



**EUROPEAN
LEADERSHIP
NETWORK**

NATO's Brussels Summit: Getting From Good To Great

**EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY
REPORT**

Adam Thomson

June 2018

About the Author

Sir Adam Thomson KCMG has been the Director of the ELN since November 2016. Before joining the ELN, Sir Adam had a 38 year diplomatic career in the British Diplomatic Service, preceded by short spells at the World Bank and at Harvard University. His final diplomatic posting was as the UK Permanent Representative to NATO between 2014 and 2016. Prior to that, from 2010 Sir Adam served as British High Commissioner to Pakistan and between 2002 and 2006 he was British Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. Sir Adam has also worked as the Head of the FCO's Security Policy Department and as FCO Director for South Asia and Afghanistan.

The European Leadership Network (ELN) works to advance the idea of a cooperative and cohesive Europe and to develop collaborative European capacity to address the pressing foreign, defence and security policy challenges of our time. It does this through its active network of former and emerging European political, military, and diplomatic leaders, through its high-quality research, publications and events, and through its institutional partnerships across Europe, North America, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region.

The opinions articulated in this report represent the views of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Leadership Network or any of its members. The ELN's aim is to encourage debates that will help develop Europe's capacity to address pressing foreign, defence, and security challenges.

NATO's Brussels Summit: Getting From Good To Great

Summary

NATO has adapted quite well to the shocks of 2014. It will register further progress at its Brussels summit on 11 -12 July this year. Alliance solidarity is a more important concern than formal unity. And Alliance solidarity has held up despite all the stresses since 2014.

But solidarity has to be continuously earned. And beneath NATO's fixes since 2014 lie threatening longer-term questions. Will European Allies not merely spend more but make themselves better Allies by spending better and taking more responsibility? Without good answers, the gaps will widen across the Atlantic and across Europe. Where is NATO going in the protracted, costly and increasingly dangerous downward spiral in relations with Russia? Without a clearer sense of direction, Allies will be pulled apart over risk management and dialogue with Moscow. As for threats from the South, what should NATO expect to be able to do? If expectations are not shaped and managed, divisions lie ahead.

This year's summit cannot and should not seek to provide all the answers. But it must be more than a rabbit in President Trump's headlights. It can and should still negotiate a series of steps that take NATO from being 'good' in 2018 to 'great' at its next summit, ideally the Alliance's 70th anniversary celebrations in Washington in 2019. The main steps on the three big risks to solidarity that this paper considers - the South, Russia and burdensharing - are about positioning for the long-term rather than about resources:

- Agreement to work, preferably in conjunction with the EU, towards a road map for the coming decades on greater European capacity to meet the defence burden;
- A recognition that long-term confrontation with Russia calls for NATO to reduce the risks in current deterrence postures and work for all-weather dialogue;
- A resolution to work harder for institutional and national partnerships in which NATO can play a realistic part in tackling the threats from the South.

In this context, this analysis offers specific, practical recommendations for the Brussels communique, declaration and Joint EU-NATO Declaration.

Looking good

Certainly, NATO has its problems – as this analysis will show. But it is still going strong after nearly 70 years of enormous change. Being in alliance continues to offer all 29 member states unique, irreplaceable benefits for their national security, notwithstanding their varied sizes, geographies and threat perceptions. And as an organisation NATO is still easily the best vehicle for multilateral transatlantic security cooperation.

As NATO heads of government gather for their 11-12 July Brussels summit in the wake of the G7 summit debacle, they will be bracing themselves more than ever for what President Trump has to say.

As they do so, they should reflect on their alliance's strengths and how to get from 'good' to 'great'. Concentrating on moving to 'great' would be the best response to doubts, whether from President Trump or elsewhere, about NATO's effectiveness and resilience. And negotiating a greater measure of 'great' in terms of greater cohesion, effectiveness and sense of direction, while not easy, is certainly possible.

Since 2014, in response to Russia's destabilisation of Ukraine and the new arc of instability to NATO's south, the Alliance has performed comparatively effectively and swiftly. The 2018 summit will record further progress: strengthened deterrence (principally facing Russia); a package of measures for stabilisation around NATO's south including a training mission in Iraq and a slightly strengthened military presence and an extension of funding for Afghanistan; plus modest steps to modernise the Alliance itself. It will reiterate that NATO is open to new members, looking hopefully towards Macedonia and launching an Annual National Programme with Bosnia-Herzegovina. And it will advance the EU-NATO relationship further through another joint declaration.

The steps on deterrence will focus on new Atlantic and Support Commands; on a new cyber operations centre and framework for cyber effects; and on readiness, reinforcement, mobility and resilience. SACEUR wants agreement to a Maximum Level of Effort. Leaders will endorse the decision of Defence Ministers on 7 June to be able by 2020 to deploy 30 mechanised battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat vessels within 30 days. The measures on defence capacity building in the South, Iraq and Afghanistan will be badged as NATO countering terrorism.

There is much to celebrate about NATO. Of course, there will be disagreements. But –

Trump apart - the 2018 summit is set to be workmanlike and unremarkable. There is a strong temptation in NATO circles to use it just for consolidation and outward shows of harmony. Perfectly naturally, not least because of President Trump's volatility and manifest scepticism about NATO, the dominant concern among most Allies and NATO officials is not whether the summit will agree enough substance but whether it will demonstrate enough unity.

Is 'good' good enough?

Muddling forwards is the default setting for all multilateral organisations. And for NATO in 2018, good feels good enough.

But it isn't.

Ministers, officials and international staff in the thick of the NATO summit preparations will reasonably object that they are already tackling the difficult issues – indeed that these will feature prominently at the summit – and that the need for consensus prevents faster progress, that forcing the pace would threaten Alliance unity and that the ambition should simply be to maintain that unity.

“Pressures are building that demand bolder approaches - an element of 'great'.”

However, pressures are building that demand bolder approaches - an element of 'great'. The Alliance may manage its way through one or two more summits superficially unscathed. But it will be at increasing risk of being pulled apart, if it does not turn and face at least some of its deeper divides.

What are these divides? This paper considers three. There are other questions, of course, the answers to which could take NATO summits well beyond 'good'. How to sustain public support might be one, if Allies continue

to face only hybrid attack. Another might be how the organisation can be sufficiently adaptable, agile and innovative now that it is faced by more diverse and innovative adversaries. But, at the moment, three major issues look like the most dangerous fault lines. They are the South, Russia and burdensharing.

Why are these fault lines so threatening? There are some considerations that apply to all three issues. First, despite a return to collective defence since 2014 and despite modestly increasing public support,¹ NATO is as potentially vulnerable to the political storms buffeting the Euro-Atlantic area as is the EU or the United States. These storms can blow into crises rapidly and unpredictably. Second, where during the Cold War NATO faced one slow-burn strategic challenge from the USSR, now it simultaneously faces fast-changing strategic-scale challenges on at least three fronts - Russia, the unstable South and internal cohesion. Such a situation is unprecedentedly demanding.

NATO therefore has to work harder than ever before on its cohesion and resilience and the shaping of its conditions for operation. Planning and therefore policies need to be more strongly aligned if solidarity is to remain strong. Resolving the three issues addressed in this paper would give NATO a clearer sense of direction and a stronger sense of itself.

Getting to great

How can NATO possibly be bolder or clearer, when it depends on consensus and when unity seems so important?

In fact, consensus is built on solidarity not unity. Allies should take more confidence from their solidarity² and worry less about

¹ For the 10 Allies for which data are available, support for NATO rose by an average of 5.6% between 2013 and 2017 (<http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/37/survey/all/>)

² Allies continue to demonstrate defence and security

formal unity. What Trump says in Brussels this July will of course matter and it will no doubt be divisive; but what counts more is what the US actually does and how cohesive other Allies are in response.

Moreover, NATO already has the building blocks for a higher level of ambition on the South, Russia and burdensharing. It does not have to tackle the fault lines head-on. And, in-time honoured fashion, it can use more than one summit to get to the answers.

With limited time now left to negotiate whole new initiatives, the Brussels 2018 communique is the best place to insert fresh thinking about ways forward and pledges to undertake future work. The further NATO-EU Joint Declaration offers further opportunities and it is always open to individual Allies or groups of them to float new ideas.

“NATO already has the building blocks for a higher level of ambition on the South, Russia and burdensharing.”

This is not about futile attempts to agree what cannot be agreed. It is about ambitious diplomacy to push beyond second tier issues where possible to establish fresh primary common ground. None of this work need touch fundamental, hard-negotiated NATO texts such as the 2010 Strategic Concept, the 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review or the 2016 Tenets and Key Principles of Modern Deterrence. Even where these texts are out of date (as in the Strategic Concept's

solidarity with one another – “29 for 29” – expressed, for example, in Baltic air patrols, the multinational enhanced and tailored forward presence to the East, NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan and the Alliance's response to the nerve agent attack in Salisbury. Under President Trump there has been a 40% increase in spending on the United States's European Reassurance Initiative, increasing US equipment, presence and activity on the territory of European Allies.

four paragraphs on Russia) it is wiser simply to gloss and adapt them in other texts rather than to open them up or launch fresh, core drafting exercises.

Three issues

NATO's engagement southwards, NATO's long-term approach to Russia, and the question of transatlantic burdensharing are in ascending order of importance for Alliance solidarity. They must eventually be tackled if that solidarity is not at least gradually - and possibly rapidly - to erode. Tackling one or more of them could make the next summit after 2018 a great one.

NATO engagement to the South³

Southern Allies are happier about NATO's positioning than they were even 12 months ago. The tone of intra-Alliance debate has improved: east-south divisions have subsided and it is now well-established that NATO's 'deterrence and defence' is exercised in all directions, not just towards Russia. Advance planning is underway for southern contingencies. Units are being voluntarily pre-designated by nations for defence capacity building roles in the South. The hub at NATO Joint Forces Command Naples for coordination of Alliance activity along the southern arc of instability has been agreed (and is scrambling to be ready, late, by the 2018 summit). Following the military defeat of ISIS, US pressure for NATO to demonstrate counter-terrorism relevance has eased. So of our three issues, the South seems the least pressing.

Nevertheless, on all three main NATO lines of effort southwards – stabilisation, counter-terrorism and deterrence – NATO solidarity is liable to be tested. Southern Allies may be content simply to feel that NATO understands and will respond to their security concerns.

³ The terms the 'South' and 'Southern' are merely shorthand for the arc of instability that runs from North Africa through the Middle East to Afghanistan and for the Allies adjacent to it.

But that isn't enough.

Historically, incoherence and divisions such as over Iraq, Libya, migration and Afghanistan have shown how damaging 'southern' issues can be for European and Euro-Atlantic cohesion. And the moment the security of southern Allies once again comes under stress, whether from fresh waves of migrants, high profile terrorist outrages or even state-based threats such as missile proliferation, intra-Alliance solidarity will again be tested because the political foundations for NATO action in the South remain fractured.

“The moment the security of southern Allies once again comes under stress, intra-Alliance solidarity will again be tested.”

The fault lines in these foundations are numerous. Some are specific to Turkey. But the cracks go wider and deeper:

- NATO alone cannot deliver stability southwards. The organisation's own resources for defence capacity building in third countries are tiny. Allies' national contributions are not always well knitted together. And it remains unclear how NATO efforts on their own actually make a sustainable difference to countries like Tunisia or Jordan. This depends on others, but NATO still lacks a philosophy and practice of coordination with others' capabilities. Yet some Allies sometimes seem to suggest that NATO should have neat solutions of its own and NATO sometimes pretends to itself that it can make a difference on its own.
- Similar points apply on countering terrorism. Although NATO talks a good game, this generally confuses CT with stabilisation. Again, the collective assets for CT are minuscule. Yet there is a lack of clarity about how Allies acting

together actually contribute to defeating terrorism – reflected in the lack of US-led political solutions in Afghanistan and NATO's absence until recently from Iraq. Approaches differ between the US and Europeans and among Europeans: certain major European Allies fear tainting CT-relevant stabilisation work by association with the US through NATO. Hence too the reluctance of EU member states to take NATO offers of counter-migration assistance in the Mediterranean.

- It is unclear too how “360 degree deterrence” works towards the South. Conventional state threats against Europe such as from Iranian missiles are perhaps deterred. But NATO has not set out to deter state-sponsored terrorism and no Ally has shown how this would be done successfully. Nor is it evident from where the assets would come if NATO was simultaneously tested from the south and from the east.

All this creates expectations that NATO cannot meet, with consequent risks of upset to southern Allies and of east-south tensions. There are no simple glues for these fractures. But NATO solidarity would have stronger foundations if there was a clearer and more realistic consensus about the Alliance's southern goals, how these are to be achieved, and what can and cannot be done with the resources available.

This is not so easy with a US President who, it may be assumed, will react badly if told that NATO cannot do as much as he insists. The key, positive message to push is that, for most of its aspirations in the south, NATO will depend on collaborations with others and that Allies will therefore work even harder to develop those partnerships. This should be reflected in the following concrete steps:

- In its communique and the EU-NATO Joint Statement, NATO should intensify its commitment to partnering with

the EU in capacity building for partner countries. It should explicitly recognize that, for defence capacity building to be sustainable, it must be embedded in sustainable capacity building for wider security and governance. Among other Allies, Germany should press this case in order to counter-pose its substantial development efforts to Washington's pressure for greater German defence spending. Berlin might legitimately seek to trade greater German military performance for less unilateralism in US military assistance to partner countries like Jordan, Tunisia or Georgia.

- To make this intensification of effort explicit and the 'new level of ambition' envisaged in the July 2016 EU-NATO Joint Declaration more concrete:
 - NATO should commit to launching and coordinating by its next summit a programme between Allies in capitals and on the ground in partner countries of greater transparency, non-duplication and collaboration on national capacity building assistance, recognising that NATO's own contributions to counter-terrorism, building integrity⁴ and defence capacity building will be principally through the coordinated efforts of its member states;
 - NATO and the EU should agree to move from cooperation on stabilisation and CT activities to active collaboration with a view to minimising duplication and boosting EU-NATO synergies through regular communication on the ground in selected partner countries and by progressively improving their information sharing and aligning their planning about their efforts individual partner countries.⁵

⁴ Through its Building Integrity Programme, NATO supports Allies and partners in stilling integrity, transparency and accountability in the defence sector.

⁵ For further detailed recommendations, see the ELN paper on 'EU-NATO relations: Inching Forward?' and

NATO-Russia confrontation

NATO has done quite well in adapting its defence posture in response to the needs of 'modern deterrence', will take further steps in July at the summit dialogue with Russia⁶ and will go further in coming years, especially on the readiness and infrastructure necessary for rapid reinforcement from North America and across Europe. Foreign Ministers in April this year reconfirmed the 2016 Warsaw summit commitment that deterrence of Russia is to be paralleled by dialogue with Russia.⁷

But there are three underlying weaknesses that will continue to eat away at internal solidarity for the Alliance's core collective defence role.

The first is a geostrategic question. What is the long term objective with Russia? Since 2014 it has been impossible for the North Atlantic Council to agree a new Alliance strategy on Russia. Is the purpose to manage confrontation, overcome it or transcend it? "Deterrence and dialogue" is a second order compromise that says nothing about how NATO will deal with the dangers and costs of the long-term downward spiral in NATO-Russia confrontation.

the associated 17 May 2017 'Statement of Support for EU-NATO collaboration' by ELN participants.

⁶ *Inter alia*, the summit will endorse what NATO Defence Ministers, with a clear eye on a Russia contingency, decided on 7 June 2018 – the so-called "four thirties" initiative referred to further above through which Allies would be able collectively to deploy 30 mechanised battalions, 30 air squadrons and thirty combat vessels within 30 days.

⁷ Warsaw 2016 Communiqué, Paragraph 12, 'We remain open to a periodic, focused and meaningful dialogue with a Russia willing to engage on the basis of reciprocity in the NRC, with a view to avoiding misunderstanding, miscalculation, and unintended escalation.' (https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm)

And, Stoltenberg at 2018 Foreign Ministers meeting 'We agreed that our dual-track policy of strong deterrence and defence combined with meaningful dialogue is the right one.....NATO remains committed to dialogue with Russia.' (https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_154092.htm)

Unless Allies come to some better understanding of the goal, the handling of Russia will be endlessly divisive. Some Allies favour a hard line to hasten the day when Moscow sees the light and changes its policies. Others favour far more engagement and less 'provocation' for exactly the same reasons. There are knock-on effects on key questions such as further enlargement of NATO's membership. And there is a great deal of unilateralism, from the bilateral contacts that Washington and other Allied capitals pursue with Moscow to Turkey's roller-coaster love-hate relationship to initiatives like Warsaw's proposed purchase of permanent US military presence. Lack of a clear approach makes it easier for Moscow to drive wedges into Alliance solidarity.

The NATO 2010 Strategic Concept's vision of strategic partnership with Russia is plainly an anachronism. The 2014 and 2016 summit communiqués state only that NATO's relations with Russia are contingent on 'a clear, constructive change in Russia's actions which demonstrates compliance with international law and its international obligations and responsibilities.'⁸ Until that happens, the Alliance maintains there can be no return to 'business as usual'.⁹ Given the extreme improbability of Russia unilaterally returning to an approach that all Allies can accept, NATO's posture is short-term strengthening of deterrence while leaving the initiative to Russia on dialogue.

It may as yet be impossible to find consensus on a Russia strategy. It would nevertheless mark a forward step in the Alliance's positioning if – four years on from Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine – NATO fully recognised that the new condition of confrontation is

likely to persist. This would not involve saying what the desired exit strategy or end state should be. Nor would it solve all problems in the intra-Alliance deterrence debate. For example, acknowledging the long haul might be thought to strengthen Poland's minority argument for the permanent stationing of substantial US combat forces in violation of the NATO-Russia Founding Act (NRFA). But recognising the long-term challenge of safely and successfully managing the relationship would reinforce the case for thinking harder and agreeing more about how some elements of deterrence and dialogue are going to be conducted.

“Responsible deterrence’ would offer all Allies more moral high ground at lower risk for greater solidarity.”

Recognising that NATO and Russia are likely to be in confrontation for many years would force more focus on the second weakness. This concerns the risks and costs in NATO's current deterrence posture. Deterrence is relatively easy to do but hard to do well. Four years on, it is time for NATO, in parallel to its so far largely defence-based response, to focus on the long haul deterrence responsibilities of reading Russia better, signalling more clearly, and taking other at least unilateral steps to reduce unnecessary risks of unintended escalation. This would not prejudge choices between harder or softer lines towards Moscow. But 'responsible deterrence' would offer all Allies more moral high ground at lower risk for greater solidarity.

Similar arguments apply to the third weakness – NATO's position on dialogue. Here, the Alliance is on shakier ground, with solidarity in correspondingly worse shape. Given that NATO sees dialogue as a necessary concomitant to deterrence and an agreed tool in NATO's arsenal, implementation

⁸ Wales 2014, Paragraph 23 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/351406/Wales_Summit_Declaration.pdf)

⁹ Warsaw 2016, Paragraph 15, (https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm)

of the “periodic, focused and meaningful dialogue” called for at Warsaw has been poor. NATO has missed the internal discipline of agreeing lines for regular dialogue. Allies have stood back and waited for Russia to come to them, leaving the initiative in the Kremlin’s hands. Despite the acknowledged risks in the deterrence relationship, such as hazardous military incidents, NATO has pressed Russia very little through dialogue.¹⁰ Even though it is now impossible to imagine any routine business for NATO with Russia, the slogan ‘no business as usual’ with Russia has obstructed NATO’s pursuit of business that needs to be done.

These weaknesses could all be addressed with small but important developments of communique or declaration language in July 2018 and taken further into more explicit long term policy in April 2019 when NATO marks its 70th anniversary or at a later summit. The aim should be for 2019/2020 language in effect to replace the outdated big picture paragraphs on Russia of the 2010 Strategic Concept. Concrete steps should include:

- A commitment in July 2018, with regret, to start planning for the reality of a long-haul confrontation with Russia, with conclusions to be reached at NATO’s next summit. This planning should include work to reduce such risks of unintended escalation as there may be in NATO’s and Russia’s deterrence postures.¹¹

¹⁰ Only partially successful testing of the NATO-Russia hotline, two Stoltenberg-Lavrov meetings a year, one meeting of the Chairman of NATO’s Military Committee with General Gerasimov, one meeting for Gerasimov with SACEUR and seven meetings (counting the one on 31 May 2018) of the NATO-Russia Council since April 2014 hardly constitute “dialogue”.

¹¹ For detailed recommendations on how to do this, see the ELN’s ‘Russia and NATO: how to overcome deterrence instability?’, ‘Inherent Instability: Cyber and Space as Deterrence Spoilers’, ‘Envisioning a NATO-Russia conflict: Implications for Deterrence Stability’ and ‘NATO’s Evolving Modern Deterrence Posture: Challenges and Risks’.

- A commitment in July 2018 to ensure that NATO’s deterrence measures are well-communicated to Moscow and well-understood there. To that end, the Brussels summit should more specifically commit to try to bring about an all-weather NATO-Russia dialogue sustained with an established periodicity and agenda even if relations further worsen. The communique should envisage multiple, sustained, high-level, well-prepared military and political channels of dialogue with appropriate Russian counterparts to try to reduce the risks that Russia’s actions impose.

Burdensharing

Perhaps the division in the Alliance that is most corrosive of solidarity is the feeling that some Allies do not pull their fair share of the weight. It is ever less sustainable politically that 70 years after the end of the Second World War rich European societies still depend for their collective defence and high-end military crisis management on an Ally thousands of miles away. Europeans need to show more practical action to increase their capabilities in ways directly relevant to NATO or solidarity will come under serious and growing strain. Its huge stakes in European stability and prosperity by themselves may not keep the United States from rash decisions about burdensharing. It will be corrosive for solidarity too if some European states make an effort and others do not.

“Europeans need to show more practical action to increase their capabilities in ways relevant to NATO.”

While increased spending is necessary, the focus on defence spending as a proportion

of GDP shows how immature at least at the political level consideration is of what it will take for European Allies really to pull their weight. The 3.6% of GDP that the United States spends on defence globally doesn't tell us what it spends for just the Euro-Atlantic area. And 2% of GDP spent on defence by 2024 is a poor proxy for getting Europeans to spend better.

The burdensharing debate needs to factor in the in-built inefficiencies of 27 different European national defence plans, defence budgets and threat perceptions and the fragmented nature of European defence industry and procurement. The NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) does identify military capability requirements for individual European Allies and this can balance progress by all Allies on filling absolute NATO capability shortfalls with progress by Europeans on relieving the US from making up relative shortfalls. But it doesn't set out how these capabilities are to be generated. It does not plan firmly beyond the four year horizon of the NDPP cycle. And it doesn't set out a timeline over which European and North American efforts on Euro-Atlantic defence and security might reasonably be brought into balance.¹²

“The progress of Europeans towards being able to look after their own defence will be measured in decades.”

Realistically, even with increased spending and determined efforts at cohesion through the EU as well as NATO, the progress of Europeans towards being able to look after their own defence will be measured in decades.

¹² NATO estimates suggest that in aggregate even if Europeans do all that is currently asked of them, the US will still be providing more than 30% of total NATO capabilities in the mid-2030s.

The health of transatlantic defence relations in NATO requires this long timescale to be recognised on both sides of the Atlantic. European Allies then need to agree with Washington, and set out for their publics and parliaments, how better European defence capability is to be achieved. NATO would find itself in very poor condition indeed if great strides had not been made by its 100th anniversary. Its 70th next year seems a good time to start.

Thus, alongside credible commitments on defence spending, in Brussels this year European Allies in particular should:

- Pledge to develop by April 2019 a long-term roadmap towards greater, more coherent, better planned European burdensharing in order to free up US military capability and make Europe a more useful security partner to Washington.¹³ Ideally, this would be envisaged in collaboration with non-NATO EU member states. In that case, the pledge should also be reflected in the planned NATO-EU Joint Declaration. This Joint Declaration will in any case celebrate NATO-EU collaboration on military mobility across Europe. It would be natural to build on this with more vision for the future.

The credibility of this pledge to work on a roadmap for greater capacity among Europeans to look after their own defence should be reinforced by a number of smaller steps.

- In this pledge, picking up the language of the 2014 Wales Summit Declaration that “increased investments should be directed towards meeting our capability priorities”, leaders should undertake to establish a mechanism within the NDPP to require Allies to demonstrate that the additional quantum that they spend on

¹³ See the ELN's May 2018 'European Strategic Autonomy: Stop Talking, Start Planning'.

defence year on year will be applied to agreed NATO capability shortfalls.

- The summit should confirm the commitment already made by NATO Defence Ministers that all Allies will develop and publish defence spending plans to reach 2% by 2024.
- Leaders should recommit in the communique to the other Allies spending pledges – (a) to aim by 2024 to spend 20% or more of total defence expenditures on major new equipment, including related research and development; (b) to ensure national forces meet NATO agreed guidelines for deployability and sustainability and other agreed output metrics; and (c) to ensure the implementation of agreed NATO standards - and set 2024 as the target date by which all Allies aim to meet (b) and (c), with specific reference to maintenance, rapid response capacity, logistics and other forms of readiness.
- The 2018 NATO-EU Joint Declaration should undertake to resuscitate and actively employ the NATO-EU Capabilities Joint Working Group in order to maximise coherence between NATO and EU priorities for filling capability gaps.
- Reconfirm in the 2018 Brussels communique that Allies' commitment to collective defence is absolute and that therefore SACEUR will automatically get whatever national military capabilities are foreseen in NATO's new Graduated Response Plans for collective defence. (For NATO crisis management tasks, as opposed to collective defence, the contribution of forces is voluntary and involves SHAPE in laborious efforts to generate forces.)

Conclusions

NATO is a political Alliance, not just a military one. Given the security shocks of 2014, it is natural that the organisation's focus has until now been on immediate military responses. These need to be continued and developed. But the Alliance must also attend to its politics.

Its solidarity is vulnerable to structural questions and trends that go considerably deeper than President Trump's antagonistic approach, although that too can do damage. The best response to doubters about NATO's value on both sides of the Atlantic is for the Alliance to work for solidarity not just in its short-term actions but in its long-term thinking.

“The Alliance must also attend to its politics.”

This brief survey has by no means addressed all the long-term issues on which the Alliance needs to pull together. NATO enlargement, for example, is an underlying long-term question that may be straightforward for the western Balkans but is certainly not so where aspirants like Ukraine and Georgia are concerned.

However, the three issues on which this report focuses – the south, Russia and transatlantic burdensharing – clearly have the potential to undermine Alliance solidarity if they are not more satisfactorily addressed. All can still be addressed by steps at the July 2018 summit that would position the Alliance for a more worthwhile, productive, less inherently defensive declaration at its 70th anniversary celebration in Washington next year or a summit in 2019 or 2020.

While some of these steps are undoubtedly a stretch, all of them are negotiable. Since money is always hard to agree, none of these recommendations in itself necessitates extra

spending above and beyond what is already called for. All of them involve a longer-term view – what NATO wants to achieve on the south and how; where the NATO-Russia relationship should go and dealing with the risks in that; how the long-term, consensual rebalancing of defence effort in Europe from the US to European Allies can be achieved.

At the strategic level, the longer term can often be easier to negotiate than the immediate and yet can have a clarifying, consolidating effect on the rationale for shorter-term decisions. And on the other hand, failure to address these issues would damage Alliance coherence and cohesion and leave NATO progressively less able to guarantee Euro-Atlantic security.