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NATO'S DEFENCE AND RELATED SECURITY CAPACITY BUILDING (DCB) INITIATIVE

Report

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I.   INTRODUCTION

1.   NATO has a long history of working with partner nations on security sector reform. NATO outreach in the wake of the Cold War to former Warsaw Pact adversaries set the tone of the absolute gains the Alliance sees in expanding its cooperative security outreach – cooperation builds trust and extends the area of stability for all involved.

2.   NATO's bilateral efforts to help partners reform, strengthen, and streamline defence institutions, and other governing bodies overseeing them, have taken on many different forms since the early post-Cold War days. Successful cooperative security outreach has extended Allied best practices in nations and regions across the globe. NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept identified cooperative security, along with collective defence and crisis response, as a core task essential to guarantee Alliance peace and security.

3.   NATO understood the necessity, however, to adapt its approach to cooperative security after a series of significant security shocks: Russia's military aggression against Georgia in 2008 and then against Ukraine in 2014 confirmed to Allies that they no longer had a willing partner in cooperation with Russia, and, in fact, Moscow had the intention of competing against Allies to undermine their interests whenever and wherever possible. In the Middle East, the fulgurant Daesh also upended the territorial integrity of another key partner, Iraq, and had resonating effects throughout the region and beyond, as renewed violence pushed new waves of displaced populations out of their regions. The increasing number of security challenges to key NATO partners made it clear that security challenges in the regions surrounding NATO can and do have a direct impact on Alliance security.

4.   Russia's continued creeping occupation of Georgia's provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the illegal annexation of Crimea and military intervention in the east of Ukraine, coupled with the rise of Daesh in Iraq and Syria and the waves of terrorism it inspired, also made it clear the future would likely hold more of such security shocks and challenges in NATO's surrounding neighbourhoods. As such, the Alliance moved to make cooperative security a function of the collective defence efforts once again receiving the bulk of its attention.

5.   One key means of doing so was via the announcement of a new bilateral defence capacity building initiative at the 2014 Summit in Wales – the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative – which was designed to focus on intense defence and security sector cooperation between NATO Allies and potentially vulnerable strategic partners.

6.   Today, NATO's DCB initiative is an integral part of the core of NATO's cooperative security outreach with partners. The programme allows NATO Allies to focus on working very closely with select partners to make their defence institutions and, therefore, armed forces stronger, more capable and resilient. The drive of the initiative is to focus support on those areas where existing tools are not capable of responding to the scope and focus of desired cooperation to deliver tailor-made, effective defence and related security sector support that comes with the strong political backing of Allies. The motto defence experts use for the DCB initiative in the hallways of the International Secretariat in Brussels is *One nation, One plan*. This report will review the history of NATO's bilateral cooperative security outreach, and then highlight efforts being made in the current five DCB recipients. It will also endeavour to underscore persistent challenges to making NATO's defence capacity building initiative more effective. It will conclude with a set of recommendations for NATO parliamentarians to consider.

II. THE RISE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SECTOR REFORM POLICY: REFINING OUTREACH TO MEET INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS' NEEDS

7.   The increased prevalence of complex security challenges emanating from failed/failing states and civil wars in the wake of the Cold War forced international policymakers to tie development assistance and security issues together. Via coordinated and cross-sector security sector reform[1] (SSR) efforts, many Allies and partners sought to anchor stability in transitioning and conflict affected countries (Eckhard, 2016). While initial approaches were more ad hoc, coordinated SSR efforts streamlined with practice and time.

8.   A key lesson drawn from initial SSR efforts was the necessity of a viable local partner with whom Allies, and partners could work on tailored reform efforts to suit the needs of the local government. Close political cooperation between SSR advisors and recipients allowed for better local ownership, which in turn made the reformed local national security institutions guarantee longer-lasting stability. Poorly implemented SSR investments, it was found, often led to the perpetuation of security sector dysfunction (Eckhard, 2016).

9.   It is not difficult to understand how dysfunctional and corrupt security institutions pose a threat to regional stability. Not only can they become havens for organised crime and terrorism, but, in extremis, can be significant factors in a state's (re)descent into civil conflict. By contrast, effective security institutions foster an environment ripe for economic development and foreign investments, which in turn help reduce poverty and create enduring peace and stability (Caparini, 2002).

A. DEFINING SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

10.   The NATO PA works in close cooperation with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) on SSR-related initiatives throughout the year. A good working definition of SSR guiding the understanding of the initiatives is articulated well as: "the political and technical process of improving state and human security by making security provision, management and oversight more effective and more accountable, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights" (DCAF, 2015a).

11.   Effective SSR often relies on a high degree of external actor involvement. International organisations, local and national governments, INGOs and bilateral state-to-state engagements contribute to SSR implementation via the provision of critical assistance, advice, and support for necessary internal reform. Yet, as noted above, the critical variable to effective and enduring SSR is a viable political partnership with the host nation.

12.   NATO has a long record of supporting SSR implementation in transitioning countries: The Alliance led critical SSR processes across Central and Eastern European as many of the region's nations vied for NATO membership in the post-Cold War era (Caparini, 2002). NATO's membership action plans for aspiring members drew up common standards as well as tailor-made security sector reforms as a requirement for entry into the Alliance[2]. NATO also developed and deployed a range of missions and initiatives in defence and security related reform as part of its cooperative security efforts with partner nations in its near neighbourhood and beyond (Diaz-Plaja, 2018).

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[1]   The security sector itself is defined quite broadly, a non-exhaustive list incorporates the nation's executive branch, the parliament, the government ministries, the military, local and national law enforcement, the intelligence community, the justice system, and civil emergency response.

[2]   The following principles guide NATO in its SSR cooperation frameworks with partners: Democratic control of defence activities; civilian participation in developing defence and security policy; legislative and judicial oversight of the defence sector; comprehensive procedures to assess security risks and national defence requirements; optimised management of defence ministries and agencies with responsibility for defence matters; compliance with internationally accepted norms and practices established; effective and reliable personnel structures and practices; effective and efficient financial, planning, and resource allocation procedures; economically viable management of defence spending; and, strengthened international cooperation and good neighbourly relations in defence and security matters (DCAF, 2017).

13.   The following is a brief review of the evolution of NATO's cooperative security outreach programmes with individual partners since the Cold War.

B. LENDING A HELPING HAND: NATO'S ROLE IN BILATERAL SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE – FROM THE PFP TO DCB

14.   In the official declarations from the 1990 NATO Summit in London, Alliance leaders took a bold step away from their Cold War footing to 'extend' a 'hand of friendship' to former Warsaw Pact adversaries (NATO, 1990). To facilitate this newfound attempt at cooperation the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was established as a formal mechanism for dialogue and cooperation in December 1991[3]. A range of cooperative structures soon followed.

15.   The post-Cold War international security environment was seen as permissive enough to shift the bulk of the Alliance's focus from collective defence to cooperative security. In the absence of the vital mission to deter the Soviet Bloc, there was political will among Allies to capitalise on the post-Cold War *peace dividend* to expand the remit of the liberal international order through broader political and military cooperation. The diplomatic outreach extended by the various cooperative security platforms and initiatives, it was assumed, would lead to defence institutional reform, which in turn would encourage greater democratic control of the armed forces and, eventually, undergird broader trends toward good governance as a whole. As such, while cooperative security quickly became a core function for the Alliance alongside collective defence and crisis response, it was a decidedly politically focused function of Allies' military efforts.

C. TOWARD A WELLSPRING OF INDIVIDUAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

16.   By 1994, the Alliance established the Partnership for Peace Programme (PfP) to create a more structured avenue for partner countries to develop bilateral relations with NATO on security issues. Early PfP efforts created an essentially dual-tracked relationship with (principally) European non-aligned states; either opening a structured reform pathway forward for those states wishing to become credible candidates for NATO membership; or allowing for closer cooperation with those partners seeking to maintain their neutrality such as Sweden, Finland, Ireland and Austria (Raji, 2019).

17.   The early success of NATO's PfP efforts can be touted as one of the Alliance's greater diplomatic achievements in the post-Cold War era. The programme allowed for sustained cooperation with the Alliance to help reform defence institutions to strengthen the democratic control of armed forces, share military best practices, and bolster mil-to-mil cooperation. At the same time, it was believed, such cooperative security outreach could also serve as a clear demonstration to Russia of the benign nature of potential future NATO enlargement (Raji, 2019). In fact, Russia joined NATO PfP in 1994 and began earnest cooperation with the Alliance[4].

18.   In parallel to the PfP initiative, NATO also established its Mediterranean Dialogue[5] in 1994 and, a decade later, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative[6] added Gulf countries to NATO's cooperative security outreach. By April 2011 Allied Foreign Ministers extended the PfP to all partners seeking

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[3]   The NACC was rebranded the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997 and continues to serve as main political forum for Allies and partners in the Euro-Atlantic area.

[4]   It was not until Vladimir Putin's presidency that the narrative surrounding cooperation with NATO was consistently portrayed by the Russian government as a danger to Russian security interests (Raji, 2019).

[5]   The Mediterranean Dialogue currently involves seven non-NATO countries in the Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

[6]   The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative fosters closer bilateral cooperation between NATO and 4 of the 6 Gulf Cooperation Council member states: Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE. Oman has expressed an interest in the initiative.

closer relations with NATO[7]. The number of partners across the globe has expanded further since, as Allies sought the means to remain in cooperation with a large number of global partners[8] that have contributed to NATO missions over the years, particularly NATO's efforts in Afghanistan.

D. BROAD AND FARSIGHTED IN PRINCIPLE: CHALLENGED DELIVERY IN PRACTICE

19. As the number of partners quickly grew, NATO initiated the Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 1995 to streamline the range of relatively ad hoc cooperation activities (NATO interviews, 2020). PARP is a two-way programme between NATO and any individual partner state to devise a means to measure progress in defence institutional reform, and military modernisation[9]. While PARP was designed to be voluntary, it is nonetheless a requirement prior to any state seeking to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP) (NATO interviews, 2020).

20. The PfP programme enabled allies to build country-specific cooperation partner programmes with NATO; once in it, partners can select their own priorities for engagement, which means they can choose individual activities according to their stated ambitions and existing capabilities. When the partner has identified priorities, an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) is then drawn up and mutually agreed upon (NATO interviews, 2020). IPCP's are on a two-year cycle and programme activities are drawn from the Partnership Cooperation Menu, which comprises well over 1,500 activities (NATO interviews, 2020).

21. The breadth and depth of NATO's outreach with individual partners expanded when Allies endorsed the Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAPs) at the 2002 summit in Prague. IPAP provides individually tailored assistance on a range of defence and security-related issues[10], also on a two-year cycle and renewable basis, but more focused on supporting domestic reform efforts. In October 2004 Georgia established the first IPAP with NATO followed by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia.

22. The Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB), was a concept launched at the 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul to support partners' defence institutional reform efforts to meet both domestic needs and international commitments (NATO, 2018). The PAP-DIB set forth a set of principles to be integrated into existing partnership tools, particularly the PARP, IPCP, and IPAP. While the PAP-DIB was designed within the EAPC framework, it has particular relevance for partners in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

E. MULTIPLE PROGRAMME OFFERINGS AND COMPETING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

23. As NATO officials will readily note, the ability to deliver effective and focused support to individual partner nations got muddled in the push to create a broad array of engagement offerings to an expanding range of partners. While in theory the streamlining of outreach efforts through PARP and IPAP/IPCP created the ability to deliver more effective outreach to individual partner countries, the evolving practice proved otherwise.

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[7] Current PfP members are Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, the Republic of Moldova, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

[8] In addition to NATO's formal structures, NATO also cooperates with a number of countries which are not a part of these structures. These are often referred to as "Partners across the globe" and these countries cooperate with NATO in areas of mutual interest, including emerging security challenges, and some contribute actively to NATO operations, either via direct military assistance or other means. These countries are Afghanistan, Australia, Columbia, Iraq, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, and Pakistan.

[9] The PARP is a two-year North Atlantic Council-approved process whereby the partner nation and NATO agree on a set of goals every even-numbered year and then progress is assessed in the odd-numbered years.

[10] General issues can be divided into such categories as: defence and military, public information, science and environment, civil emergency planning, administrative, protective and security resources.

24.   At its core, a key challenge to the process is defining the strategic objectives of any NATO cooperative security outreach with an individual partner (NATO interviews, 2020). As one NATO official noted, "NATO has all the capacity building tools you could imagine, the challenge is these programmes more often than not operate in stovepipes" (NATO interviews, 2020). While there is little to no duplication within these tools, there is a challenge in understanding overlaps and gaps in practical support, particularly the lack of visibility of the bilateral cooperation between individual Allies and the partner nation (NATO interviews, 2020).

25.   Another key challenge was that, in the years prior to 2014, partnership outreach simply oversold Allies' willingness to invest the resources necessary to deliver on all of the competing demands of partners looking for an Ally to match their demands. While the partner state and Allies consult and agree on the defined goals[11] of cooperation, and with North Atlantic Council approval for a security assistance cooperation in hand, partners must then seek out the assistance they need from the Allies. Ultimately, this process became problematic as either there would not be the support needed from Allies to fill the proposed package for a given partner nation, or the partner nation could not meet the defined goals (NATO interviews, 2020).

F.   2014: AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHIFT THE FOCUS AND IMPACT OF NATO BILATERAL COOPERATIVE SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS

26.   In 2014, the European security environment deteriorated significantly. Two key variables drove decisions to adapt the Alliance's defence and deterrence posture to meet the challenge of guaranteeing peace and security across the Alliance. The first was the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the subsequent military intervention and occupation of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions; and, the second the spill over effects accompanying the breakout of the so-called Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, from the significant rise in the number of displaced persons seeking refuge across Europe to the rise in violent extremism-inspired terrorist attacks.

27.   To meet the challenge of a rapidly evolving and complex security environment, and with the Afghanistan experience fresh in its mind, the Alliance's central lesson drawn from 2014 was the need to return to the Alliance's original core focus – *collective defence*. A parallel lesson, however, was also that the security of NATO members is inextricably linked to the stability of its neighbouring states. As a result, the Alliance understood it needed to make cooperative security a function of collective defence. The 2014 security environment shift provided the occasion to revisit cooperative security outreach to address the above-mentioned problems that had crept into the process.

28.   The September 2014 NATO Summit, therefore, introduced two new cooperative security formats: The Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII) and the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative. While the PII focused on the ability to maintain and strengthen partners' ability to execute joint military operations[12] with NATO forces, the DCB Initiative provides a tailored assistance package to individual partners when existing tools and programmes cannot meet the requirements. As the 2014 Summit Declaration notes, DCB is designed to help the Alliance "project stability without deploying larger combat forces" (NATO, 2014). To wit: stronger neighbours can act as a bulwark to the various external threats which may spill over into the Alliance's territory.

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[11]   Ultimately all the defined partnership goals of any cooperation are refined and put together by the Partnership and Cooperative Security Committee for approval by the North Atlantic Council. Still, as NATO officials will note, the partner state leads when it comes to the definition of any set of goals for a partnership assistance programme (NATO interviews, 2020).

[12]   The spirit of the initiative was to maintain the strong, effective, and, to a large degree, interoperability partnerships NATO had formed with a wide array of partner nations during its long ISAF operation in Afghanistan.

III.   *ONE PARTNER, ONE PLAN*: **THE NATO DEFENCE AND RELATED SECURITY CAPACITY BUILDING (DCB) INITIATIVE**

29.   As conceived, the NATO DCB Initiative is to form an essential pillar of the Alliance's broader *Projecting Stability*[13] initiative, focusing specifically on strategic-level advice on defence and related security reform and institution building, and the development of defence capability and forces, usually focused on education and training. It aims to improve the defence and related security capacities and to strengthen partners resilience. It is also a key element of the Alliance's declared *360-degree approach to security*, which seeks to address the range of causes of instability emanating from any direction, thereby stopping or seriously mitigating neighbourhood security challenges before they impact the Alliance directly.

30.   NATO granted initial DCB packages for Georgia and Jordan at the 2014 Wales Summit and began implementing these packages through existing partnerships with these nations. Packages for the Republic of Moldova and Iraq were agreed upon in 2015. The 2018 Brussels Summit announced the launching of a DCB package for Tunisia.[14] Any partner can apply for a DCB package, but North Atlantic Council approval for such an investment is set at a relatively high bar (NATO interviews, 2020).

31.   As NATO policy states, DCB packages are demand-driven and tailored to meet the needs of the recipient countries: The goal being to contribute to a more specific, focused, and coherent approach to defence capacity building for the recipient countries. NATO DCB packages therefore include such instruments as strategic advice, education, and training of local forces and specialised assistance, such as modern equipment maintenance. As noted above, best practices acquired from NATO's long track record of delivering security sector assistance help best address the needs of the requesting partners.

32.   DCB packages can be financed by the DCB Trust Fund which was established in 2015. NATO Allies and partners can contribute on a voluntary basis to a specific capacity building project (Diaz-Plaja, 2018). To date, 23 Allies and three partners[15] have financed the Trust Fund, contributing EUR 23.3 million (NATO, 2020c). Collaboration with other international organisations allows NATO to maximise the impact of DCB packages. It avoids overlap between the different defence and security related assistance programmes of the United Nations, the OSCE and the European Union. The trust fund has executed or committed to 35 separate projects (NATO, 2020c). All Allies plus seven partner nations have contributed so far to the DCB Initiative (NATO, 2020c).

A.   ONE PARTNER, ONE PLAN: FINDING A POLICY STRATEGY MATCH

33.   To streamline the approach to NATO's cooperative security, all practical partnership programmes and tools have been consolidated into the Defence Institution and Capacity Building Directorate in the Operations Division at NATO. Doing so, NATO officials note, will make the programme more strategic, coherent and effective (NATO interviews, 2020). The goal is to have NATO bilateral cooperative security outreach have a single set of objectives to maximise the potential outcomes. The motto going forward NATO HQ officials note will be – *one partner, one plan* (NATO interviews, 2020).

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[13]   *Projecting Stability* is a relatively broad-based concept launched at the 2014 Wales summit. At its core, it is a defence and security-capacity building programme focused on designing and implementing a range of train, advise, and assist missions with NATO partners in the near neighbourhood and beyond; it has been determined that the security of regions beyond NATO has a direct impact on Allied security (NATO Summit Declarations 2016). Missions can range from military education and training for tasks such as border protection to crisis response and counterterrorism tactics to the mitigation of hybrid warfare. Projecting stability seeks to make partner states more resilient to hybrid and grey zone threats, which can undermine state institutions and response capacity.

[14]   The 2014 Wales Summit Declarations note the Alliance's readiness to provide DCB support for Libya "when conditions permit" (NATO, 2014). To date, conditions on the ground still do not permit the restarting of DCB talks.

[15]   Finland, Ireland, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Sweden.

34.   The following is a brief overview of NATO DCB packages to date.

B. GEORGIA

35.   The 2014 NATO Summit in Wales established the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP) as part of the broader DCB initiative. The SNGP works to improve Georgia's defence capabilities, develop close security cooperation and interoperability with NATO, and support Georgia's accession efforts to the Alliance. In parallel, Georgia continues to execute all existing mechanisms successfully, such as the PARP and the Military Committee and Georgia Work Plan (MC+GEO WP), along with a number of other programmes designed to further advance Georgia's candidacy for potential future NATO membership.

36.   Georgia has proven itself to be a critical partner to the Alliance over the past decade as an outstanding contributor to NATO missions and operations; it is the largest non-NATO Ally contributing (and the largest per capita) to the mission in Afghanistan today, for example. Due to the success of NATO-Georgia defence cooperation, NATO officials will quickly note that Georgia has risen to become one of the Alliance's most interoperable partners. Georgia applied to NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EARDCC) on April 3 for international assistance to help slow and contain the spread of the coronavirus in the country. A number of Allies, including Poland and Estonia delivered critical medical supplies to assist Georgian civilian health authorities in their efforts.

37.   The initial package outlined in 2014 focused on 13 areas for cooperation: Acquisition; Strategic and Operational Planning; Special Operations Forces; Military Police; Cyber Defence; Maritime Security; Strategic Communications; a NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Centre; Logistics Capability; Intelligence Sharing and Secure Communications; a Defence Institution Building School; Aviation; and, Air Defence. Crisis management and counter mobility were identified as two additional priority areas and added to the SNGP in 2016. The initiative focused on strategic and operational planning was declared concluded in October 2017.

38.   Today, the NATO Core Team and a corresponding Georgian Coordination and Monitoring Division continue to work to implement the remaining 14 SNGP initiatives. The NATO Core Team guides the projects, coordinates and facilitates unity of effort and resources funding (NATO interviews, 2020). To date, a wide range of Allies and partners have provided support in the form of expertise and/or resources to the SNGP (NATO interviews, 2020). The NATO meeting of Foreign Ministers on 20 November 2019 agreed to a review and refresh of the SNGP. As a result, the SNGP will be reviewed over the year to evaluate what initiatives to continue, those areas which may be added, and which initiatives can be considered successfully concluded (NATO interviews, 2020).

39.   Three initiatives, the NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Centre, Defence Institution Building School and maritime security, highlight the breadth and depth of the SNGP.

1.   The NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Centre (JTEC)

40.   Inaugurated in 2015, the NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Centre (JTEC) is a central hub with a mandate to focus efforts to reform, modernise, and strengthen Georgia's defence forces, improve their interoperability with NATO forces, coordinate multinational training and exercises, and contribute to the broader stability of the Black Sea and Caucasus region (NATO, 2016). Since its establishment, JTEC has trained tens of thousands of Georgian military personnel for national, regional, and even international missions, such as NATO's *Resolute Support* Mission in Afghanistan.

41.   In 2016, JTEC hosted the NATO-Georgia exercise. The exercise focused on training a Georgian-led multinational brigade to plan, coordinate and execute a crisis response operation to

NATO operational standards. As part of the SNGP, the NATO-Georgia exercise is to take place every three years. In March 2019, JTEC conducted the second iteration of the NATO-Georgia joint military exercise, expanding the role of the Georgian personnel to officer conducting and officer directing exercise (OCE; ODE) levels of responsibility. The exercise counted 350 participants from 24 different NATO Allies and partner countries (NATO, 2020).

42. The NATO-Georgia exercise is not only essential to build Georgia's capacity to develop a standalone exercise cycle capacity, but it is also an important signal of the enduring political support all Allies continue to give to Georgia.

2. Defence Institution Building School

43. The SNGP established the Georgian Defence Institution Building School (DIB School) in June 2016 to promote a common understanding of defence and security policy across Georgia's government institutions. The school's courses focus on the development and execution of best practices for defence and security policy making. To do so, the DIB School facilitates cooperation between national government agencies, NATO Allies, partnering think tanks, as well as Georgian inter-agency understanding and cooperation, to share best practices and lessons learned on ongoing Georgian security sector reform. To date, the school has offered numerous courses to train professionals from across a broad range of Georgian government institutions and civil society.

3. Maritime Security

44. The Black Sea region has seen evolving security concerns in recent years. Russia's military aggression against Georgia in 2008, and subsequent occupation of its Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali regions, set the broader Black Sea region on an escalatory trajectory. Russia's 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea and effective seizure of several of Ukraine's naval forces vessels in the 2018 Kerch Strait incident only intensified existing regional security tensions. Georgia's strategic position in the Black Sea draws attention to the necessity of reinforcement of the nation's maritime security capabilities. The SNGP maritime initiative focuses on Georgia's ability to safeguard the maritime security of its territorial waters and coasts via a range of efforts from international cooperation with NATO and its partners in the Black Sea, to the development of its standalone ability to do such things as harbour protection (NATO interviews, 2020). The initiative also pairs NATO's Maritime Command headquarters (MARCOM) closely with the Georgian Coast Guard to prepare it for future participation in the NATO-led Operation *Sea Guardian*. Moreover, Georgian participation in and contribution to Operation *Sea Guardian* includes the mutual exchange of operational support group-relevant information between NATO MARCOM in London and the Georgian Coast Guard. The Georgian Coast Guard now has a direct liaison established with NATO MARCOM at the staff level. Strengthened cooperation has allowed for Georgia to contribute to MARCOM's overall picture of the Black Sea. As such, the SNGP also works to strengthen Georgia's cooperation with NATO Allies to contribute its voice in the broader political discussion in the Alliance about Black Sea security developments.

4. The Role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

45. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly has longstanding and strong cooperation with the Parliament of Georgia. Georgia became an Associate Member of the NATO PA in May 1999 and, following the 2008 Russia-Georgia War, the NATO PA created the Georgia-NATO Interparliamentary Council (GNIC), as a bilateral consultation group complementing the NATO-Georgia Commission at the parliamentary level. There is an annual GNIC meeting held at NATO HQ in an effort to review such issues as Georgia's fulfilment of its Annual National Programme, progress on the SNGP initiatives, and Georgia's evolving security situation. GNIC remains an important platform for NATO and Georgian legislators to discuss the ongoing security sector reforms and future cooperation. The NATO PA will maintain its commitment to GNIC and to the implementation of SNGP.

C.   THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

46.   Despite its constitutional neutrality, the Republic of Moldova has strengthened its partnership with NATO over the years. Relations with NATO started in 1992 when Moldova joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In the wake of its first democratic parliamentary elections in May 1994, the parliament of Moldova was admitted as an Associate member to the NATO PA.

47.   As Moldova began to look West, however, Russia moved in to increasee its influence in the country; most visibly by its support since 1992 of the separatist region of Transnistria, which has a Russian ethnic majority population. Russia maintains a strong presence in Transnistria. To date, 1,500 Russian troops remain deployed in the region as peacekeepers.[16]

48.   Over the decades, despite significant Russian interference, Moldova worked hard to develop an effective level of cooperation with NATO. Russia's aggression in Ukraine starting raised concerns in Chisinau of Russia's broader regional intentions (Chyzhova, 2017). Moldova's longstanding desire to improve its relations with NATO combined with Russia's increasing aggression in the Black Sea region opened a window for Moldova to move quickly to negotiate a NATO assistance package, and, at the 2014 Wales Summit, NATO agreed on introducing the DCB package. The tailored package was launched in June 2015.

49.   The DCB package for Moldova focuses on support to Moldovan authorities in the formulation of key political and strategic-level directions, as well as direct subject matter expert support to Moldovan defence professionals in areas such as the transformation and modernisation of the armed forces, cyber defence, defence education, building integrity-related defence institution reform, and the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Cooperation has been strengthened by efforts of the NATO Liaison Office in Chisinau, which is a small, civilian office. The NATO liaison office was established in December 2017, at the request of the Moldovan government, and augmented in 2019 with a DCB coordinator providing NATO-Moldova DCB implementation advice.

50.   Moldova is also a valued contributor to NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR). Since 2014 Moldova has provided over 40 troops, including an infantry manoeuvre platoon and an explosive ordnance disposal team to the operation. Moldova's participation in KFOR allows for the implementation and execution of many defence institution adaptations as a result of cooperation with NATO, as well as improved interoperability with Allies and partners in the field.

Political Challenges

51.   Moldova experienced a significant political crisis in 2015 surrounding a declining economic situation in the country, compounded by widespread government corruption. The ensuing political crisis impacted DCB implementation (Chyzhova, 2017). Moldovan officials' decision to halt security sector reforms in the midst of the political crisis had a ripple effect on external donors' willingness to fund many of the SSR initiatives, as they were without a reliable partner in Chisinau (Lins de Albuquerque and Hedenskog, 2016). With the 2016 election of the pro-Russian president, Igor Dodon, Moldovan politicians reverted to a strict neutral security policy, which dampened the government's promotion of the accomplishments of the DCB cooperation with NATO. Despite this, the DCB Phase I in Moldova was implemented successfully through the 2015-2019 window.

52.   A key challenge for the implementation of NATO's DCB package in Moldova is the country's absorption capacity for the initiatives outlined to achieve the set goals, as well as Allies' willingness

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[16]   While NATO has no direct role in the conflict resolution process to settle the status of Transnistria, Allies do follow developments in the region closely with the expectation that Russia will adhere to its international obligations, which include respect of the territorial integrity of neighbouring countries and their sovereign right to choose their own security arrangements.

to provide the necessary resources, which is challenged by competing political priorities (NATO interviews, 2020).

53.   Moldova's current Prime Minister, Ion Chicu, has focused on what he terms a 'balanced foreign policy' and 'international recognition of Moldova's neutrality', and has intensified its relations with Russia as a result (NATO interviews, 2020). These efforts to maintain contacts with Moscow, however, have not impeded continued practical security cooperation with NATO. For example, NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoana met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova Oleg Tulea on 10 September 2020 to discuss a new IPAP with the Alliance. In addition to this, the Alliance has been the most critical source of emergency medical supplies to Moldova throughout the COVID-19 crisis in response to the nation's assistance request via NATO's EADRCC, which is the Alliance's primary civil emergency respond mechanism (NATO, 2020h).

D. JORDAN

54.   Jordan has been a key partner to NATO since its entry into the Mediterranean Dialogue in 1995. In 1996, the NATO PA established the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) in which Jordan was invited to participate as a regional partner. The parliament of Jordan gained Parliamentary Observer status with the NATO PA in 2004, which was upgraded to Regional Partner and Mediterranean Associate Member in 2005. Jordan is a regular participant in Assembly seminars and session, and recently hosted a joint delegation from the Defence and Security and Economics and Security Committees in November 2019.

55.   Jordan is a vital security partner with NATO in a region beset with major conflicts and other complex challenges threatening general security and stability. Over the past decades, NATO and Jordan have coordinated their efforts in the global fight against violent extremism and international terrorism in missions, operations, and initiatives from the Balkans to Afghanistan.

56.   NATO also introduced a DCB package for Jordan at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales in an effort to show key political and military support to Jordan at a time of particular regional instability. The initiative focuses on the Jordanian government's, particularly the nation's security forces, capacity to deal with such challenges as crisis management, border security, terrorism, logistics and cyber defence. The DCB package's efforts to improve Jordan's counter improved explosive devices (C-IED) capabilities and doctrine is considered a success. In a sign of the progress of NATO DCB efforts, Jordan hosted the first NATO Regional Exercise (REGEX) in a Mediterranean Dialogue country in 2017.

57.   A NATO coordination team will be established in Amman in 2020 to work more closely with the Jordanian Armed Forces to oversee the implementation of the capacity building measures (NATO, 2020c).

E. IRAQ

58.   At the 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul NATO implemented the NATO Training Mission-Iraq. By 2011, Iraq had acquired NATO partner status and then signed an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme with the Alliance, unlocking the mechanisms necessary for constructive dialogue and structured cooperation. Though it does not have an official status, the parliament of Iraq has been invited to participate as a Parliamentary Observer in the Assembly's sessions, as well as at its GSM seminars – it has done so with regular frequency since 2014.

59.   The DCB package for Iraq was approved in July 2015. The year prior to the package agreement, Iraqi PM Abadi had been negotiating increased bilateral NATO assistance to Iraqi forces in their ongoing fight against Daesh (al Ali, 2018). Initial DCB efforts focused on essentials to help turn the tide against Daesh. The Alliance subsequently announced the "strategy focus team" initiative to improve the Iraqi armed forces' abilities in areas such as EOD and demining (al Ali, 2018). In

parallel, NATO Allies had stepped into the fight against Daesh after agreeing at the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit to provide direct support to the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh. NATO support to the Global Coalition came via the loan of joint Allied assets such as AWACs; it also included an agreement to increase direct counterterrorism training for the Iraqi armed forces.

60.   Jordan and Turkey hosted the first phase of the initiative due to security concerns, with NATO financing the training of 350 Iraqi officers (NATO, 2016). In-country training only started in 2017 when NATO established a small Core Team of NATO civilians and military to coordinate the training of Iraqi security forces in Baghdad. Following the defeat of Daesh in Iraq and the restoration of Iraqi sovereign control over its territory, additional DCB measures were requested by the Iraqi government. As a result, the DCB activities for Iraq were extended at the 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels and included the declaration of a non-combat training and capacity building mission in Iraq, the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI).

1.   NATO Mission Iraq (NMI)

61.   NMI established in Baghdad in October 2018. NMI strengthens Iraqi security forces and Iraqi military education institutions via its training initiatives. The mission also provides advice to assist with the reform of the Iraqi security sector; with the goals of enhancing transparency, accountability and integrity in the defence and security sector, as well as build up, train, and educate the Iraqi military forces to prevent the 're-emergence' of Daesh (NATO, 2020c).

62.   NMI includes military and civilian personnel to boost skills in areas such as military medicine, countering improvised explosive devices, EOD, demining, cyber defence, and national security structures reforms to assist with civil-military planning support to operation, civil preparedness, the rule of law and the law of armed conflict, as well as counter corruption initiatives (Missiroli, 2019). The mission comprises of 500 trainers, advisors and supporting personnel from Allied and partner countries and reached full operating capacity in September 2019 (NATO, 2020c).

63.   The mission also implements the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. NMI provides a gender advisory capability and gender perspectives into the Iraqi military institutions and schools (NATO, 2019).

64.   The mission is under the direct and effective control of the Iraqi government.

2.   US-Iran Regional Competition

65.   Escalating tensions between Iran and the United States were on full display throughout much of 2020. On 3 January, Iranian General Qassem Soleimani was killed by a US drone strike in Iraq. Iran responded to the Soleimani's death by launching ballistic missile strikes against US Forces stationed at two different bases in Iraq on 8 January. While there were no fatalities among the targeted US Forces, many have subsequently been treated for traumatic brain injuries resulting from the concussive shock of the strikes (Zaveri, 2020).

66.   Over his decades as head of the Iranian Quds Forces[17], Soleimani was responsible for the training and supply of Iranian proxy forces across the Middle East. Iranian proxies have driven regional violence via the use of terrorist or militia tactics in such places as Lebanon, Israel, and Iraq. Quds Force training, supplies, and direct action have been key to the resilience of the Asad regime in the Syrian Civil War. For years, Iranian Quds Force-trained and armed Shia militias in Iraq have

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[17]   The Quds Force is the branch of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards responsible for external action. Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, this has translated into the funding and training of, often Shia, armed groups to project the Iranian Revolution's goals via the use of force in regional arenas such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, US Forces in Iraq, and in support of the Asad regime in Damascus since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War.

caused the deaths of hundreds of US Forces operating in the country (Arango, et. al., 2020). For decades, Iraq has been a proxy battlefield for US-Iranian regional competition.

67.   On 5 January, the Iraqi Council of Representatives voted for a resolution demanding the government to expel foreign forces from the country (Rasheed, 2020). While the resolution was nonbinding and would have required many more steps before the government would enforce such an action, it did lay bare the tensions in the country as a result of the escalation between the United States and Iran.

68.   As a precautionary measure against potential further retaliation for Soleimani's death, NATO temporarily suspended NMI to secure the safety and protection of the 500 personnel in Iraq.[18] The Iraqi government subsequently requested the NATO mission not only remain in the country, but that it be expanded.

69.   In the wake of the January events, US President Donald Trump called on the Alliance to increase its security force assistance role in the Middle East as a means of mitigating some of the region's longer-term security challenges (Brzozowki, 2020). On 12 February, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg reaffirmed NATO's commitment to Iraq, underscoring that NATO's efforts in the country are at the invitation of the Iraqi government and in full respect of its sovereignty. He also noted that NATO Defence Ministers had "agreed in principle to enhance NATO's training mission" (NATO, 2020b).

70.   NATO is currently working closely with the Iraqi government on the possibility of expanding the mission and mandate of NATO DCB in Iraq (NATO interviews, 2020). Most recently, in September 2020, Secretary General Stoltenberg met Iraq's Foreign Minister to reiterate NATO's commitments to Iraq, including helping in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic (NATO, 2020i). Over the summer, several NATO members – including Poland, Turkey and Spain – delivered critical medical supplies to the Iraqi population. NATO's pandemic-related coordinated assistance came following Iraq's request for support through NATO's EADRCC (NATO, 2020(e)(f)(g)).

71.   On 9 September, the United States announced plans to reduce its presence in Iraq from 5,200 to 3,000 soldiers over the following month. Despite of the reduction in troop numbers, US military officials reiterated the broader US commitment to expanding "partner capacity programmes that enable Iraqi forces and reduce [the US] footprint in Iraq" (Reuters, 2020).

F. TUNISIA

72.   The Mediterranean Dialogue initiated NATO cooperation with Tunisia in 1994. The parliament of Tunisia was granted Parliamentary Observer Status with the NATO PA in 1996. In 2014 NATO signed an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme with the government in Tunis. The programme's initial focus was on counterterrorism and border security with Algeria and Libya.

73.   Tunisia's wave of terrorist attacks in 2015, however, led prime minister Habib Essid to seek deeper cooperation with NATO (Profazio, 2018). The threat of extremism from the deteriorating situation in Libya and growing challenges from extremist-led violence worsened in the ensuing years. As a result, Allies accepted Tunisia's request for a DCB package to help counter tackle the broader challenges to the nation's security. The NATO DCB package for Tunisia focuses on developing Tunisian defence capabilities in cyber defence, C-IED and promoting transparency in resource management (NATO, 2020c). NATO DCB efforts in Tunisia centre on education and training activities for the Tunisian Armed Forces.

74.   The Tunisian government solicited international assistance from NATO's EARDCC on 6 May 2020. In the months since, EARDCC coordinated assistance has allowed for the delivery of vital medical supplies to assist the Tunisian government's efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic

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[18]   The rapid evolution of the COVID-19 health crisis in Spring 2020 also had a temporary impact on the mission's activities.

across the country (NATO, 2020d). A 16 May 2020 meeting between NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Tunisian Foreign Minister Khemaies Jhinaoui discussed possible avenues for broadening NATO-Tunisia cooperation.

IV.   CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR DCB: CONCLUSIONS FOR NATO PARLIAMENTARIANS

75.   As NATO experts stress, a key lesson learned over the Alliance's long history with partnership programmes is the need to meet the specific needs of the host nation. As such, NATO officials will note that several core tenets undergird their approach: a coordinated and agreed upon understanding of what ends the programme is seeking by both Allies and the partnering nation; no pre-determined principles defining the organisation of a particular nation's security sector institutions; and, no assumption from the outset that everything must be changed in order for there to be a successful outcome from the investment.

76.   As this report makes clear, however, key challenges remain to make the Alliance's bilateral outreach more strategic, coherent, and effective. In order to help the Alliance achieve its goal of *One Partner, One Plan*, the following are some recommendations NATO Parliamentarians may consider as they review the issue of how their own national resources and forces may be employed for activities in a partner country.

77.   **Demonstrating strong political support for NATO DCB** initiatives should be a consideration of all NATO member state parliamentarians. As noted in the report, Allied efforts to invest in effective and enduring defence and security sector reform in partner states can have a direct impact on broader NATO security: *NATO cooperative security must be considered a function of collective defence*. Security challenges in NATO's near neighbourhood from the civil war in Syria to Russia's intervention in Ukraine have clear spill over effects; these will not be the last challenges emanating from states and regions in the regions surrounding NATO territories and populations. NATO Parliamentarians can do their part to bolster support at the parliamentary level for their nations to do more to contribute to the DCB effort.

78.   **The NATO PA can work more closely with NATO to support and even strengthen the DCB initiative's outcomes.** As noted in this report, the NATO DCB initiative focuses significant attention to partner nations' institutional reforms in their efforts to achieve more capable forces as well as effective institutions to both support and oversee them. The NATO PA has the capacity and the experience to work with NATO DCB recipient nations' parliaments as they seek to learn best practices about the oversight of their armed forces. From procurement to recruitment to deployment, the democratic control of the armed forces is essential to define and defend national interests and to manage limited national resources as efficiently as possible.

79.   **Greater Allied transparency** with NATO HQ in Brussels and among Allies about their own discrete efforts in any particular country in a defence and related security capacity building programme is also important. As one NATO official noted, "NATO is, at times, completely unaware what individual Allies are doing with a particular partner at the bilateral level" (NATO interviews, 2020). Until there is greater transparency about what Allies are doing, the challenge of getting a clear 'picture' of problems or progress with any particular initiative will remain a challenge. Greater transparency of current and planned engagements, therefore, will go a long way to help deal with targeting critical areas needing assistance, reduce duplicated efforts, and be a more efficient use of resources overall.

80.   **NATO DCB support is a strategic priority for all Allies**. Investing in focused capacity building can help strengthen a partner's national forces: Outreach initiatives as wide ranging as education and exercises to rule of law reform to mitigate such factors as corruption or via helping build effective and fit-for-purpose acquisition programmes do a lot to help transform and modernise a partner nation's armed forces. There is a logic to the five nations currently receiving DCB support, each is located in a strategically relevant location to help anchor much needed security sector

stability. Each one of the packages deserves renewed attention and focused political support from Allied governments and parliaments to ensure they are as successful as possible.

81.   **Renewed focus on Georgia**: As NATO interlocutors will note, the successes of the **SNGP programme** are evident by Georgia's continued and impressive progress across the board in its efforts to implement the necessary changes that contribute to its NATO membership aspirations. It is a welcomed sign that all Allies signed a recent letter from the UK to focus on a refreshed reinvestment in the SNGP to help push it forward. Recent staff level meetings indicate NATO officials and their Georgian counterparts are seeking to find new ways to broaden their existing cooperation. To match the renewed attention of the Alliance to invest in a stronger security sector in Georgia, *Allied parliamentarians can and should call for attention to continued democratic reforms in Georgia.* NATO Parliamentarians should follow the upcoming Georgian parliamentary elections, scheduled for 31 October, closely, as they will have an important impact on the nation's path forward in the coming years.

82.   **Broader inclusion of Jordan** into NATO's exercises and education programmes is an imperative. Perhaps more than any other DCB recipient, Jordan is in need of focused and effective assistance in order to remain the oasis of stability it currently is in a region overwhelmed with troubles. The political and military significance of a strong Jordanian partner in the Middle East cannot be overstated in a region overwhelmed by conflict, displaced populations, and resource scarcity – the Kingdom of Jordan remains a bulwark of stability that must be reinforced through closer partner opportunities with the Jordanian Armed Forces.

83.   **Stay focused on Tunisia**. Tunisia, like Jordan is a unique NATO partner in the MENA region. The nation is continuing to make tenuous steps forward for real democratic reforms since coming out of the 2011 democratic uprising. Assistance to Tunisia should be reviewed to ensure the range of programmes are addressing what the Tunisians themselves need to continue to build defence institutions capable of serving the interests of the nation. Broader efforts to ensure the democratic control of the Tunisian armed forces will play an essential role in anchoring Tunisia as a strong democratic pillar in North Africa.

84.   **NATO has a chance to have a broad based and lasting impact in Iraq**. Iraq remains at a fragile crossroads since the enormous security challenge it faced with the rise of Daesh in 2014. The nation's armed forces are ready to engage with NATO at a much deeper level to ensure they are capable of fending off any future challenge to the state that may emanate from a state or non-state actor. NATO parliamentarians should encourage NATO's dialogue with the Iraqi government to deepen the Alliance's role in the development of Iraq's defence institutions. With strong Allied political and financial backing, NATO can play a significant role in helping Iraq become a bulwark of regional stability.

85.   **The Republic of Moldova remains a valuable partner for NATO**. The NATO DCB programme in Moldova continues to play a significant role in helping the Moldovan defence professionals develop and implement their national defence and military strategies. NATO is also a strong partner alongside Moldova's ongoing efforts to transform and modernise its armed forces. NATO should continue to assist Moldova, while respecting the country's desire to remain neutral. Moldova's efforts to transition from its challenging domestic security and economic situation will be difficult, as well as consuming of time and resources, but they will benefit greatly from having a faithful partner helping them along the way as they determine what is the appropriate future for their nation. As Moldova continues with its reform efforts, it is important it continues to work to strength its democracy. Strong democratic institutions are the sine qua non of strong armed forces capable of defending the interests of the entire nation. As such, the Assembly will look to Chisinau to oversee the conduct of free and fair elections in the Presidential elections on 1 November.

86.   **NATO should strongly consider a future DCB plan for Ukraine**. NATO took the right step when the North Atlantic Council recognised Ukraine as an Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP) on 12 June 2020. As an EOP, Ukraine will be able to increase its participation in NATO exercising,

hold political consultations on strategic issues, and share information and intelligence on evolving threats with Allies. Adding a DCB plan for Ukraine will allow for an additional pathway to help the country hone its armed forces' abilities and to strengthen national defence institutions. Closer partnership with Ukraine is clearly mutually beneficial for Allies as Ukraine has faced a range of Russian direct as well as hybrid attacks; lessons learned from these are valuable. Finally, closer partnership with a stronger Ukraine will strengthen NATO's broader Black Sea strategic efforts to push back against Russian efforts to militarise the region and interfere with Allies and partners' freedom of navigation.

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