimate goals, as well as adequate funding and the political support of member states. It had each of those for its earlier efforts to project stability to the East. But until it has equally robust support for its new mission

¹⁷ Warsaw Summit Declaration, 7 July 2016.

to the South, the Alliance will continue to provide grandiose visions without the wherewithal to turn them into reality.

Putting the Horse Back Before the Cart: NATO's Projecting Stability in the South

Kevin Koehler

As stated before in this volume, the phrase “Projecting Stability” is not a new entry in the Alliance’s catch-phrase dictionary. However, post-Cold War NATO’s Strategic Concepts never made explicit reference to Projecting Stability. The current document, published in 2010, contains the substantive idea – securing Alliance territory by stabilizing the security environment in the periphery – in that the classical core task of collective defense is complemented by an emphasis on crisis management and cooperative security.¹ However, Projecting Stability thus far has not made it to the level of policy or indeed a formal new Strategic Concept. In brief, even though the idea is more than two decades old, strategic reflection as to what exactly “stability” means and how it can be “projected” is still lacking.

In lieu of such strategic reflection, NATO has developed a “military concept” for Projecting Stability which has been approved by the Military Committee (MC) and, at the time of writing, awaits endorsement by the North Atlantic Council (NAC). While the latest draft of this document remains classified, previous versions suggest a “means-focused” approach to Projecting Stability with little connectivity to a strategic end-state.

Making sense of existing activities

The emergence of the Projecting Stability concept is tied to the transformation of the Alliance after the end of the Cold War. Stability projection does not address direct threats to Alliance territory by state adversaries, but rather focuses on indirect threats emerging from political turmoil just outside of NATO’s boundaries. It is

¹ “Active engagement, modern defense”, NATO New Strategic Concept, 2010.

thus based on the assumption that “NATO territory cannot be secure if instability reins along NATO’s periphery”.² As such, Projecting Stability attempts to combine elements of all three of NATO’s core tasks as defined in the 2010 Strategic Concept – collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. It is a cross-cutting effort differentiated by the nature of the challenge, not by the type of response.

Secondly, the renaissance of Projecting Stability after the Warsaw Summit has a political dimension as well, and therefore serves to enhance Alliance cohesion. With its focus on non-traditional threats emerging from instability on NATO’s periphery, the concept of Projecting Stability helps balance different threat perceptions among Allies in the current European security environment. This is particularly the case among those Allies focusing on a resurgent Russia to the east and NATO members whose main concern is political instability on the southern shore of the Mediterranean and further afield in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).³

Renewed emphasis on Projecting Stability notwithstanding, the concept has thus far not been translated into a coherent policy. On the military side, by contrast, the Military Committee has approved a document (MC 0655) that provides working definitions of central concepts meant to guide the development of concrete activities. In the absence of a coherent policy for NATO’s Strategic Direction South (NSD-S), however, such activities amount to little more than an attempt to address strategic problems by tactical means.

Alliance activities under the revived Projecting Stability concept have therefore been rather haphazard. The most significant of these activities has been the establishment of the NATO Strategic Direction South Hub (NSD-S Hub) at Joint Force Command Naples (JFCNP). The Hub is supposed to serve as a one-stop shop for Alliance activities in the south. As a strategic-level (rather than operational) structure, the Hub focuses on increasing situational awareness, coordinating Alliance activities, and strengthening cooperation with other relevant actors, including existing regional Partners and other international organizations – in particular the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU). The Hub was inaugurated in September 2017 and NATO Heads of State and Government declared its full

² R. R. Moore, *NATO’s new mission: Projecting Stability in a post-Cold War world*, Westport, Conn., Praeger Security International, 2007, p. 4.

³ V. Caitlin, “A false dichotomy: the choice between protecting NATO’s Eastern and Southern flanks”, NATO Association of Canada, 17 November 2015.

capability at the Brussels Summit in July 2018.

In the region itself, the establishment of the NATO Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Center in Kuwait⁴ is seen as a practical step in the process of strengthening partnerships in the Gulf. The Center commenced activities in September 2017 with a “NATO week” focused on cooperation between the Alliance and ICI countries in a range of different domains from cyber defense to crisis management and civil preparedness. Moreover, NATO Heads of State and Government agreed to start planning for a new NATO Mission in Iraq at the 2016 Warsaw Summit to complement the ongoing out-of-country training effort in Jordan. This led first to the deployment of a core team to Baghdad in January 2017 and then to the formal establishment in February 2018 of a new training mission in the country at the request of the Iraqi government and the Global Coalition to Defeat the Islamic State (ISIS)/Daesh.⁵

In addition to these highly visible activities, NATO offers a total of about 1,400 separate activities to all its partners through the Partnership Cooperation Menu (PCM). These activities range from specialized training to educational activities and, as a rule, are demand-driven. The Alliance’s southern partners in the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) are active participants in these activities, despite the temporary blockage of the PCM in 2017. Moreover, NATO has individual cooperation programs in various formats with a range of countries in the region, including Individual Partnership Cooperation Programs (IPCPs) with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia.⁶ All four ICI Partners, i.e. Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE, have signed security agreements with NATO as a first step towards increased cooperation.⁷

From a strategic perspective, however, NATO’s approach to Projecting Stability has so far been mainly about re-labeling what the Alliance was already doing in the south. There is still no systematic framework to guide these activities, to determine priorities, and to incentivize coordination among Allies and cooperation from Partners.

4 K. Koehler, “Projecting Stability in practice? NATO’s new training mission in Iraq”, *NDC Policy Brief* No. 2, October 2018.

5 “Relations with Iraq”, https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/topics_88247.htm#

6 “NATO Mediterranean Dialogue”, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_60021.htm

7 “Qatar signs security agreement with NATO”, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_150794.htm?selectedLocale=en

The “Projecting Stability” ambition

As has been mentioned above, the military side of the Alliance is ahead of its political leaders in attempts to define words and terms regarding the concept of Projecting Stability. The current “military concept” (MC0655) provides this working definition of stability:

A situation where capable, credible, legitimate and well-functioning institutions and a resilient state/society create the conditions in which the risk for outbreak, escalation, recurrence of conflict is reduced to acceptable levels, leading to a more secure and less threatening environment.

Then the proposed definition of Projecting Stability is:

a range of military and non-military activities that influence and shape the strategic environment in order to make neighbouring regions more stable and secure in support of both NATO’s strategic interests and those of its neighbours.

Two observations follow from these definitional efforts. First, they appropriately refrain from specifying a concrete political end-state. This does not mean activity for activity’s sake. In fact, MC 0655/3 clearly states that Projecting Stability “includes both political and military efforts, recognising that all efforts should serve a clear political aim”. Given NATO’s character as a political-military alliance, this political guidance needs to come from the political level.

Second, the definition of stability is rather ambitious, including as it does “capable, credible, legitimate and well-functioning institutions” as well as a “resilient state/society”. These formulations not only imply activities far beyond NATO’s comfort zone, but also suggest that the Alliance takes an active interest in the domestic political configurations of Partners. While this does not necessarily suggest that the Alliance is in the business of democratization, it does imply that “local political institutions... need to be sufficiently resilient and representative of local societies as to avoid and resist further crises in the near future”.⁸

Taken together, these definitions highlight two distinct problems which need to be addressed at the political level. There is first a coordination problem amongst Allies as well as between NATO and other international organizations active in the region – most notably the EU. If Projecting Stability is about supporting NATO’s strategic interests, this must structure not only the activities of the Alliance itself,

⁸ S. Costalli, “What is ‘Stability’ and how to achieve it: the research-policy nexus”, in Sonia Lucarelli *et al.* (eds), *Projecting Stability in an Unstable World*, ACT, University of Bologna, IAI, 2017, p. 25.

but also those of individual allies and Alliance cooperation with other organizations. Second, a principal-agent problem besets NATO partnership activities in the framework of cooperative security. NATO as the provider of training and educational activities to partner armed forces has little control over whether such activities actually contribute to building “capable, credible, legitimate and well-functioning institutions” in the security sector. As in the context of Security Force Assistance (SFA) more generally (see Chapter 6), the effectiveness of such activities crucially depends on the political will of the recipient. To address both problems, the Alliance can do little more than to try and set the incentives right: incentives for both allies and partner organizations to converge on a number of strategic fundamentals when it comes to their approach to the south; and incentives for partners to comply with the strategic objectives of the Alliance. Whether this can produce any effect in the long run remains an open debate.

The regional picture

To the extent that the Projecting Stability agenda applied to the south is seen in parallel to earlier or concurrent efforts in the East, then a number of core differences in the regional and global context which might impact its effectiveness are to be identified.

First, even though the Alliance maintains its “open door policy”, there is no prospect for membership when it comes to NATO partners in the South. While criticized at the time and controversial due to its effects on NATO-Russia relations, NATO’s eastward enlargement must be considered successful from a technical point of view: with the fifth wave of enlargement in 2004, NATO had integrated ten new member states from Central and Eastern Europe – necessitating massive transformations in their security sectors as well as regional security arrangements. This transformed the security environment in the region and had significant effects on domestic security sectors as well. In the absence of a membership perspective – and the attendant prospect of being allowed under the security umbrella of the Washington Treaty’s Article 5 – a similar dynamic is unlikely to unfold in the MENA region. In other words, incentives for Southern partners to adapt their policies and open up their security sectors are limited when compared to candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

Second, NATO is not necessarily well-perceived in the Southern neighborhood.

Even though systematic public opinion data are lacking, public attitudes toward NATO in most MENA countries are expected to range from ignorance to opposition. Even among security professionals and military officers, NATO is seen with some skepticism and Alliance intentions in the South are generally perceived as unclear.⁹ The Libya intervention – and its aftermath – largely account for negative perceptions about NATO in the MENA region. NATO thus starts from a difficult position in the South, underlining the importance of outreach and confidence building activities.

Third, NATO enlargement to the East occurred in parallel with EU enlargement there and the causal effects of these two processes are not easy to disentangle. It must be stressed, however, that similar incentives for and pressures towards larger political reforms do not exist in the MENA region. Quite to the contrary, major western powers engaged in the MENA region have traditionally accepted authoritarian regimes with dubious security practices. For example, Egypt – one of the largest recipients of western military aid in the MENA – has some way to go to meet the standards of security sector governance encouraged by NATO, even though the country has long cooperated with western powers on a bilateral level and with NATO as part of the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD).¹⁰

Lastly, western attempts to project stability (or influence) to the MENA do not occur in a vacuum. Russia's September 2015 intervention in the Syrian crisis has proven that Russia is, and will remain, a crucial player in the Middle East. This not only has the potential of importing part of the re-emerging East-West tensions into the MENA, but also means that the West and NATO are not the only players in town.

From the perspective of regional countries, cooperating with Russia might thus appear more attractive given that Russian support does not come with strings attached regarding domestic political processes.

In this broad and rather pessimistic context, what can NATO hope to achieve with regards to shaping the regional security environment?

⁹ Based on the author's regular interaction with officers and officials from the MENA in the framework of the 10-week NATO Regional Cooperation Course held twice a year at the NATO Defense College in Rome.

¹⁰ A. El-Adawy, "Challenges and potential for NATO-Egypt partnership", *NDC Policy Brief* No. 3, November 2018.

Regional Security

In terms of regional (security) integration, the MENA lags far behind other regions.¹¹ The League of Arab States (LAS), to begin with, does not have a security component and is largely ineffective as a political organization; similarly, while the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) had shown some signs of increasing cooperation in military and security matters,¹² the current crisis between Qatar on the one hand and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other has largely blocked what progress had been achieved beforehand. In brief, the MENA region remains one of the least integrated regions of the world – economically, politically, and in security terms (see Chapter 8).

This general picture is punctuated by sub-regional security cooperation, largely based on necessity. One example is the G5 Sahel (G5S) formed by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger and supported by the EU. Founded in 2014, the G5S has set up a joint military force (FC-G5S) in an effort to contribute more efficiently to security provision in the region. Another example is the GCC with its Peninsula Shield Force and steps towards the establishment of a joint command and missile defense coordination – largely driven by increased demands on Gulf militaries in the context of their countries’ more assertive posture since 2011.¹³ In addition, the recent initiative of bringing together the six GCC member states as well as Egypt and Jordan in the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) – sometimes referred to as the “Arab NATO” – could potentially bolster security integration in the region.¹⁴

NATO’s partnership formats, the MD and the ICI, have not played a role in these developments. Cooperation between NATO and the G5S, for example, has so far been limited to the participation of G5S representatives in the fifth Mediterranean Dialogue Policy Advisory Group Meeting in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in October 2017.¹⁵ Moreover, while four of the six GCC countries are members of NATO’s

11 P. Arts, “The Middle East: a region without regionalism or the end of exceptionalism?”, *Third World Quarterly* 20, no. 5, October 1999, pp. 911-25.

12 J. L. Samaan, *Toward a NATO of the Gulf? The challenges of collective defense within the GCC*, US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2017.

13 K. E. Young, “The emerging interventionists of the GCC”, *LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series*, London, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2013.

14 C. Mouchantaf, “What are the chances an ‘Arab NATO’ will work?”, 29 August 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/mideast-africa/2018/08/29/what-are-the-chances-an-arab-nato-will-work/>

15 “NATO and MD partners meet in Mauritania for the Fifth Mediterranean Dialogue Policy Advisory Group”, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_147563.htm?selectedLocale=en

ICI and both Egypt and Jordan are MD partners, NATO was not involved in discussions surrounding the establishment of MESA.

NATO partners in both the MD and the ICI have generally preferred bilateral cooperation with the Alliance over regional cooperation through their respective partnership frameworks. Political disagreements among different members of both partnership formats are part of an explanation for this problem. Moreover, the partnership frameworks themselves do not reflect contemporary security dynamics but are based on the political status quo at their foundation.

This means that one of NATO's greatest strengths – its experience in organizing collective security on a regional basis – is not capitalized on. Efforts towards increased cooperation with regional organizations – MESA, the GCC, G5S, AU, and others – thus ought to be pursued to promote stronger regional security cooperation.

Domestic Stability

At the domestic level, NATO has been involved with a number of regional states – mainly by providing educational opportunities and specialized training. In this area, the “free for all” approach to cooperation with partners needs to be re-thought. This highlights an inherent tension between the Alliance's emphasis on a demand-driven approach and strategic interests in “capable, credible, legitimate and well-functioning” (security) institutions. Activities related to reforming the security sector – such as NATO's Building Integrity (BI) programme – can be perceived as invasive by partners due to their implications for the domestic balance of power. Given this situation, ways of incentivizing partners to make the investment necessary to advance in this realm need to be considered. An important aspect of this incentive structure is to increase coherence between Alliance activities and bilateral initiatives by allies.

A pre-condition for such an approach is a clearer picture of what effective security provision implies for the structure and capacity of partner security sectors. The fact is that effective security provision in the MENA is hampered by two different (ideal-typical) problems: a lack of capacity, preventing effective security provision despite best efforts; and deficiencies in security sector governance, preventing capacities from being deployed efficiently. If states lack capacity, they might be unable to confront domestic or regional security challenges simply because they do not command the human or material resources necessary to do so. On the

other hand, if security sectors are governed poorly, states might have considerable resources at their disposal, which are yet deployed in ways which do not effectively contribute to security provision. One might refer to the first as a capacity shortfall and to the second as a lack of strategic leadership. In reality, these problems are not independent of each other but are more likely to occur in different combinations and configurations. On a systematic level, it nevertheless makes sense to examine the two dimensions separately.

Examples which come close to the ideal type of a capacity shortfall are Afghanistan and Iraq after the respective external military operations. In both countries, security institutions had to be built up almost from scratch so as to enable national security sectors to eventually take responsibility for security provision. This led to the establishment of the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I) after the dissolution of the country's Baathist military. Given this context, the NTM-I's main mission was to "assist in the development of Iraqi security forces" training structures and institutions so that Iraq can build an effective and sustainable capability that addresses the needs of the nation".¹⁶ NATO assistance to Iraq has been renewed recently in the form of a new mission.¹⁷

In Afghanistan, NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) was set up in 2009 to complement existing capacity building efforts under US and various bilateral auspices.¹⁸ Similar programs might be expected to take place in Libya once the situation on the ground allows such efforts. And EU training of the Libyan coastguard under the auspices of the EU-led Operation EUNAVFOR Med Sophia, as well as bilateral Italian efforts, already follows such a pattern.¹⁹ These activities proceed from the assumption that the partner countries involved in cooperation with NATO lack specific technical capacities which can be addressed by capacity building and training. The hope is that the development of such capacities will then contribute to domestic stability which will, in turn, increase Alliance security.

Effective security provision can also be hampered by political factors, however.

16 "NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTMI-I)", <https://shape.nato.int/page136952>

17 R. Emmott and I. Ali, "At US urging, NATO agrees training mission in Iraq", *Reuters World News*, 15 February 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-nato/at-u-s-urging-nato-agrees-training-mission-in-iraq-idUSKCN1FZ1E5>

18 "NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan", https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52802.htm

19 R. Emmott and P. Stewart, "Libya sends new request for military training to NATO", *Reuters World News*, 16 February 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-nato/libya-sends-new-request-for-military-training-to-nato-idUSKBN15V23B?il=0>

Following the defeat of Daesh in Iraq, for example, establishing mechanisms of security sector governance which can integrate the paramilitary Popular Mobilization Forces (Hashd al-Shaabi) is a precondition for effective security provision. The new NATO Mission in Iraq (NMI), announced at the 2018 Brussels Summit will have to address these issues. Similar concerns exist in Libya, in the context of existing capacity-building efforts by the EU and Italy, but also with respect to a future NATO Defence Capacity Building package for Libya.

Currently, the Alliance does not differentiate between different partner needs. Rather, the 1,400 activities contained in the PCM are principally open to all partner countries, even though Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programmes (IPCP) are agreed upon with partner countries. If these partnership activities are to be effective components of a Projecting Stability portfolio, then better use needs to be made of the possibility of directing cooperation and proactively offering specific content to specific partners. In particular, generating capacity without paying attention to governance issues will not lead to effective security provision, nor will security sector reform in the absence of capacity.

A more strategic use of NATO's partnership programs is predicated upon a detailed needs assessment, framed by an overall understanding of where the Alliance would like partner countries to move. NATO's new NSD-S Hub in Naples might be a good place to perform such assessments, assuming that present resource limitations can be overcome. However, assuming that disparate cooperation activities will somehow automatically lead to an outcome only vaguely defined as "stability" would be deluding; as it would be to rely on cooperation to increase Alliance security in the absence of strategy.

Getting strategic clarity

Two key and interrelated points need to be factored in when looking at how the Projecting Stability agenda can move forward. First, despite the hype surrounding NATO's Projecting Stability since the 2016 Warsaw Summit, neither the underlying idea nor the phrase itself is new to the Alliance narrative. Nevertheless, the concept remains ill-defined and needs to be better understood if it is to help guide Alliance activities in the MENA and elsewhere. Second, NATO's non-strategic approach to partnerships and cooperative security more generally has limited the practical usefulness of existing tools associated with Projecting Stability. Two main

conclusions follow from these two points.

First, a clear policy for the Strategic Direction South needs to be developed. This step is crucial from three interrelated perspectives. To begin with, a policy agreed upon by all 29 Allies will increase the chances that coordination between Alliance activities and initiatives by individual Allies can be strengthened. Given different threat assessments and national strategic priorities, full coordination will be difficult to achieve; yet any progress toward coordination would be positive as a way of avoiding duplication and also strengthening NATO's credibility in the region. Second, clear policy is an important part of a new public relations approach to the region. NATO's regional partners have difficulties understanding the Alliance's strategic aims – a problem which, combined with a generally rather skeptical attitude, feeds conspiracy theories about the “real” intentions of the Alliance. A clear strategic approach combined with an open dialogue process would help address these issues. Third, a coherent policy would give direction to the various activities suggested under the military concept, many of which are already being conducted. In the absence of such guidance, it is difficult to prioritize and to efficiently target resources.

The second conclusion is that partnerships ought to be used strategically. NATO has long insisted that its partnership programs are demand-driven, and the Projecting Stability military concept reiterates this idea.²⁰ There are two different ways of resolving the inherent tension between a demand-driven approach and the requirements of a regional policy. The most radical option would be to shift from a demand-driven to a conditionality-based approach. This would allow NATO to promote what it sees as positive reforms and to target resources where they are most likely to produce favorable outcomes. However, given the sovereignty concerns involved, whether partners would accept such an approach is not guaranteed. A less radical solution is therefore to use cooperation selectively. Here NATO would reinforce cooperation with some partners and scale back cooperation with others based on the extent to which they are willing and able to contribute to the overall policy aims. To some extent this approach is already in place, but it would be useful to make it explicit so as to set the right incentives.

²⁰ “Military Concept for Projecting Stability”, MC 6055/3, para. 20b.

Training as a Way to Project Stability: The NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan

Guillaume Lasconjaris

Projecting Stability has become an important concept to justify what the Allies do in the South and to counterbalance the collective defence measures taken since the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. In what appears to be a collection of actions rather than a real encompassing concept, Projecting Stability takes stock of what has become central to both NATO and to its Allies individually: making sure that our Partners are secure makes us secure in return.

Projecting Stability often takes the form of Security Force Assistance (SFA), a tool whose importance has grown to become a central component of third party interveners who want to avoid massive deployment of troops.¹ Whilst consensus exists among practitioners on the importance of SFA missions, academics tend to be more cautious, in particular in terms of cost-benefit analysis and the measurement of success indicators of those missions. Another reason for this caution might be the broad spectrum of what military assistance entails – from security cooperation to building partner capacity – allowing SFA to vary considerably in its settings, size, and objectives. Nevertheless, there are military missions which look to “improve a local ally’s ability to defend itself”,² which now belong to the broad Projecting Stability agenda.

As a key stabilisation activity, SFA spans the spectrum of conflict prevention, stabilisation and downstream engagement, while being encapsulated within Security Sector Reform. Prior to the outbreak of a conflict, SFA helps strengthen a country’s ability to tackle a common threat, and is as such one means of military and diplomatic

1 S. Biddle, J. Macdonald and R. Baker, “Small footprint, small payoff: the military effectiveness of security force assistance”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 41, Iss. 1-2, 2018, pp. 89-142.

2 *Ibid.* p. 91.

cooperation between militaries. In the case of an ongoing conflict, SFA is part of the transition phase that enables local stakeholders to rebuild confidence in their military, before the drawdown of foreign forces as the host nation's security forces take ownership. SFA can be continued after the conflict is terminated, as one tool to prevent the root causes of the conflict from resurfacing. SFA not only covers a broad spectrum of activities, but it also has the merit of being a low-visibility instrument, which makes it less likely to cause political resistance, both locally and in the sending country.

SFA is not new to NATO. The tool was used to help reform former Warsaw Pact countries before they became Allies. The same kind of support was extended to NATO's partners in the 2000s, after the Alliance launched the Training Cooperation Initiative to share Allied training expertise with Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Partners. At that time, NATO was focusing on expanding its training activities to help modernise partners' defence structures and train security forces through an evolutionary and phased approach.³ In February 2005, the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) was launched and this constituted a first attempt to set standards for how the Alliance understood the links between education, training, defence institution-building and mentoring.⁴

A few years later, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) drew on achievements observed in Iraq – albeit with significant challenges – to further enhance stability in Afghanistan. Both missions helped shape the 2010 Strategic Concept which defines – alongside the traditional collective defence task – crisis management and cooperative security as the other two of NATO's core tasks.

In this context though, what could have become an overarching strategy – ensuring the Alliance's security at home by helping partners abroad – was short-lived as the focus moved away from the strategic level to the tactical means at hand. Rather than truly Projecting Stability, with all the implications of such an ambitious agenda, the aim became to find ways to ensure a proper “exit strategy” out of Iraq and Afghanistan, leading to a misunderstanding about what should eventually be done.⁵

3 F. Rademacher, “The NATO Training Cooperation Initiative”, *NATO Review 2007*, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/Reviewing_Riga/NATO_training_cooperation_initiative/EN/index.htm

4 See F. Gaub, “Building a new military? The NATO Training Mission-Iraq”, *NDC Research Paper*, n°67, April 2011.

5 T. X. Hammes, “Raising and mentoring security forces in Afghanistan and Iraq”, in R. D. Hooker and J. J.

This was further accompanied by a misperception that should be recognized if the whole concept of Projecting Stability through SFA is to make any sense: if Projecting Stability is the end (of a strategy), then SFA is a way (i.e. an enabler) which gathers several tactical activities (i.e. means), forming the ends, ways and means of an overall strategy.

This Chapter examines the mandates, achievements and challenges of NATO's SFA-missions in Afghanistan – NTM-A from 2009 to 2014 and *Resolute Support* since 2015 – to identify practical lessons and good practices.

From ISAF to NTM

How NATO got involved in SFA in Afghanistan has a lot to do with how it became involved in what was its first out-of-area mission. After the withdrawal of the Taliban regime from Kabul in December 2001, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established with the mandate to protect the capital city and “establish and train the new Afghan security and armed forces”.⁶ While the intent was straightforward, there was little understanding of what was to be achieved apart from training a certain number of soldiers and policemen deemed necessary for stabilizing the country, and allowing the government to restore its authority over Afghan territory. The ISAF framework was flexible, with nations contributing on a voluntary basis and only for specific tasks, many of which were formally separate from ISAF itself. For instance, Germany was responsible for the police, Japan led the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of the militias, and the US took up the task of raising an Afghan National Army through its Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan. The latter actually started rather well but was soon hampered by a series of challenges, partially related to the American shift to the invasion of Iraq, which diverted already limited resources, but also partially because US forces were first and foremost concentrating on counter-terrorism under *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF).

Moreover, the training activities were impacted as more NATO members joined the mission with their own training schemes and military cultures, creating additional

Collins, *Lessons encountered. Learning from the long war*, Washington, DC, NDU Press, 2015, pp. 277-344 (quote p. 277).

6 UNSC Resolution 1386, 20 December 2001.

difficulties when the first *kandaks* (battalions) were fielded.⁷ Ill-conceived from the beginning, the ISAF mandate had not factored in the need to put the rebuilding of the Afghan security forces (army and police) under a common umbrella. If efforts to build the components of security were supposed to move at the same speed and reinforce each other, this did not happen.⁸

A wakeup call came in 2007-2008 when the senior US leadership admitted that the situation in Afghanistan deserved a policy shift.⁹ Yet, it was not until the arrival of the Obama administration and General Stanley McChrystal's command of ISAF that the Taliban momentum was somehow halted.¹⁰ By applying the same recipe as in Iraq – a “surge” in troops – it was believed that the conditions for a successful transition and a smooth withdrawal could be created. NATO was involved in the process; since 2006, the Alliance had slowly assumed more authority, especially with the merger of ISAF and US headquarters in Kabul. Yet, tensions persisted over the reluctance of some Allies to be involved in direct combat operations, as well as over their numerous caveats and restrictions. They were therefore encouraged to focus on training and mentoring of the Afghan forces, an activity that proved more politically acceptable.

NATO embraces SFA

The NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) was formally launched in April 2009. NTM-A's command was dual-hatted: the NATO mission complemented the already existing US-led Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), and both missions reported to the same US General.

In November 2009, all the force generation, equipping, training, professionalization and mentoring of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) was centralized under NTM-A. Yet problems arose as the target strength of the Afghan forces kept

7 T. X. Hammes, “Raising and mentoring security forces in Afghanistan and Iraq”, pp. 280-281. For instance, the French were in charge of the officers' corps whilst the British had to deal with the NCOs.

8 See the comparison of the army build-up under the US leadership and the slow setting of the Afghan police under Germany in A. Jalili, “The Future of Security Institutions”, in A. Their, *The Future of Afghanistan*, Washington, DC, United States Institute of Peace, 2009, p. 24.

9 Admiral Mullen's comments in R. Burns, “Mullen: Afghanistan isn't top priority”, *Washington Post*, 11 December 2007.

10 T. E. Ricks, “The COINdinistas”, *Foreign Policy* (online), 30 November 2009, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/30/the-coindinistas/>

increasing: while the benchmark ceiling had been 70,000 for the Afghan National Army (ANA) and 62,000 for the Afghan National Police (ANP) in 2006, it was raised to 171,600 (ANA) and 134,000 (ANP) in 2010, to then reach a total of 352,000 troops in 2013 (195,000 ANA; 157,000 ANP).¹¹

This put a permanent strain on NTM-A, as manning the Afghan security forces was a “Danaides’ barrel”. Within NATO it was understood that given the deterioration of the security situation, the Afghans would not be able to take the lead for operations throughout the country by the end of 2014. However, the transition imperative took precedence over an open debate about the real capacity of the Afghan forces. Speeding up the fielding of *kandaks* was considered the top priority, at the possible expense of quality and cohesion. In context though, the NTM-A’s mission met the recruiting and training goals for 2010 and 2011. In some areas the target strength was even met earlier, but this created problems in terms of recruit qualifications and retention, heavy dependence on logistical support (mainly US), tons of equipment and weapons delivered without a maintenance or sustainability plan. In a way, before it shifted to *Resolute Support Mission* NTM-A was facing a schizophrenic situation: it was efficient as a capacity-building mission but overly focused on delivering numbers at the expense of quality.¹²

The Mission was nonetheless considered a success, mainly due to the fact that it had overcome a series of problems. Yet no real strategic thinking has ever supported it. As one NATO official put it: “when it comes to assisting host forces, NATO’s strategy [had] been a non-strategy: a largely *ad hoc* series of missions and programs. Some of these [were] highly successful, but none have benefited from a template or strategic framework at the highest level”.¹³

One reason for the difficulties encountered was that the Allies had no common understanding of what SFA was, how it should be done, and the priorities it should address. In 2009-2010, only the US Army had a SFA Field Manual to provide guidance and a conceptual framework.¹⁴ The other Allies could either use the US document, or rely on their own strategic culture and priorities. For instance, France

11 N. Gosset, *Lost in transition? State of the conflict, sovereignty, and post-2014 prospects in Afghanistan*, Brussels, Royal Higher Institute for Defence, November 2013, p. 136.

12 *Ibid.* At peak capacity, the NTM-A employed 2,800 trainers, working with 34,000 Afghans across 70 training sites. In 2014, there were still 1,900 personnel in theatre, from 39 nations, and on any given day, more than 20,000 personnel were being trained.

13 Interview with a senior NATO official, NATO HQ, Brussels, January 2014.

14 US Army Field Manual FM 3-07.1, *Security Forces Assistance*, May 2009.

invested in the education of the Afghan officers' corps, training and educating the senior leadership at the "Command and staff college". But it also participated in a myriad of specialized formations, establishing the "Intelligence training center" or the "Armor Branch School". Germany, on the contrary, took over the "Combat service school" consisting of three separate schools (logistics, finance and human resources), thus controlling the entire process and limiting its efforts to one single military education mission. The training of officers, on the other hand, had to be divided between several nations, resulting in frustration, as means and efforts were dispersed in too many directions, thus limiting impact.¹⁵

What lessons?

Lessons from the Afghanistan experience must be learned for future Projecting Stability missions. At least four issues can be identified.

Adopt a comprehensive plan

Security assistance has to be understood comprehensively. It starts before and ends after a crisis. It has to be part of a long-term plan and its success conditions the drawdown of any external presence. In Afghanistan however, the end state changed over time, and security was not always the primary concern. Priorities shifted from defeating the Taliban to reconstructing Afghanistan, whilst the three pillars or lines of operation (security, governance and economic development) had only limited synergy.¹⁶ The large number of actors involved (governments, militaries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, etc.), and the complexity of the environment inherently hampered clarity about what was to be achieved. Furthermore, the co-existence of various missions – NATO, EU, US-led – the separation of UN civilian and non-UN military missions, the political divergence between Allies with regards to priorities and end states, dual-hatted command structures, numerous caveats, and various strategic cultures, all negatively impacted overall efficiency. The setup of the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) in 2009, while seen as the solution to coordinate military actions, was a late measure that

15 See CDEF/DREX, *L'Assistance militaire opérationnelle (AMO) dans les opérations extérieures et les missions extérieures récentes*, Paris, Armée de Terre, CDEF, 2015, pp. 20-21.

16 See J. D. Kem, "Lessons from Afghanistan", in A. Kerr and M. Miklaucic (eds.), *Effective, Legitimate, Secure. Insights for Defense Institution Building*, Washington, DC, NDU Press, 2016, p. 310.

could not solve the “strategic impatience” of some nations wanting to pull out.

This led to competing efforts and priorities in developing host nation security forces, in terms of balancing between the army and the police or defining format. Overall, the emphasis was too tactical and quantitative – with number of *kandaks* trained being the measure of success. This was to the detriment of long-term mentorship of governance structures and institutions like the Ministries of Defence and the Interior. In this context, the decision to accelerate the drawdown of the Coalition led to an even stronger disconnect between what was expected and the real effectiveness of the ANSF, while metrics were twisted to report increasing capabilities.¹⁷

Get “local ownership” right

“Local ownership” describes the ability for the host nation to be empowered and in the end fully in charge. One identified problem in Afghanistan was the tension between what the host nation thought it needed, and the force model and structure proposed by international donors. Some senior Afghan officials insisted on building a military that could face external threats, whereas the international community took for granted that the principal adversary were the insurgents. As a consequence, assistance forces focussed on infantry units, while the Afghan MoD pushed for heavier forces similar to those of its immediate neighbours.

Sustain the financial effort

The development of the ANSF was only possible due to external donors and to some innovative funding mechanisms that were set by the United States and the international community. The United States created the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) to provide the ANSF with equipment, supplies, services, training, and funding, for a cost estimated to be USD64 billion between 2002 and 2016.¹⁸ NATO, for its part, established the ANA Trust Fund in 2007, with cumulative contributions of over USD2.4 billion as of June 2018.¹⁹ Such massive aid dropped

17 US General Accountability Office, *Afghanistan: key oversight issues*, Washington, DC, February 2013, p. 20 and B. Connable, *Embracing the fog of war: assessment and metrics in counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, RAND, 2012.

18 J. D. Kem, “Lessons from Afghanistan”, p. 314.

19 NATO, “Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund”, April 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_04/20180425_1804-backgrounder-ana-trust-fund-en.pdf

over Afghanistan resulted in unsustainable structures, without solving the strategic issues that the Afghan military was facing. The sustainability issue was never really thought through, while it was clear very early on that Afghanistan could not afford such a large security apparatus without substantial and enduring financial support.

Get the culture right

Security assistance happens in a particular environment and context, the culture of which must be fully understood. Appreciating T.E Lawrence's principles is just a start.²⁰ Key in this respect is recognizing the primacy of the host nation and the necessity to “de-Westernize” as much as possible policies and standards. Accepting that military assistance is a service offered gives additional value to adopting “anthropological finesse” which will result in a better appreciation of the context and the solutions – thus limiting frustration at the end of the mission.²¹

From SFA-by-default to SFA-by-design

Most of these lessons were already recognized by the Allies as war went on, but it took some time to shift from SFA-by-default to SFA-by-design. The rationale was not just the difficulty of changing the whole organization while fighting continued, but to implement a new approach that would avoid liabilities and in the meantime correct the course of action. Not only would this have impacted the overall strategic campaign design but it would have required a common approach to SFA that could have then been translated into a joint NATO doctrine. Logically, this could only happen after the transition into the *Resolute Support Mission* with the lessons learned process taking place in every ISAF-participating nation. The Italian NATO Rapid Deployment Corps provides an example. On the basis of a traditional lessons learned process – underlining gaps spanning from the lack of coherent and coordinated training programmes, to the overlap in programmes by military and non-military actors, to the splitting up of activities²² – corrective

20 T.E. Lawrence, quoted in B.H. Liddell Hart, *Lawrence of Arabia*, New York, DeCapo, 1989, p. 399: “Geography, tribal structure, religion, social customs, language, appetites, standards were at my finger-ends. The enemy I knew almost like my own side. I risked myself among them many times, to learn”.

21 M. McFate, “The military utility of understanding adversary culture”, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Vol. 38, 2005, p. 48.

22 C. Era, “NRDC Security Force Assistance Model between resources rationalization and methodology innovation: towards a new NATO doctrine?”, *NRDC-ITA*, 3/2015, pp. 19-24, <https://www.difesa.it/Infor->

measures were developed and an SFA dedicated structure was created within HQ. A new branch was also established, composed of selected officers and NCO subject matter experts, who were specialized, highly trained, culturally savvy, and with an expeditionary mind-set. In a different manner, and with a different scope, the US Army plans to build six Security Force Assistance Brigades “whose core mission is to train, assist, accompany and enable operations with allied and partner nations in order to develop their security force capabilities”.²³ Meant as an “enduring capability organized into a formal brigade-level structure of more than 800 officers and non-commissioned officers”, this will reduce the burden from the conventional Brigade Combat teams, develop a pool of highly trained advisors, and focus on delivering tailored SFA.²⁴

NATO can only benefit from these experiments. Since 2016, the Alliance has moved forward with the publication of AJP-3.16 “Allied Joint Doctrine for Security Force Assistance” which captures the essence of what NATO has done and learnt.²⁵ The document acknowledges that SFA is one activity that NATO “may be required” to perform – amongst other actors.²⁶ This doctrine combines generic principles – in taking stock of the context and environments – and more specific lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan. It insists on trust, legitimacy, rule of law, transparency, host nation commitment, local ownership, and sustainability. One important output is acceptance that there is no “SFA blueprint”. Security assistance is contextual and requires specific planning, reinforcing the idea that there cannot be any quick fix, but only a commitment towards reaching an end-state where building professional and well-governed security forces serve the stability of the host nation.²⁷

What does that mean for Projecting Stability as a concept and an activity? SFA is only one component amongst a broad panel of activities, but potentially it is cost-effective if well-addressed. Because it arches over the spectrum of a crisis – from its birth to its termination – SFA may limit the risk of “mission creep”. From a political standpoint though, any form of assistance (or defence institution/military

mazioniDellaDifesa/periodico/periodico_2015/Documents/SupplementoR3_2015/nrdc_security_force_assistance_model_id_03_2015_supp.pdf

23 US Army Forces Command, *Security Force Assistance Brigades*, 27 March 2018, https://www.army.mil/standto/archive_2018-03-27/?s_cid=standto

24 *Ibid.*

25 NATO, AJP-3.16, Version A, May 2016.

26 *Ibid.*, para. 0104 and 0105. Interestingly, it also recalls “NATO’s broad history” of delivering SFA.

27 *Ibid.*, para. 0303.

capacity building) is a wager on the future: limited in scope, it can only impact the security domain, while the roots of a crisis are always multifaceted.

Nevertheless, NATO has been a key actor in SFA and is well-placed to preserve this capability. The existing doctrine is a way not to lose the expertise acquired.²⁸ Beyond, mainstreaming and institutionalizing SFA is required. One step can be the accreditation of the newly-established SFA Centre of Excellence that would support cooperation and interoperability, identify lessons and best practices, and improve the effectiveness of stability and reconstruction efforts.²⁹ This would form the bedrock of any long-term Projecting Stability operation.

28 S. Blair, *Assisting host country militaries*, p. 13.

29 The establishment of a NATO SFA CoE in Rome, Italy, was cleared by ACT in December 2017 for accreditation in late 2018, <http://www.act.nato.int/new-security-force-assistance-centre-of-excellence>

Projecting Stability in the Southern Flank: The Missile Defense Dimension

Jean-Loup Samaan

The challenge of missile proliferation to transatlantic security is coming back in earnest. For the NATO policy community, the topic is nothing new. After its emergence on the transatlantic agenda in the mid-1990s, it became a central element of the Alliance's strategy when members decided at the NATO Summit in Lisbon in 2010 to develop a ballistic missile defense to support the task of collective defense.

Since then, missile defense was pushed back into the background and barely made the frontlines. For many defense experts, it seemed a topic of interest only for engineers and military operators. However, the technological and geopolitical landscape has dramatically changed over the last decade. Despite the scientific progress made with regards to defense systems such as radars and interceptors, the threat of missiles and rockets being used by states or non-state actors is increasing. Specifically, in the Middle East, missile warfare has now become a central component of the many conflicts that undermine the regional stability.

Against that backdrop, this chapter argues that discussing missile proliferation and the defense against it should be part of NATO's initiative of Projecting Stability in its southern neighborhood. The following pages look at the latest developments in that domain and show how NATO partners struggle to cope with this challenge. After delivering an overview of the contemporary regional threats and the ongoing defense programs launched by Middle Eastern countries to tackle the issue, the paper questions the strategic significance of this phenomenon for the Atlantic Alliance. Finally, it looks at the ways NATO could put the topic on the agenda of its two main partnerships with the region – the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative – and how this framework for cooperation would eventually support the idea of Projecting Stability on its southern flank. As such,

these NATO efforts would constitute a concrete example of the comprehensiveness of the Projecting Stability initiative, moving beyond pure cooperative security to combine it with crisis management planning, and defense and deterrence; all for the purpose of enhancing regional balances, security, and stability.

The steady growth of missile proliferation in the Middle East

Although missile warfare has been a common feature in the Middle East for several decades, its current scope is unprecedented. In Libya, the collapse of the Gaddafi regime following the NATO intervention of 2011 led to a huge flow of Libyan arsenal on the illicit market. By 2015, between 3,000 and 12,000 man-portable air-defense systems (so-called MANPADs) were estimated to be circulating in the region.¹ According to the UN, these arsenals have been identified in other countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Mali, Egypt, Tunisia, as well as in the Central African Republic.²

The missile threat is also a clear and immediate one in the rest of NATO's southern flank. Cases like the Egyptian group, Ansar Bayt al Maqdis attacking an Egyptian military helicopter with a MANPAD in 2014 or al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb firing a rocket against a gas facility in southern Algeria in 2016 evidence the salience of the issue. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas and smaller Palestinian factions have invested into home-made rockets for the last twenty years. The exponential growth of these weapons dramatically increased the vulnerability of southern Israel, and triggered several air campaigns from the Israeli Air Force to degrade the threat. In 2014, the year of the last major conflict between Israel and Hamas, no less than 4,897 missiles were fired at Israel.³ Despite the repeated Israeli attempts to curb this trend, the firing of rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel's territory has become a fact of life.

But this is not even the biggest missile challenge Israel faces today. On its northern border, the country confronts the threat from the Lebanese group, Hezbollah. Today, Hezbollah remains the strongest non-state actor in the Levant, in

1 Small Arms Survey, "Missing missiles: the proliferation of man-portable air defence systems in North Africa", *Issue Brief*, no.2, June 2015.

2 United Nations Security Council, "Final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011)", 9/III/2016, 2016, p. 40.

3 Y. Kubovich, "Israeli Army deploys Iron Dome batteries along Gaza border", 6 June 2018.

terms of military training and capabilities. Missiles have been a central component of its military strategy against Israel for three decades now.⁴ The combination of indigenous rudimentary rockets and Iran-made ballistic missiles has enabled the “Party of God” to build a credible military force in Southern Lebanon and to deny Israel’s access to its controlled territories. Like in other places, Israel and its international allies have been unable to prevent the steady growth of Hezbollah’s arsenal. If the group had stored approximately 12,000 rockets before the 34-day war of July 2006 started, Israeli officials estimated by 2017 that it now possessed 150,000 rockets.⁵

These are not simply short-range projectiles of limited accuracy: Hezbollah’s arsenal also includes short- to medium-range ballistic missiles provided by the Iranian and Syrian regimes. In September 2018, the former deputy chief of Israel’s Mossad, Naftali Granot, argued publicly that despite frequent air raids on Syria, Israel had failed to prevent significant transfers to the “Party of God” and went on to say that the group “recently received small numbers of GPS precision-guided systems that will help it to convert some heavy rockets into accurate missiles”.⁶

What can be called the Hezbollah strategic model – defined as a central reliance on missiles and rockets as means for non-state actors to coerce or deter an opponent – has become an inspiration for the extremist groups across the countries of the region. The most significant illustration of this influence is in Yemen, where the Houthi insurgents supported by Iran have progressively turned to these weapons to target the Saudi-led coalition and used them in a similar fashion.

Over the last two years, the war in Yemen has led to an escalation in the frequency and the range of missiles being fired by the Houthis either on the Saudi territory – going as far as the airport of Riyadh – or on ships crossing the Red Sea. The other contributor to the coalition, the UAE, has also been the target of failed attempts by the Houthis to launch missiles on its territory. In December 2017, Houthis declared that they had launched a cruise missile on the Barakah nuclear reactor in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi but no signs of destruction were reported and Emirati authorities denied the claim.

4 J. L. Samaan, “Missile warfare and violent non-state actors: the case of Hezbollah”, *Defence Studies*, Vol.17, n° 2, 2017, pp. 156-170.

5 A. Issacharoff, “Israel raises Hezbollah rocket estimate to 150 000”, *Times of Israel*, 12 November 2017.

6 Y. J. Bob, “Ex-deputy Mossad Chief: IDF didn’t fully stop new Hezbollah rocket tech”, *Jerusalem Post*, 7 September 2018.

Like in the case of Hezbollah, the ability of the Houthis to use these arsenals was made possible thanks to state support, namely from Iran. A few days after the presumed attack on the UAE, the US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, issued a strong statement accusing Iran of transferring these weapons to the rebels in Yemen.⁷ This was followed by several public assessments from the US intelligence agencies that supported this claim.⁸

In the longer term, the major concern for Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent for the UAE, is to see the situation evolving with a security threat that would increasingly look similar to the one Hezbollah represents to northern Israel. In other words, the missile threat would be a fact of life for Gulf countries which would require significant adaptation at the defensive level. For Saudi Arabia, this has already changed the framing of the issue which initially was one for commanders on the battlefield inside Yemen, whereas it now involves also those responsible for the protection of its own territory, its infrastructures, and ultimately the safety of its citizens.

In addition to these issues, the biggest threat in this domain is one that has remained below the radars of NATO for the last years: Iran's own ballistic program. In 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – commonly known as the “nuclear deal” signed with Iran – had seemingly downgraded the importance of the Iranian ballistic threat. But the decision of the Trump administration to leave the JCPOA has reactivated the Iranian nuclear conundrum and, with no clear diplomatic framework in sight, the issue is likely to return on the agenda of the Atlantic Alliance. In fact, the US withdrawal was partly caused by the inability of the JCPOA to curb Tehran's ballistic program.

Despite repeated condemnations regarding their ballistic tests, Iranian authorities have constantly justified them in the name of their sovereign right to defend their territory. Most of the estimates in the public domain on the Iranian arsenal show a wide array of different types of missiles, including Ra'ad short-range cruise missiles or short- to medium-range ballistic missiles (respectively the Fateh-110 and the

7 J. Ismay and H. Cooper, “US accuses Iran of U.N. violation, but evidence falls short”, *New York Times*, 14 December 2017.

8 See the testimony by D. Coats, Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 13 February 2018, <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Testimonies/2018-ATA---Unclassified-SSCI.pdf>

Shahab-3).⁹ Missiles have been at the core of Iran's strategic culture since the 1980-1988 war with Iraq, in particular following the so-called "war of the cities", during which Saddam Hussein's forces fired missiles over Iranian urban centers, killing thousands of civilians.

Missiles are also used as an instrument of the maritime strategy of Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). The IRGC frequently uses its naval forces composed of 65 missile-armed combat warships as a show of force against the US Navy in the Gulf. This Iranian asymmetric strategy at sea is also significant, given on the other side, the modest size of GCC naval capabilities.¹⁰ As a result, a major source of concern is the prospect of Iran launching missiles, loading them on its ships close to the maritime space of GCC countries, or displaying them on the UAE occupied islands – the Greater and Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa. A scenario of Iran ostentatiously stationing long-range missiles on Abu Musa is a daunting one that could turn into a kind of "local Cuban missile crisis", with Western partners being forced to intervene to prevent escalation, while reassuring their Arab partners.

NATO partners and the missile defense buildup

The combination of these multiple threats has had a direct impact on the force structure of NATO partners. Missile defense programs were a nascent trend when NATO decided in 2010 to develop its own system. Today, they constitute major pillars of the procurement policies for Middle Eastern countries. Three countries play a significant role in that domain: Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Israel is the most advanced country in the region and one of the few worldwide to implement a multi-tiered system that aims to defend against threats as different as Qassam rockets to Shahab-3 ballistic missiles. Because of the size of the country, the distinction between theatre missile defense and territorial missile defense is irrelevant: military commands at the Israeli borders, either in the south or the north, are simply too close to civilian areas to separate the battlefield from the urban centers. The missile threat to Israel grew in earnest in the 1970s as its Arab

⁹ See the database provided by the Center for Strategic and International Studies Missile Defense Project, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/iran/>

¹⁰ A. Cordesman and A. Lin, *The Iranian sea-air-missile threat to Gulf shipping*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, pp. 16-17.

neighbors took stock of their inability to match Israel's conventional superiority and Egypt, Syria and Iraq subsequently invested into ballistic missiles.

Because of a long resistance within the Israeli armed forces (fearing that defensive measures would consume resources critically needed to maintain their offensive edge), it is only in 1988 – and thanks to technical cooperation with the US – that Israel Aerospace Industries was commissioned with the development of Arrow to intercept ballistic missiles. The Arrow program has significantly evolved since that time (with Arrow-2, Arrow-3 and soon Arrow-4 versions) to cope with the advent of the arsenals in the region.

Nevertheless, by the middle of the 2000s, Israeli military planners realized that they were also facing a different threat from non-state actors in Gaza and Lebanon. The rockets of Hezbollah were no longer a mere nuisance but a game-changer, hence the development of Iron Dome. Designed to intercept short-range rockets (between 4km and 70km), the program was launched by Rafael in early 2007 and less than 5 years later, its first batteries were deployed on the field. Additionally, a third missile defense system was developed by Israel: David's Sling. Within the spectrum of threats covered by the Israeli missile defense architecture, David's Sling is designed to counter the intermediate ones, meaning medium-range rockets (e.g. Iran's Fatah 110) and cruise missiles that could be fired from 40km to 300km.

Meanwhile in the Arabian Peninsula, Gulf countries have also increased their reliance on missile defense. The major difference with the Israeli experience is that the Arab monarchies have not developed indigenous capabilities and focused primarily on buying American systems, with Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia being at the forefront of these purchases. In 2013, Abu Dhabi bought Patriot missile batteries as well as two Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) batteries. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia procured the biggest and the oldest missile defense capability. As a matter of fact, Riyadh started investing into this field following the Gulf War of 1990. The use of Short-Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBMs) and cruise missiles by Saddam Hussein against the country was an obvious wake-up call for its leadership. Today, according to independent surveys, the Saudi Kingdom has acquired and deployed various systems: Hawk surface-to-air missiles (MIM 23B I-Hawk and MIM J/K Hawk) and Patriot batteries, which include Pac-2 and Pac-3. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has also officially ordered THAAD systems in 2017. Worth USD15 billion, the package of the sale is impressive: 44 THAAD launchers, 360 THAAD interceptor missiles, 16 mobile fire-control and communication

stations, and seven THAAD radars.¹¹ With regards to Qatar, the leadership in Doha also decided to acquire 10 Patriot batteries, which were part of a broader arms sale deal with the United States worth 11 billion dollars (US).

Regional stability and the strategic implications of the missile race

The ongoing trends in the acquisition of missiles and rockets by states as well as non-state players in the broader region encompassing North Africa, the Levant, and the Gulf have immediate consequences for how NATO approaches its southern flank. Missiles have always been an effective way for one actor to overcome its conventional inferiority. But until the last decade, their access was largely restrained to states whereas today, a myriad militias can either procure them or indigenously build rudimentary ones. In the case of non-state actors, the untamed proliferation of these military technologies erodes governments' monopoly of military power and exacerbates the structural weaknesses of state institutions in the region.

Therefore, NATO partners in the Middle East are facing a crucial conundrum: how to build a coherent defense against multiple threats that vary in their geographical origins, their political motivations, and their technical features? As reflected by the overview on missile defense systems, protecting populations against rockets does not imply the same resources as protecting them against mid-range ballistic missiles.

Additionally, the growing reliance of Gulf countries on missile defense systems has a significant impact on the way they balance their defense expenditures – even for wealthy states like them. For a long time, analysts have pointed out the unsustainable imbalance between offense and defense, between a cheap short-range rocket easily built by an extremist group and a missile defense battery relying on complex technology and requiring major state funding. It is also worth bearing in mind that, given the impossible goal of reaching a 100 percent interception rate, decision-makers need to invest in several interceptors to destroy only one rocket. Despite the technological progress in the field of missile defense, this imbalance will remain the rule for the near future.

At the same time, the experience of Middle Eastern partners is a revealing case in point for NATO on the deterrence effect of missile defense. Back in 2010, during

11 A. Mehta, "US clears THAAD sale to Saudi Arabia", *Defense News*, 6 October 2017.

the Lisbon Summit, NATO member states bitterly argued about the possibility to conceive missile defense as a substitute for nuclear weapons. In other words, could the deterrent effect of a missile interceptor in Romania equal the one of a US tactical nuclear weapon stationed in Germany? Going beyond the quasi-religious positions of NATO Allies on deterrence, the Middle Eastern experience provides concrete perspectives on the question if robust missile defense programs can deter non-state actors from firing missiles. In fact, the deterrence effect of missile defense is questionable here. In the Israeli case, even if we base our analysis on the most optimistic estimates of the interception rate of Iron Dome batteries, its ability to deter “by denial” future rocket attacks from groups in the Gaza strip appears limited in so far as Palestinian factions keep firing them. This leads to a whole set of interrelated unknowns: can a national defense apply deterrence to each of the different missile threats? Can non-state actors whose rationality differs from state entities be subsumed to this system?

To ponder on these limitations, it is worth getting back to the seminal analysis of US scholar Bernard Brodie: “That is not to say that effective active defenses against the missile are technically impossible, or that their development should not be pursued; it is only to point out that one must have extraordinary faith in technology, or a despair of alternatives, to depend mainly on active defenses”.¹²

The deterrence issue is only one dimension of the missile race implications. Non-state actors in the Middle East may not only look at missiles as means of harassment but also as means of access denial. This is already the case of Hezbollah. Rockets and missiles have grown into a major component of Hezbollah’s military posture. While this arsenal grew – quantitatively and qualitatively – the leadership of the Lebanese group revised its strategy. Initially used as a means to compel Israel to withdraw its defense forces from South Lebanon in 2000, missiles have since then become means to deter. The major change at stake here is the way a terrorist organization like Hezbollah now looks at its arsenal, not as mere instruments to destabilize Israel and fuel terror among its population but rather as tools to deny the Israeli Defense Forces the ability to displace the “Party of God” from its stronghold inside Lebanon.

The arsenal allowed the “Party of God” not only to overcome its conventional inferiority but to defend its area of control in Lebanon, by threatening retaliations

12 B. Brodie, *Strategy in the missile age*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1959, p. 221.

deep inside Israel's territory. In other words, Hezbollah has been learning from the Iranian experience of asymmetric warfare and emulating it in the Lebanese context. By extension, this posture has significant implications on how states in the region comprehend Hezbollah's objectives, and consequently how they should design an effective counterterrorism strategy. In the Middle East, other non-state organizations likely to follow this Hezbollah model include groups like the Houthi insurgents in Yemen and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The potential for non-state actors building such anti-access postures should not be inflated. The history of a group like Hezbollah evidences its rather unique nature as a non-state actor which relies on state-like capabilities from state-sponsors, namely Iran and Syria. Not only did the IRGC provide these capabilities but they also shared their experience, their techniques, and their tactics. In comparison, state support to Hamas or the Houthis remains more limited. Only if states such as Iran – or Russia – decide to spread their military technologies and strategies to regional proxies, could the Hezbollah phenomenon become a conceivable model. This does not mean that in the future, the IRGC might not be tempted to transfer to their regional proxies along their military technologies, their ideas and experiences in order to disseminate “access denial bubbles” through the Middle East.

Setting a roadmap for NATO partnerships on missile defense

In this context, missile defense should not be dismissed as a mere technological discussion with no direct implications for NATO partnership diplomacy. Admittedly, threats driving the policies of NATO and those of its Middle East partners are not alike. On the one hand, Israel and Gulf countries see missiles and rockets as constituting close and immediate – and even to some extent “existential” – dangers to their territories. On the other hand, NATO looks at the future prospect of an intercontinental missile launched from the Middle East – presumably from Iran – which is unlikely to become a reality in the near future. Despite the strong reliance on their missile inventory, the Iranians are unlikely to build an intercontinental capability in the near future, mostly because of their technological shortcomings – such as in their space program.¹³

But if for the short term an intercontinental ballistic attack coming from its

13 M. Elleman and M. Fitzpatrick, “No, Iran does not have an ICBM program”, *War on the Rocks*, 5 March 2018.

southern flank remains a far-fetched scenario, the contemporary proliferation trends could pose other types of threats for populations in southern Europe, commercial ships crossing the Mediterranean Sea and NATO troops, if they were to operate in the southern flank. The lasting collapse of Libyan central authorities and the enduring security vacuum in the Sinai Peninsula will fuel proliferation networks on the North-African shores of the Mediterranean. In these areas, militias could then see the targeting of civilian ships as an effective way to gain political influence – or in the case of the Islamic State as a retaliatory tactic following the US-led military campaign against its combatants in Syria and Iraq.

Likewise, NATO should consider the consequences of the “Hezbollah model” for its future operations in the region. The exponential access of militias to rockets and missiles, and their use as a way to deny access of foreign forces to their strongholds, could significantly complicate NATO interventions on the southern flank. Missions such as enforcing no-fly zones over one area could be challenged by the increased vulnerability of naval and air assets which would be targeted by these arsenals. It would therefore raise the potential human cost of the operation – and by extension, its political cost.

In this context, NATO should put missile defense on the agenda of its partnership with Middle Eastern countries. This could be done either through the framework of its existing Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative or on an *ad hoc* basis, gathering the countries that have been active in the missile defense field: primarily, Israel, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.¹⁴

The purpose of the program should be to build common knowledge and policies to address the missile threat emanating from the southern flank. To that end, several steps could be conceived. First, NATO officers and their counterparts in Middle Eastern partners could work together at the level of military education and research by identifying the lessons learned from the recent experience of missile warfare in the region. Specifically, our understanding of the ways missile proliferation is changing the strategic behavior of extremist groups is incomplete and should be enhanced via workshops and scientific studies. This could involve NATO’s Allied Command Transformation (and in particular its Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre). NATO academic entities (the NATO School and the NATO Defense College) could also support the program by providing tailored

¹⁴ Saudi Arabia being formally not part of NATO partnership for the Gulf, the talks would have to take place within another framework.

courses on the history of missile warfare both in the Atlantic sphere and the Middle East. In the Gulf, the newly-established NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait could also contribute to this part of the project.

If education and analysis could serve as the first step to initiate a dialogue between NATO and its Middle Eastern partners in the field of missile defense, this should eventually lead to cooperation at the level of the defense policy and planning process. This is ultimately where the exchanges will contribute to the objective of Projecting Stability in the region. In this case, NATO and partner countries should be willing to share and discuss their latest threat assessments – in terms of both capabilities and strategic behavior from potential enemies. The dialogue could also involve tabletop exercises exploring scenarios such as those discussed earlier, where NATO and local partners would face a direct missile threat. Such exercises enable the participants to clarify the respective chains of command, to identify the most effective communication channels between partners and to detect potential capability deficiencies. Overall, this would leverage cooperative security activities to create a common culture of crisis management incorporating deterrence and defense concepts at the regional and sub-regional levels; this harmonization of NATO activity above the bilateral NATO-partner relationship is at the core of the concept of Projecting Stability.

Conclusion

The Middle East has entered a new phase of the missile race. As reflected by the growing reliance on rockets and missiles by countries like Iran and local non-state actors such as Hezbollah, this phenomenon has strategic implications, not only for the region but also for NATO. As the Alliance embraces the philosophy behind the Projecting Stability agenda – “If NATO’s neighbors are more stable, NATO is more secure” – it should take into account the centrality of this security trend and turn it into an opportunity for better cooperation with its local partners, both national and regional. Such an initiative could first involve multiple activities in the field of military education and research, in order to pave the way for a dialogue at the policy and planning level. All in all, this would both support the Projecting Stability agenda and recalibrate NATO partnerships as relevant instruments of defense policies.

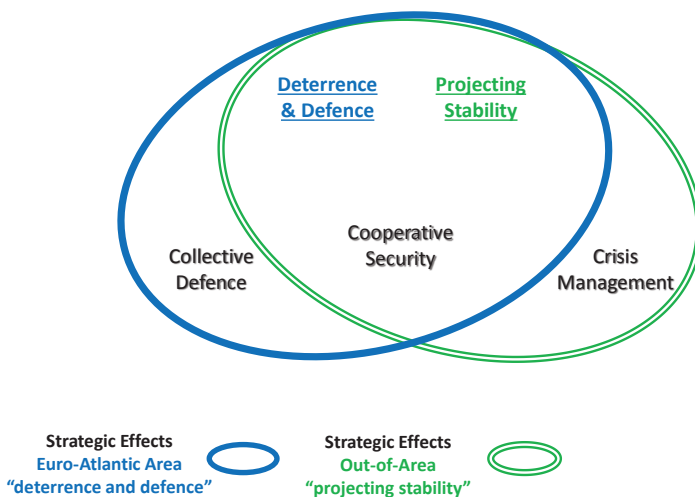
Conclusion

The Alliance no longer organizes its activities, policies, and plans along the lines of the three core tasks articulated in the extant 2010 Strategic Concept. Since 2016 NATO has increasingly categorized its activities, policies, and plans along the lines of strategic effects desired. More and more NATO documents are speaking of creating conditions for enduring *deterrence* and effective *defence* against threats from state and non-state actors who would attack NATO member states; and measures that enhance or *Project Stability* on the peripheries, that pre-empt crisis, and that manage crisis with a view to having greater security around the Alliance perimeter.

The term “Projecting Stability” itself is rather awkward, defies translation, and lacks clarity. In actuality it means the conduct of activity by the Alliance to help a partner society or regional organization create conditions that reduce the potential for conflict. It must not be construed as meaning compulsion as the activities are programmed only at the request and in the interests of partner nations and regional organizations, and only in support of other international community efforts.

The taxonomy of deterrence and defence and Projecting Stability incorporates the three core tasks of collective defence, cooperative security, and crisis management. The relationship of the tasks to the strategic effects has been a major revelation of this *NDC Research Paper*, and it is hoped that it will explain current NATO thinking to the reader. This is illustrated in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3: Effects and Tasks Relationship



The effects and tasks relationship is not simply about geographic focus (Euro-Atlantic area *versus* out-of-area). It also clarifies the place of Article 5 and non-Article 5 activities. The strategic effect of deterrence and defence incorporates those collective defence activities that pertain to Article 5 scenarios within the Euro-Atlantic area. But deterrence and defence also incorporates activities and functions that pertain to out-of-area, such as implementing NATO's new Framework for the South, planning and force readiness and force posturing for out-of-area operations, and training and exercises out-of-area. These cannot possibly be done without also conducting cooperative security activities that support them. All these activities relate directly to efforts to project stability on NATO's periphery.

The effects and tasks relationship also works the other way around. The strategic effect of Projecting Stability includes cooperative security activity and crisis management operations that should contribute to crisis avoidance or de-escalation in out-of-area scenarios that might otherwise lead to Article 5 situations. But stability on the peripheries is also enhanced by NATO force posture, readiness, training and exercise programs that are focused out-of-area. Therefore many of the core task activities can produce effects that are mutually supporting.

This *NDC Research Paper* has attempted to explain the emerging concept of Projecting Stability within the context of this effect-tasks relationship, and to assess its potential utility and some challenges to its application. Through six distinct and progressive chapters, the Paper has introduced the concept, described its genesis and evolution since the end of the Cold War, examined the obstacles it faces in the South, and analyzed specific applications of key Projecting Stability activities in the South and further out-of-area.

Want of time and space have prevented full examination of the Projecting Stability and related concepts. For instance, a significant activity within the Projecting Stability concept involves improving Alliance awareness and analyzing factors that contribute to instability in specific countries and regions. Political consultations, defence diplomacy and continuing engagement with partners is fundamental to gaining awareness of partner issues and regional concerns on NATO's periphery. This activity deserves greater attention.

Likewise, although Chapters 4 (Larsen) and 5 (Koehler) introduce the topic, the full extent of NATO activity under the Alliance partnership programs, not just with partner nations but with such regional organizations as the ICI, MD, the Gulf

Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States, and the African Union, could not be adequately covered. The broad range of training and Defence Capacity Building/Defence Institution Building initiatives, key to creating stability effects, could only be lightly covered in Chapters 6 (Lasconjarias) and 7 (Samaan). Engagement with non-state partners such as the European Union has also escaped the Paper's focus, but is critical. So too is the implementation of NATO's Framework for the South which will tie together all of the core tasks and strategic effects under the auspices of the new Regional Hub for the South at Joint Forces Command-Naples. Future research regarding Projecting Stability must include these essential topics and programs.

Also missing is the problematic of NATO's efforts in the Fight Against Terrorism. This has sometimes been discussed as a third strategic endeavor equal to deterrence and defence and Projecting Stability. However, examining this initiative in relation to the effects-tasks diagram above, the Fight Against Terrorism is situated more appropriately as a cross-cutting set of activities that transcend geographic boundaries. It is not a strategic effect. It cannot be separated from any of the core tasks or effects and therefore remains subordinate to them; existing as numerous discrete activities that together help create the conditions of enduring deterrence and effective defence and enhanced stability upon the periphery.

Finally, the importance of sustaining current operations, and Alliance readiness and force posture for future operations out-of-area was not adequately explained. The Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, support for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, the NATO Mission in Iraq, maritime support to operations in the Aegean and Operation *Sea Guardian*, would all deserve to be discussed in detail so as to understand how they relate to Projecting Stability.

Despite these omissions, this *NDC Research Paper* has tied together many emerging concepts and strings of activity which reveal a shift in NATO's operating paradigm. As the Alliance further develops these initiatives, and formalizes change within its transformation efforts, apportioning tasks and resources in markedly different ways than before, there may well be official recognition that the new paradigm of deterrence and defence and Projecting Stability indeed constitutes *de facto* a new strategic concept.

