COMPARISON OF COUNTRY CASES AND CONCLUSION

by Matthias Dembinski and Caroline Fehl

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG

THROUGH THE KALEIDOSCOPE: COMPARING VISIONS OF NATO

Matthias Dembinski and Caroline Fehl

As the preceding analysis highlights, national discourses on the future of NATO are shaped by members' (and non-members') different geographical locations, historical experiences, economic interests, threat perceptions, security cultures, bilateral relations with key global actors, and domestic politics. As a consequence, hardly any key issue area in our analytical matrix is marked by full agreement among experts across the states we analysed. Scholars are in agreement on one important point, however: NATO is here to stay. Discourses reflect the shared conviction across our sample of member states that the alliance serves their interests. With few (US) exceptions, even critical think tanks and NGOs on both the left and the right agree that states are better off within NATO than outside it. However, they also agree that NATO lacks cohesion and a sense of purpose and that it needs to be adapted to a changing external environment and internal challenges. Externally, NATO needs to prioritize threats and choose its geographical focus. Internally, it will have to adjust its architecture and the balance between American leadership and European self-reliance, between alliance solidarity and member state autonomy, and between interests and values. Cross-cutting challenges include the scope of NATO's agenda, the future of arms control and issues of force modernization. As we will show, geographical priorities are connected to debates on cross-cutting and internal challenges. In what follows, we provide a detailed comparison of national expert discourses on these key issues, beginning with a mapping of different positions on NATO's future geographical focus. We then compare viewpoints on cross-cutting policy areas, and finally analyse diverging views of NATO's internal challenges. In conclusion, we sketch three alternative futures that could emerge from contending national discourses, discussing risks and opportunities attached to each of them.

GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

In contrast to the Cold War period during which it was founded, opinions about where NATO should direct its attention and defence efforts have been shifting continuously over the past three decades. In contemporary debates, three potential geographical priorities can be distinguished that are not viewed as mutually exclusive but are nevertheless discussed with very different degrees of emphasis in different NATO member (and non-member) states: Russia, China, and the MENA region. Related to these geographical priorities are different threat perceptions. Is NATO threatened most by kinetic and non-kinetic aggression from Russia; by Chinese infringements of its normative and technological sovereignty; or by instability, state failure and terrorism in the MENA region?

RUSSIA: OFF THE BEATEN (DUAL) TRACK?

Presently, Russia is still perceived by a majority of experts as NATO's main threat. However, scholars differ with regard to the significance and nature of the Russian threat and preferred responses.

Figure 1
National expert discourses on Russian threat
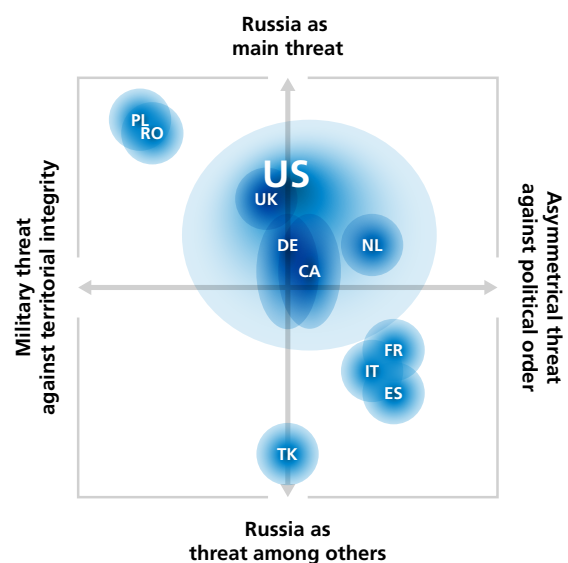
CA	Canada	IT	Italy	TK	Turkey
DE	Germany	NL	Netherlands	UK	United Kingdom
ES	Spain	PO	Poland	US	United States
FR	France	RO	Romania		

---

* The visualizations in this chapter are based on collective deliberation by the study editors and the authors of the individual country chapters. They represent authors' assessments of expert discourses in the respective countries in relation to each other, on the basis of their qualitative analysis of interviews and secondary literature.

Scholars in Poland and Romania perceive the Russian threat as predominant and are more concerned about military threats than about non-military threats directed against the stability of the political order in member states. Scholars in Southern NATO states and France perceive Russia as one threat among others and are more concerned about asymmetric challenges such as disinformation campaigns. The Northern European states and Canada sit somewhere in between, while the US expert community is split between these poles. Turkey is an outlier and regards Russia as a »frenemy« in its neighbourhood.

Threat perceptions shape the responses preferred by scholars in our sample. The stalling of NATO's dual-track approach of combining deterrence and defence with dialogue is pulling member states in different directions. According to Eastern European governments and pundits, as well as the Atlanticist mainstream view within the United States, the dual track has led to a dead end, having produced no tangible progress in seven years since the Russian annexation of Crimea. Consequently, NATO should meet Russia's increasingly aggressive posture with increased counterpressure. This means deterring and preventing cyber-attacks, disinformation, and other non-kinetic threats emanating from Russia, but also reinforcing the alliance's defence posture on its Eastern flank with more boots on the ground. These reinforcements should be made on a rotational basis or even, in the eyes of most Eastern European

governments and pundits, permanently, in defiance of the NATO-Russia Founding Act that many Eastern European observers consider obsolete following Russian violations. At the same time as strengthening deterrence and defence, Russia hardliners advocate maintaining NATO's open door policy, at least in the medium to long term, even short of offering full Membership Action Plans. Dialogue with Russia should be restricted to areas of common interest and pursued from a position of strength. Whereas NATO Reflection Group chairs Mitchell and de Mazière agree with this approach, other voices within NATO and pundits in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are less in agreement on the need to strengthen the deterrence part of NATO's dual-track approach. In contrast, they deplore that the recent focus on deterrence has prevented NATO from developing a constructive dialogue that would give Russia a greater stake in Europe's security order. At the other end of the spectrum, actors in France, Italy and Spain, as well as some realist and isolationist voices in the United States, instead advocate further strengthening dialogue with Russia, not least with the aim of peeling Russia away from China.

The path dependency created by the Bucharest Summit decision in 2008, according to which Georgia and Ukraine »will become members of NATO«, and Ukraine's incessant pressure to realize this pledge imply that NATO will find it difficult to put conflicts over its open door policy to rest.

Table 1
National expert discourses on policies towards Russia

Think tank positions	Pursue open door policy actively		Permanent deployment in the East/Southeast		Maintain commitment to NATO Russia Founding Act	
Canada	⭕	❌ (dominant)	⭕	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	⭕
France	⭕	❌ (dominant)	⭕	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	⭕
Germany	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	❌ (minority)
Italy	⭕	❌ (dominant)	⭕	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	⭕
Netherlands	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	❌ (minority)
Poland	✅ (dominant)	❌ (minority)	✅ (dominant)	⭕	⭕	❌ (dominant)
Romania	✅ (dominant)	❌ (minority)	✅ (dominant)	⭕	⭕	❌ (dominant)
Spain	⭕	❌ (dominant)	⭕	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	⭕
Turkey	⭕	❌ (dominant)	⭕	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	⭕
United Kingdom	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	❌ (minority)
United States	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)	✅ (dominant)	❌ (minority)	✅ (minority)	❌ (dominant)

APPROVE
✅ dominant position
✅ minority position

REJECT
❌ dominant position
❌ minority position

Just like Western experts, their Russian counterparts discuss a spectrum of threat perceptions. While Russian experts concur that NATO and its open door policy pose the main threat, there are important nuances in perceptions concerning the future of NATO (decaying versus strong and staying), the character of threats (primarily military versus primarily political and asymmetric), the prospects of dialogue with NATO on arms control (irrelevant versus urgently needed but difficult to achieve), and responses to NATO's open door policy (counter from a position of strength versus diplomatic solutions).

CHINA: NATO PIVOT OR TRANSATLANTIC DIVISION OF LABOUR?

Pundits on both sides of the Atlantic see the global power shift towards China and sharpening US–Chinese competition as the most powerful future challenge to NATO's traditional architecture. This agreement exists despite considerable differences between US and European perspectives on the rising power and the character of threats connected to it. In the United States, China is recognized across the political spectrum as the most important challenge to US security; voices calling for US–Chinese cooperation on climate change and other key global issues are outweighed by advocates of a more confrontational stance, both outside and inside the Biden administration. European scholars tend to see China as a partner, for example, in climate policy, as well as an (economic) competitor and strategic rival that challenges European norms and standards. Yet, in Europe a willingness to engage China with a positive agenda and reap the benefits of (economic) cooperation is still the more widespread stance. Nevertheless, there is an acute awareness among European NATO members that the US–Chinese rivalry will shape the future of NATO in one of two conceivable ways.

The first possibility is that of a *NATO paying significantly more attention to security developments in East Asia*. Already during the late Trump administration, the United States pushed vigorously to define China as a top challenge to NATO, a campaign that the Biden administration appears set to continue. Some voices within NATO, such as Reflection Group chairs Mitchell and de Mazière, have vocally embraced this agenda, whereas Secretary General Stoltenberg, while highlighting the challenges of a China that is coming closer to Europe, is also emphasizing the opportunities of intensified NATO-China consultations. If the »China pivot« scenario carries the day, at a minimum NATO members will have to develop common positions and policies on aspects of the China challenge that hit close to home, particularly with regard to policy fields that might affect collective defence such as cyber, the security of communications and supplies, space, as well as export controls. In addition, NATO could deepen or even institutionalize cooperation with East Asian democracies, which in the most far-reaching long-term scenario could lead to some form of NATO military presence in the Indo-Pacific. In Europe, support for the American line of curtailing Chinese influence within Europe is strongest in Romania.
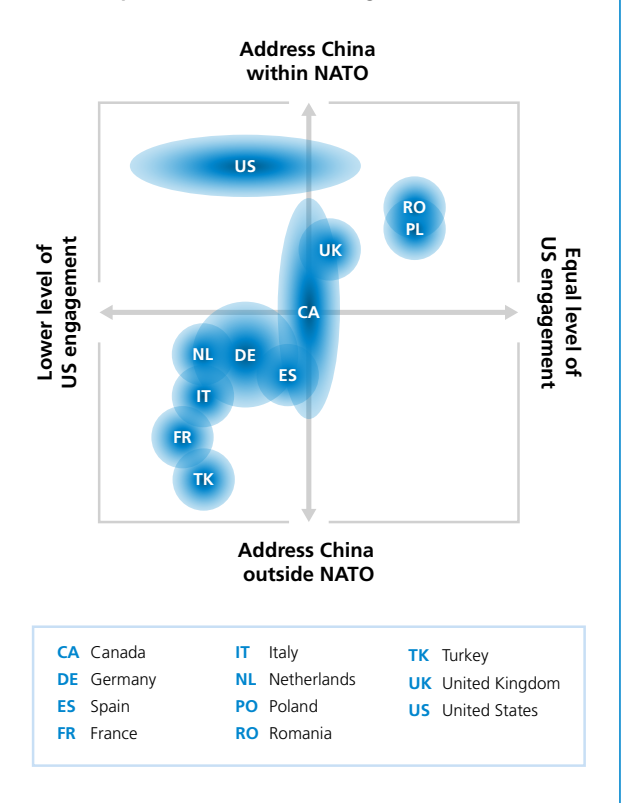
Sympathies for addressing China within NATO are also expressed by Polish, British, and some Canadian experts. Other member states privilege transatlantic consensus-building on China *outside* NATO, primarily through US–EU consultations.

An alternative scenario that receives much attention in Europe is that of a stronger *transatlantic division of labour*, with the US devoting increasing attention and resources to balancing China, while European NATO members, consequently, have to shoulder more of the political, military and financial burden of defending the European continent. Despite President Biden's promise that America is back, awareness of this possibility is strong across European member states, but has yet to translate into concrete plans for greater European engagement.

NATO 360 DEGREES: EAST VS SOUTH?

At a general level, there is broad agreement in both the United States and European NATO member states that the alliance must devote increasing attention to its Southern flank. However, member state governments and think tanks are far from agreed on the amount of resources that should be poured into this »360 degree« defence approach – and on its precise purpose. According to the NATO Reflection Group, the need to focus more on the South derives from the increased and destabilizing presence of Russia and China in the critical MENA region – and also from the need to avoid frictions among NATO member states. These frictions are clearly visible in the diver-

Figure 2
National expert discourses on reacting to China's rise

CA	Canada	IT	Italy	TK	Turkey
DE	Germany	NL	Netherlands	UK	United Kingdom
ES	Spain	PO	Poland	US	United States
FR	France	RO	Romania		

gent regional interests articulated by Eastern and Northern European NATO member states, on one hand, and Southern members, on the other. While the first group advocates largely sticking with the established distribution of interests and resources – and thus with a primary focus on the Eastern flank – the latter want a much stronger NATO engagement in the South. Still, there is disagreement on the forms that this engagement should take. While some pundits still consider the possibility of future interventions to either fight terrorist organizations or to substitute for a lack of governance, most advocates of a 360 degree approach see NATO's primary role in the projection of stability through government-to-government military cooperation and/or cooperation with civil society and other international organizations in the MENA region. Even NATO's Southern members set different priorities. France tries to draw attention to the region, its conflicts and the dangers of terrorism in particular, but is hesitant to give NATO a leading role and prefers the EU as the main agent for projecting stability and coalitions-of-the-willing, such as the bilateral military cooperation with the United States in the fight against terrorism. Italy is engaged in several military interventions and willing to continue this kind of engagement in the future. However, Italian scholars deem projecting stability and the fight against the economic and societal root causes of regional instability as paramount and see more merit in NATO's work with civil society organizations. Spanish experts see their country and the southern rim of NATO most affected by instability in the larger MENA region. At the same time, they are most critical of NATO's military interventions and disappointed by NATO's stability-building efforts so far. Although the failed intervention in Afghanistan and lessons to be drawn from it have to date played a surprisingly limited role in debates on the future of NATO, it can be expected that this experience will leave a mark on NATO's future intervention policy.

CROSS-CUTTING CHALLENGES

BROADENING THE AGENDA

Connected to debates about the alliance's future geographical focus and the nature of security challenges confronting it across different regions is the debate about the breadth of the agenda for which it is responsible. At the most traditional end of the spectrum of opinions, experts in Eastern European NATO members, as well as influential voices in France and the United States, advocate a focus on Article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty, the collective defence of member states. While the focus here is on deterring and containing nuclear and conventional kinetic threats, some broadening of the agenda is widely considered inevitable, particularly regarding space, as well as cyber and hybrid challenges emanating from state adversaries that directly impact NATO and its military and logistical infrastructure. As already mentioned, experts advocating a stronger focus on China propose an even broader agenda. Geographically, they suggest expanding the partnership with Asian de-

mocracies or even a NATO presence in the region; functionally, they see a responsibility for NATO in fields ranging from telecommunications to connectivity. Advocates of the 360-degree approach in Southern member states advocate a broadening of NATO's agenda in different directions. In addition to projecting stability, working with civil society in partner countries, government-to-government security cooperation at NATO's borders and peace-keeping, the fight against terrorism is an additional element of the stability projection agenda. Although its perceived relevance is nowhere near its position in the early 2000s, when it was framed as a new principal raison d'être for the post-Cold War alliance, the fight against transnational terrorism still figures prominently in NATO documents and is advocated as a major NATO task by pundits, particularly in Turkey.

While agreeing with the importance of Article 5, the report of the Reflection Group also incorporates the agenda of the »pivot to Asia « and the 360-degree proponents. It even proposes a yet broader agenda by also taking on board voices that emphasize the need for the alliance to boost societal resilience in the face of climate change, pandemics and other non-traditional threats. In fact, the 138 proposals for reform listed in the report seem to represent a NATO for everything and everybody. Sympathies for this broad agenda exist both in the United States and among Southern member states.

Besides discussing the breadth of NATO's future agenda, officials and pundits also debate how individual items on this agenda should be addressed. However, as the following analysis of debates on arms control and emerging disruptive technologies illustrates, policy priorities with regard to individual »old« and »new« issues are somewhat more consensual than the question of how to define the agenda itself.

ARMS CONTROL

With regard to arms control, the departure of the openly arms control–critical Trump administration has enabled the re-emergence of a broad NATO internal consensus on the revival of negotiated bilateral and multilateral arms control. Accordingly, early steps taken by the Biden administration, particularly its prompt extension of the New START treaty and its intention to revive the JCPOA, have been applauded in all NATO member states. A more ambitious (nuclear) arms control agenda that might be pursued by the Biden administration in the future would meet with a divided response in the European expert community. While experts in the majority of European countries would support a Biden initiative to restrict the role of US nuclear weapons to the sole purpose of deterring a nuclear attack and concomitant changes in NATO's nuclear doctrine, experts in France and in Eastern European countries are more critical. Unilateral or radical disarmament steps, such as an end to nuclear sharing or support for the new TPNW, receive less support beyond think tanks in individual NATO member states (specifically Germany and

Table 2
National expert discourses on nuclear policy and arms control

Think tank positions	Maintain nuclear sharing		Sole purpose/No first use policy		Support TPNW	
Canada	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	✓ approve (dom)	○	✓ approve (min)	✗ reject (dom)
France	✓ approve (dom)	○	○	✗ reject (dom)	○	✗ reject (dom)
Germany	✓ approve (min)	✗ reject (dom)	✓ approve (dom)	○	✓ approve (min)	✗ reject (dom)
Italy	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	✓ approve (dom)	○	✓ approve (min)	✗ reject (dom)
Netherlands	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	✓ approve (dom)	○	✓ approve (min)	✗ reject (dom)
Poland	✓ approve (dom)	○	○	✗ reject (dom)	○	✗ reject (dom)
Romania	✓ approve (dom)	○	○	✗ reject (dom)	○	✗ reject (dom)
Spain	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	✓ approve (dom)	○	✓ approve (min)	✗ reject (dom)
Turkey	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	○	○
United Kingdom	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	✓ approve (min)	✗ reject (dom)
United States	✓ approve (dom)	○	✓ approve (dom)	✗ reject (min)	○	✗ reject (dom)

APPROVE
✓ dominant position
✓ minority position

REJECT
✗ dominant position
✗ minority position

Canada). However, in some countries, NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements are not widely debated among experts and support for them, rests more on political justifications and loyalty to NATO partners than on security rationales.

EMERGING DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

The leeway for arms control is further restricted by calls within NATO and member states to maintain NATO's technological edge. The Reflection Group report mentions artificial intelligence, autonomous capabilities, space, hypersonic missiles, quantum technology and biotechnologies. This insistence on preserving NATO's technological edge is echoed more strongly in the United States and in some European member states with substantial arms industries, particularly in France and the Netherlands.
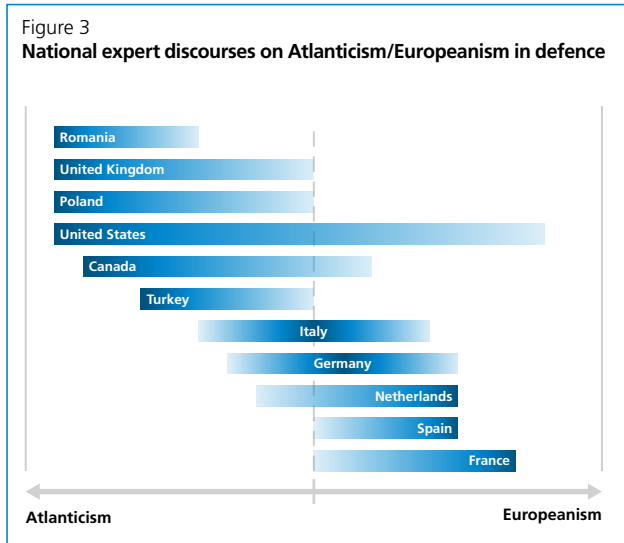
INTERNAL CHALLENGES

As discussed in the introduction to this report, it was less the ongoing global transformations in NATO's security environment than the widespread perception of internal problems that triggered the Reflection Group process and broader debates about adapting the alliance to the future. However, a detailed comparison of discussions on these internal issues suggests that they are in fact closely intertwined with de-

bates about external challenges. Perceptions of changing external demands and threats influence positions on *who* will have to take the lead in adapting NATO to its future tasks (a more European or US-led NATO), *how much* member states will have to invest in this effort (the perennial question of burden-sharing), *what* shared convictions should guide the alliance's adaptation process (is NATO a community of values or interests?) and *how*, through what norms and procedures, NATO should manage disagreements among its members in this adaptation process.

WHO LEADS? A EUROPEAN NATO?

As already mentioned, the multilateral approach of the new US administration and the rise of China are changing the debate on the relationship between NATO and the EU's security and defence policy. European self-reliance and/or a stronger European pillar within NATO are no longer pursued as a hedge or alternative to a unilateralist and increasingly capricious United States. Instead, more European responsibility for security and defence is increasingly perceived as a necessity to compensate for the likely redirection of American attention and military capabilities towards East Asia. Although pundits expect that the United States will remain engaged in Europe, they nevertheless assume that European states will have to compensate for a future partial withdrawal of US troops and crucial enablers such as drones and heavy-lift capabilities.

Figure 3
National expert discourses on Atlanticism/Europeanism in defence

Romania
United Kingdom
Poland
United States
Canada
Turkey
Italy
Germany
Netherlands
Spain
France

Atlanticism   Europeanism

As a consequence, the boundaries between Europeanists and Atlanticists are becoming blurred. But differences remain. While support for European defence is strongest among experts in France and Spain and – with some gradations – in Italy and Germany, traditionally pro-Atlantic countries such as the Netherlands are also moving towards the European camp. Support for a transatlantic NATO under the leadership of the United States and scepticism towards European defence are still running high among experts in Romania and to a slightly lesser degree in Poland. Turkish scholars are rather critical of both a stronger European voice and American leadership.

HOW MUCH DOES IT TAKE?
REVISITING BURDEN-SHARING

This change of perspective is affecting the debate on burden-sharing. The critique of the 2 per cent metric is fairly widespread among experts, not only in the countries that fall short of this benchmark. Nevertheless, the Biden administration continues to insist on a fairer distribution of burdens, and pundits in Europe acknowledge that European states will have to increase their defence spending to compensate for a possible partial withdrawal of the United States from Europe. Thus, experts in the United States and Europe propose different benchmarks that reflect output and contributions to NATO's missions and operations.

WHAT GUIDES NATO? (RE)DEFINING
THE TRANSATLANTIC COMMUNITY:
VALUES VS INTERESTS?

In the face of a plethora of old and new threats, NATO's *internal* challenge is to reach agreement on the foundations of its community. Recent years have witnessed considerable democratic backsliding within NATO member states, not only through the authoritarian turn in Turkey and the erosion of the rule of law in Poland and Hungary, but also through the rise of right-wing populism in the United States and Western European member states. These different

counter-democratic pressures, as well as debates about NATO's external priorities, give rise to contending narratives about NATO as a community of values. According to the first, which is popular in the United States, but also among experts and government actors in Western European countries, forging a united democratic front externally against authoritarian China demands a reinvigoration of democratic principles also within. According to this view, democratic backsliding *within* NATO member states is a serious challenge that the alliance needs to confront head-on to preserve its common foundations. Other US pundits acknowledge that NATO has been and remains the West's bulwark against authoritarian powers, entailing a common, uncompromising stance toward both Russia and China, but also requiring a certain degree of compromise within. In contrast to both these narratives, Eastern European NATO members in particular, but also French experts, US realists and the majority of Turkish scholars define NATO much more soberly in terms of shared interests rather than values and insist that NATO should compromise on its values to keep countries like Turkey within the alliance.

HOW TO GUIDE?
CONSULTATIONS AND COHERENCE

Related to the debate on values versus interests is the thorny question of national autonomy versus coherence of the alliance. Should NATO strengthen norms of solidarity and prior consultation with a view to increasing coherence even beyond Article 5 issues? Or should NATO tolerate national differences and even provide for the formation of coalitions of the willing within NATO? In this debate, Turkey sits at one end of the spectrum, while European medium powers with an expeditionary tradition also argue with varying degrees in favour of a flexible NATO. At the other end of the spectrum are scholars in Western and Eastern European states who fear that too much national leeway will undermine NATO's cohesion and in the longer term also its collective defence. The Reflection Group and most of our interviewees within the International Secretariat are closer to the latter group, even if the report of the Reflection Group refers to the institutionalization of coalitions.

MIX OR MATCH? WHAT NATIONAL
DISCOURSES IMPLY FOR NATO'S FUTURE(S)

Based on our review of how NATO experts and key external actors discuss the possible evolution of the alliance, we see several alternative futures of NATO on the horizon. As shown in the preceding chapters, NATO officials as well as think tank experts debate many dimensions of NATO policy and argue over the fine-tuning of specific policy proposals. Yet, their different perspectives cluster around three broad visions, which flag different priorities for the alliance's future work. Each of these futures entails opportunities and risks for NATO itself and its ability to reconcile tensions between collective defence, collective security and common security.
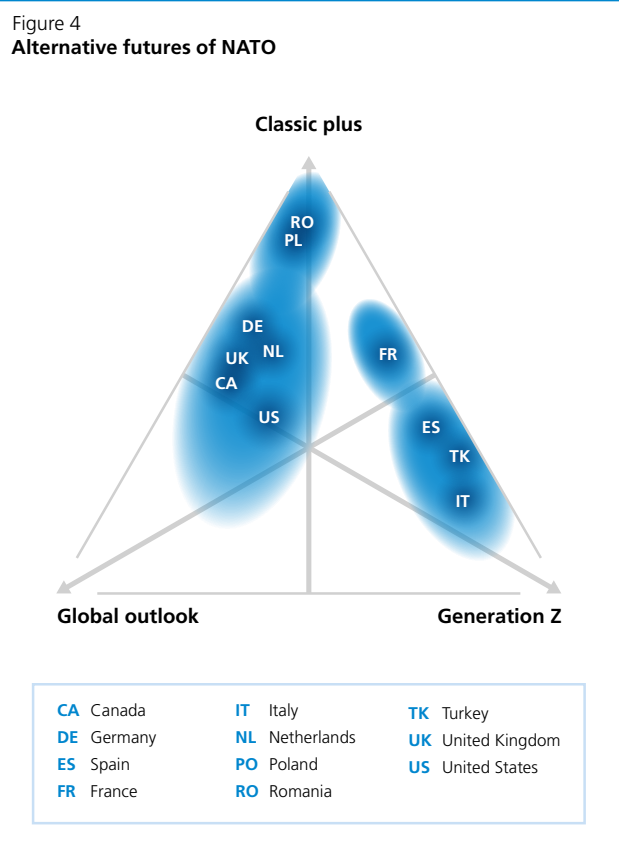
Future 1: NATO Classic Plus

The first vision is the least expansive one and follows the formula »NATO classic plus«. It advocates a return to NATO's roots in refocusing the alliance's efforts on the core task of collective defence, primarily vis-à-vis a newly assertive Russia. While this geographical focus corresponds to the alliance's traditional Cold War posture, the nature of the present-day Russian threat is seen as going beyond the military realm that preoccupied NATO in the twentieth century. As the »plus« in the formula indicates, NATO must address not only the risk of a Russian conventional or nuclear attack, but also threats of hybrid warfare, cyber attacks and disinformation campaigns. The first vision has particularly strong support among Eastern European member states, but also has some vocal advocates in the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, and France.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

In our view, this vision offers opportunities. By focusing on its traditional core task of collective defence, NATO could reinvent itself as an »alliance-in-being«. By just being around, NATO would reassure its members, alleviate the security dilemma in the transatlantic area and would not have to look for new tasks and responsibilities. Moreover, internal conflicts over leadership, NATO's character as an alliance of values or interests, and ways to ensure cohesion with regard to non-Article 5 issues would be less divisive.

This vision, however, also bears the risk of overrating the Russian threat and of stymieing the dialogue part of NATO's dual-track approach. Russia has made remarkable strides in modernizing its forces and will remain a formidable military power.[2] But it also faces serious and structural limits. Its nominal GDP ranges between the Spanish and Italian levels, its economy is stagnant and without much innovative potential, and levels of trust in government are low. Overall, NATO should be able to check potential expansionist Russian ambitions towards its member states. Russia's non-military attempts to destabilize the alliance have achieved mixed results at best. Its cyberattacks, covert operations and disinformation campaigns have largely backfired and have undermined its reputation even in traditionally friendly countries, such as Italy and Spain. Thus, when going back to basics NATO does not need to invest more in its own military security. If anything, NATO should spend available funds more wisely. Instead, NATO should be more imaginative in restarting the dialogue with Moscow and in balancing collective defence and common security. Nuclear arms control and NATO's nuclear doctrine and posture should be

Figure 4
Alternative futures of NATO

CA Canada	**IT** Italy	**TK** Turkey
DE Germany	**NL** Netherlands	**UK** United Kingdom
ES Spain	**PO** Poland	**US** United States
FR France	**RO** Romania	

high on the list of priorities when NATO starts the process leading to a new Strategic Concept. As by far the world's strongest conventional military actor, NATO has a responsibility and should have a strong interest in pursuing an ambitious nuclear disarmament agenda. The Biden administration will propose a sole-purpose doctrine, and expert debates in Canada and other European NATO states show support for such a change of doctrine. NATO's rejection of the TPNW, too, is less solid than it may seem at first glance. In some NATO states, experts and decision-makers are torn between conflicting allegiances: loyalty to NATO and loyalty to their traditional role as promoters of non-proliferation and disarmament. Thus, support for the TPNW runs higher and might become stronger in the future than NATO's official statements suggest. If NATO wants to retain consensus, it should start the debate on the future of nuclear disarmament and its own posture now.

Future 2: NATO with a Global Outlook (and a Stronger European Pillar)

The second vision, pushed most vigorously by US government officials and US think tanks, advocates a NATO with a global outlook. In contrast to discussions about a »global NATO« in the 2000s, the »global« in this second vision refers neither to terrorism and related transnational threats, nor to the kind of large-scale out-of-area interventions we saw in Afghanistan, which would be required to meet them or to project stability. Rather, the primary global dynamic on NATO's contemporary agenda is the ongoing power shift towards China. To address it, NATO does not have to be-

---

2 According to SIPRI, Russian defence spending in 2020 was $61.7 billion. The UK spent $59.2 billion, Germany $52.8 billion and France $52.7 billion. The United States, by contrast, spent an astronomical $778 billion; https://www.sipri.org/publications/2021/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2020. However, analysts assume that based upon purchasing power parity exchange rates, Russia's military spending is much higher that the nominal figures suggest (Meijer and Brooks 2021:37).

come an »Indo-Pacific NATO« in the sense of establishing a military presence in the region. However, it cannot but broaden its strategic outlook beyond its neighbourhood to recognize and tackle the (kinetic and non-kinetic) challenges that China poses to the unity and security of the alliance and its member states. Some of these challenges, such as cyber security or Chinese investments in critical infrastructure, must be addressed on the alliance's own territory, whereas others demand a stronger military component to counter China's presence in the Mediterranean. Still others call for expanding and institutionalizing NATO's network of political and military cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

In our view, the rise of China will inevitably affect NATO's architecture. The European member states would be well advised to prepare in time for a shift of American capabilities and attention towards the Pacific. The major challenge ahead is the transformation of a hegemonic NATO into an alliance with greater European ownership. Beyond this, a global NATO that coordinates policies on China might strengthen the willingness of transatlantic and other democracies to pursue value-based policies and offers the advantage of reducing China's ability to divide and single out individual states and actors for retribution.

Focusing on China, however, might be more divisive than unifying as the United States and European member states are pursuing different approaches towards China. For NATO's European members, China is not (yet) a military threat. As China moves closer to the European region, it challenges Europe's norms, standards and regulatory autonomy, but remains an important state with whom European states will continue to interact. Given this mixture of cooperation and competition and the functional character of policy areas at stake, most Europeans ask whether NATO could add value. Moreover, by broadening its agenda NATO would run the risk of losing focus. Hence, most Europeans prefer the EU as an appropriate venue for devising responses.

A NATO with a global outlook might pose other risks as well. By emphasizing democracy as a rallying cry to mobilize internal unity against autocratic China, NATO might systematically undercut common security and its ability to contribute to global order and stability in a world in which fewer and fewer people live in democracies and where global functional challenges, such as climate change, demand cooperation with non-democratic states.

Future 3: NATO Generation Z

The third vision, less prominent than the first two but recently gaining support in the United States and Western European NATO member states, is that of a NATO Generation Z. In this vision, the alliance has to expand both its definition of security and its own competences to tackle a wide array of non-traditional threats. This includes the projection of

stability agenda, on one hand, and societal resilience against climate change, pandemics and other global health risks, on the other. NATO must develop this competence to address these new security challenges not only because of their inherent importance but also to secure the political support of younger generations who place much more emphasis on these issues than have previously dominant societal and political actors.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

The appeal of this vision lies in the fact that most external challenges confronting member states are non-military in character and not directed against their territorial integrity. The risks of broadening NATO's agenda, however, are twofold. If the alliance retains its specific culture as a collective defence organization it would run the risk of inadvertently providing militarized solutions to problems that require a different response. The tendency to equate disinformation campaigns, including cyber attacks on civilian networks, with hybrid military strategies is a case in point. The inadequacy of NATO as a provider of stability is another example. Moreover, if NATO declares responsibility for a variety of challenges to societal resilience, it will inevitably lose its focus, risks dissipating its energies and might disappoint expectations and fail in what it tried to achieve in the first place: support from the societies of member states. Societies expect NATO troops to reduce their CO_2 footprint, respect gender equality and even to defuse myths about NATO itself. They do not expect and would not approve a leading role for NATO beyond tasks that are clearly linked to collective defence.

REFERENCES

Meijer, Hugo and Brooks, Stephen G. (2021): Illusions of Autonomy. Why Europe cannot provide for its security if the United States pulls back, in: *International Security* 45 (4): 7–43.