

NATO after the summit in Warsaw: adapting to meet new security challenges

“The Warsaw Summit was a good meeting. We took landmark decisions, so that we can properly address the risks and threats Europe is facing. We reaffirmed and strengthened solidarity among Allies and with our Partners. We made well-balanced decisions, we’re focusing on cooperation and dialogue, and we will not fuel conflicts any further.” (Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on 9 July 2016)

The NATO Summit in Warsaw on 8 and 9 July 2016, like the Wales Summit in September 2014, was another landmark meeting at which the North Atlantic Alliance responded to the urgent security challenges it is facing in its immediate neighbourhood.

The event sent three key messages: First, it signaled transatlantic solidarity and unity. Second, it demonstrated that NATO is consistently implementing – and remains fully capable of making – decisions, also “at 28”. Third, it proved the Alliance is ready and able to continually adapt – without giving up its defensive military posture. Military readiness and dialogue are two sides of the same coin, and both remain strategic pillars of NATO.

In Warsaw, the focus was on what position the Alliance should adopt on security challenges in its neighbourhood, ranging from the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the east to the complex crises in Libya, Syria and Iraq; on how NATO can help strengthen security and stability in view of the many conflicts along its periphery; and on how NATO should react to new threats, such as hybrid warfare and cyber attacks.

Once again, this summit demonstrated how there are no easy answers when it comes to tackling these unprecedented security challenges. The new challenges are complex, not static, and sometimes lack clearly-defined adversaries or a geographical source. To respond to them, NATO needs a long-term adaptation process: a “21st-century security policy” that is based on a networked approach and tailored to present-day requirements.

From Wales to Warsaw

The much-needed process of adaptation was set in motion two years ago, at the summit

*Translation of an article by Ambassador Dr. Hans-Dieter Lucas, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on the North Atlantic Council, published in the August issue (8/2016) of “Europäische Sicherheit & Technik”.

meeting in Wales. In response to Russia's actions in Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea in violation of international law, NATO refocused on its core task of collective defence – a significant change after almost 25 years of crisis management operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan, as well as strong engagement in cooperative security and partnership policy. Especially the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which was adopted at Wales and aims to increase the Alliance's readiness, sent a clear message: The security of the North Atlantic Alliance is indivisible. We are bound by our commitment to protect one another.

In Warsaw, the Heads of State and Government noted that the RAP, which was agreed in Wales, has been implemented. Considering the sheer number of associated measures, their successful implementation is impressive. Germany is a key contributor: together with the Netherlands and Norway, we assumed a pioneering role by establishing a new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), and by providing rotating contributions to exercises in the Alliance's eastern territory. We have also transformed the Multinational Corps Northeast headquarters in Szczecin into a hub designed for all NATO Article 5 activities in the Baltic and in Poland.

At Warsaw, in response to the continuing changes in the security environment, the Alliance has gone even further, by taking tailored decisions to bolster deterrence and defence. Concerns have arisen particularly among our eastern Allies, not only due to the conflict in Ukraine, but also because of Russia's large-scale, unannounced snap exercises, its problematic nuclear rhetoric, and its increasing ability to dominate the air and sea domains, thereby blocking NATO's access to, and denying operational activity in, certain areas (Anti-Access/Area Denial, or A2/AD). The Alliance has now responded – albeit not by returning to the methods and instruments of the Cold War, but rather in a proportionate and balanced way: NATO is ensuring credible deterrence, in accordance with its defensive character and fully respecting the provisions of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. At the same time, the Alliance is offering to engage in dialogue with Russia.

The dual-track approach: deterrence and dialogue are two sides of the same coin

A key element is NATO's enhanced forward presence in the geographically more exposed Allied countries in the Baltic and in Poland. Enhanced forward presence is important – because, in times of crisis, rapidly-deployable forces alone are not sufficient; NATO must

*Translation of an article by Ambassador Dr. Hans-Dieter Lucas, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on the North Atlantic Council, published in the August issue (8/2016) of "Europäische Sicherheit & Technik".

already have assets present in certain regions before a crisis occurs. That is why, next year, four multinational battalion-sized units will be deployed on a rotational basis. Four Allies will assume the role of framework nation: Canada for Latvia, the United Kingdom for Estonia, the United States for Poland, and Germany for Lithuania.

Enhanced forward presence is a visible sign of Alliance solidarity and meets the security needs of our eastern Allies. The multinational character of these units aims to underscore that a possible attack against any one Ally would be considered an attack against all Allies. NATO purposefully chose not to permanently station substantial combat forces in the east. Rather, NATO Heads of State and Government have made clear they want to preserve and uphold the rules-based security architecture in Europe, along with the fundamental principles of the OSCE and the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

There was consensus among summit participants that a military response alone will not suffice. More security will only be created if we pursue both military readiness and dialogue. Ever since the Harmel Report was published in 1967, the dual-track policy of deterrence and defence, on the one hand, and détente and dialogue, on the other hand, is ingrained in the North Atlantic Alliance. This means we must use channels of communication with Moscow, as well as strengthen mutual transparency and build trust. A key part of this is using the NATO-Russia Council as a forum for dialogue – something Germany has repeatedly advocated even when times were difficult. After a two-year hiatus, the NATO-Russia Council reconvened for the first time in April 2016, and it recently met again immediately following the Warsaw Summit.

Continual dialogue will remain important: The NATO-Russia Council is not a fair-weather forum. Rather, it is well-suited to discussing contentious issues with Russia – for instance, the situation in Ukraine – and it is a forum for making our interests known. This includes efforts to promote military transparency and risk reduction, with the aim of preventing dangerous incidents that may lead to escalation.

Security challenges to the south

The crises and conflicts in NATO's southern neighbourhood were the second major summit topic. Today, the situation there is even more dramatic than it was two years ago

*Translation of an article by Ambassador Dr. Hans-Dieter Lucas, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on the North Atlantic Council, published in the August issue (8/2016) of "Europäische Sicherheit & Technik".

during the Wales Summit: there are crises in Libya, Syria, and Iraq, as well as the threat posed by the so-called Islamic State, a continued difficult security environment in Afghanistan, and the refugee crisis. These keywords show that the threats we are facing are directed at all Allies and originate to a large, if not greater, extent from non-state than from state actors. The causes – failing governmental structures, terrorism and fundamentalism – are highly complex and multi-faceted. Therefore, there are no easy answers. An appropriate response in Syria, Iraq or Libya will not be purely military. In the end, political solutions must be found.

As the key transatlantic security organization, NATO must be part of a broader international effort that aims to contribute to more security, also along the Alliance's southern periphery. In most cases, however, NATO is not the first responder. It performs more of a supporting role, e.g. for the EU in the Mediterranean, or for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL in Iraq and in Syria. NATO can do much to project stability by helping its partners in the region strengthen their own defence capabilities: through the Defence Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative, and by providing training and advice so that these countries can help themselves.

For some time now, the Alliance has been training Iraqi security forces in Jordan, above all on counter-IED techniques. At Warsaw, we agreed to move parts of NATO's training programme to Iraq, to support the Iraqi forces in their own country as they set out to stabilize areas that have been reclaimed from ISIL. NATO also wants to do more to help Jordan and Tunisia. These countries urgently require assistance with border security, and NATO has informed Libya it is in principle willing to help that country build security structures, should it expressly request such assistance.

Security in the south also has a key maritime dimension – as was highlighted by the refugee crisis. That is why Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean, which has been in place since 2001 and was previously based on Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, has now been transitioned into a broader maritime security operation that is no longer tied to Article 5. The new Operation Sea Guardian will focus on delivering maritime situational awareness, aiding countries with their capacity-building efforts and thereby also helping to fight terrorism. In addition, NATO has declared it is prepared to support the EU's Operation SOPHIA in the Central Mediterranean. Furthermore, NATO will continue to pursue its activities in the Aegean in close cooperation with the Greek and

*Translation of an article by Ambassador Dr. Hans-Dieter Lucas, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on the North Atlantic Council, published in the August issue (8/2016) of *“Europäische Sicherheit & Technik”*.

Turkish coast guards, as well as the EU's border management agency FRONTEX.

Finally, NATO Heads of State and Government have announced they are in principle willing to provide NATO AWACS support, operating from Turkish and international airspace, to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. These aircraft can help increase the coalition's situational awareness. However, it is also clear that, although NATO intends to provide this support, it is not thereby becoming a member of the Global Coalition.

The renewed emphasis on collective defence does not render obsolete crisis management, which remains one of NATO's core tasks. This is true in Afghanistan, where the Alliance will need to remain engaged in the future. At the Warsaw Summit, the international community expressed its commitment to continue financial contributions toward the sustainment of Afghanistan's security forces until the end of 2020. NATO also reaffirmed its intention to sustain the Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016. A key aspect here was the United States' announcement just prior to the summit that the US contingent in Afghanistan will be maintained at the current level of 8,400 service members.

It becomes especially clear when examining the arc of crises along our southern periphery that neither NATO nor the EU can tackle these challenges alone. Both organizations have responded appropriately, by issuing a major declaration in Warsaw that they intend to give new substance to their cooperation, particularly in their efforts to counter hybrid warfare, bolster resilience, exchange information, improve their analysis and early warning capabilities, expand coordination on cyber security, as well as enhance strategic communication and maritime security. This will take the strategic partnership between these two core institutions of the political Western World to a whole new level.

Long-term adaptation

Although brief, this look at the key decisions taken in Warsaw aims to show how the long-term adaptation process that has been set in motion will prepare the Alliance to meet future strategic challenges and will ensure that it remains capable of action.

Yet successful adaptation also requires sufficient personnel, materiel and funding. At Wales, Allies pledged to spend 2% of their Gross Domestic Product on defence, and 20% of their defence budgets on major equipment, as well as to increase their output to NATO.

*Translation of an article by Ambassador Dr. Hans-Dieter Lucas, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on the North Atlantic Council, published in the August issue (8/2016) of "Europäische Sicherheit & Technik".

In Warsaw, the Heads of State and Government reconfirmed their commitment to this ambitious objective. Germany is still far removed from meeting the 2% NATO defence spending pledge. However, because Germany has assigned nearly the entire Bundeswehr to NATO, it does rank very well on “output”. Regarding investments, too, we’re on the right track. With its 2016 defence budget, Germany has achieved the significant reversal of a trend. The same is true for most Allies: After years of declining defence budgets, we are now for the first time witnessing greater European expenditure on defence, i.e., an increase of more than 3%.

However, financial leeway will remain limited. It will therefore be all the more important for Allies to employ their assets more wisely and efficiently. There is much room for improvement and new ideas. The Framework Nations Concept – developed and proposed by Germany – is one such innovative approach. Together with 16 fellow Allies, Germany is pursuing the development of European capability clusters. This is helping to substantially strengthen European capabilities, which helps to improve transatlantic burden sharing.

Besides promoting specific projects and addressing issues related to resources, we will also need to pursue the long-term adaptation of NATO so that it can meet new security challenges. These efforts will only be successful if they are based on the tried and proven principles that underpin the North Atlantic Alliance: NATO’s defensive military posture, unity of and solidarity among Allies, and a shared set of values. The Warsaw Summit stands as proof that, on this basis, NATO can – also in a highly volatile security environment – provide credible answers to the security challenges of the 21st century.