

Transatlantic security institutions are resilient but resolving current security challenges requires reformatting the OSCE

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Executive Summary:

Strengthening efforts in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and the degradation of terrorist organizations in Europe and its periphery entails greater engagement between the US, the EU and Russia. One option would be to institutionalize the 'Normandy Format' with the creation of a Security and Economic Council at the OSCE.

The stability of the post-Cold War security institutions is not at risk despite being confronted with multiple crises. However, these institutions are not adequately equipped to deal with the new range of strategies used by state and non-state actors in regional destabilization and warfare. These include interference in electoral processes, secessionist strategies, hybrid warfare tactics, dismantling borders, piracy, use of migratory pressures, terrorist attacks on key states and freezing conflicts. After taking stock of the resilience of NATO and the EU despite new challenges, this article proposes to re-engage with Russia within the context of a redesigned OSCE.

From the American perspective, 9/11 is the defining event in current security policy. It has shaped security strategy leading to the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, 2003 invasion of Iraq, further interventions and tactical alliances in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, as well as the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. This has occurred despite greater regional belligerence from Russia and China, notwithstanding a limited pivot to Asia mostly apparent in terms of military preparedness. The continued volatility of the Middle East, adjustments in regional alliances, state failures creating apertures for terrorist organization affiliates, and stocks of conventional weaponry as well as WMDs, inescapably lead incoming American administrations towards a more realist security approach requiring diplomatic and military involvement in the region. This has informed the Obama administrations' approach to securing a nuclear program deal with Iran, disposing of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal, and measured interventions and tactical alliances regarding the conflicts in Libya and Yemen.

However, despite fifteen years of sustained interventionism, no new long-term strategic alliance has been established by the United States. The only significant stretch to post-Cold War security institutions has been NATO's expeditionary force in Afghanistan and its intervention in Libya. Overall, NATO remains an efficient security actor for the purpose of deterrence and surveillance, whether aerial or naval, within its area of operation. The current 'Readiness Action Plan' with the re-deployment of the NATO Response force and air surveillance

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operations on its eastern flank (McNamara 2016), as well as efforts to increase cyber-warfare and missile defense capabilities and its joint situational awareness, are adequate postures to deal with increased Russian military presence and prevent further escalation. Although the Trump administration will insist more heavily on greater burden sharing, this has been a constant in US security diplomacy since 1990 (Quintana 2016).

From the European perspective, the decade going from August 2008 to April 2017 (expected start of Brexit negotiations) will have been a bruising experience. It is a distinct departure from the 1999-2008 period of civilian and military build-up of capabilities (EU-ESDP and EU-CSDP), with limited interventions in Africa with the UN and AU, and a hand-off of peacebuilding operations from NATO, the UN and the OSCE (FYROM, Bosnia, DRC, Kosovo, Chad, CAR). For European defense institutions, the last decade has been a trial by fire putting its territorial defense architecture, external intervention capabilities, and system of support for other regional alliances to a test. The Russo-Georgian war of 2008, with the first foreign intervention by the Russian military since the end of the Cold War, and Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, severely undermined the post-war continental security architecture. Together with the annexation of Crimea and war in Eastern Ukraine they demonstrate the limits of the OSCE as a peace broker and monitoring institution, as well as the inevitable limitations of NATO outside of its area of operations. Additionally, NATO expansion, EU neighborhood policy, EU and US targeted sanctions and EU civilian interventions in the region (Bosnia, Kosovo, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) do not deter Russia from greater regional interventionism, rather the opposite.

Put together, these institutions, although resilient, do not have the capabilities to resolve frozen conflicts (Kapitonenko 2009), impede the creation of new ones or sufficiently thwart election tampering in the wider region. Although NATO and the EU-CSDP remain the cornerstone of their members' territorial and expeditionary defense policy, a rethink is required regarding the security architecture of Eurasia as a whole. The OSCE has coped with the tasks of Cold War 'Détente' (under the CSCE format) and post-communist regime transition, but has not been able to establish a stable European system, one that includes a cooperative Russia (Galbreath 2007). The 'Normandy Format' created to deal with the war in Donetsk and Luhansk, which includes major state stakeholders to regional stability (Russia, Germany, France), in addition to Ukraine, seems to be Russia's preferred format for negotiation (Yurgens 2015). A similar, less formal format had been used for post-conflict negotiations regarding Georgia in 2008 (shuttle diplomacy by Nicolas Sarkozy, Bernard Kouchner and Condoleezza Rice while France held the EU Council's rotating presidency) (Diesen 2012). These formats demonstrate limitations to the US's dual containment policies (the ability to simultaneously contain Russia and China) and a willingness to let the EU take the lead (Asthmus 2010).

Furthermore, the Arab Spring, starting in Tunisia in December 2010, and the ensuing destabilization processes, proxy wars, foreign interventions, civil wars, extra-territorial terrorist attacks and migratory crises have changed the EU's

perspective of a benign Southern European neighborhood and its reliance on NATO for out-of-area military interventions.

The 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, although securing a UN Security Council mandate, was to be the last of its kind for the foreseeable future. Not only was it heavily criticized by Russia and many emerging states, it also showed the limits of Western interventionism, with only eight states willing to intervene, the over-reliance of the European military forces on US capabilities, and the lack of appetite for post-conflict peacebuilding activities (Chivvis 2014). NATO's only current deployment in addition to sea patrol in the Gulf of Aden and deterrence in the Mediterranean is helping the EU Border and Coast Guard limit illegal trafficking and migration in the Aegean Sea (NATO 2016).

The Syrian conflict, in addition to revealing a lack of support for a significant intervention force and war fatigue by key Western states, is also a crucial stage for the international security order (Tocci 2016). It demonstrates the limits of the UN Security Council, post-Libyan conflict, to settle regional wars with non-regional sponsors. Any settlement including Western and Eastern Syria requires an agreement between Russia and the United States. Despite key areas of conflict being situated at the NATO border, no peacebuilding intervention is possible without broader agreement, so as not to trigger an even wider conflict. This is an inescapable problem because Sunni regions in Syria will require a post-ISIS stabilization process.

For the EU, the migration crisis provoked by the Libyan and Syrian conflicts, as well as the terrorist threat within its borders from ISIS, has triggered a profound revision of its strategic posture. In essence its new 'Global Strategy' seeks greater strategic autonomy, greater cooperation with regional security alliances (foremost NATO and the AU), greater cohesion in defense procurement and defense operational structures (previously obstructed by UK membership to the block) as well as an increase in its defense budget (Biscop 2016). Both Britain's exit from the EU and Donald Trump's election will reinforce these aims, by putting greater emphasis on the need for European participation in its own territorial defense and external intervention capabilities. It extends a strategic analysis which re-emphasizes NATO's role in deterrence for EU territorial defense, and increased limitations to out-of-area UN and NATO interventions. Preliminary discussions excluding increased defense spending from EU Commission normal budgetary guidelines and for EU funding on defense research projects might significantly break with post-Cold War reductions in defense spending (Gros-Verheyde 2016). Rather than freezing further integration, Brexit permits greater focus on defense issues within the EU27. Donald Trump's insistence on greater burden-sharing in NATO also reinforces the need to find new budgetary capabilities for defense spending.

From the US, EU and UK perspectives, fully engaging with Russia so as to defuse tensions in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and the wider war on terrorist organizations has become of primary importance. Additionally, defusing tensions arising from Russia's use of hybrid warfare

techniques, cyber-warfare and electoral tampering, including in the US and the EU, is becoming urgent. Russia's refusal to participate in NATO forums following expansion of the organization's footprint, and limited engagement at the UN and OSCE (Kropatcheva 2012), highlight the need to develop a more elaborate institutional setting. Building on the Normandy format, a new layer of cooperation at the OSCE might be an institutional innovation permitting re-engagement with Russia in an acceptable format.

An OSCE 'Security and Economic Council' might permit negotiations for regional and out-of-region multinational peacebuilding interventions by the institution. Limited membership of the council and veto power for Russia, the US, the EU and the UK might enhance diplomatic breakthroughs, by testing each other's red lines, as well as develop conflict prevention measures (which the EU Neighborhood Policy lacks). As with the 'Normandy Format', it would keep membership restricted, leadership unambiguous and reinstate great-power politics (Bosco 2009), thereby filling an institutional gap in the post-Cold war architecture. Significantly, it would be limited to the actors whose consent is necessary for any regional conflict resolution (acknowledging give and take diplomacy at the highest level that could allow climb-downs from aggressive postures) and it could rely on existing operational structures and mechanisms for post-conflict interventions. From a theoretical perspective, it would permit a transformation of the post-Cold War European system, from a hegemonic collective security system toward a procedural collective security system, institutionalizing a regional concert of great powers (Frederking 2007).

Formally, this would mean inserting a new structure, the 'Security and Economic Council', in parallel to the existing ones, the Ministerial and Permanent Councils, which include all member states, without the former having veto power on the latter's current functions. Symbolically, this could be perceived as a 'better deal' for the new US administration, a 'change in the international liberal order' by Russia and revitalize conflict resolution efforts in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan as well as Syria and Libya. Importantly, it could enhance the organization's election monitoring policies, making them compulsory and comprehensive for all member states, including the US and Russia. Finally, it could also provide a forum for discussion between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union regarding economic and trade interests, thus anticipating Russian red lines in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

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