The Security Times

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No more excuses

By Wolfgang Ischinger

Every year, the Munich Security Conference brings together more than 300 key decision-makers, civilian and military, in the fields of foreign and security policy, as well as captains of industry and representatives of civil society. They are joined by a large number of observers from many different countries. More than 300 journalists report from Munich, and more than 60 government delegations from around the world participate in strategic discussions at the Hotel Bayerischer Hof.

Last year, the MSC further enhanced its position as a globally respected independent annual international forum. The MSC, with a history stretching back more than 40 years, is also embarking upon new paths. In addition to the annual main conference held in Munich and following a successful first "MSC Core Group Meeting" in Washington, DC last November, we are now planning to organize such MSC Core Group Meetings every fall, rotating among different capitals.

As we open the 2010 Munich Security Conference, my appeal to all participants is: No more excuses! Now is the time to act. Let us make 2010 a year of peace implementation and global cooperation.

In February 2009, US Vice President Biden, President Sarkozy, Chancellor Merkel, and Deputy Prime Minister Ivanov initiated an early "political spring" in Munich. But the planning phase is over. Now is the time to kickstart initiatives which can usher in peace, security and prosperity, as well as lasting protection of the global climate. The public expectations placed in those who hold responsibility for international foreign and security policy are greater now than ever before.

DDP/LANG

Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger is Chairman of the Munich Security Conference

This year, the MSC will again focus on transatlantic and European security issues, including the key issue of Russia's place in the context of the European security architecture. In addition, new global challenges, such as resource security, climate change, the financial and economic crisis, combating terrorism and questions of global governance, will be addressed. The conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East are on the agenda, as well as the future strategic concept of Nato and urgent issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation: is "global zero" possible?

The MSC is not an intergovernmental conference: we do not draft communiqués. This is a private, independent initiative.

But thanks to its special and intimate character and its unusual composition, the MSC spirit can help develop creative and stimulating solutions, and build personal trust and better understanding among decision-makers. The lack of mutual trust was so obvious in recent years – and building trust is our business at MSC.

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Beyond nostalgia and emotion

How to puzzle the new world order into place | By Mark Leonard

European and American leaders are converging in Munich this year in an atmosphere of crisis. The tragedy of Haiti, and the failed airplane plot pile pressure on leaders already destabilized by the political aftershocks of the economic crash and the struggling mission in Afghanistan. But the trauma of the West has longer antecedents than the collapse of Lehman brothers in 2008 or even September 11. Its roots go back to 1989.

In 1939 the English historian E. H. Carr wrote a seminal book called "The Twenty Years' Crisis," which showed how the liberal powers squandered their victory in 1918 by failing to adapt to a changing world. Today's West is suffering a 20-year crisis of its own. Of course, 2009 is not 1939. There is no prospect of war in Europe, and the financial crisis has not wreaked the havoc of the Great Depression. But the analogy of the 20-year crisis does function in a fundamental way: the liberal powers in 1919 believed that they were the center of what would become a democratic world and were taken by surprise by the economic resurgence of authoritarian regimes. The same is true of the West after 1989: We believed that history was on our side, and that the world was cheering us on.

But 1989 not only opened the door for globalization and a shift in economic power from West to East (and the shifts in the military balance that rising powers could afford). It has also sowed the seeds for a multipolar world of ideas where many global leaders embrace the Beijing Consensus over the Washington Consensus, Russian sovereign democracy over European liberal democracy, while western attitudes towards sovereignty, human rights and intervention struggle to gain ground in international court of public opinion. In this context, the lack of reform of international institutions, from the UN to the IMF, could be seen as a mini-Versailles Treaty; a symptom of the fact that the liberal powers were too busy basking in their victory to ready themselves and their institutions for a different world.

President Obama is now preparing for this post-Western world by re-setting American relations with China and Russia, and reconceptualizing the US policy toward Af/Pak, the Middle East, and Iran. Many EU leaders, conversely, have strategic jetlag: They remain in thrall to the thinking of the 1990s (an incredible decade that saw Germany reunited, the seeds for NATO and EU enlargement planted, a European single market and currency completed, and the creation of a new generation of multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, the Kyoto Protocol, and the International Criminal Court). Because its world view was shaped by this glorious decade it is struggling to adapt to changes in its own continent or the wider world.

The 1990s was the EU's unipolar moment, at least in its own neighborhood. Russia descended into chaos, the countries of the eastern bloc began their long journey toward EU accession and the liberal European model was the only one on offer. Enlargement – of NATO first and then the EU – has been the EU's most successful foreign policy ever, but its very success is preventing the EU from developing fresh thinking for the challenges of the 21st century. Enlargement in the 1990s was based on the assumption that Europe is the only pole of attraction and that countries want not simply to join it, but to become like it.

However, beyond the Western Balkans and Turkey, neither of these assumptions hold true. Today's neighborhood is multipolar with Russia and a newly active Turkey using soft and hard power to bring countries into their sphere of influence. While the new neighbors are attracted by the European market, they want to choose European benefits à la carte rather than embark on the wholesale transformation of their societies. They see the European Union as a way of increasing their leverage against Russia. And at the same time, the United States – through its re-set diplomacy and the step away from missile defence and NATO enlargement – has signaled to Europeans that they will return to off-shore balancing – leaving Europeans to take primary responsibility for their backyard.

It is in this context – of an increasingly multipolar Europe – that we need to think about the Medvedev proposal. For diplomats there is a natural tendency to go for a defensive posture of marking out European red-lines and sending the debate into the graveyard of the OSCE.

But the core questions we need to start with are: Do we live in the best of all possible orders given the political situation in Russia? Are the post-cold-war institutions underpinning European order and giving us the security that we need? If the answer to these questions is yes, there may be problems with the OSCE, CFC, and Georgia but any renegotiation will simply play into Russia's hands – allowing them to undermine NATO, EU and OSCE; divide and rule Europeans and Americans; and re-establish a sphere of influence.

An alternative approach is to recognise that the post-cold war order is already crumbling and that the status-quo we are trying to defend is inherently unstable. If that is true it might be worth risking moving beyond red-lines to forge a united European position that could shift the Russians on arms control, common missions in Transdnistria, mutual recognition of the status-quo in Georgia. Of course, this approach will probably not succeed because of the conceptual differences between the two sides. For Europeans, the idea of security is about pooling and constraining sovereignty. For a Russia that is busy trying to rebuild its sovereignty and protecting itself from outside interference the very idea of security in the EU is a threat. Conversely, it is the Russian idea of security – a sphere of influence shielded from external interference – which makes Europeans feel insecure. However, the EU has more to lose from passively responding to the Russian proposals than from debating its own idea of a European order and asking others to sign up.

On the surface, the US faces a similar dilemma on the global stage in responding to the rise of a China that has become a factor on all security issues. The conventional wisdom is that we have two choices in dealing with China: Either we give it the space to pursue more ambitious economic, diplomatic and defense objectives within the existing order; or we will find that China tries to alter the international rules and institutions of the Western order in order to build a new one in its own image.

But seen from Beijing there is no binary choice between engagement or exit. China depends too much on the existing system to drive its economic growth to seek to overthrow it, but it is showing little sign of becoming a "responsible stakeholder." Whether in sinking the chances of a meaningful deal at Copenhagen, in controlling the pace of the P5+1 process on Iran, working with India as a deal-breaker in the WTO negotiations, or restraining the capacity of the UN Security Council to take action on Burma and Zimbabwe, a more engaged China has generally acted to weaken the liberal orientation of the system wherever possible.

Rather than being transformed by the institutions, China has used its participation in the Western system to constrain the ability of the West to pursue core policy goals while at the same time working outside the existing system to create a new network of relationships and institutions that exclude the West. None of these steps are likely to result in outright confrontation with the West – not least because avoiding such a conflict is one of China's primary goals. But in the round, it represents a powerful challenge to the liberal order that was in the process of developing after the Cold War.

Rather than developing plans for a G2, the US should be working with the EU to develop an approach to preserve the liberal bias in the global order. The goal should not be to hope that China will become responsible, but rather to make the existing order China-proof. The central idea to adopt is an approach of "conditional integration" – using tools such as "Carbon taxes" or the threat of exclusion to make participation contingent on the contribution countries are willing to make. The goal is not to create a "league of democracies" but for Western powers to get much better at acting in concert and recruiting others to break up illiberal coalitions in global institutions.

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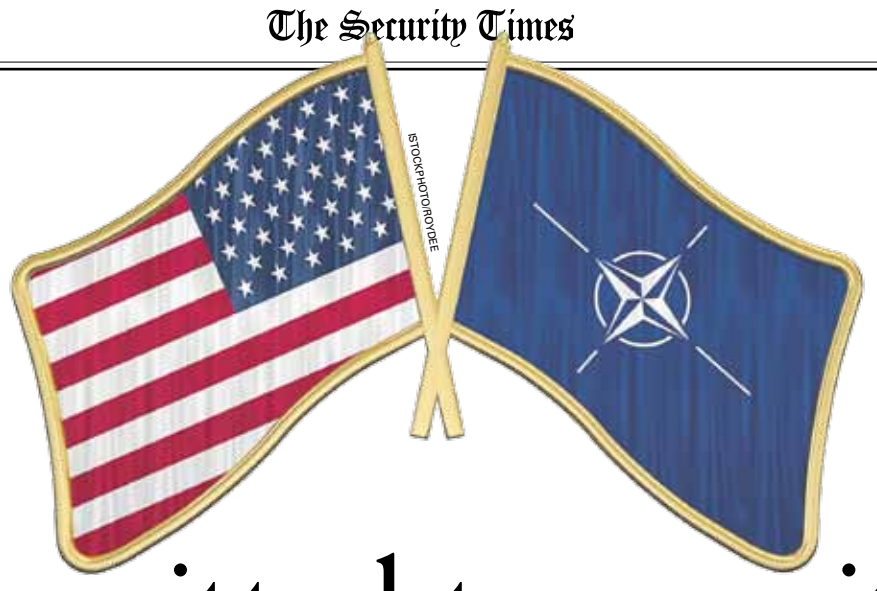
Forging new partnerships means being unafraid of escaping the thinking of the last 20 years. Today's Washington is already less focused on Europe and busy forging its own policies with other powers which may not always be in tune with European interests. This is not a bad thing. Over the past half century, Europeans have been infantilized by America – whether in the form of Atlanticism or anti-Americanism. Rather than developing their own responses to global issues, the tendency has been to pass a running commentary on American policy. But now, in a "post-American world," there is a chance to develop a new security agenda motivated not by nostalgia or emotion but shared interests, including the preservation of a liberal world order in an increasingly multipolar world.

> "Let's be unafraid of escaping the thinking of the last 20 years."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Committed to a united, free and peaceful Europe

"NATO remains fundamental to the American understanding of European security."

By Ivo H. Daalder

The agenda of this year's Munich Security Conference is unusually full. The leaders who gather here must consider how to protect Europe in the face of new and changing threats – from energy security challenges to the dangers of ballistic missiles and cyber terrorism – while also preserving and revitalizing those institutions that have guaranteed European security for decades.

Our achievements over the last six decades are great: working together with our European allies and partners we have brought peace and prosperity to most of Europe. But we cannot rest on our laurels – the 2008 war in Georgia reminded us that our task is not yet complete and that, in parts of Europe and Eurasia, security remains elusive.

As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's recent remarks in Paris on the future of European security emphasized, the United States remains fully committed to completing our principled vision of a Europe that is united, peaceful and free. A centerpiece of that commitment is NATO, where we will be working with our allies this year to adapt the alliance to the new security challenges by adopting a new strategic concept, increasing military transparency, strengthening the NATO-Russia Council, and developing missile defenses.

Certainly, NATO is only one part of that effort to realize our vision for European security. Europe has many important forums for enhancing security and we intend to pursue our vision in any and all that are appropriate. In the coming year, we will work with the European Union and within the OSCE to enhance transparency, to provide a forum for crisis management, and to protect human rights. We will work to revive the Treaty on Conventional


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Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) to provide the reassurance that no country is secretly preparing its forces for attack on another. And we will continue our efforts to conclude a follow-on agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia.

But NATO remains fundamental to our understanding of European security. Together we created NATO to defend Europe and North America from the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO's purpose has been less rigidly defined, but paradoxically the institution has been more useful to its members.

In the 1990s, many called on NATO to resolve conflicts in the Balkans. NATO enlargement contributed to increased stability and democratic consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe. Today, NATO is fielding tens of thousands of soldiers to fight terrorism in Afghanistan and engaging in counter-piracy operations off the coast of Africa, while still fulfilling its role of ensuring collective defense in Europe. It has proved itself to be adaptable and effective in responding to the more global and diverse threats of the 21st century.

NATO is also contributing to regional security through its various partnership structures, which provide a mechanism for dialogue and practical cooperation with the countries on its borders. NATO, for example, has a relationship with Russia through the NATO-Russia Council, as well as through the Partnership for Peace.

This is an important relationship – although as events of the last 18 months have shown – it is not without its difficulties.

Russia remains dissatisfied with its relationship with NATO and has proposed a new NATO-Russia Treaty. Similarly, many NATO members remain suspicious of Russian intentions and are looking to the alliance for reassurance. We welcome the Russian ideas, but we have some important disagreements with what they have proposed. As Secretary Clinton articulated last week in Paris, our approach to European security rests on certain principles – including respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights, and the right of all countries to choose their alliances – on which we cannot and will not compromise.

In Munich in 2009, the Obama administration committed to changing the US relationship with Russia. With our mutual interests as the basis, we have sought ways to work together constructively to address security concerns that we share. Together, we have made progress on a range of mutual security concerns, including stabilizing Afghanistan, addressing Iran's nuclear program, confronting North Korea's defiance of its international obligations, and tackling non-traditional threats, such as pandemic disease, climate change, and the trafficking of children.

We would welcome similar progress in the NATO context through a more efficient and more constructive NATO-Russia Council that enhances our political dialogue and encourages cooperation on a range of security issues – from Afghanistan and counter-narcotics to missile defense and conventional arms control. That kind of partnership will require a firm foundation of trust and fulfillment of commitments, including transparency on both sides about our military training and exercises.

We will be similarly transparent as we move forward on efforts to defend NATO territory against a growing ballistic missile threat. In December, NATO foreign ministers embraced President Obama's new approach to missile defense, which offers a means for linking US efforts with those of our allies. They recognized our missile defense plan as a key contribution to the territorial defense of NATO nations. This approach, which takes advantage of the latest advances in missile technology, is the physical embodiment of both our commitment to collective defense and the alliance's ability to adapt to new and changing threats. The new system also provides enhanced opportunities to link US, NATO, and Russian missile defense systems in a manner that might increase transparency and instill confidence.

We are proud of the alliance we have built with Europe over the past 60 years, one that promises decades of cooperation on the horizon. But we recognize that there is much work left to do to realize our vision. We look forward in the coming year, together with our allies and partners in Europe, including Russia, to taking important steps toward fulfilling that vision.

Is there an Obama Doctrine?

The president is now ready to take "military action whenever necessary." But what does that mean?

By William Richard Smyser


AFP/GETTY IMAGES/MANDEL NGAN

At last year's Munich Security Conference the new US Vice President Joseph Biden told conference chairman Wolfgang Ischinger that he had come to Munich to "listen and learn."

But Biden did more, also announcing some key themes of President Barack Obama's foreign policy:

- Top priorities would be diplomacy and partnership
- Obama would try to reach out to Muslims;
- He would ask for more help from US allies.

Obama has indeed followed those lines, opening discussions with (among others) Burma, Cuba, Iran, and North Korea while trying to "hit the reset button" on relations with Russia. He has appointed widely respected diplomatic emissaries for the Middle East and for Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Obama has also had a busy year of personal diplomacy with potential partners, visiting Europe, Russia, China, Asia, Latin America and such Muslim lands as Turkey, Egypt and Iraq.

Some of Obama's efforts have opened doors and won support. He may have increased the number of states that would join in sanctions against Iran if necessary. He may have improved the US image among Muslims by saying that "the Americans are not your enemy" and by making a direct statement to the Muslim world from Cairo. He has renewed a dialogue with North Korea. Over time, more results should appear.

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In the process, however, he must have learned that in diplomacy, as in war, the best-laid plans rarely survive the first encounter. Many of his approaches have not yet led to breakthroughs. Some show no progress at all. Others have even been roundly denounced by the partners he sought.

Obama has had some modest initial success with Russia, winning an agreement to permit transit of US military supplies across Russia to Afghanistan. Yielding to Russian interests by reversing former President George W. Bush's decision to install missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic, he won Russia's agreement not to install missile defense equipment in Kaliningrad. More important would be a follow-on nuclear arms control agreement mandating lower limits, but that has been very slow in coming.

Moreover, Obama faces some genuinely daunting problems: a deepening war in Afghanistan, a country known with good reason as "the graveyard of empires"; a conflict in Iraq that he wants to end "responsibly" but that can re-erupt at any time; the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation in North Korea and Iran; the unresolved crisis in the Middle East; Chinese trade protectionism through currency manipulation; last but not least the widespread sense that the American century has ended and that US power and influence can no longer determine the direction of the planet.

It is a world Obama did not make, a world he did not want, but a world he now must face. And one in which Obama has seen that diplomacy can achieve a lot but cannot protect either American interests or the American people alone.

The moment of truth came when Obama needed to decide his policy on Afghanistan in the face of a worsening situation on the ground and rising numbers of US and allied casualties. There, and perhaps from there, Muslim fighters who are seething with rage at the Western presence in Arab and Muslim lands can attack Americans and perhaps America and its allies directly.

Obama held a series of meetings last fall to formulate a strategy, announcing in December that he would send an additional 30,000 US troops to Afghanistan (bringing the total to about 100,000) but would begin withdrawing them by July 2011. He does not want to launch an occupation, preferring to train Afghan forces and to place greater responsibility for conducting the war on the Afghan government. He has also suggested that he would support Afghan government efforts to "open the door" to those Taliban ready to make peace.

Later, speaking at the Oslo ceremony where he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Obama justified his Afghanistan decision by asserting that "the instruments of war do have a role in preserving the peace." He reminded his European listeners that "a non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies." Despite his commitment to diplomacy, he observed that "force is sometimes necessary" in a world that is "not as it ought to be."

Obama's actions and statements about Afghanistan and about foreign policy in general reveal the emerging "Obama Doctrine." He has neither defined nor claimed it as a doctrine, but it is nonetheless clearly visible as one.

The doctrine could be stated as: "Negotiate wherever possible but be ready for military action whenever necessary." In plain English, it is: "Talk where you can but fight where you must."

Obama sees the combination in strategic terms. His public remarks and his actions show that he now thinks of them as essential complements. He much prefers diplomacy but has decided that his foreign policy must have both.

It is not known whether Obama came to office with that combination already fixed in his mind. Unlike such earlier presidents as Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon or George H. W. Bush, he had little experience in foreign policy. But the several long months that he spent planning his Afghanistan policy – condemned by some commentators as needless (some said "feckless") delay – undoubtedly helped to drive Obama to the doctrine.


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The diplomatic priority that Biden announced last year in Munich would not suffice. It may be the essential and preferred element in Obama's policy arsenal, but it did not quickly show the results he might have wanted nor could it alone protect the American people against another potential al Qaeda attack. Obama obviously meant it when he said that he would do "whatever it takes to keep the American people safe."

Obama's doctrine may have trouble finding a wide American constituency. When he speaks of war, especially of a war against "terror," he may win many Americans provided it does not now cost too much. But diplomacy, although it may be an essential component of a winning global strategy, has rarely aroused enthusiasm in the United States except when it represented a profound breakthrough (like Nixon in China or Ronald Reagan with Mikhail Gorbachev). The Republicans give him little credit for his diplomatic efforts, describing them as "appeasement."

Obama's dry, almost professorial speaking style, very different from his inspirational campaign rhetoric, leaves many of his listeners unmoved. He does not engage them emotionally. Fortunately for him, he came into office with high approval ratings and has some leeway.

Recent polls also show a growing belief that it is time for America to "come home." With a stagnant economy, high unemployment and deepening despair in former industrial areas, the people want their government to concentrate on things that matter to them directly – such as economic growth. That is an important reason why Obama calls for allied support.

Nonetheless, persons who claim to know his thinking say that Obama will persist with such a doctrine because he believes that the combination is right and will justify itself in the end. They also insist that he believes a double strategy now makes sense.

Of course, like all doctrines, Obama's is subject to interpretation. Does it mean he would attack caves in Yemen with more than drones? Would he land US forces in Somalia? What would or could he do about Pakistan if things go massively wrong there? He would probably be very reluctant to do the things that these questions suggest, but the uncertainty hangs in the air even if he may not have intended it.

Therefore, those who come to Munich to learn American policy may want to think of the Obama Doctrine and its potentially open interpretations as fixtures for at least the next few years. And, of course, perhaps for longer.

DPA/WOLF

The truly global problems

New challenges for NATO: climate change, natural catastrophes and cyber attacks

By Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg

Today, everyone seems to expect flexibility from us. Openness of mind, out-of-the-box thinking, new approaches – this is what counts. However, what sounds like the mantra of some personality coach bears some truth, also for politics. Modern day dynamics have taught us that if ever we used to store away issues in individual containers, we better make sure not to push them in too deeply. There is ample evidence that pigeonhole thinking no longer applies: Climate change is no longer only a 'green' problem, scarcity of resources has more than a political and economic dimension, and the cyber world with its bits and bytes has become interesting to people outside the group of computer scientists. All these topicshave tangible implications for our security.

Climate change has many faces; soil erosion, desertification, water shortage and rising sea levels are just some of them. Besides such vast effects on the environment, it has also become an economic risk factor and threat multiplier. In fact, it is one of the major challenges to security policy in the 21st century. For the first time, we are faced with a truly global problem which concerns each and every one of us. With its domino effects, it can contribute to the destabilization of whole communities, states and regions. Darfur is only one sad example.

And as many different fields are affected, many actors are needed to find a solution. It requires experts from the fields of foreign affairs, development aid, security and defense to co-operate closely with scientists, economists and legal specialists. Moreover, we have to take a double-track approach: mitigate the climate change as such by lowering carbon dioxide emissions and at the same time, reduce its negative effects. Germany will maintain its role as a driving force on this road. We will continue to attempt to find solutions that are viable and at the same time acceptable to the international community.

This approach has to be complemented by generous and constructive development aid to help communities and countries in need adapt to the changes. In addition, early-warning systems, not only for seismographic developments but also for arising conflicts should be further built up and invested in. If a natural catastrophe happens, disaster-relief should be provided where asked for, just as it is currently happening in Haiti.

DPA/KAPPELER

Old challenges, new challenges: Defence Minister zu Guttenberg with the Bundeswehr ISAF contingent in Kunduz, Afghanistan (above). Yet he also has a close eye on upcoming threads (too).

> "We must avoid holding on to old measures just because they proved right at one point."

Cyber attacks on information and communications systems are a completely different problem, yet also a serious and 'new' threat. NATO allies are exposed to them on a daily basis. These attacks jeopardize the economic system, infrastructure and society of a country and ultimately the structure of the state as a whole. The events in Estonia, in April and May 2007, illustrate this. Even powerful states like the United States are confronted with cyber attacks all the time. And to the extent that we become dependent on computer electronic networks and cyber structures, our vulnerability grows, too.

Denial of service attacks, data destruction, manipulation and espionage are not only directed against preferred targets, such as electronic communications facilities, financial institutions and energy utilities. They are also likely to pose a threat to our armed forces. Attacks on military information networks or satellite communications may directly result in a loss of command and control capability and – as a consequence – of operational capability, especially in a military network-based information environment.

If we want to preserve the stability of the Euro-Atlantic region, NATO has to place this issue prominently on its agenda. Not by including it in Article 5, as some nations wish. The sources of cyber attacks are mostly hard to trace, which is one reason why action is not easy. Assistance must be given where needed, yet a cyber attack must not automatically activate the Article 5 mutual defence clause. The question of how and when to react to a cyber attack has to be decided on a case-by-case basis. We, as an alliance, should further explore the potential for practical co-operation on cyber defense. The exchange of lessons learned, joint exercises and training as well as the political discussion of whether this capability might, at some point, also be used pro-actively if needed, could be a good starting point. In order to meet the requirements of the comprehensive approach to security in this field, too, NATO should co-operate with other international organizations such as the EU.

It is widely accepted that NATO is the most powerful military alliance in history. The key to its success was and remains its flexibility. Whereas the founding fathers of the Washington Treaty evinced a remarkable sense of vision when they formulated the goals and defined the cornerstones of the alliance, its various instruments and structures had to be adapted time and time again to the ever-changing security environment. Catchy terms such as "out-of-area or out-of-business" are a testimony to this process.

Yet transformation, the changing of structures and instruments, begins in our heads. We must avoid holding on to old measures just because they proved right at one point in time. Instead, we must constantly revise and test our approaches to see whether they still work. And steps that previously might have seemed unviable, might at some other juncture be just right. German rearmament in the 1950s, the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's speech to the Israeli Knesset in 1977, NATO's double-track approach to nuclear deterrence in 1979 – all seemed very daring at the time and were widely criticized. However, they have contributed to international peace and security. Today, the goal of Global Zero is yet another element in this category. We should try to prove its critics wrong – also in this field.

■

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg is Minister of Defence of Germany.

Selectivity is a catching disease

NATO needs unity of purpose and a shared strategic understanding | By Pauline Neville-Jones

The review of NATO's strategic concept provides an opportunity for the long-term relevance of traditional assumptions and concepts that have underpinned the alliance to be reassessed. Is the alliance still fit for purpose? Is its raison d'être of collective security still relevant in the current and future strategic context?

The first phase of the alliance's existence was characterized by deterrence against a mortal threat but without NATO as such ever being directly involved in combat. In other words, the function of the alliance was – or gradually became – primarily political. In this it was supremely successful.

Since the early 1990s however, the strategic context has been transformed out of recognition. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, NATO forces have engaged in active operations almost continuously. We began with humanitarian intervention. We now face network terrorism, piracy threatening the safety of trade on the high seas and myriad other forms of international organized crime, which taken together over time are capable of insidiously undermining civilized life in open democratic societies.

At the moment, ongoing operations in Afghanistan receive most attention. Indeed they have come to dominate to the virtual exclusion of everything else. Understandable but not altogether healthy. They have sparked two general debates. The first is about the nature of future conflict – is Afghanistan a good indicator of the future challenges to national and international security? The second is how such challenges should best be addressed: Does the coalition yet have a model response? There is a third debate particular to NATO: Whatever the answer to the first two questions, are such operations a legitimate and long-term part of the NATO agenda? We are all increasingly aware of the political and resource unsustainability of serial intervention, but does it follow there is no role? NATO needs to use the opportunity of the revision of its concept to deliver answers to these burning questions.

At the other end of the new agenda lie risks more popularly associated with homeland security which do not so much threaten the power of the state as the good functioning of society. Some may argue that these should not be the purview of a military alliance but the distinctions between different forms of risk are not clear cut. The emerging threat of cyber attack is an example. As the attacks on Estonia (and Georgia) showed, not only can it grossly disrupt essential daily functions in civilian life but it also degrades allies' military communications and capabilities. Do not all member states have a strong interest in the collective ability of its members to withstand such attacks, since the inability to do so weakens the security of all of us?

And we increasingly witness devastating natural catastrophes where the logistical and leadership capabilities of the military play a role. Again it may be argued that this is not an alliance matter – but is this true? It was NATO which showed up – and showed up well – after Hurricane Katrina. In an era of global communication, it seems improbable that the allies would stand idly by while a member state (or any other for that matter)

LADY MARGARET HALL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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struggled to manage alone from a manmade attack or natural catastrophe, especially when the capabilities needed to cope with either overlap. As Haiti shows, the skills demanded for successful stabilization and reconstruction post combat are akin to those in demand after an earthquake.

Finally there are some traditional tasks. The security of the transatlantic area, sea as well as land, is major among these. While attention is no longer focussed on the possibility of attack through the Fulda Gap, there are residual challenges to security, such as the stability of the Balkan region; ongoing issues such as the potentially destabilizing effects – economic as well as political – of strategic competition along the borders of the former Soviet Union; and emerging issues such as the security of the seas of the High North. How alert are the allies to all of these?

So, the world is not a quiet place and is unlikely to be so for the foreseeable future. At a time when power is shifting away from the North Atlantic, the governments of alliance countries will have to paddle hard to make their influence felt. We have a collective asset in NATO to which we should give new life. Some agenda items are new and some traditional. What should be the alliance's priorities?

The range of tasks facing the alliance is potentially overwhelming. But prioritizing does not in my view mean reverting to some narrow core concept based on Article 5. NATO should be about security as well as defense.

Afghanistan is in reality a security operation. The default option for dealing with a terrorist threat should not be counter-insurgency – that should be the exception. Each situation will present features that require a mix of capabilities tailored to it; in some instances limited strike operations might secure a particular objective, in others capacity building. The traditional area/out of area distinction no longer holds either: networks have to be followed where they lead. Cyber space has created a borderless world. Essential supplies transit for thousands of miles across the high seas. Advanced societies are as vulnerable to natural disasters as less developed countries, if in different ways.

These threats may fall short of the mortal but they cry out for continuous and active management precisely to limit the danger they represent. If NATO does not get into the business of security and members decline to get involved in activities short of Article 5, it not only narrows the alliance's future relevance but ultimately makes the world a more, not less, dangerous place. The Treaty of Washington already provides for this contemporary focus; Article 5 remains essential, but Article 4 should be allowed to assume increased importance and relevance.

How should NATO approach this task, given the dispersed and networked nature of the challenges we face? The 'toolbox' definition of NATO is unhelpful. I believe the alliance needs to develop, in doctrinal and practical ways, the concepts of conflict prevention, solidarity and mutual assistance as part of the operational underpinning given to collective security in the 21st century.

Part of the way forward lies in increasing partnership activities with other countries to create a wider 'pool' of states with which members can work with for such tasks as capacity building, ensuring the safety of sea lanes and cyber security – all of which rely on continuous vigilance and engagement worldwide. We shall in the future see more of coalitions. Not all members of NATO will necessarily be involved in all operations. But all need to be committed to the overall aim and all should offer assistance in some form. The alliance needs an operational budget.

Which brings me to my last point. What ultimately underpins the effectiveness of NATO is unity of purpose and a shared understanding of the way forward. During the Cold War, NATO members knew that the task before them was as much political as military. This perception found its expression in the twin track policies of the Harmel doctrine.

The context now is different and the ideological challenge also. Many member states face the task of safeguarding domestically the democratic values for which they stand. And there is plenty to consult about when it comes to relating our respective domestic security situations to the threats abroad. In relation to Afghanistan, a complaint heard in a number of capitals is that the deployment is irrelevant to local security. This could derive from a lack of understanding of the global risks posed by network terrorism or, worse, betoken an à la carte attitude to the obligations of membership. Selectivity is a catching disease and ultimately fatal to the alliance's ability to provide effective security.

While partnerships and coalitions of the willing will provide member states with greater flexibility and reach, they will be to much less avail if the alliance itself engages without a shared strategic understanding of what it is trying to do. Sharing doctrine and capabilities remains at the center of the allies' political commitment to each other and to NATO's ability to provide collective security to its members.

ACTION PRESS/US NAVY

New challenges – but are they the right ones for NATO? US soldiers fighting piracy off the Horn of Africa and delivering aid to Haitian earthquake victims.

A new concept for NATO's soul

Fogh Rasmussen is preparing the new strategy. Can he meet the challenge? | By Christoph Bertram

Once again, the North Atlantic Alliance, 61 next April, is engaged in defining what it is about and what it can do better. Since the end of the Cold War, it has gone through this process almost every 10 years: in 1991, in 1999, and now, with the aim of presenting the new text to the next NATO Summit in November 2010.

But this time the self-examination is more demanding. If the earlier exercises were imposed by external changes in the strategic context, the current one is dictated by growing doubts among NATOnians about the adequacy of their alliance, and a growing sense of NATO's irrelevance, often bordering on indifference, among the wider public on both sides of the Atlantic.

That is probably why NATO's leaders did not call on NATO's traditional consensus machinery to prepare the new concept, but on the organization's Secretary General, former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. He will be assisted by a group of experts, to report to him by the end of April, and will consult with all member governments. But then it is up to him to develop the concept and submit proposals for its implementation.

Can Fogh Rasmussen meet the challenge? It is clear that the document will have to be much shorter than the usual NATO communiqué product; modelled not on the wordy previous strategic concepts but the Harmel report of 1967 or the pithy Washington Treaty itself, NATO's founding document.

Fortunately, some issues which were controversial a year ago, have now become less so.

On Afghanistan, the January London Conference is likely to have laid the basis for consensus on an eventual exit strategy, perhaps even set a date for the beginning of the exit. Tensions with Russia over missile defense have been deflated by the US decision not to proceed with the planned deployments in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Enlargement – the offer, formulated by Article 10 of the Treaty, to "invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty" – is being upheld in principle but practically put on hold. The desirability of close cooperation – not institutional rivalry – with the EU, the world's premium soft-power producer, is no longer in dispute but the governments of Cyprus and Turkey are blocking it.

With Barack Obama in the White House, transatlantic irritations among "Old Europe" have dissipated. With Nicolas Sarkozy's decision to allow France, once again, to play a constructive part in the alliance, another traditional irritant has been removed. And Obama's emphasis on arms control and the reduction of nuclear arsenals has furnished a platform for defusing potential controversy over the nuclear aspects in NATO's strategy.

Perhaps most important, the impact of the financial crisis is rapidly imposing realism on ambitions. All NATO governments will have to cut defense spending. The routine assertion of past NATO documents, namely that the alliance must have at its disposal capabilities for the full range of military missions, is becoming ever more hollow. If, as Brussels has calculated, the dispatch of NATO's Response Force to a Baltic member state will cost $10 million (€7 million), it is safe to assume that it will not be dispatched.

DPA/BELGA/WARNAND

The Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

Success and failure of the exercise will be determined by what it has to say on three major challenges: improving the functioning of the existing organisation; defining the meaning of security solidarity among members in the new strategic environment; and NATO's future relationship with Russia.

The concept will have to take NATO as it is and enable it to cope better with current tasks. Here the organization needs to regain its credibility. It will have to be better able to identify potential conflict situations early on, both to identify those which might affect members' security and to examine other than purely military responses. If, as urged by successive German governments, the NATO Council should be the central place for discussing alliance security concerns, this will have to be translated into a clear commitment by governments and a larger and better equipped staff in Brussels. The financial constraints experienced by all capitals give new urgency to rationalization and division of labor.

What does solidarity among members mean under conditions of the changing strategic environment? In Article V of the Treaty the parties "agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all," although the response is left to each member state.

The most likely encroachments on members' security will not come from the Euro-Atlantic area but from messy regions beyond; there is consensus that NATO should not only protect members' territory but their other security interests as well. But the latter task does not facilitate a joint response. Many of the new security problems moreover are not caused by hostile states but by non-state actors, not by armies but suicide bombers. Many of the new security challenges – from energy and climate to cyber attacks – normally lack the intensity of armed attacks; if NATO were to try and address them all, it would loose both credibility and identity. Therefore, the need for concentration, not expansion should be obvious here, too.

Finally Russia: The mere repetition of previous NATO offers to work with Russia will not do; the new strategic concept will have to be more ambitious.

In a recent speech in Moscow, the Secretary General sketched his vision of the relationship in 2020: "We will share intelligence and work together in combating terrorism and drug-trafficking. Our navies will cooperate closely in fighting piracy at sea. And Russian soldiers will be deployed alongside NATO soldiers in UN-mandated peacekeeping operations.... Cooperation on missile defense will have advanced to the point where we are able to link our systems to create a genuine missile shield in the Euro-Atlantic area. Which will not only protect us all against proliferation, but bind us together politically as well."

But this vision, in order to come true, will have to be underpinned by an institution, and the NATO-Russia Council is not up to the task; Russia would still be outside the structure. As Gareth Evans, the former President of the International Crisis Group, has long argued, the problem with NATO's enlargement is not so much that it extended to Russia's borders, but that it stopped there. "The most helpful single step that NATO leaders could take ... would be to make a very clear statement that NATO is an alliance of the free open for membership by all countries on the European continent, including Russia itself, and encouraging Moscow to seek membership at a time of its own choosing." Werner Hoyer, Minister of State in Germany's Foreign Office, has just echoed the idea at one of the seminars accompanying the preparation for the new concept: NATO should start to consider what would need to change to make Russia's membership possible.

Would this be a step too far for the document that Rasmussen will have to present to the November summit? On many points the new strategic concept is likely to opt wisely for consolidation. On relations with Russia, however, that will not do.

If NATO's leaders are bold enough to think along the Evans-Hoyer line, their 2010 strategic concept will indeed break new ground. It would offer the alliance as well as Russia a far-reaching, dramatic new direction. It would end the Cold War once and for all. It would catch the imagination of citizens from Vancouver to Vladivostok. And it would open an exciting horizon for advancing what NATO has always stood for – security and freedom of, and between, its members.

VARIO/HEINZ

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The unfinished nature of the Cold War

Europe needs to see Russia as a powerful ally

By Sergei Karaganov

Let me share some of the thinking that lies behind the Russian idea of the necessity of a new European security architecture. I cannot claim authorship of the idea – that belongs rightly to President Dmitry Medvedev – but I have been a proponent of the concept for many years.

During the last decade and a half, Russia has been drifting back to its traditional historical role – that of a relatively backward, but powerful country, seeking to join a European civilization to which it largely belongs, but fearing that if it fully joins it could lose its sovereignty and also lose out in competition with more advanced societies.

That eternal Russian question has recently been complicated by the emergence of an alternative to the European orientation. Previously, Russian Slavophiles or Euro-Asianists did not have a convincing case in the real world. Their calls for a retreat from Europe amounted to advocating a retreat from prosperity and modernity. Now, for the first time in 700 years (since Prince Alexander Nevsky used Mongols against the Teutonic knights) Russia seems to have an alternative. Another great civilization – China – has rebounded and is developing much more rapidly and effectively than the tired European one.

Fifteen years ago, Russia and Europe reached a historic crossroads. In 1991, the newly victorious anti-communist Russian elite were ready to join Europe. Moscow would even have settled for a role as a respected apprentice.

But that opportunity was lost. NATO's eastward expansion, which began in 1994-1995 and proceeded without Russia's participation and against its will, put an end to hopes of building a Europe without dividing lines. At the same time it dealt a blow to Russia's trust in the United States and its allies. Russia's elite, who saw themselves as the winners in the struggle against totalitarian communism, have never considered their country defeated in the Cold War. The West, however, treated Russia – in Germany as elsewhere, almost unconsciously – de-facto as a defeated country, whose weak protests could be disregarded.

The Cold War was proclaimed finished and, indeed, the ideological and military confrontation was gone. But the old geopolitical rivalry, which was always waiting in the wings, has again come to the fore.

But Russia has learned its lesson. It is no longer ready to join Europe as a respected apprentice. Now it wants to join as a powerful ally, or not at all.

The problem of the new European architecture lies not only with the fact that Russia, by far the most powerful nation on the continent, is not satisfied with its place in it.

In addition, Russians feel that the existing organizations for international and collective security in Europe have not solved the main problem – the issue of war and peace. Their impotence manifested itself in the spring of 1999, when NATO attacked Yugoslavia, and again in August 2008, when the conflict in the Caucasus erupted. In both cases, the tragic events were caused by the inability of the existing European security institutions to prevent the international and intra-state conflicts that escalated after the end of the Cold War.

Concurrently, the existing mechanisms and institutions for multilateral interaction on security matters (OSCE, NATO, EU or Russia-NATO Council) deny greater Europe the ability to respond jointly and effectively to new challenges and threats and to be a key player in international conflict resolution. There exists no efficient institutional and legal framework in Europe or the Euro-Atlantic area for the cooperation of all states in such matters as countering drug trafficking, combating terrorism and cyber crime, ensuring biosecurity, taking collective preventive action, reacting in concert to emergencies and humanitarian crises, guaranteeing environmental protection and meeting the challenge of global climate change.

The unfinished character of the Cold War, the continuation of the obsolete geopolitical rivalry between NATO and Russia clearly impede effective cooperation between Russia and the United States on many strategic issues, including the nuclearization of Iran and other countries.

Moreover, and we must be unequivocal about this very unpleasant truth, the possibility of further NATO expansion to Ukraine, which Russia views as a vital threat to its security, has the potential to revive the long-forgotten specter of a large-scale war in Europe, which could escalate unpredictably.

The unfinished nature of the Cold War constantly reanimates open or hidden suspicions, as well as a confrontational mentality and rhetoric in Russia and many other European countries. The old geopolitical thinking and the psychology of rivalry are again rearing their heads in Europe. "Energy security" is a classic example. Non-Russian Europe should thank God for the presence of energy-rich Russia at its borders, while Russia should be thankful for such a wealthy customer. But natural, albeit hidden differences in the interests of energy consumers and energy producers, which could be easily overcome in open negotiations, almost unconsciously take on a political hue. Thus, energy supply becomes an issue of "security" and even acquires a military slant – witness the discussion about an "Energy NATO." Another example, which is almost too absurd to be true, is the farcical military-political rivalry over 25 percent of the world's undiscovered energy resources that allegedly are located in Russia's economic zone in the Arctic.

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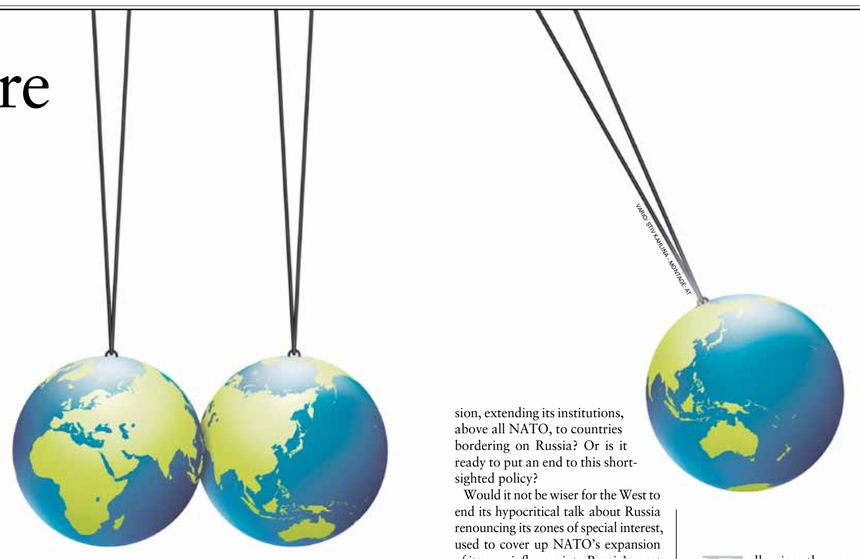
Faced with the impossibility of mutually advantageous and equitable accession to the Euro-Atlantic sphere, Russia now seems to be inclined to give priority to cooperation with China – as a "younger brother" admittedly, although a respected one. A partial economic reorientation toward an ascendant Asia, and Greater China in particular, is necessary and beneficial for Russia. But Moscow's alienation from Europe – the cradle of Russian civilization and modernization – threatens Russia's identity and may pose geostrategic risks in the not too distant future.

This estrangement has already played a significant role in Russia's partial retreat from European values like democracy or the rule of law. What was seen as a betrayal by the West gravely undermined those in Russia who preached rapprochement with Europe – in some cases it even caused them to rethink their position.

The disaffection between Russia and Europe continues to grow. If they fail to unite on the basis of their cultural proximity and the complementarity of their economies, they will be consigning themselves to the status of second, or even third-rank players in the future world order. Europe will then become a sort of larger Venice, a rich but declining continent and a monument to its former greatness, while Russia assumes the role of an agrarian and raw material supplying appendage of Greater China and other developed economies. Realistically, neither Russia nor Europe appear to have the ability to revitalize and transform themselves into independent centers of power that could counterbalance and supplement the two main power players of the future – the United States and China.

It is necessary to clearly identify the problem: Does the West want to continue its geopolitical expansion, extending its institutions, above all NATO, to countries bordering on Russia? Or is it ready to put an end to this short-sighted policy?



VASILIY STEPANENKA – MENTALAY

Would it not be wiser for the West to end its hypocritical talk about Russia renouncing its zones of special interest, used to cover up NATO's expansion of its own influence into Russia's most sensitive military-political sphere? For this is what NATO has been doing.

It would have been better to avoid such "zones of special interests," at least in Europe. The alternative would be to give up NATO expansion in favor of joint development, renouncing rivalry in favor of cooperation. Talk about the desire of some elites in post-Soviet countries to join NATO to confirm their "European choice" must be replaced by shared responsibility for security in Europe. This does not mean that Russia can or should impede the social and economic convergence of all of Europe around its most efficient center – the European Union. Rather, it should join in this consolidation.

But for that to begin to happen, Euro-Atlantic leaders need to draw a final line under the Cold War, either by concluding a new Pan-European security treaty or by inviting Russia to join NATO. Otherwise we will all be doomed to continue the history of rivalry and decline, and to growing obsolescence in a world of new powers and new challenges.

Toward a new start

Approaches to a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia

By Margarete Klein

Following the war in Georgia in the summer of 2008, relations between Russia and NATO were on hold for some time. But now NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has announced a new beginning. During his inaugural visit to Moscow, Rasmussen said his goal was to establish a "true strategic partnership" with Russia.

But that will require more than just a return to business as usual. The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) has so far proved unable to transform the relationship – which currently fluctuates between selective cooperation and outright competition – into a more substantial partnership. This would require overcoming fundamental differences of opinion, particularly with respect to the basic elements of the international political order in Europe and the post-Soviet region.

In view of the deep crisis of confidence and the fundamentally divergent concepts of political order, it will not be easy to transform the NATO-Russia relationship into a strategic partnership. A number of building blocks are required.

The first goal is to avoid the needless creation of new obstacles. In developing NATO's new strategic concept, the alliance should refrain from defining energy security as an element of collective military defense. This issue would be better served if it were addressed between Russia and the EU. In addition, the Atlantic alliance should take great care in the implementation of its political declaration on NATO's eastward expansion, agreed at the NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008.

On the one hand, Russia should not be granted a right of veto. But on the other hand, hastily admitting Georgia and Ukraine to the alliance before they have fulfilled the necessary criteria would unnecessarily damage NATO's relationship with Moscow, and undermine the organization's political credibility.

The next step should be to strengthen confidence-building measures. Both sides already agreed in December 2009 to jointly evaluate potential threats in the 21st century. It would also be worthwhile to intensify the dialogue on questions of military reform, since Russia's recent efforts in this area are strongly influenced by western models. Furthermore, the NRC could formalize a consultation mechanism to prevent one side from closing down channels of communication just when they are most urgently needed.

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However, the effectiveness of consultation and confidence-building measures should not be overestimated. The NRC has been active in this area in the past with no discernible reduction in mutual distrust. Reviving conventional arms control, on the other hand, could contribute more strongly to confidence building, because both sides would gain verifiable security guarantees.

The second building block involves expanding practical cooperation. In the case of Afghanistan, that means the areas of transit, equipping the Afghan army and fighting drug smuggling. In the fight against drugs, NATO could reach a formal agreement with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), whose members are Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

To avoid facilitating Russia's quest for regional hegemony, any formal agreements should not replace bilateral cooperation between NATO and the CSTO countries but instead complement them where a regional approach seems to make sense. In the military sector, cooperation in the fight against piracy appears promising. This could provide impulses for more interoperability, an area that has virtually ground to a halt in recent years.

In mid-December 2009, Rasmussen suggested that both sides "combine" their missile defense systems by the year 2020. Although he left open what concrete steps would need to be taken in the coming years to achieve it, cooperation in this area would be a quantum leap. Russia and NATO would not only rid themselves of a key sticking point, they would also jointly address a major security threat. But cooperation in this sensitive area requires a high degree of trust.

The measures listed so far – with the exception of missile defense – are primarily oriented toward expanding cooperation in areas where it would be fairly easy to achieve. But that is not synonymous with a strategic partnership. To achieve that the two sides would have to begin to reconcile fundamentally divergent concepts of political order that are rooted in contradictory positions regarding the organization of Euro-Atlantic security structures.

A window of opportunity exists to address these questions. NATO and the US are interested in improved relations with Russia; Russian President Dmitry Medvedev himself presented a draft for a Euro-Atlantic security treaty, and the OSCE's Corfu process already provides a framework for addressing the issues.

But it remains unclear whether NATO countries have the political will to move beyond simple discussions to concrete negotiations, as Moscow has demanded. The US and many new alliance members have expressed skepticism and even outright rejection; they fear a split – and thus a weakening – of the Alliance.

To prevent this from happening NATO states would need to agree in advance on certain core issues, including a number of "red lines" that cannot be crossed during negotiations – such as the principle of freedom to choose alliance partners or the rejection of exclusive spheres of influence. Furthermore, NATO countries would have to agree on a positive agenda, a common vision of their long-term relationship with Moscow. That is exactly what is lacking, as the different policies of NATO countries toward Russia currently demonstrate.

Moscow, on the other hand, would have to clearly move away from its maximum demands. The draft Euro-Atlantic security treaty published on Nov. 29, 2009 is the equivalent of an attempt to veto nearly all future NATO activities – a carte blanche for Russian dominance in the post-Soviet area.

The two pillars of European security

"It is necessary to renew the Atlantic alliance while strengthening our defense capabilities." | By Pierre Lellouche

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe – reunited both in the European Union and NATO – is entering a globalized era of risks but also of opportunities. On the one hand, the allies within NATO are striving to find the right strategy for Afghanistan as exemplified at the London conference, after bringing peace to the Balkans. On the other hand, the European Union is now being shaped by the Lisbon Treaty; the Union has officially appointed a president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and a high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Catherine Ashton. With those officials in place, the EU is preparing to establish the new European External Action Service (EEAS), which will give Ashton a real voice (we do hope so!) and allow her to have a real influence on world affairs, including during crises.

While the economic crisis has mistreated our economies by brutally upending the hierarchy of economic power, we must find the way back to sustainable growth, strengthen financial regulation to prevent new crises and enhance the competitiveness of our companies compared to those of the large emerging economies. But the war in Afghanistan, Haiti's tragedy, the semi-success of the Copenhagen climate conference, the persistence of threats such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, demographic imbalances, as well as the absolute necessity to ensure our energy security, are reminding us at the same time how immense the new security challenges that we need to take on are, not only in Europe but also beyond.

If 21st century Europe wants to be a fully-fledged strategic player and not just a mere spectator, it needs to be ready to take up the challenges. It has achieved institutional maturity. But Europe now needs to get ready to collectively take on its responsibilities and assume its growing share of burden, as the example of Iran shows. The time has come, in particular, for Europeans to get ready to support the sanctions against Tehran that we are moving toward at the UN Security Council, in the face of the Iranian refusal to agree to any of the solutions proposed over the past six years.

Everyone needs to understand that future European security will have to rely on two pillars, NATO and the European Union. To this end, it is necessary to continue to renew the Atlantic alliance while in parallel strengthening the defense capabilities of Europe.

The ongoing efforts to reform NATO and the restructuring of its strategic concept must be used as opportunities to give Europe the place it deserves within NATO. That was the aim of President Nicolas Sarkozy when he decided in the spring 2009 that France would fully re-enter NATO, a decision now completely implemented.

PICTURE ALLIANCE/ABACA

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More France in NATO means more Europe in the alliance. The return of France to NATO's integrated military command clarified our relationship with our allies, American as well as European, by dissipating ambiguities. No one can accuse us anymore of wanting to develop European defense policy against NATO.

The European Union today has at its disposal all the necessary institutions to be able to strengthen its influence in international crises. However, it is not the progress on the institutional front that is most striking but its operational progress.

In this regard, the high representative will be able to count on a wealth of real experience. The European Common Security and Defense Policy has achieved significant practical successes. With 23 civilian and military operations in the past 10 years, including the crisis in Georgia in the summer 2008 and the ATALANTA anti-piracy operation, the European Union has demonstrated that it could bring real value-added in the realm of international security. It is now the only organization that has at its disposal a large set of instruments, be they economic, diplomatic or military, that it can combine and leverage in resolving crises.

> "More France in NATO means more Europe in the alliance."

At the same time, gaps in European defense must be faced with objectivity and courage. Budgets are far from being on par with the challenges. Europeans bring barely 10 percent of the American military capabilities for long-range deployments to the table. A real assessment of operations is therefore still limited.

Further efforts are necessary. It is also the condition sine qua non of the viability of European industries. The goal is not to compete with the American military power on volume. But it is still essential to leverage the European dimension to progressively fill our gaps, including in the field of missile defense. To that end, it might be necessary to pool together certain types of equipment or to draw up new bilateral agreements. Most of all, it is absolutely necessary for Europeans to have new joint industrial projects, as long as they create economies of scale instead of increasing costs.

In addition, we need to strengthen the synergies between the European Union and NATO as this is the recipe for success in solving many international crises, starting with Afghanistan. Both organizations – with 21 common members – must coordinate their strategies better to ensure the successful reconstruction and stabilization of that country.

The billions that have been spent in eight years on economic aid for Afghanistan must be better coordinated and really begin to trickle down. Our militaries must talk to each other more. It is in everyone's interest.

Finally, we need to question the content of the common European policy on security and defense and its level of ambition, while remaining realistic. We will not succeed in reconciling citizens with the European project if we do not demonstrate, for example, that the current European policies can bring concrete benefits.

Besides the stabilization in the Balkans and Afghanistan, both of which remain top priorities, we need to develop new types of missions to fight, for example, piracy, drug trafficking as well as illegal immigration on the borders of Europe. This is particularly important at a time when the limit between internal and external security has become so blurred.

Boosting the defense dimension of Europe is, for me, a strategic aspect of the European project for years to come. It will, at the same time, contribute to strengthening the Atlantic alliance and consolidating European security overall.

The way ahead

European security architecture: "We need to improve the existing institutions, not build new ones."

By Radosław Sikorski

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AP/BRUNS

Radosław Sikorski is Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

There is no single European security architecture that is objectively recognized as such by all European nations and their transatlantic partners. For most of us, this notion covers, first of all, institutions like NATO, the EU and OSCE, for others it may consists of different – possibly sub-regional – organizations; and yet for some it should be a mixture of international structures and mechanisms known in the past as the "concert of powers." In other words, perception matters a lot in this case. One thing, however, must be clear: There is no way back to the static concepts of security architecture which had proven their – sometimes limited – value in the past, after the Vienna Congress or following the end of the World War I.

Poland has benefited from the changes that have occurred in Europe over the last two decades. We have had no reason to complain since joining NATO and the EU – the two main international institutions on our continent. Nevertheless, we recognize the fact that the current security system is not perceived as satisfactory by all states. The ideas and proposals concerning the European Security Treaty, as well as the NATO-Russia agreement that were recently presented by the Russian Federation have clearly indicated a need for further dialogue on what are, in the eyes of our partners, the challenges to our security and how we all should deal with them. We cannot afford to ignore any voices of concern.

The current European security architecture – inherited from the Cold War era but since adapted to new realities – has been subject to constant and profound transformation. The aim of this process was to adapt institutional structures to the needs of states, and to respond to new challenges, the likes of which we might not have seen before. Some have argued that post-Cold War structures no longer meet current needs. However, the European security order, founded on democratic values and the principle of a system of interlocking institutions, functions well. Institutions that mutually reinforce and complement each other have proved able to adapt.

Last year, we launched the European Security Dialogue within the OSCE, through the useful framework of the so-called Corfu process. This was in order to assess how our strategic environment has evolved and what modifications are needed. The OSCE is the appropriate setting to tackle this challenge, due to its mandate, capacity and participation. We are satisfied with the results achieved so far.

Russian proposals that were put forward recently can be seen as an important contribution to this strategic dialogue. We are open to a frank discussion of Russian concerns. However, we do have some doubts concerning the aims and potential consequences of these proposals. The existing institutions of European security have – in our view – proven their value and effectiveness. We have concerns over the further weakening of their role as a forum for strategic security dialogue. Some of the provisions of the Russian draft treaty would undermine the role and decision-making capability of the EU and NATO. Other provisions might limit the freedom of states to choose their alliances.

We need a thorough consideration of these ideas, and I am sure that some aspects will be clarified during the course of discussion. But let us focus on the real world and steps to be taken, and not only on the virtual reality of purely theoretical grand scenarios. In Athens, at the meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, the decision was made to take stock of the results of discussions within the Corfu process, and to produce a report of the progress achieved. We believe this summary should record real progress in our deliberations, the readiness of OSCE participating states to commit to compromise solutions, and the significance of the entire Corfu process. We therefore need to focus our efforts on possible deliverables if we aim to obtain tangible results in the first half of the year.

We need clear rules of the game (not yet another new game as such). We need to accept new phenomena in the security landscape: the co-existence of old and new threats; diversity of security perceptions; the dynamic nature of the security environment; new roles and functions of security institutions (which must be more flexible). We need to observe norms and honor our commitments. We need to draw operational conclusions from a new strategic paradigm: comprehensive security. In other words: we need a kind of 'Code of Conduct' for the 21st century. And we have to build confidence!

What we do not need is to create any new institutions (and to duplicate the tasks of existing ones) but rather to think about how we can improve the efficiency of those that already exist, and to assure the optimal co-operation between those structures. Our emphasis in discussing the real needs of our security should be on improvement and not duplication, bearing in mind the principle of Occam's razor that "entities must not be multiplied beyond necessity."

As one of my predecessors, Professor Adam Daniel Rotfeld, recently wrote, "One thing is for certain: Europe is not short of institutions, norms, procedures and regulations. Indeed, we have more than enough." We have plenty of security-related organizations and institutions, and have established numerous multilateral mechanisms and regimes (CFE, CSBMs). Many of them may have been established a number of years ago, but they could and should be adapted to new realities. In short: We do have the necessary means, but all we are missing is the requisite political will on the part of all actors concerned.

Poland is not just ready to engage in all aspects of the Corfu process. We are doing that and we will continue to do so. We expect that a new round of talks in Vienna will show that we can generate the will, the capacity and the vision to do what should be achieved in order to ensure the stability of the continent. That process must help to finally get rid of Cold War stereotypes, misperceptions and mutual suspicions, historically deep-rooted but clearly unfounded today. Confidence, transparency and openness should be our road map.

Afghanistan (I)

An unpopular task

Why the Afghanistan deployment is creating so many problems for Germany | By Stefan Kornelius

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Helicopter mission in the Hindu Kush: ISAF troops reconnoitering the barren mountain regions of Afghanistan.

Those in Germany who now want to quit Afghanistan mostly want to escape the maw of a malevolent policy monster. This monster particularly likes to rampage on the German domestic political scene, though all 44 nations engaged in Afghanistan have already made its acquaintance.

Germany has wearied of its mission, and the political leadership has lost its gumption – if there was ever much of it to begin with. German relations with Afghanistan are complicated and over the years have seen so much deception and hypocrisy that one cannot still expect much sincerity, now that the great adventure is reaching its final stages.

The deployment of 4,500 Bundeswehr troops, and perhaps even a few more, has become less a military than a domestic political burden. In the run-up to the Afghanistan conference, a last-ditch effort was undertaken to engage in a debate over national strategy. But it was evident that the political and military leadership has lost the support of the electorate – and with it, the all-important and decision-making parliament. What remains to be decided will be stitched together from a sense of duty, spurred by a last spark of loyalty to the alliance. And it will take place in desperate hope that, in the remaining months until the anticipated withdrawal, everything is going to turn out well.

Germany was left with no choice for its endgame in Afghani-stan but to adapt its strategy to fit American plans. There are many in the German security community who would prefer to see it the other way around. They argue that it was the US, as reflected in President Obama's speech at West Point and by the new defensive tactical instructions coming from General Stanley McChrystal, that adopted Germany's 'networked security' strategy – which combines military stabilization efforts with reconstruction.

The thesis is not entirely wrong. But this perspective has one flaw: German contributions to Afghanistan were always so modest that it isn't plausible to speak of sustainable networking. The Bundeswehr always quickly reached its limits when militarily challenged or put under pressure by the Taliban. It was at these junctures that the political shackles the German armed forces had been clapped into right from the beginning of the Afghanistan engagement became clear. Nor were Germany's efforts on the civilian side all too impressive.

Actually, the Afghans have regarded Germany fondly ever since Werner Otto von Hentig, the Kaiser's emissary, tried in 1915 to persuade the Emir of Kabul to form an alliance against Russian and British forces in Central Asia. The recruitment ef-fort failed, but the Afghans were flattered. Never before had such an important state courted them as equals. The seed for a fruitful relationship had been sown.

At heart, German strategy has changed little since von Hentig's day. With much respect, goodwill and funding, the Bundeswehr, together with their accompanying political and humanitarian organizations, have built good and sustainable relations in the northern part of the country with the local powers of the former Northern Alliance. It was an area of responsibility the Germans had selected with care. However, when the Taliban turned up in the Kunduz region in the spring of 2009, evidently driven out by the beefed-up US forces in the south, and always sniffing about for a soft flank of the ISAF troops, the Bundeswehr had little they could counter with.

It was constrained by a defensive mandate and by restrictive rules of engagement, the products of German domestic policy imperatives. Chancellor Angela Merkel's Grand Coalition was at pains to keep an insufficiently explained deployment out of the turbulence of the election campaign as well as out of intraparty disputes. The successful electoral campaign her predecessor Gerhard Schröder had conducted in 2002, focused on opposing the Iraq war, was a traumatic lesson for Merkel. And members of parliament, as the final authority over any deployment, learned in their constituencies that in a society that at heart is oriented to pacifism, it is nearly impossible to make a case for a logic dictated by security concerns. Former Defense Minister Peter Struck's key statement – that Germany's security was being defended at the Hindu Kush – met with derisive laughter, despite the fact that there is a kernel of truth to it.

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As it happened, Berlin's politicians and military leaders had just finally rallied together to take a more robust military stance when Stanley McChrystal, the new ISAF Commander, distanced himself from the previous, aggressive US strategy. He recognized that every Afghan killed, every Afghan home destroyed, only created more insurgents.

Just at that point, in September 2009, the German field commander in Kunduz ordered the bombing of two hijacked fuel trucks surrounded by a group of Taliban. Up to 142 people, including civilians, lost their lives. After more and more details of this disastrous incident became known, a shrill debate erupted in Germany about the meaning and purpose of the deployment, the role of the military in general, and whether it was legally and ethically permissible to engage in targeted killing. The nation agonized over the question of whether what was going on in Afghanistan was a war or not. And at year's end, the leader of the Protestant church in Germany, Bishop Margot Kässmann, further polarized matters by the simple assertion that nothing good was going on in Afghanistan.

That is, of course, polemical and indicates a lack of knowledge of the facts on the ground. Nevertheless, it struck a chord with the public and catapulted the option of withdrawal to the forefront of debate.

So how to disengage? How to survive the domestic political tumult and leave Afghanistan with honor? And do so, if pos-sible, without Afghanistan immediately falling back into civil war? Or without future German policy-makers, for fear of the beast of public opinion, forever keeping out of international affairs and distancing themselves from crisis hotspots around the world?

Parliament and government agree that the new mandate gives them one last chance. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, head of the Social Democratic opposition in parliament – in a gesture of responsible statesmanship – has let the chancellor know what conditions must be met for a cross-party consensus: considerably increased civilian aid, a clear focus on training Afghan security forces, verifiable steps toward a withdrawal, reorgan-izing the Bundeswehr contingent and – if no other option remains and it can be well-justified – deploying more soldiers.

The SPD chairman Sigmar Gabriel rode roughshod over this olive branch and instead – setting himself above the bipartisan consensus – set a deadline for withdrawal. If the SPD has its way, the Bundeswehr would quit Afghanistan by 2015. So a bone of contention for the next parliamentary elections has already been identified. The options for Afghanistan have already been unnecessarily narrowed by dates and gestures.

A semblance of peace with her political opponents will be more important to the chancellor than making radical decisions. For her, too, the next election is never far away. She has problems in her own camp as well. Isolationists, and what the Green politician Ralph Fücks calls "primitive pacifists," are no strangers now even to the CDU.

In fact, Merkel has never really warmed to the deployment in Afghanistan. She seems to have gone along with it more for reasons of alliance politics than out of deep conviction. She has been quite wary of the domestic burden that comes with sending German troops abroad.

Only the pressure of events – the bombing in Kunduz and the London conference on Afghanistan – prompted her to issue a statement, her second governmental declaration on the topic. But at this point, the reasons for the deployment lie too far in the past. Germany has been conducting an undeclared war since 2001, and trying to explain why in 2009 and 2010, no matter how great the conviction, is simply too late.

So how to withdraw? Ideally, the same way the troops went in: quietly and unobtrusively. From the outset, the most important military engagement in the history of the Federal Republic was marked by evasiveness and indecision. Germany was active in the peaceful north, provided help with reconstruction, and damned the injudicious conduct of the war by its alliance partners in the south. It was a stabilization engagement, a humanitarian action of the better sort. The war itself was fought by others.

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Now that the real nature of the Afghan adventure has started to become clear, the only hope is that the remaining time will be enough to change the dynamics of the war, that the Afghans will themselves take over responsibility, and that the endgame will be conducted by the Americans. The most recent troop increases by the US brought a contingent of 2,500 soldiers to Kunduz in the north. That is where the Bundeswehr, with a forward deployment of only 800 soldiers, had been holding the line – but only with difficulty.

Afghanistan (II)

Balancing means and ends

Obama's strategy for Afghanistan: Four preconditions of success | By Charles A. Kupchan

The new strategy for Afghanistan that President Barack Obama unfurled at West Point late last year is, like most of his decisions, carefully calibrated as to both policy and politics. As for policy, Obama is seeking to balance means and ends, recognizing that the United States must pursue limited objectives in Afghanistan if it is to aim for the attainable rather than the desirable, and keep the US effort in proportion with the interests at stake. As for politics, he is well aware that he is conducting the war among polarized and discontented electorates at home and abroad – providing another incentive for Obama to embrace modest aims and put a cap on the scope and duration of the mission in Afghanistan.

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The main strength of Obama's strategy is its modesty and sobriety – its implicit recognition of the limits of US power and the obstacles facing the successful pacification of Afghanistan. The success of the policy in the coming year will turn on Obama's ability to maintain modest aims and sustain a balance between the effort in Afghanistan and the political and military resources at his disposal. The situation on the ground could encourage him to do more; counterinsurgency and nation-building can be a bottomless pit. The situation at home will likely encourage him to do less; the Democratic base is uneasy with the war and the 2012 election already looms on the horizon. Obama must maintain his steadiness amid the inevitable setbacks ahead and the political backlash that will accompany them, resisting both the danger of sliding down the slippery slope of deeper involvement and the urge to head for the exit prematurely.

So far, Obama's plan - deploying an additional 30,000 US troops and stepping up the counterinsurgency campaign, redoubling efforts to build a functioning Afghan government and security apparatus, and eyeing the summer of 2011 as a target date for the beginning of a handoff of the mission from the international community to Afghan authorities – has gone over relatively well. At home, initial opposition from both the left and right has since died down. To the surprise of many observers, European members of NATO have not only endorsed the new strategy, but agreed to contribute as many as 10,000 additional troops. Afghans and Pakistanis have both grumbled about various aspects of the policy. But they are comfortable with the fact that the United States is neither pulling out nor moving in for an indefinite stay.

Looking ahead, the successful implementation of the plan will depend on four main elements.

First, the coalition must make its top priority the establishment of a functioning Afghan government, army, and police force. Indeed, this objective must be the focal point of the international effort. Without a viable Afghan government and security force, even successful efforts at counterinsurgency would be little more than an expensive palliative. If the center does not hold, then neither will the periphery. If a rump Afghanistan is not ready to begin standing on its own by the summer of 2011, then failure will beckon – with costly consequences not just for the region and the fight against extremism, but for the Obama presidency and NATO as well.

Resources should be allocated appropriately. Although General Stanley McChrystal's original request for more troops stemmed from the perceived need for a reinforced counterinsurgency campaign in rural areas, that mission should not be allowed to distract resources from the more important task of consolidating control and security in more central locations. In this respect, the surge of civilian advisers and military trainers is crucially important; both are needed to build up the capacity of the Afghan government and its security forces. It is worrying that the arrival of civilian advisers has been running well behind schedule, as has that of the trainers; as of the beginning of 2010, only about 1,500 of the 4,200 trainers planned for deployment were in place. Even if the pace of arrivals picks up, the coalition needs to do a better job of coordinating the civilian and military efforts. Some improvement in command and coordination was made during 2009, but much more can be done to integrate the work of NATO, the EU, the UN, and the many other national and international missions.

Helping the Karzai government increase the capacity of state institutions will entail continued efforts to clamp down on corruption and patronage in favor of a more meritocratic system. At the same time, the Afghan government has little choice but to work within the confines of traditional patterns of authority. In Iraq, the United States made the fatal error of dismantling the Iraqi state – and is still suffering the consequences of the collapse of order that followed. Afghanistan has no functioning state to dismantle. But it does have institutions of governance rooted in ethnic, tribal, and religious traditions. Standing up more capable Afghan institutions will require a stronger center and advances in the rule of law and other universal measures of good governance. But no less important will be tapping into and strengthening the civic capacity of traditional communal and local institutions that will be, at best, only loosely connected to the central government in Kabul.

Second, the coalition should maintain tight limits on the footprint of the counterinsurgency effort. Were international forces to aim at pacifying the broad swaths of rural Afghanistan where the Taliban operate, it would be a bridge too far; that task can await the standing up of the Afghan army. Instead, US and coalition forces should focus on select locations – transportation nodes, market towns, and areas of higher population density. It is better to clear and hold key areas than to spread coalition forces too thin, providing opportunities for the insurgents to regroup and return. Moreover, investments in local projects – schools, water pumps, irrigations systems – will often be more effective than the presence of foreign troops in affecting the alignments of remote communities.

Afghanistan's fragmented tribal structure is a further reason to be cautious about the ambition of the counterinsurgency mission. In Iraq, the United States did succeed in undercutting the Sunni insurgency. But that insurgency was controlled by key tribal leaders whom the US forces were able to turn through a combination of bribery and coercion. In Afghanistan, tribal structures are much more decentralized, in part as a result of decades of war, compelling the coalition to woo communities elder by elder and village by village. The country's forbidding terrain makes the task even more formidable, reinforcing the need for the coalition to curb the scope of the counterinsurgency mission.

Third, when it comes to counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations against militants, the coalition should take a page from its opponents, adopting hit and run tactics against the Taliban and al Qaeda. Rather than maintaining remote outposts, the coalition can use special forces to carry out strikes in peripheral areas. In addition, as more assets become available from Iraq, drone attacks can be used more regularly in Afghanistan to attack militants and keep them on the defensive. Due to their ability to loiter quietly over potential targets, drones offer the coalition an especially effective means of engaging militants in areas of Afghanistan where coalition ground forces may choose not to operate. Indeed, drone attacks in Pakistan, where US forces are not allowed to deploy, have taken a heavy toll on militants.

Fourth, the success of the coalition effort will depend upon Pakistan's willingness to continue prosecuting offensive operations against militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Northwest Frontier. While Washington should continue to quietly press Islamabad to expand and intensify its offensive, overt American pressure may well backfire. Instead, the United States and its coalition partners should focus on producing tangible progress in Afghanistan. The standing up of a legitimate and competent government in Kabul, the forging of cooperative partnerships with local communities, and coalition progress in setting back the Taliban in Afghanistan – such developments may well convince Pakistan that the Afghan Taliban will not be making a significant comeback. Accordingly, Islamabad might no longer see any reason to indulge the Taliban, and could instead seek to shut them down. In this sense, the construction of functioning Afghan institutions is doubly important: it is an ingredient critical to prevailing against extremism not just in Afghanistan, but in Pakistan as well.

Should these four elements of strategy fall into place, Obama has a reasonably good chance of realizing his objectives in Afghanistan. But the obstacles are daunting; the Taliban has demonstrated surprising resilience and the coalition has only limited leverage over its key partners – the Karzai government, disparate Afghan communities, and the leadership of Pakistan. It will be a year, if not more, before the evidence is in. In the meantime, Obama will have his hands full managing the war and trying to maintain the balance between means and ends that has thus far proved so elusive in Afghanistan.

AP/SADEQ

On Jan. 18, Taliban insurgents mounted fierce attacks in the heart of Kabul, killing five and wounding dozens more.


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