



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**POLITICAL COMMITTEE (PC)**  
Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations  
(PCTR)

**NATO @ 70: WHY THE  
ALLIANCE REMAINS  
INDISPENSABLE**

**Report**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The current relevance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been questioned. The Alliance prevailed against a would-be hegemonic communist dictatorship through the strength of collective will and shared values. This was a truly historic achievement. The fact that more countries want to join the Alliance is a testament to the significance of that triumph of liberal democracy and its continued relevance. NATO has guaranteed peace and security in Europe for more than two generations, and that value proposition remains essential. The Western Alliance can take proud stock of its accomplishments at the age of 70.

2. However, past achievements do not guarantee future success, particularly in the rapidly changing security environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has successfully adapted to this constantly changing security environment. The Alliance has been crucial to consolidating peace and democracy across Europe and managing crises from the Western Balkans to Afghanistan. As NATO celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, it is worthwhile to celebrate its achievements and consider its future trajectory. The latter is of particular importance as the Alliance is facing the most complex security environment in its history, defined by both external and internal challenges.

3. The purpose of this report is twofold; first, to stress that NATO's success is not only due to its military capabilities, but also to the fact that it is an alliance underpinned by common values. This emphasis on shared values has been pivotal in maintaining Alliance cohesion for seven decades, and it will be decisive for continued success. We must continue to insist that Allies uphold the founding democratic principles of the Alliance and consider support for democratic institutions as a condition for membership in the Alliance. To that end, NATO must develop the capability to reinforce these values among its member states.

4. The second purpose of this report is to demonstrate the value of collective defence and to provide a platform for discussion for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on the future security environment and NATO's role in addressing the threats facing member states. This report has benefitted from the responses of national member delegations of the NATO PA to the inquiry initiated by your Rapporteur and the CDS Rapporteur, Ulla Schmidt (Germany). The Rapporteurs would like to thank the delegations for their valuable contributions as they provided concrete insights into the role of NATO for the security of their respective countries and for the Euro-Atlantic region.

5. Your Rapporteur wants to thank the members of the Political Committee for their valuable comments and contributions in finalising this report.

## II. NATO'S CONTRIBUTION TO EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY AND STABILITY

6. Through steadfastness, solidarity, and shared values, the Alliance has achieved the longest peace in European history, safeguarding security and stability on the continent for more than two generations.

7. NATO was established as a political and military alliance to address an external threat. The Alliance saved democracy itself from would-be Communist domination and aggression – and did so without ever firing a shot. Collective deterrence proved effective. Not once during the Cold War was Article 5 invoked. In fact, the only time the Allies invoked the Article 5 mutual defence commitment was in response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. The invocation of Article 5 served as a clear expression of solidarity among Allies.

8. NATO was a central part of the multilateral system that emerged after the Second World War. At its core, NATO's focus was on deterrence and the defence of its member states against an outside

attack. The Washington Treaty of 1949 was an arrangement that took security above the national level. It made national military forces interoperable and created structures and processes that furthered joint consultation and decision making. By becoming the central forum for the dialogue on foreign, security, and defence policy, the Alliance enabled nations to see national security as inseparable from Allied security.

9. NATO also effectively made the United States and Canada European powers. Then, as now, NATO was about reassurance of its member states. Together with what would later become the European Union, it was instrumental in reconciling former enemies. It was a catalyst for Germany's recovery and peaceful integration into the West after the Second World War. The security umbrella provided by NATO has continued to be a key driver of European integration.

10. Though the Alliance is often considered a military organisation, it is much more than that: NATO is first and foremost a political organisation underpinned by close military cooperation. It was built on shared values and standards, a commitment to democracy and individual liberty, human rights, and the rule of law. And by providing security it also enabled its member countries to thrive economically and politically.

11. NATO's role has evolved throughout its 70-year history. It has adapted and reinvented itself to match changing security environments. This is demonstrated clearly through the four historical periods of NATO's evolution.

#### **A. THE COLD WAR – RAISON D'ÊTRE**

12. During the Cold War, NATO's focus was collective defence and deterrence. The core of the Washington Treaty of 1949 was to protect and defend the democracies of Europe and North America against an attack from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. When the Soviet Union did test the commitment and resolve of the Allies, NATO rose to the challenge and maintained the credibility of its collective deterrence. During this period, territorial defence and deterrence was NATO's single focus and its area of responsibility and military posture were limited to North America and Western Europe.

#### **B. THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD – THE PEACE DIVIDEND**

13. NATO adapted to the disorderly post-Cold War period, in which it lacked a singular defining threat. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact led to drastic reductions in defence spending, the downscaling of military capabilities, and the reallocation of funds to domestic spending, the so-called "peace dividend". With the Soviet Union gone and the Alliance's original strategic focus on territorial defence less important, the question of "Whither NATO?" was frequently debated in member state capitals. But new security threats and the inability of other relevant actors like the EU and the UN to address them successfully proved the continued value of NATO. More specifically, the failure of the EU and the UN to end the wars in former Yugoslavia demonstrated that NATO was indispensable to containing and managing security crises on the continent. With its focus on collective defence diminished, NATO shifted to "out-of-area" crisis management operations. In fact, the Alliance became one of the most important actors in this field.

14. Another significant change was that NATO became a bridge builder. The Allies reached out to former adversaries and engaged in partnerships with the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. These partnerships were a key element of the transformation of the Alliance towards a flexible defence organisation able to project security and stability beyond its borders. NATO partnerships were also a key part of NATO's "Open Door" policy, the enlargement policy which led to the accession of ten new member states in 1999 and 2004.

### **C. POST 9/11 – THE THREAT POSED BY TERRORIST GROUPS**

15. In response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the Allies invoked NATO's Article 5 collective defence clause for the first time in the history of the Alliance. The fight against international terrorism moved to the top of NATO's agenda. The Alliance adapted its agenda and its military and political capabilities to confront non-state terrorist groups and related challenges such as failed states and maritime piracy. Consequently, NATO significantly extended both its geographical reach and its range of operations. NATO's engagement in Afghanistan was a key driver of the evolution of the Alliance towards lighter, more mobile, and more lethal forces. NATO remains engaged in Afghanistan to prevent the country from once again becoming a breeding ground for terrorism. The NATO mission in Afghanistan dominated defence planning in all Allied countries, and it has constituted a core mission for NATO since the early 2000s.

16. Cooperation in Afghanistan has also facilitated the rapid development of NATO's relationships with countries outside the Euro-Atlantic region and international organisations. NATO has served as a focal point for the international coalition of countries making contributions to the effort in Afghanistan and led the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which at its height included 50 NATO and partner nations.

### **D. A RESURGENT AND ASSERTIVE RUSSIA - REFOCUSING ON COLLECTIVE DEFENCE AND DETERRENCE**

17. The current adaptation challenge for NATO is that it must address a resurgent and aggressive Russia. Russia's attacks on its neighbours, including the 2008 war against Georgia and the occupation of Georgia's territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region, the forcible and illegal annexation of Crimea and invasion into the eastern parts of Ukraine and their subsequent occupation, and the Russian occupation of parts of the Republic of Moldova, have again made collective defence and deterrence a core priority for NATO. Thus, NATO has turned its attention once again to territorial defence and a security environment in which the commitments of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty need to be bolstered by a credible deterrence and defence posture.

18. Russia's aggression required NATO to relearn and reapply the lessons of Cold War deterrence. NATO Allies are now focused on adapting their military capabilities to deter any potential Russian threat. To that end, NATO has expanded the NATO Response Force (NRF) and established the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The continuous deployment on a rotational basis of troops from 19 member countries in the Baltic states and Poland (Enhanced Forward Presence) and the increased presence in Southeastern Europe (Tailored Forward Presence) are visible signs of solidarity among the Allies and contribute to a balanced and robust NATO deterrence and defence posture. Additionally, the United States has provided USD 16 billion for the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), which reflects the continued and increased US commitment to European Allies following Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova.

## **III. AN UNRULY WORLD**

19. Throughout its history, NATO has demonstrated that it can adapt to a changing international security environment. Today, NATO is facing both traditional and emerging security challenges that will test the relevance and enduring nature of the Alliance. This includes a resurgent and aggressive Russia, which is testing NATO directly with attacks on domestic democratic institutions and violations of the sovereign territory of countries on NATO's periphery. Instability in the South and fragile states pose a direct threat to some Allies and have a concrete impact on Euro-Atlantic security. And global threats emanating from countries like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK – North Korea) and re-emerging areas of military interest like the Arctic region are also relevant for NATO security (see the Rapporteur's previous reports: [North Korea's Challenge to International Security](#) and [NATO and Security in the Arctic](#)). Finally, perhaps the most elusive but also the most daunting challenges are generated by an increasingly polarised stance of large parts of our populations on

many political, economic, and societal issues. These dynamics certainly challenge and even have the potential to erode trust in our democratic political institutions.

20. Under Vladimir Putin, Russia has become a revisionist power, attempting to re-establish its position as an important global power on par with the United States. Russia's revisionist and illegal actions, including the aggression against Georgia, and the ongoing occupation of Georgia's territories, and Ukraine, and the illegal annexation of Crimea and the occupation of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, put an end to 25 years of Allied efforts to build a genuine strategic partnership. The Kremlin has disregarded international norms and prioritised and justified the unilateral use of force, and it continues to attempt to weaken Western democracies. Russia's aggression is not limited to the sphere of hard security; rather, the Kremlin uses all tools at its disposal to undermine NATO and the stability of NATO member and partner countries through cyber activities and extensive social media, but also with more traditional tools like broadcasts. The Kremlin aims to create a new security architecture in Europe with Russia as the dominant player.

21. Regarding the threats from the South, widespread instability in Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan is generating humanitarian crises and multifaceted terrorist threats and forcing mass migration. Although largely defeated on the battlefields of Iraq and Syria, Daesh continues to pose a serious security threat. Defeating Daesh and other terrorist groups requires broad international cooperation, including among NATO Allies and partner countries (see the Rapporteur's previous report: [Security in the Gulf](#)). Additionally, poor governance in large swaths of the Middle East and Africa enable terrorist groups to spread instability and insecurity, which threatens the Alliance and partner countries in the South.

22. The main drivers behind the security challenges to NATO's southern flank result from a perpetual state of armed conflict, radicalisation, religious extremism, and an unprecedented degradation of state structures. A lack of economic opportunities, social inequality, and high levels of corruption are also drivers of instability throughout the region, which is further exacerbated by environmental degradation. As an organisation, NATO has few tools that can help to address these underlying causes for instability and conflict. However, NATO can leverage its partnerships with governments in the region and other multilateral organisations, such as the EU and UN, to help create the conditions for long-term stability.

23. Disinformation and the weaponisation of information are increasingly a part of the international landscape of crises and conflicts. Trends in the information domain facilitate the propagation of false and distorted stories, thereby offering new opportunities for those who seek to destabilise our democratic societies. Rapidly developing technology and the internet provide even non-state actors with disruptive capability, with far-reaching implications for the Allies. More generally, a growing number of state and non-state actors are developing their cyber capabilities to gain an advantage, including by stealing information, influencing social media audiences, or crippling critical infrastructure. Cyberspace is a battlefield. Emerging technologies in this space, such as [artificial intelligence](#), have the potential to disrupt our economies as well as our societies – with profound implications for our national security. In the past, NATO always had the [technological edge](#) over its adversaries. This advantage is no longer guaranteed.

24. The international power distribution is shifting fundamentally. The rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC), with its breath-taking economic and technological development and its rapidly increasing military capabilities, poses a particular challenge. China is already asserting itself on international and regional security issues, including in areas that are important for NATO, such as the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and the Arctic. China has inaugurated a "Belt and Road" programme across dozens of central Asian and African nations as a direct competition to Western aid. Moreover, China, like Russia, does not share the same values as NATO Allies. Both countries seek to undermine the existing international rules-based order that NATO countries helped build and now support as a means to stability and certainty in the international system.

25. Authoritarian powers like Russia and China challenge the West in several ways. They seek to replace or destroy the existing rules-based international order and do not shy away from attempting to gain political, economic, or other leverage over other nations. They may, as is already the case with Russia, also employ hybrid campaigns to divide and destabilise western societies in NATO and partner countries. This is already evident in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, where Russia has sought to undermine necessary reforms and to interfere with elections (the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Ukraine being the most recent examples). In addition, both China and Russia have territorial disputes with neighbouring countries and do not shy away from coercion or threats to expand their influence. This increases the risk of regional conflicts that can impact the security of the Allies.

26. Threats to NATO values are not emanating solely from our adversaries. Political movements that pay little heed to democratic institutions or the rule of law have gained traction in many countries of the Alliance. These movements have championed national approaches over international cooperation. However, in our interconnected security environment, national approaches are not always effective, nor are they conducive to achieving solutions to global issues such as, for example, the challenges posed by climate change. On the contrary, transnational challenges, such as the migrant crisis and terrorism, require close international cooperation.

#### **IV. NATO – IN PERENNIAL CRISIS MODE?**

27. When the Alliance was founded in 1949, the question of its longevity was uncertain. The success of NATO was never guaranteed, and the democratic nature of the Alliance has always meant that disagreements among Allies could undermine cohesion.

28. At any given time in its history, NATO has seemed in crisis. A perennial point of discussion has been burden sharing, particularly the relative imbalance in defence spending and military capabilities within NATO. The burden sharing debate is as old as the Alliance itself, dating back to the early 1950s when the Alliance agreed on its ambitious “Lisbon Force Goals”, which were never met. The Suez crisis of 1956, the crisis over a new nuclear strategy – “flexible response” – in the mid-1960s, and the departure of France from NATO’s integrated military structure in 1966 were all events that brought NATO to a breaking point. The discussion and implementation of the “dual-track decision” on intermediate-range nuclear forces in the late 1970s and early 1980s were also difficult moments for the Allies. The vitriolic exchanges among senior Allied leaders in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War also elicited headlines claiming that NATO solidarity had faltered – possibly for good.

29. However, the Alliance has weathered these crises to become the most successful security organisation in world history. NATO has proven effective on both the military and the political fronts. Militarily, because collective deterrence has protected member nations against outside attacks by a hostile military power. Politically, because the Alliance has continued to grow through an enlargement policy based on the proliferation of democracy in Europe.

30. Political will and the ability to compromise have helped the Allies overcome differences and find common ground. Political leadership and, above all, the recognition on both sides of the Atlantic that member nation security and NATO are inextricably intertwined ensured that the Alliance did not become a relic of history.

## **V. PREPARING NATO FOR AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

31. However, alliances need tending, particularly if the threats to our liberal democracies originate not only from without but also from within. While a resurgent and aggressive Russia poses primarily a renewed but not unfamiliar threat, rising nationalism poses a challenge to the Alliance from within. In an increasingly unpredictable and unstable world, the Alliance finds itself, once again, at a crossroads. NATO remains a source of stability in this changing world and the need for the transatlantic security partnership, based on common values, norms, and principles, is as great as ever.

### **A. MAINTAINING THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ALLIANCE - THE ROLE OF MILITARY CAPABILITIES**

32. NATO has been the most successful security organisation in part because it has been credible. That credibility was based on NATO's military strength – i.e. on the military capabilities of the Allies – and a common unity of purpose. The Soviet Union was deterred because NATO's conventional and nuclear forces could match any challenge and because NATO showed unity and solidarity despite occasional internal discord. Though the threats have evolved, the principle of credibility must be preserved for the Alliance to remain effective. NATO's military capabilities ensured that no NATO Ally was ever attacked by any other state, and the strength of the Alliance also brought the Balkan wars to an end. The best proof that NATO's deterrence is successful is that more countries want to join. Without any doubt, applicant countries' key motivation to join is that they want to be secure; they consider membership in the Alliance as the best possible security guarantee. NATO's deterrence is successful because the combined military capabilities of NATO Allies outmatch that of any other nation. No other country can field as many troops, tanks, aircraft, and ships as the 29 NATO member states. In addition, Allied defence expenditures dwarf those of others. For example, in 2017, the defence spending of NATO nations was USD 882 billion, compared to China's USD 228 billion and Russia's USD 55 billion. Therefore, NATO enjoys a fundamental advantage in terms of aggregate national power that would be relevant in any conflict.

33. Allied member states have recognised the need to improve their military capabilities in the face of Russia's efforts to undermine NATO and ultimately destroy the existing Euro-Atlantic security architecture. NATO's response to Russian aggression as evidenced by the decisions made at the Wales, Warsaw, and Brussels Summits will help the Alliance address capability shortfalls. The defence investment pledge and the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) are major steps in the strengthening of NATO's deterrence and defence. The RAP increases the readiness level of NATO's reaction forces, and it demonstrates the resolve of NATO Allies to match their rhetoric with the appropriate military posture. There is also tangible progress on Allied defence spending and military equipment modernisation, with Allies expected to add an additional USD 100 billion to defence spending by the end of next year. These efforts must be maintained, and some Allies will need to redouble their efforts. Implementing the defence investment pledge is crucial for Alliance cohesion, and the failure to do so would raise questions about member countries' political will to meet today and tomorrow's security challenges, which could risk undermining the unity of the Alliance. Allied governments must demonstrate to their citizens that freedom and peace require investments and unshakeable commitments. The governments must generate the political will necessary to invest in their countries' armed forces in a manner commensurate with their responsibilities to NATO.

### **B. THE NEED FOR INNOVATION**

34. The Cold War ended 30 years ago, and the Alliance has been adapting to a constantly changing security environment ever since. The ability to adapt is a permanent requirement for the Alliance. Global trends such as shifts in economic and military power, demographics, and increasing competition for scarce resources require NATO to continuously revisit its strategic outlook. And new military threats have emerged from a resurgent Russia in Eastern Europe, the Arctic, the Baltics, and the Middle East.



35. New information and communication technologies impact all aspects of life, including contemporary political systems, international relations, and global security. These new technologies are both a boon and a bane for our nations, as they make communication much easier but are also misused for disinformation and intimidation campaigns. As cyberspace becomes increasingly important, cyber defence and security must be part of NATO's core task of collective defence. While NATO made cyberspace a domain of operations at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, each Ally remains responsible for its own cyber defences. NATO Allies should evaluate if and how NATO could take on a greater role in facilitating cooperation on cyber defence and increase support for member countries.

36. Some progress has already been made in this direction as NATO has taken on a role in countering hybrid threats. In this context, Allied leaders agreed in July 2018 to set up counter-hybrid support teams, which provide tailored targeted assistance to Allies, upon their request, in preparing for and responding to hybrid activities. Moreover, NATO has strengthened cooperation with its partners, in particular with the European Union, in this area. Following the 2016 Joint EU/NATO Declaration, the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Hybrid CoE) was established in Helsinki, with the aim to assist member states and institutions in understanding and defending against hybrid threats.

37. The security of NATO Allies depends on [NATO maintaining its technological edge](#). In today's world, technological change is occurring ever more rapidly; emerging technologies have the potential to disrupt the global strategic balance. In this increasingly uncertain, unstable, and complex security environment, the Allies need to increase efforts to maintain their technological edge. NATO needs to adapt defence research and development (R&D) and innovation to current and future strategic and technological realities, and it needs to improve the coordination of these initiatives within the Alliance and among Allies.

### **C. PARTNERSHIPS AND THE NEED TO CONTINUE THE “OPEN DOOR” POLICY**

38. Geography is much less of a defining factor for security than in the past. This is particularly the case with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber threats, and hybrid warfare. Therefore, in a globalised environment, the security of NATO member countries is also affected by developments outside its traditional geographical realm. As NATO and NATO Allies are interested in a stable international security environment, the Alliance has established strategic partnerships. The Framework for the South is a case in point. Under the Framework, NATO's remit – as well as its expertise and capabilities – remains limited. NATO cannot address the underlying causes of instability in the MENA region, which are driving instability in the South and are primarily economic, environmental, and social in nature – and are exacerbated by poor governance. However, partnerships, such as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Partnership for Peace (PfP), the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), help the Alliance address the underlying issues that ultimately manifest into a security threat to the Alliance. NATO partnerships are “strategic assets”. Partners are not only force multipliers; they also help stabilise regions beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. Partnerships are thus an increasingly important part of NATO's approach to complex challenges in regions on the periphery of Europe and beyond.

39. Since the establishment of its partnership policy, the Alliance has developed partnerships with more than 40 countries and international institutions. Partnerships have become a central part of the political and military agenda of the Alliance, and they are crucial for two of NATO's three core missions: crisis management and cooperative security. NATO partners have made meaningful contributions to NATO-led operations and are necessary to tackling issues like nuclear proliferation, international terrorism, failed states, cyber crime, or maritime piracy. In return, NATO provides partners with training and capacity-building support, including through Individual Partnership and Cooperation programmes tailored to partners' specific security needs and priorities.

40. Partnerships also help to avoid overburdening NATO. For example, the Joint Declaration signed between NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the EU's High Representative for

Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini at the 2018 Brussels Summit outlines areas of cooperation on hybrid threats, cybersecurity, and defence industry research. Developing this relationship going forward will help NATO take advantage of work being done by the EU on areas of common interests. One of these common interests is the ability to move forces, equipment, and supplies as fast and efficiently as possible in an emergency. Both NATO and the EU have a shared interest in increasing their military mobility, but in the past NATO-EU collaboration in this area has been hampered by different standards in the exchange of classified information. Moreover, consultations on cross-border mobility have only been possible in informal staff-to-staff settings. More progress on [cross-border mobility](#) within the Alliance is essential to NATO's collective security mission.

41. NATO's partnerships complement the "Open Door" of the Alliance. The prospect of further enlargement and the spirit of cooperative security promote stability and security in Europe. NATO's "Open Door" policy also stresses the democratic control of the armed forces and thus has a "socialisation effect" on aspirant countries. The success of NATO and the fact that more countries want to join is a testament to liberal democracy, and we must continue to be uncompromising on the values we seek to uphold through enlargement.

42. The Alliance must continue to support its partners in the East – Ukraine and Georgia in particular – against Russian interference and encourage other aspiring members. The ascension of Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia sends a powerful message: NATO refuses to accept a Russian veto over which countries enter the Alliance. At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, Allies agreed that both Ukraine and Georgia would become a member of NATO. Georgia and Ukraine have practical tools to prepare for membership, such as the NATO-Georgia Commission and the NATO-Ukraine Commission, the Annual National Programmes, and the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package as well as the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine. By substantially contributing to the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and joining NATO efforts towards strengthening Black Sea security, both Georgia and Ukraine play a significant role in strengthening common Euro-Atlantic security. The Alliance must continue to support Georgia and Ukraine in their membership process.

#### **D. COMMUNICATING THE VALUES AND VALUE PROPOSITION OF THE ALLIANCE**

43. An Alliance based on common interests and values must communicate in an appropriate, timely, accurate, and responsive manner on its evolving roles, objectives, and missions, as was stated ten years ago at the 2009 Strasbourg/Kehl 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit. Promoting awareness of and building understanding and support for NATO's policies, operations, and activities are essential to the political cohesion of the Alliance.

44. The values upon which the Alliance has been founded are being challenged by external enemies of democracy and by internal proponents of illiberalism. These forces aim to undermine the faith in and political support for our Allied democracies. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the resilience of our societies against these malign influences or we risk gradually undermining the faith of our citizens in Western values, systems, and leadership. How NATO Allies respond to those threats will determine the future not only of this Alliance but of the West more generally.

45. In an age of "fake news" and misinformation, stressing the value that NATO generates for the security of our territories and citizens is crucially important. Many of our citizens take security for granted. A better understanding of a more demanding security environment contributes to improved burden sharing across the Alliance. NATO and the governments of NATO member countries need to better inform about the roles and mission of NATO.

46. Liberal democracies are threatened by political, anti-establishment movements and leaders on both the right and the left of the political spectrum. The political upheaval generated by these movements is often based on economic dissatisfaction and anxiety about rapid social and societal change. Therefore, some of the steps necessary to respond to these threats to Western values are

not to be found in the realm of security policy. Rather, many of the answers must emerge from political, economic, and financial system reforms.

47. Political dialogue and consultation define NATO's decision-making process. This dialogue includes disagreements. But these disagreements are not a sign of Alliance fatigue, at least as long as all Allies demonstrate the political will to advance the goals of the Alliance and accept their fair share of the burden. Decision making among the soon-to-be 30 member nations can be cumbersome and frustrating at times, but this is the essence of an Alliance that is based on shared democratic values – vigorous debate fuels vigorous democracies.

48. Cohesion among Allies will eventually depend on the political will of member states to coordinate their security policies through NATO and on their ability to ensure that resources match NATO missions. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly plays a central role in building unity and solidarity among the member states. It also plays a significant role in linking NATO with the public and in bringing its experience into national parliamentary debates. NATO and the NATO PA should therefore continue to deepen cooperation to better communicate with the general public and enhance general understanding of the Alliance's policies and missions.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

49. NATO remains as essential today as in the past 70 years. The Alliance has been the prime catalyst for close transatlantic policy cooperation and coordination – which have been pivotal in securing peace, prosperity, and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. In a rapidly changing international security environment, NATO remains indispensable to achieving this goal. However, securing Allied homelands and maintaining an effective and credible deterrence requires military capabilities and the political resolve to agree on common action. Credible military capabilities and unity of purpose are the pillars on which Euro-Atlantic security is built.

50. The value of NATO is more than the sum of its parts. It acts as a force-multiplier for Western democracies and enables member states to advance shared security interests. NATO remains the best vehicle for Allies to pursue their own national interests. Therefore, Allies should approach security challenges with the same resolve with which they pursue their own individual national security, because the two are highly interconnected. One cannot separate the future of NATO from the future of the West as we know or want it. NATO is both a political and military alliance. It is not a "bad deal" for either the United States or any of the Allies. Our influence and the future of a liberal, rules-based international environment depend on close political and economic cooperation among the nations of the transatlantic Alliance.

51. Recommendation #1: Update the NATO Strategic Concept. To ensure the value of NATO to member state national security is demonstrated clearly, the Alliance must remain at the vanguard of meeting emerging threats. To this end, the NATO Strategic Concept, last updated in 2010, must be revamped to reflect the new realities in the international security environment. For example, the current Strategic Concept notes that NATO-Russian cooperation "contributes to creating a common space of peace, stability and security". This is obviously no longer the case. Moreover, the PRC is increasingly active internationally, including in regions that directly affect the security interests of NATO, such as the Balkans and the MENA region. Beijing is pursuing policies that are of concern to the Allies and the international community more generally. The Alliance should put the PRC on its radar. Finally, greater emphasis should be given to cyber and hybrid threats, the latter of which does not receive a single mention in the current Concept.

52. The need for a close transatlantic Alliance based on military capabilities and common values is as great as ever. We are faced with both external and internal challenges in an environment crowded with misinformation and disinformation. The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the principles and commitments that have made the Alliance the most successful security organisation in history. It would be insidious and corrosive to allow Allies to mimic those who

we oppose – the enemies of liberal democracy. The single most effective thing we can do to address the external and internal challenges and reinforce the strength of our collective will is to be vigilant and police ourselves to ensure that Allies live up to our shared values – democracy, individual liberty, and support for the rule of law. Governments must effectively communicate that will to adversaries and Allied citizens alike.

53. Recommendation #2: In an effort to rededicate the Alliance to the shared democratic values that constitute its founding principles, the report recommends that NATO establish a Democratic Resiliency Coordination Centre (DRCC) with the explicit purpose of helping member states strengthen democratic institutions. The DRCC would serve as a resource for challenges to the common values shared by member states. In this context, it would provide advice and assistance to member states on election integrity and security, judicial independence, press freedom, and other issues important to maintaining a vibrant democracy. The Centre would be resourced to conduct research and promulgate findings on challenges facing member states' democratic institutions and ways to tackle these challenges. The DRCC would engage in partnerships with organisations and countries able to provide democracy assistance. This Centre would give such assistance programmes the imprimatur of NATO and send a clear message that democratic health and Alliance security are linked.

54. As part of this effort, the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence and the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence must be reinvigorated and adequately resourced to support democracy resiliency programmes in member states. NATO should also evaluate how it can further deepen its cooperation with the EU on defending against cyber attacks and hybrid threats. The exchanges between NATO and EU cyber incident response teams that are taking place on policy updates and best practices are positive; both organisations should look into areas where cooperation can be expanded.

55. To develop the NATO-EU relationship further and improve military mobility, the Alliance and the EU should establish a joint Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Military Mobility similar to the one that already exists on Hybrid Threats. Such a CoE would allow participating countries of the Alliance, and eventually also NATO partner countries, to develop best practices together and facilitate the transfer of military forces and equipment in Europe.

56. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly can also play a pivotal role in advancing Alliance cohesion. It can help educate different national constituencies on why the Alliance is not only still necessary and effective today, but paramount to our respective national security. In this context, your Rapporteur wants to stress the important contribution of the Assembly's Working Group on Education and Communication about NATO, which is focusing its activities on devising active and innovative in ways of reaching out to the young generation and increasing its awareness of global security and NATO's role for Euro-Atlantic stability in particular.

57. In conclusion, NATO has an important mission, and it remains as relevant and essential as ever. The security challenges the Alliance must confront are more complex, but they are no less compelling. The endurance of our shared mission is owed not only to the military cohesion of the Alliance, but also to our collective commitment to strong democratic values and governance.

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