Framework
Document

50 1970 — 2020

ieee.es
Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos

08/2020   2 October 2020

Joel Diaz Rodriguez *

NATO after 70: Challenges and redefinition of the alliance

Visit Web   **Receive Newsletter**

NATO after 70: Challenges and redefinition of the alliance

Abstract:

Lord Ismay said that NATO was created "to keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down". Such phrase summed up the original nature of NATO. Since then, the Alliance has successfully adapted to the geopolitical changes. As a result of its trajectory and the dynamic of the transatlantic relations, since the Wales Summit in 2014, major challenges have been posed to NATO as never before. However, the most important challenges NATO is facing today, are internal and political, rather than strategic. These can be divided around 5 issues: The U.S. commitment with Europe's security and its demand for a fairer shared burden; the division between the Allies over the objectives and the role of NATO; The enlargement policy and its flexibility; the debate over the European strategic autonomy and its effect in the NATO-EU relations; and the role of the alliance before the new balance of global power. This work will analyse the alternatives and possible scenarios for every challenge as well as presenting the NATO's prospects.

Keywords:

Atlantic Alliance; Leadership: Cohesion; European Union; NATO; Common Security and Defense Policy; Strategic Autonomy; Transatlantic Relations; Russia

How to quote:

DIAZ RODRIGUEZ, Joel. NATO after 70: Challenges and redefinition. Framework Document IEEE 08/2020
http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_marco/2020/DIEEEM08_2020JOEDIA_OTAN70.pdf
and/or link bie3 (accessed on the web day/month/year)

Joel Diaz Rodriguez *

La OTAN después de de los 70: desafíos y redefinición de la alianza

Resumen:

Lord Ismay decía que la Alianza se había creado «para mantener a los rusos afuera, a los americanos dentro, y a los alemanes debajo». Tal célebre frase resume la naturaleza original de la OTAN. Desde entonces, la OTAN se ha adaptado de acuerdo con los cambios en la geopolítica global. Como resultado de esa trayectoria y de la dinámica de las relaciones transatlánticas, desde la Cumbre de Gales de 2014, se han planteado los mayores desafíos que la Alianza ha vivido hasta hoy. Sin embargo, los mayores desafíos de la OTAN hoy son internos y de dimensión política más que estratégica, y se dividen en torno a cinco cuestiones: el compromiso de los EEUU con la defensa europea y la exigencia de una carga compartida más justa; la división entre los aliados sobre los objetivos y el rol de la Alianza; la política de expansión flexible; el debate sobre una defensa europea autónoma y sus efectos en las relaciones UE-OTAN; y el rol de la Alianza ante el nuevo equilibrio del poder global. Este documento analizará las alternativas y los posibles escenarios para cada uno de dichos desafíos y presentará las perspectivas de futuro para la OTAN.

Palabras clave:

Alianza Atlántica, desafíos políticos, liderazgo, cohesión, EE. UU., Unión Europea, OTAN, Política Común de Seguridad y Defensa, autonomía estratégica, relaciones transatlánticas, Rusia.

Introduction

Lord Ismay, NATO's first Secretary General, said that the Alliance was created "to keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down". Such a famous phrase sums up the original nature of NATO. The international context in which the Atlantic Alliance was created was drastically different from today, formed by two blocs led by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Since then, NATO has evolved in accordance with the changes in global geopolitics, adapting to different events and periods of history. However, this evolution has been influenced by the two main factors that underlie its raison d'être: the dynamics of relations between the United States and Western Europe and on the other hand the rivalry with Russia.

 In 1991 two important events occurred: the end of the Cold War and the adoption of a new Strategic Concept that gave NATO a renewed role for the new international context. From this period, characterized by western supremacy and the reconversion of NATO as an organization for projection of international security, we moved on to the new post-9/11 era. During this time, we saw a geographical expansion of the Alliance, the re-emergence of Russia as a power, and the appearance of new unconventional threats and actors. This conjunction of events reached its peak with the Russian aggression in Crimea, which brought a new scenario for European security, as well as made NATO recover its original mission of deterrence and defense of Europe.

These events opened a new period in the Alliance's history, whose milestone was the 2014 Wales Summit. Since then, NATO has lived the greatest internal and external challenges that the Alliance has experienced to date. Externally, NATO is facing a more threatening Russia that is fearful of the Atlantic expansion and lurks on the eastern flank. Furthermore, the emergence of ISIS, the war in Syria, the instability in Libya and the Sahel have posed constant unconventional threats, inside and outside Europe, increasing the risk in the southern flank. However, it is internally that NATO has found its greatest challenges and that can be divided around 5 major issues: the questioning of the US commitment to the defense of Europe and the demand for a fairer burden sharing; the division among the Allies on the common objectives and the role of the Alliance; the enlargement policy; the increasingly divisive debate on an autonomous European defense and its effects on EU-NATO relations; and the role of the Alliance before the new balance of global power. Additionally, the questioning of the organization

by some Atlantic leaders in the year of its 70th anniversary has led to a period of reflection on its future with a still uncertain outcome. Given this complex scenario, what are the prospects for NATO?

This document aims to show that the prospects for the Alliance are positive, but leadership and cohesion are needed to address the challenges at hand. We will divide this work in two parts. First, we will analyze which factors, resulting from the dynamic of transatlantic relations that have conditioned the evolution of the Alliance and are at the origin of its present challenges. As a result of this trajectory and the changing geopolitical context, since 2014 NATO has been facing challenges that we can call multidimensional, due to their diverse origin and nature. Secondly and mainly, we will address the five issues that, in our opinion, condition NATO's future today and that have a political and leadership dimension. We will propose alternatives and possible scenarios for each of these challenges. Actions that would imply a political rather than strategic redefinition of the Alliance's objectives and role, that is, what kind of NATO we want and what we want it to do. This will require a new Allies' commitment to common objectives and shared responsibility for Atlantic security. Additionally, the enlargement policy should be re-evaluated based on geopolitical and less integrationist calculations; and a stabilization of EU-NATO relations must be achieved, defining the interests and the task of each. Finally, NATO must face the rebalancing of global power by internalizing the rise of China and its implications for security in order to not remain aside of the new competition between powers. In short, today NATO is the most successful military alliance in history and its future will depend on political leadership to achieve the consensus needed to address its challenges. Decisions to be taken at its next Summit will be crucial.

NATO in a bipolar world

On March 5, 1946 in Fulton, Missouri, while sharing a tribune with Harry Truman, Winston Churchill —then not in office— claimed that "an iron curtain has descended across the continent". This premonition was the announcement that Europe and the world would be divided in two. The rupture between the USSR and the Western democracies led the United Kingdom and France to conclude the Brussels Pact in 1948. This was a British project devised by Erns Bevin, secretary of the Foreign Office, which

would serve as the basis for a defense system that would permanently involve the Americans, calm France's concerns about a German resurgence and contain the Soviets, as he put it. Thus, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came to meet Bevin's requirements and those of a Truman Administration determined to add a security anchor to its new containment policy. The treaty of Washington created a mutual military and security alliance and was signed on April 4, 1949, by the US, Canada and the Brussels Pact countries, joined by Italy, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Portugal.

It is in this historical context and with these clear objectives that NATO was born. From then on, rivalry with the Soviet Union and its effects on transatlantic relations, to be later replaced by rivalry with the new Russia and its effects on US-EU relations, forced its adaptation to the new geopolitical scenarios. The division of Germany and the outbreak of the Korean War led to the rapid development of the military and political structure, creating the figure of the Secretary General, assigned —at the insistence of Churchill— to Lord Ismay. The containment of communism led to the first enlargement of the Alliance, towards Greece and Turkey, acceding to NATO in February 1952. The rejection by the French Senate in August 1954 of the European Defense Community project precipitated the solution of the "German question". Federal Germany was admitted to NATO in May 1955 and allowed to rearm within the Atlantic framework, completing the security triptych devised by Bevin and advocated by Lord Ismay. In this way, the United States' sphere of influence was established in post-war Europe, which responded more to its fears than to its ambitions and, on the other hand, to the weakness of Western Europe.

The Cuban missile crisis highlighted the different views of the allies on security. France, supported by Germany, maintained that a unilateral action by the US in its struggle with the USSR could unleash a nuclear war that would drag, through the mutual assistance clause (Article 5), the other allies. This meant the promotion of an independent European security policy, which was externalized under the pretext of Skybolt. Thus, the US refusal to manufacture the Skybolt missile, led the US to suggest the integration of the European nuclear force under a NATO common command in order to maintain control of the allied nuclear force. The United Kingdom accepted and joined its nuclear policy to that of the United States, but France did not cede in order to keep its national

interest and margin of decision. This marked the beginning of a long philosophical debate about the nature of Atlantic cooperation and competition for leadership in Europe. As a result, President De Gaulle ordered France to withdraw from the NATO integrated command in 1966 to which France would only return in 2009 with Sarkozy as president.

From then on, new developments during the Cold War and the change in US foreign policy from containment to *détente* led the relationship between the two superpowers being managed bilaterally. In short, NATO had been created to prevent any Soviet aggression in Europe and it fulfilled its mission. This gave Europe the security and stability to develop its own integration process that was the European Community, with a mostly economic purpose. However, Europe security became dependent on the US, limiting its military capacity and, after the 1966 crisis, the tension between an autonomous security policy led by France and another dependent on the US remained latent. These questions would reappear with greater intensity at the end of the 1990s and would become a divisive issue among the allies today.

NATO and the new international order

When the Soviet Union was dying, James Baker, then US Secretary of State, said in June 1991, that US' objective is to create a "Euro-Atlantic community, that extends east from Vancouver to Vladivostok". That reflection was too optimistic and eventually faded completely over the decade. That year, two important events occurred that would mark NATO's future: the end of the Cold War and the adoption of a new Strategic Concept —the first made public— for the new unipolar international context.

The Cold War ended with the sober resignation of Gorbachev, as president of an extinct Soviet Union. The political division of Europe that had been the source of the Cold War confrontation was over. The potential threat of a Soviet invasion that had been NATO's main concern had disappeared. What would happen to NATO without the main reason for what it had been created?

Baker had already given the answer shortly after the fall of the wall, evoking the need to "put into place a new security architecture for a new era". The reflection had its origin in the democratizing processes in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Baltic states that looked to the West because of the need to protect their borders from the USSR. Then, the new European geopolitics and the outbreak of conflicts in Yugoslavia set the stage for the Allies to adopt a new Strategic Concept reflecting these geopolitical changes at the Rome Summit in November 1991. The Concept provided a new, broad approach to security and gave it a role in contributing to peace and stability through cooperation and crisis management in Europe. That foundation ─without being its intention─ would serve as the "legal basis" for NATO's new mission over the next two decades: intervene in conflicts and combat threats to European and international security.

The bloody conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina offered the opportunity for NATO to debut its new role. The conflict ended with the signing of the Dayton Accords in November 1995, meaning a success for NATO. This showed the unipolar context of the time, in which international security resided in a West led without counterbalance by the United States. That situation would not be repeated since, given that, when the conflict in Kosovo arose a few years later, Western cohesion had been damaged, and this time Russia prevented action within the framework of the UN.

The conflicts in the Balkans had consequences in the transatlantic relations, because they brought an old debate: the European autonomy in military matters and the dependence on the US. After the conflict in Bosnia, the US promoted a mechanism of cooperation with the EU, creating the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI), whose objective was to rebalance the roles and responsibilities between Europe and the US. The Kosovo conflict showed once again the incapacity of the EU to intervene, which provoked the French-British initiative contained in the Saint Malo Declaration. This laid down the bases for a European defense that would lead to the launch in June 1999, of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

On the other hand, since 1991, cooperation on new bases with Russia and the former Soviet States was promoted for the creation of a Euro-Atlantic security space. Regional cooperation agreements were concluded with all the neighboring countries, but they ended up becoming partnerships of little relevance. Russia's desire ─ once it emerged

from its internal crisis— to seek an equal and direct relationship with NATO led to the signing of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security in May 1997 as a confidence-building mechanism. Thus, the spirit advocated by Baker of a security community vanished. Instead, NATO began its process of enlargement to Eastern Europe at the end of the decade.

The geopolitical developments of the decade exceeded the foresight of 1991 and a new Strategic Concept was approved in 1999, which would be overtaken by the events of 9/11. Since then, NATO's mission focused on the fight against international terrorism, as well as on the management of post-conflict areas, changing the priorities of the Alliance and its strategic and military adaptation. Moreover, NATO saw the reappearance of something that seemed forgotten: the re-emergence of Russia as a rival and threatening power for Europe. The 2007 Munich Conference served as the stage for the announcement of President Putin's new doctrine of ending the unipolar moment that the United States had enjoyed.

As a summary, we can say that the 1991 strategic concept was intended to give the Alliance a new role in contributing to European security in a broad sense, but it ended up serving as a base for NATO to intervene in conflicts outside its territory. Since 9/11, the Alliance has been strategically and tactically reoriented towards the fight against global terrorism and the management of post-conflict areas. The consequence of its intervention in the Balkans was the development within the European Union of an European defense policy that would eventually fuel the division among its members about Europe's dependence on US capabilities. On the other hand, the impossibility of creating a Euro-Atlantic security space led instead to vague partnership agreements with neighboring countries and with Russia. This gave time to Russia to re-emerge as a rival power to the West. In addition, a flexible enlargment of the Alliance to the Central and Eastern European states started, growing from 16 to 28 member states in only ten years (1999-2009). NATO's international role and its success in operations such as Libya made it seem that it had forgotten its original mission of deterrence. The aggression of the Crimea by Russia in March 2014 and its subsequent annexation raised again the deterrence and territorial defense of Europe as a priority mission.

NATO in the era of multidimensional challenges

The conjunction of the internal and external factors described has been key in the formation of the geopolitical scenario that NATO faces today. However, 2014 was a turning point in the history of the organization due to the conjunction of three relevant events: the annexation of Crimea and the appearance of ISIS aggravated the security scenario in which NATO operated and led the organization to rethink its mission and strategy at the Wales Summit. Since then, a new period has begun which we can call of multidimensional challenges because of the convergence of internal and external challenges of a political and strategic nature, as well as threats of various kinds. Furthermore, this scenario has been aggravated by the questioning and divergence of some allied leaders on the future of the Alliance.

As external challenges, NATO faces a more threatening Russia that is fearful of Atlantic expansion. The annexation of Crimea has generated an increase in tension on the eastern flank of the Alliance that has not stopped rising since then. The appearance of ISIS in June 2014, in the wake of instability in Syria, has extended from there its terrorist action against the West. It has also supported and funded terrorist groups in the Sahel and North Africa that have dramatically increased the risks on the southern flank. In addition, there is the implicit positioning of China as a superpower and other actors determined to challenge the liberal international order. On the other hand, NATO today faces four types of threats: conventional threats; unconventional ones, such as jihadist terrorism; hybrid threats; and cyber security, which can now be considered the new battlefront of the Alliance. But what have been the concrete responses to this new security scenario?

The Wales Summit marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Alliance because, on the one hand, it served as an acknowledgement of the new security context, redirecting NATO to its original task of deterrence and territorial protection of Europe. On the other hand, it also served to respond to external challenges and threats. Among the most important decisions, we have the creation of a Readiness Action Plan as well the adoption of the Defense Investment Pledge, which set a target for each ally to spend at least 2% of GDP on defense by 2024. This was a political (and not legally binding) commitment established by the NATO leaders, on a strategic issue. However, it soon became a political issue that would serve as an argument for the subsequent US-

EU confrontation on burden sharing. It is also worth noting the establishment, in parallel with the Warsaw Summit in 2016, of the "EU-NATO Strategic Partnership" that sought to create a cooperation mechanism for the promotion of joint defense projects and operations, in view of the divergences of the past.

Notwithstanding, it would be the political conjuncture in the United States and in Europe that would provoke the open debate of the issues that most divide the Alliance. Two facts were mainly the origin: The Brexit provoked an unprecedented reaction for the development of the European defense that revived the debate on European strategic autonomy. On the other hand, the arrival of Donald Trump to the US presidency brought into question the usefulness of NATO, using the question of burden sharing to demand a greater contribution from the Europeans. In addition, other developments in the international context occured: Russian interference through disinformation campaigns in the West; the Turkish incursion into Syria in the fall of 2019 showed the lack of coordination within the Alliance; and France's desire to lead an alternative European defense outside NATO and the EU. All these facts have been undermining the credibility of the Alliance, as well as its internal cohesion.

Thus, today NATO is facing a critical moment because the most important challenges are internal and of political rather than a strategic dimension. Addressing them would imply redefining the Alliance's objectives and role, as well as internal leadership to achieve a new consensus on two key questions: what kind of NATO we want and what role it should play in the future. Thus, these challenges can be divided around five concrete but highly intertwined issues: 1) the questioning of the US commitment to the defense of Europe and the demand for a more equitable burden sharing for Europeans. 2) The division between the Allies on the common objectives, that is to say the role of the alliance and the values it defends. 3) The enlargement policy that has increased the territorial space of application of Article 5. 4) The stabilization of EU-NATO relations due to the increasingly divisive debate on European strategic autonomy and its effects on transatlantic relations. And finally, 5) The new balance of global power due to the rise of China and its consequences for international security.

In short, we can affirm that since 2014, the Alliance has responded to the new geopolitical scenario with a reactive approach and with strategic-military initiatives. However, it has not addressed relevant issues that required a political approach and

response. This situation can be attributed in a broad sense to the fact that, since the annexation of Crimea, NATO has responded to its geopolitical challenges under a lack of definition, acting at the same time in two ways: that of deterrence and collective defense and that of the projection of international security, without internal cohesion and in a moment of chaos in the international order. The political context in the US and the EU opened a Pandora's box of latent questions within the Alliance, which no one dared to address, and has led to a general questioning of the usefulness of the Alliance. So, in view of this panorama, what are the prospects for NATO?

Political challenges and prospects for NATO

The reflection process on the future of NATO, initiated by the Secretary General, should be open and of a reforming nature and above all must generate consensus among NATO leaders to respond to current challenges. Thus, in order to contribute to that reflection, we propose some alternatives on how to address each of the challenges identified and the possible future scenarios for the Alliance.

American questioning and burden sharing

Since the end of the Cold War, Europe is no longer the strategic stage of the world, losing relevance in global geopolitics, while other regions were gaining it. This has been reflected in the reduction of US military presence in Europe since then. As a result, the major European countries acknowledged that they had externalized their own security and they would have to fill the vacuum left by the United States. Under these premises, the commitment of the US to European security has been questioned, with two clear manifestations: the issue of the 2% on defense spending and the demand that Europe takes on greater responsibility for its defense. Both issues, presented today as political narratives by the US Administration and part of the public opinion, do not hide the depth of this latent issue.

The commitment to 2% on defense spending by 2024 sought to increase defense investment by European allies to strengthen the Alliance's deterrent capabilities, under the US argument that the burden of Euro-Atlantic security should be more equitable and that every ally should pay its share for it. The issue was not new. Since Eisenhower and

Kennedy times, US governments have applied a business approach to NATO, whereby influence and control should reflect the material contribution of each member, while the Europeans used solidarity among allies as their approach. On the other hand, the 2% issue was not a creation of the Wales Summit but was brought up for discussion by the Bush Administration as early as 2006[1].

However, the 2% commitment is not an effective measure. If we look today, only the US (3.5%), Bulgaria (3,25%), UK (2.10%), Poland (2%), Greece (2.28%) and the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) reach the 2% figure agreed in Wales in 2014[2]. From these 8 countries, only two are major military powers with an autonomous defense capacity. Thus, we should not consider the percentage but the contribution in real values, that is, the capabilities of each country to effectively contribute to the allied collective defense. The 2% argument is a simple measure, but a political weapon that is very harmful to Atlantic cohesion.

An alternative would be the adoption of a commitment to the development of specific strategic-military capabilities by each member or group of countries based on their GDP, industrial capacity and strategic interests. That is, a commitment on a specific result such as number of aircraft carriers, satellites, fighter planes or specific projects in the defense industry. This could put pressure on European Allies to increase defense spending based on a strategic approach and reduce American complaints. At the same time, this would increase national and NATO capabilities and avoid continued mutual questioning. If we continue with the current situation, we will continue arguing over who will reach and who will not the 2% in 4 years. Considering the scenario of economic deceleration for 2020 and the difficulty of some Western countries to achieve such an amount of defense spending, is a non-realistic goal. This would give more ammunition to a US administration unwilling to continue applying the principle of solidarity and could lead to the US refusal to continue participating in NATO operations that are not strictly in its interest.

---

[1] GONZALEZ MARTIN, Andrés "Las nuevas tensiones por el reparto de cargas y compromisos" in Cuadernos de Estrategia 191, IEEE. Madrid. 2018. Pg. 191. http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/cuadernos/CE_191.pdf
[2] NATO Press release. November 2019. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_11/20191129_pr-2019-123-en.pdf

The demand for greater European responsibility for its security comes in part from the same approach: Europeans must assume their *share of* responsibility for its security and defense. The conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s brought this issue to the table and led the US to take two very contradictory attitudes. On the one hand, they promoted the development of European capabilities (recall the ESDI in 1996) but reaffirming the supremacy of NATO as a mechanism for the defense of Europe. On the other hand, they were always skeptical of the development of an independent European defense. It should be remembered that before the launch of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), Madeleine Albright, then US Secretary of State, affirmed that it should only be developed if complied with the three "Ds"; No Disengagement from NATO; No Duplication of structures; and No Discrimination against non-EU members. That philosophy ended up limiting the development of the current Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). Thus, what the Trump administration is demanding is similar to what the Clinton administration was asking for and later that of Bush. The difference is that President Trump is using it as nationalistic discourse and not as a political-strategic reasoning.

An alternative is to reinforce the commitment of shared responsibility of Article 5 and that of individual responsibility expressed in Article 3 of the Treaty. There is no doubt that NATO today is the framework of defense for all European member countries, but the capabilities are nationals, and provided to NATO according to national policy criterias. Thus, it is important to reaffirm the principle of solidarity in Article 5. The Cold War made the United States the guarantor of peace and security on the continent. Europe took for granted a situation that today is no longer guaranteed, since it never really developed Article 3 of the Treaty or invested in its military capabilities. Today, although it was likely to see Russian tanks and planes crossing the border with the Baltic countries, it is more likely to see terrorist attacks against European targets or in North Africa. Moreover, the new change in the global balance could lead to a theater of war not in Europe, but the China Sea, the Arctic or another strategic area such as the outerspace which would require a large-scale response, which today no country in Europe or the EU alone could carry out.

In the opposite scenario, the Alliance could become more divided since the US would be more open to *ad hoc* coalitions of countries willing and able to carry out concrete operations than to use NATO. The result would be the loss of relevance of NATO, but above all the loss of the added value of defense for the Europeans, who should look for alternative mechanisms for their security. If NATO is weakened, Europe's security would be weakened.

The common objectives and role of the Alliance

It is well known that in the last five years the internal cohesion of the Alliance has been damaged. This not only responds to the international context but also to fundamental questions about the objectives and role of NATO today and makes us ask ourselves what has become of the Alliance? What should be its role?

The 1991 Strategic Concept gave the basis for the Alliance to go global. Colloquially we can say, it put the uniform on to intervene in humanitarian conflicts in the Balkans, then went to Afghanistan to fight terrorism while helping to rebuild areas of conflict and lately hybrid threats and misinformation. Thus, the Alliance practically changed from a military alliance to a security projection organization, but without giving up to the first one on paper. On the other hand, until the beginning of the 1990s, the objectives of the Allies had coincided: the territorial defense of Europe from Soviet aggression. After the conflicts in the Balkans, differences on the European defense policy arose, however, after the great enlargement of the Alliance and the new global context, the objectives began to diverge.

On the one hand, several Eastern European countries see NATO as a vital guarantee of their security. The obsession with security and the fear of a Russian invasion is a constant in the thinking of their political elites, think tanks and civil society in general. This explains why the Baltic countries and Poland exceed 2% in defense spending. This may show that the primary objective of these countries through NATO is collective defense. That is, they prefer a classic NATO based on Article 5. This differs from the internationalism advocated by the US-led Western partners that have taken the Alliance from the Balkans to Libya via Iraq and Afghanistan. They have demonstrated their preference for the projection of security and crisis management as NATO's main task since the end of the Cold War. That is, they prefer a NATO based on the 1991 Strategic

Concept. Moreover, Turkey is already a discordant note within the Alliance, whose nationalist foreign policy very often clashes with its European partners and generates tensions within the Alliance. Today, Turkey has reaffirmed itself as a regional Mediterranean power rather than a Western ally, preferring an Article 5-NATO that protects and supports its interests, but without making major commitments.

On the other hand, the objectives may change and have indeed changed in practice, but the values that the Alliance defends remain the same of the Treaty of Washington (in particular, those of Article 2). NATO defends the liberal values that represent the international order, whose cohesion around these values was unquestionable thanks to the democratic character of its members. However, in the last decade, the decline of democracy at the global level and the rise of so-called illiberal democracies and nationalist tendencies, especially in some allied countries, are breaking the consensus on values. Thus, a change of role, divergent objectives and values, and a lack of internal cohesion have led to the conclusion that the Alliance is suffering an identity crisis.

The answer must be to reaffirm the nature of the Alliance and its values, redefine the objectives we want to achieve and reach a commitment to re-establish political cohesion. First, NATO has been and is a political and military organization, although its political dimension has often been forgotten. For this reason, it is essential to seek a consensus among Allies on the values and principles in international politics that NATO defends as a group and those that each of its members defends individually. The difficulty, however, is not in reaching such a consensus, since the Treaty of Washington and Strategic Concepts have already expressed it, but in how to put it into practice. Until the beginning of the 2000s, the cohesion around the leadership and values defended by the United States was unquestionable. Today the difficulty is twofold because that leadership is lacking, and anarchy is beginning to reign around those values. For this reason, a new commitment is needed to reaffirm these values and allow the Atlantic Council to evaluate and draw attention to any deviation from this agreement. NATO has always been more united than other international organizations because of the democratic nature of its members.

On the division around the objectives, the dilemma is: Do we want a classic NATO of art. 5 or the global one of the 1991 Concept? Since 1949, Atlantic unity has been based on collective defense. Today the scenario is not the same and NATO is no longer an alliance whose only objective is defense against a Russian attack, because today there are global threats that directly affect European security and are not precisely on the eastern flank. What still exists today is an analysis very centered on Russia as an enemy, which prevents to foresee the potential of the other threats. The disagreement is because of many NATO members do not share the role of global security projection, nor the risks and threats of the southern flank, much less the use of NATO in the competition and geopolitics of the great powers.

Therefore, it is necessary to redefine the role and objectives of the Alliance in three aspects; abandon the old Cold War assumptions; involve all Allies in the security challenges on the southern flank; and reorient the Alliance towards a less global NATO in presence, but with a global vision. Rivalry with Russia remains NATO's main concern and is prioritized in the strategy, so today NATO is more prepared to address challenges on the eastern than the southern flank. The solution would be to reorient the priorities without forgetting the fundamental tasks of the Alliance. This means, it is necessary to rebalance preparation, analysis and response on both sides. The southern flank, on which the *Package on the South is* being applied, is today a territory of permanent instability, to which we should not apply a western approach of area where anarchy reigns that we want to put in order. We should consider it the area where potential threats and agents that put our security at risk are housed. The threats there are more invisible than in the Baltic but as well disturbing to our security. Better preparedness to respond to such risks must involve all Alliance members and not just large countries or countries with interests in the area.

On the other hand, relations with Russia must be better managed, stopping from perceiving it as an enemy. Russia today is a regional power acting with a realistic foreign policy based on zones of influence. Russia is not more powerful militarily than NATO, but it shows itself to be strong, unlike, for example, the EU, which is stronger (politically and economically) but shows itself to be weak. Therefore, it should be sought a concert with Russia to achieve relative stability on the eastern flank, applying the same realistic language of power and not only with tactical-military initiatives.

In third place, in order to have a global vision, the Alliance must redefine itself as an organization that serves the political and military goals of its members and not as global police. It should maintain its original mission of Article 5 of collective defense and the projection of security for the defense of the interests of its members. To achieve this, the Alliance should be based on three axes: military strengthening; consensus on political objectives; and the promotion of liberal values and the defense of the international order (which we can call the *Atlantic acquis*). There is a clear consensus on the first axis, but disagreements are in the other two that represent the political and external projection part of NATO. It is important to remember that NATO is an alliance that includes a military dimension expressed in Article 5 and a political dimension expressed in Article 2. So, there cannot be a NATO *à la carte*.

The challenge is to get all the Allies to take on this *Atlantic acquis,* and not to undermine the Alliance from within. Today, Erdogan's Turkey bears little resemblance to Turkey of 1952, when it joined the Alliance as part of the US containment policy. Moreover, its nationalist drift and territorial rivalries with Greece further complicate intra-NATO and EU-Turkey relations. NATO should serve as a framework for EU and US to talk with Turkey as partners to push and reach a renewed Turkish commitment to the *Atlantic acquis*. However, in order to achieve political cohesion and global approach, new US leadership will be needed, as well as cohesion within the EU to speak with one voice, since without this it will be even more difficult to reach a broad consensus on the objectives and future role of the organization.

In an opposite scenario, the division around objectives and values will grow and end up undermining the Alliance from within. Pro-Article 5 countries may only be interested in contributing to increased security on the eastern flank. The other partners, with more global interest and pro-article 1991, will need U.S. assistance to maintain strategic and military capacity in facing southern-flank threats and deployment on large-scale missions. This could lead to an *enhanced cooperation* or NATO à la carte (like the EU mechanism). If Turkey goes free and follows a nationalist and authoritarian path could be incompatible with the values and objectives of the Alliance and may further deepen the internal divide. Therefore, cohesion is one of the greatest challenges of the Alliance but is lacking political will to achieve it.

Flexible enlargement policy

Since 1999 the Alliance has almost doubled its membership, from 16 to 30 at present, joining particularly economically and militarily small states in the latest additions. The result has been the expansion of the territorial space of application of Article 5, without increasing strategic or military capabilities, raising the potential cost of territorial defense. This leads to a paradox: while some States, such as the United States, are strongly demanding a fairer burden-sharing and greater responsibility to Europe for their defence, at the same time the enlargement increases the cost of Europe's territorial defence without any counterbalance.

NATO's enlargement policy began with the change in the US position, contrary to what it had expressed to Russia at the end of the Cold War. This expansion was above all the result of the impossibility of realizing the Euro-Atlantic security space. Three states, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, quickly joined in 1999, whose tradition and their desire to integrate into the West, could contribute to the stability of the new Europe. From then on, a rather lax enlargement policy, called shortly after *open doors, was* followed, which led in a short period to the incorporation of small Eastern European states. The aim was to extend the Alliance's security umbrella to almost the entire continent, but without considering the strategic and military contribution of these countries to the Alliance as a whole. In addition, a *Membership Action Plan* was devised, similar in requirements to the EU's *Copenhagen criteria.* This situation has created the impression that NATO enlargement is taking place with an integrationist purpose and without geopolitical considerations. This leads us to a reflection: Is NATO's purpose to be an integration organization like the EU?

The argument has been that enlargement has increased the area of security, stability and cooperation in Europe, as well as helped to spread and consolidate democracy and the rule of law among its new members. This has been partly the case, but it has also meant taking greater risks and a cost (political and military) of providing security without compensation. Enlargement into many former Soviet satellites and Balkan states has also had a negative impact on relations with Russia, increasing its sense of insecurity as it is encircled by Atlantic allies.

The legal basis for the enlargement policy has been Article 10 of the Treaty of Washington, according to which it is a decision of the Allies to invite any European state to join the Alliance "*if it is in a position to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area*". The first part of the article is discretionary, but the second is a fact to be noted. Montenegro and North Macedonia were the last two additions, both Balkan states that today have no geopolitical interest in transatlantic relations and whose conventional military forces are small. How can they contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area according to Article 10?

Based on this reasoning, further expansion and admission of the current candidates, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine, should be reconsidered because their incorporation raises similar questions. The strategic importance of Ukraine does not generate doubt, but it must be remembered that the conflict with Russia began precisely when the EU wanted to conclude an association agreement with Ukraine in November 2013, which would mean a further step towards the future integration into the EU. That generated the disproportionate response of a Kremlin willing to prevent any EU influence in what it considered its zone of influence. In the case of Georgia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is the same as with Montenegro and Northern Macedonia. Can they contribute to Euro-Atlantic security or represent a geopolitical interest for the US or the EU? The answer is most probably no, and even Georgia could raise doubts about its belonging to the geographical space considered Europe according to article 10. It would require a reform of the Treaty as it happened in the case of Turkey at the time[3]. Moreover, despite Georgia's good relations and participation in joint operations with NATO, it suffers from political-institutional problems and high corruption, reflecting the great difference with the standards of the other allies. Furthermore, the *open-door* policy may have counterproductive internal results for the future of the Alliance in two ways:

On the one hand, it can pose political-institutional decision-making problems. Expanding the membership of the Atlantic Council to countries with interests and world views quite different from the main NATO countries may lead to a greater lack of internal cohesion around the objectives of the alliance. They may be simple followers and not represent any inconvenience, but also, they may seek to pursue only their interests and not support or understand the global vision that NATO needs today. This can lead to

---

[3] Due to Turkey's entry in 1952, Article 6 had to be reformed to incorporate its territory into the Atlantic security space. This was the only time the Washington Treaty was reformed.

possible *vetoes on* future initiatives that would require a reduction in scope to achieve the necessary consensus in the Atlantic Council.

On the other hand, it can distort the nature of the Alliance. NATO must not duplicate the objectives and functions of the EU, which is an integration project for Europe. NATO is a political and military organization, so it cannot pretend to expand on the basis, as is argued, of the desire to promote stability and cooperation to build a free, united, democratic and peaceful Europe[4]. What the Alliance must reflect, as we have expressed before, is the consensus on the objectives it wants to achieve and how to reach them. NATO must continue to cooperate with all neighboring countries to help strengthen their institutional and military capabilities. This does not mean enlarging NATO, but rather revisiting the old partnerships of the 1990s to make them less geographical and vague and more bilateral and country specific.

If it continues along its current path, it may further damage the internal cohesion and the true sense of its raison d'être: collective defense and security projection. Moreover, it could turn it into a security framework of a not strictly European or Atlantic scope in the medium term, making it lose strength and credibility. In any case, if NATO allies persist in this policy, the benefits and costs of each enlargement, and the added value for the Atlantic security, must be better explained. It should be remembered that the success of the adaptation of NATO has been the cohesion of its members on its objectives and its ease in reaching consensus as a medium-size club.

Stabilization of EU-NATO relations

Another very divisive issue within NATO is the relationship with the European Union, two organizations so different in nature, but two sides of the same coin. The origin of this division is intrinsically linked to the dynamics of transatlantic relations. Two facts can be attributed as cause and consequence: the externalization of the security and defense of Western Europe to NATO and, on the other hand, the decision to build a European defense outside NATO. In addition, there is a relevant element that conditions that relationship: the dependence and centrality of the US in European security. Thus, the EU-NATO relations issue has passed from being a strategic and military issue to

---

[4] https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm

adopting a political dimension. Therefore, the solution lies in a stabilization of the EU-NATO relationship by addressing its two conflicting aspects: First, the strategic autonomy of the EU and whether it can replace NATO. Secondly, the EU-NATO rivalry and the role of each in European geopolitics.

The Saint Malo Declaration of December 1998 laid the seeds of the European defence policy, but it represented the return of an old debate, now within the EU, whether Europe should create an autonomous defence from NATO and the US. The division is deepened by the great enlargement of the EU towards the center and east of Europe. Most of these countries see in NATO their vital guarantee to the Russian threat. In 2009, the EU's Lisbon Treaty came into force, which "constitutionalizes" the renowned Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). However, it deliberately did not want to be the EU's defense framework because it incorporated Madeleine Albright's *"3 Ds"* philosophy and the two visions of security: the pro-European and the pro-Atlantic[5].

From 2014 onwards, there will be an EU-NATO rapprochement as a result of the new international security context. This leads in 2016 to a new EU-NATO strategic partnership agreement, which focuses on military and operational aspects, leaving aside political-institutional issues. At the same time, the Brexit triggered the relaunch of the European defence designed in the Lisbon Treaty together with the EU Global Strategy (launched in June 2016) which already mentioned strategic autonomy as an objective. Since then, the EU embarked on an unprecedented race to build a European defense, doing more in 10 months than in the last 10 years. Thus, Article 46 of the Treaty on EU (TEU) was developed to achieve Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in December 2017.

However, the enthusiasm faded when the limitations imposed by the Lisbon Treaty on defence and the scope of PESCO (voluntary and project-focused on operational defence capabilities) showed up. That fact was used by French President Macron, to launch in June 2018, its European Intervention Initiative *(*IE2), which sought to create an effective European defense force, outside the EU, but including the United Kingdom. Since the time of Charles de Gaulle, almost all French presidents have attempted to create a European defence alternative led by France and autonomous from the US.

---

[5] DIAZ RODRIGUEZ, Joel, "The Common Security and Defense Policy: a new strategy for a new European and global scenario". IEEE opinion document. 2018.

Macron's initiative was another attempt to follow the line of his predecessors, but it contributed more to the divisive debate. Considering all this, is it possible to achieve European strategic autonomy?

Strategic autonomy is, strictly speaking, the capacity for external action. Thus, the European Union would be strategically autonomous if it could act on its own, as defined in the Global Strategy, to protect Europe and its citizens; respond to external crises and conflicts; and the power to build the capacities of its partners. Moreover, the most important aspect of this concept is to be able to act independently of the policy pursued by other allied powers, such as the US, and without material dependence on an organization like NATO. Such a capacity for action would require two fundamental things: strategic and military capabilities and a foreign policy with a global power vision. Today the EU is not able to achieve strategic autonomy because it does not have, as BISCOP[6] has pointed out, the *strategic enablers* that are the capabilities to implement autonomous actions on a large scale and it would only be possible to obtain them in the long term. On the other hand, the EU foreign policy has limitations and transform CSDP as a defence framework for its member states would require a reform of Articles 42 to 46 of the TEU. This would require a remarkably high political consensus to overcome the required unanimity. In addition, it would be necessary to define the military potential to be achieved, change the European mentality and learn the language of power to make way for a vision of global power. This scenario is far away today because of the lack of political will. Therefore, the EU cannot yet defend Europe on its own, nor can it replace NATO.

The second question is the so-called NATO-EU rivalry and the role of each. This derives because many see both organizations as competitors, on the basis that further development of European defense would be to the detriment of NATO. Practice shows the opposite because the EU-NATO relationship is based on complementarity. This is because the nature of each organization and the role of each is not well understood. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly redefine the roles of each organization according to its nature and make a political-strategic analysis of how and when to act under the framework of one or another to respond to a given crisis.

---

[6] BiSCOP Sven, "European Strategy in the 21st century". Routledge. 2019. Chapter 5.

With respect to nature, the European Union is a supranational organization that takes its decisions by majority (except for the CFSP which is by unanimity) and NATO is an intergovernmental organization, whose decisions are taken based on national interests and by consensus. The European Union is a *sui generis* actor that has tools (policies) to act externally. NATO serves as an instrument for the collective defence of its members. This clearly shows the different nature and non-rivalry. The point is that both organizations share many member states and the difficulty of establishing a clear division of the interests they pursue. This is largely due to the preponderance of the US in the leadership of NATO.

Today, all NATO member states -and especially the European ones- organize their territorial defense through the Atlantic Alliance, in accordance with the mutual assistance clause of Article 5. However, the EU member states are also committed on paper by another assistance clause in case of armed aggression in Article 42.7 of the TEU. This clause is more symbolic than real since it is limited by the primacy of the use by certain states of NATO for their defense. Moreover, even if the EU wanted to, it could not effectively exercise its territorial defence since, as we have pointed out, it lacks the military capabilities to do so. Thus, when a crisis arises and requires the use of military force, in practice, EU leaders weigh the risk and the interests at stake in order to decide whether to act within the framework of the EU or NATO. If the action requires a large-scale deployment and a potential combat risk, it will undoubtedly be done through NATO. If it is a peacekeeping operation or similar (expeditionary), it can be done through the EU. The drawback arises with the interests at stake in each case. Doing it through NATO means subordinating to the disposition and direction of the US and that other non-EU partners do not oppose at least, as could be the case with Turkey and its attitude towards EU operations. Doing it outside NATO, gives more autonomy to the EU, but without the necessary capabilities for a large-scale operation, reduces the options to expeditionary operations. That is partly what happened in Libya in 2011 and why the EU could not intervene in Syria in 2013 when the crisis reached its peak.

Thus, when NATO's interests do not coincide with those of the EU, they lead to an internal blockade or to the search for *ad hoc* alternatives outside both. This is really NATO's biggest risk: losing relevance as a security framework for its members. The solution lies, first, in the division of labor. NATO must be used as an instrument for the

projection of security on all its flanks, as well as where the interests of the members require it. That means, to use NATO for dissuasion of Russia's provocations, to fight threats of terrorist organizations or to defend interests beyond the Atlantic area. On the other hand, the EU is an actor with great diplomatic and economic leverage that can serve to conclude major agreements with other powers (using its influence and *tools*) on major international security issues. The nuclear agreement with Iran in 2015 is a good example.

At the same time, the political and military weight of the EU must be increased because this would strengthen the European pillar within the Alliance, (an expression that Canada and Turkey do not like to hear) and because it would also give the EU more autonomy to act externally. Today the relative EU share in terms of capabilities within the Alliance is small, so the challenge is to reduce the gap between Europe's current capabilities and the total Atlantic capacity. This would not duplicate unnecessary capabilities, but rather increase the European capacity for effective deployment and the total NATO's capacities. Furthermore, politically, if the EU manages to act with one voice within the Alliance and seeks agreements with the other European partners (the non-EU) it will be easier to seek a common European position and a better understanding with the other partners, mainly with the US and Turkey, rebalancing relations *ad intra*. NATO must be used as an instrument of political consultation to advance common interests and not as a zero-sum game EU-NATO.

The other alternative is to continue with the current model of practical cooperation between the two without delving into political issues. That is, to act separately without taking advantage of the immense political-diplomatic-military synergy between the EU and NATO. Thus, the political potential of a US-EU agreement to use the Alliance would be lost before the new global security scenario. Moreover, the difference between a small EU within NATO and a notably superior US contributes to the current race to find alternative frameworks outside NATO, as we saw with France's IE2 or US-preferred *ad hoc* coalitions. If we see NATO only as a means of military cooperation and deterrence from Russia, the US and the EU will be less able to cope with the new shift in the geopolitical balance of power.

Internalizing the new global balance

The current geopolitical trends further complicate the scenario where NATO must operate, but, above all, the implicit positioning of China as a challenger of the liberal international order is changing the balance of global power. Thus, the challenge that NATO has is to adapt this new geopolitical reality to its strategic vision, applying three approaches: internalizing the new rise of China and the consequences for global security; reinforcing deterrent capabilities in the 21st century new front that is cyberspace; and strengthening the international role of NATO through partnerships with like-minded countries.

The rise of China and its implications are evident. It is already the second largest economy in the world has strategic interests in Asia, Africa and is rapidly establishing itself in Latin America. In addition, today it has the second largest defense budget in the world, which can be seen in the acquisition of large strategic-military capabilities. Its attempt to reach outer space by equipping itself with satellites and its own station and above all its technological capacity puts it in a position to challenge the international order dominated by the West. This geopolitical change was already assumed by the United States at least a decade ago, seeing as its main strategic problem the rise of China. The trade war, 5G or the relevance of China as a global supplier as we have seen during the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis show the implications it has for global security.

This Chinese rise has been the main factor in changing the balance of world power because China wants to lead the so-called "fourth industrial revolution" and become a structural power to adapt the international order to its interests. Thus, China is promoting its illiberal development model: to be an economic power while remaining a political autocracy, given that China best promotes its interests within a pro-Western liberal order in anarchy. This is the main risk of China's rise for Europe and America, and for a NATO that is a product of the order established in 1945, which functions more effectively in a world based on that international order.

Thus, the task for NATO is to apply a more strategic vision of China's new position and its effects. And, on the other hand, to identify and analyze how it can contribute militarily and politically to this new global competition between the superpowers.

Today the Alliance considers China too far from its interests and is not part of its strategic analysis. Therefore, the Alliance should incorporate China in its geopolitical analysis as an ambitious revisionist power and find how it can serve as a deterrent tool to counteract the consequences that China may bring for the international security. But to do so effectively, it needs clear objectives based on a coordinated American and European foreign policy with well-defined interests. For this, it will be necessary - once again - of leadership within the Alliance, key to reorienting strategy and tactics for NATO to play a relevant role in the new global geopolitics.

Secondly, we must take into account that today the new security frontier of the Alliance is in cyberspace because it is there where threats are constantly evolving, and citizens are the objective. Since the adoption of its cybersecurity policy in 2008, great progress has been made (The *Cyber Defense Pledge of* 2016 or the *Cyberspace Operation Centre* in 2018) in adapting its response and resilience capabilities. However, today cyberspace could be a *global common that* lacks international regulation. This has been exploited by China and its technological giants, as well as by Russia for its hybrid and disinformation warfare to increasingly undermine the position and - in the second case - the institutions of the West. The challenges that cyberspace poses are no longer only against the State but the citizenry. The Internet of things and applications are elements that can control the activities of citizens and disinformation can lead to the management of public opinion producing the polarization of our societies. Thus, the next Strategic Concept should include, the agreement reached by the allies in which, a cyber-attack can activate the clause of art. 5 if the attack reaches a certain level. It would reinforce the commitment and deterrence power of the Allies in this field. In addition, NATO should open the debate internally and with its partners on the opportunity to reach an international agreement regulating the security of cyberspace. The *Taillin Manual of* 2013 can serve as a reference for the Alliance to lead this initiative.

Furthermore, to help strengthen NATO's role internationally and lead this type of initiative, it must establish new partnerships with like-minded countries. In this line, our bet is that the Alliance must extend this spectrum of partnerships to countries in the Americas for two reasons: one political and another strategic. Strategic, to establish cooperation mechanisms to generate joint strategies and operations against global threats that bring the region closer to NATO - in which it is almost absent today. But

also, to avoid greater involvement of other powers such as China or even Russia. Politically, because there is a similar approach in the region, in international security issues such as disarmament, nuclear proliferation, international terrorism. These partners can support at the international stage, the global projection of NATO and its action in facing security challenges. As starting point, NATO should open conversations with countries that have shown their international vocation and are in favor of multilateralism. This could be the case of Chile, Peru and Mexico that form the Pacific Alliance, which could join Colombia, the only one in the region that has an agreement with NATO, although today with little added value. There can be different priorities between these countries and NATO (Public vs international security) but we should look for convergence of interest and approaches. On this regard, Spain could play an important role, leading the Alliance to turn its eyes to see more strategically the region and to find some like-minded partners.

Conclusions. A NATO for 2030

The history of NATO is a successful one because it has been able to adapt to the changes in global geopolitics. This work has tried to present, at the same time, a positive balance of NATO trajectory, identifying the factors that have caused and driven its adaptation, and a realistic analysis of the internal challenges that today condition the future of NATO. The United States created NATO in order to secure Western Europe and to support its containment policy. As a result, Europe had the necessary stability to carry out its integration process, which today has become the EU. NATO is the main institutional link between the United States and the European Union and should serve as a framework for these two actors to address together the current geopolitical challenges.

Since 1991 there has been a great transformation of the world that forces us to adapt to the new challenges of the 21st century. However, Russia is still perceived as the main threat to NATO. This is because today, Russia behaves more like a 19th century imperial nation than a 21st century power. But this is a product of its weakness and not of its strength. Thus, it is necessary to move beyond the assumptions of the Cold War and to better manage relations with Russia in order to reach a concert that will stabilize the eastern flank. However, as we have remarked, there are other, less visible fronts and threats that represent a great danger to our societies that are not in the east, but on the southern flank and in cyberspace. The new strategy must be directed to rebalance the analysis, preparation and tactics on these three fronts, with a greater involvement of all the allies.

The lack of internal cohesion is one of the main challenges for the Alliance. Today there does not seem to be a consensus on what NATO we want and the goals we want to achieve with it, mainly because there is a lack of internal leadership to generate that consensus. Therefore, we need a US commitment to the Alliance and that Europeans assume their share of responsibility in security and leadership to design together the roadmap that the Alliance should take in the next decade. Leadership is needed to reaffirm values and to set political and military objectives, and for better governance of *ad intra* relations. Dialogue with Turkey from a common US-EU position is essential to push and reach consensus on NATO's role and objectives and those of Turkey within the Alliance. It should be remembered that NATO is much stronger when it reflects the shared commitment of its members.

Furthermore, in order to maintain this cohesion, and to ensure that the Alliance does not lose credibility, the enlargement policy should be re-evaluated. An expansion not based on geopolitical but on integrationist calculations can bring about internal divisions and interest groups that complicate consensus on major decisions. Moreover, there is a risk that continued enlargement could distort the nature of NATO and turn it into a framework for security cooperation. In any case, this issue must be part of an open debate between allies, partners and experts.

NATO is the result of its two souls, the North American and the European, therefore, the coordination of US-EU within NATO is fundamental to achieve common political and security objectives. Today NATO is only credible because of the US, but the US can no longer carry the burden of European security alone, less in a world of multidimensional challenges. That is why it is important to strengthen the EU as a political and military actor because this also makes NATO stronger, although a consensus must first be reached within the EU. France has always tried to create and lead an independent European military capacity, but US opposition and German ambiguity prevented such plans from being meaningful. Today the EU needs to find its place in a world of superpowers competition and develop its foreign and defense policy as a global power. France's political leadership is not enough. Germany's determination and its industrial and economic potential to achieve greater strategic autonomy is also needed. Spain and Italy should join this new leadership. Greater European cohesion should not replace Atlantic unity.

Moreover, the challenges facing the international order require NATO to take a more strategic view of China's rise because it is transforming the global order through its political, economic and security implications. Thus, it is necessary to internalize these consequences in NATO's analysis and how it can best serve to the new competition of superpowers. Transatlantic engagement will be indispensable, because only the US and the EU together can limit the effects on the international order of an uncontrolled rise of China. We must avoid a possible Russia-China alignment that seeks to undermine the liberal international order. China is more powerful in challenging the international order when the US and the EU act as rivals rather than partners. The EU-NATO divide makes it easier for Russia to meddle in the West and carry out its hybrid war. Thus, before a world of strong nationalist trends and illiberal powers, cohesion on the values and interests that NATO defends is indispensable.

Finally, this new redefinition must be expressed in a new Strategic Concept. The open differences regarding NATO's objectives and role were already reflected in the London Summit of 2019. The reflection process opened by Secretary General must conclude with the adoption of a new document that points out the political and strategic path of the Alliance for the decade ahead. A strategy not on the readjustment of allied forces but on the approach, vision and objectives for addressing the current geopolitical transformation. It is necessary to identify what NATO's contribution in political and military terms can be to the new geopolitical context. To achieve this, it is necessary to take the necessary actions to avoid falling into the undesirable scenarios described here. For this reason, we insist, internal leadership is needed to rethink priorities and make major decisions for the future.

Today, the triptych warned by Lord Ismay is still valid except for one of its parts. It is no longer necessary to put the Germans down, but they take the lead alongside France in developing an effective and autonomous European defense. In addition, to keep Americans in, the renewed commitment of the United States to the Alliance and the international order that they helped create and have defended for over 70 years will be critical. Only in this way can NATO continue to be a relevant actor for European security.

Joel Diaz Rodriguez *

Internationalist lawyer and foreign policy analyst

Former consultant at the OAS and ex-legal fellow of the Council of the EU