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EURO-ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL
BACKGROUND GUIDE

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- NATO's Open Door Policy
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Introduction to the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council is the key connection between NATO and the wider multilateral international system. Established in 1991, the EAPC originated from the North Atlantic Cooperation Council with a mission to institutionalize relations with former USSR countries. The EAPC is a forum for political dialogue concerning transnational security issues. It brings together 29 NATO allies and 21 partner countries. Additionally, it provides a framework for the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. EAPC increases dialogue and cooperation, forwarding the Alliance's goal of greater security, stability, and democracy across the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept explicitly states this link and commits the alliance to crisis management, stabilizing post conflict situations, and working with international partners, including the United Nations and European Union. "The promotion of Euro-Atlantic security is best assured through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organizations around the globe."¹

¹ NATO, 2010, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf, p. 28.

Topic A: NATO's Open Door Policy

Introduction

NATO's 70th anniversary provides an opportune moment to consider the cornerstone of NATO's mission: the Open Door Policy. While Russia spreads a narrative that NATO enlargement is a direct threat, NATO's Brussels 2018 summit reaffirmed that NATO's enlargement is not directed against Russia.² NATO's Open Door Policy implies that any European country willing to carry out the responsibilities of membership can join NATO.

NATO enlargement is grounded in the promotion of national self-determination. As the 2018 Brussels Summit Guide reconfirms, "Every sovereign nation has the right to choose its own security arrangements. This is a fundamental principle of European Security, one that Russia has also subscribed to and should respect."³ The Helsinki Final Act, which established the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and of which Russia is a signatory, states that every country has the right to belong or not belong to international organizations or multinational treaties.⁴

The Relevance of NATO's Open Door Policy

This policy continues to have relevance. In 2017 Montenegro was admitted, becoming NATO's 29th member. Four additional countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Ukraine have all declared aspirations for NATO membership.⁵ At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO agreed that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of the Alliance in the future. The NATO-Georgia and NATO-Ukraine commissions established the frameworks to help the two countries meet membership requirements. The Membership Action Plan is a NATO program of assistance tailored to the countries' individual needs.

2018 marked the tenth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Georgia. The 2008 conflict hangs over the process of Georgia becoming a NATO Member State. Georgia joined the Partnership for Peace in 1994, and in 2008, at the Bucharest Summit, NATO members agreed that Georgia will become a NATO member.⁶ This membership is dependent on Georgia meeting requirements, and the NATO Georgia Commission. One of these requirements is that Georgia solve territorial disputes - an item that seems far from being met. The ceasefire between Russia and Georgia was brokered by the EU and committed the Union to monitor the peace treaty. It now maintains a 200-member team to monitor compliance, called the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM). Russia's invasion of Georgia and its annexation of Crimea in 2014

² NATO, 2018, "Brussels Summit Declaration," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm.

³ NATO, 2018, "NATO Summit Guide: Brussels, 11-12 July 2018," https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_07/20180718_180711-summit-guide-brussels.pdf, p. 59.

⁴ CSCE, 1975, "Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act," <https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act?download=true>.

⁵ NATO, 11 July 2018, "Enlargement," https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/topics_49212.htm.

⁶ NATO, 14 September 2018, "Relations with Georgia," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm.

demonstrated Russia's willingness to use military force to prevent the EU or NATO from expanding into what it considers its traditional sphere of influence.

NATO condemns Russia's violation of Georgian sovereignty, through its continuation of occupying South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Alliance continues to call for Russia to honour its terms of the six-point agreement brokered in 2008.⁷ In the latest of Russian statements to about Georgia, in August 2018, the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev threatens that any decision of NATO to admit Georgia would trigger conflict.⁸

NATO's policy expresses steadfast support for Georgia as they contribute actively to NATO operations. The 2014 Wales Summit marked a deepening cooperation between NATO and Georgia, in which NATO agreed on a package to help Georgia to defend itself. Additional steps toward these goals were made at succeeding NATO summits in Warsaw (2016) and Brussels (2018).⁹ The NATO Liaison Office in Georgia contributes to military cooperation, supports civilian and military reform, and manages funding and programming for professional development and training courses.¹⁰

Conclusion

With the recent addition of Montenegro to the Alliance, NATO's open door policy continues to remain an important aspect of NATO and its growing membership. While states may want to join NATO, membership can also cause negative reactions from the countries' geopolitical neighbourhood. Especially Eastern European states and those in the Caucasus will have to balance between a possible membership in NATO and being located in what Russia perceives as its sphere of influence.

Guiding Questions:

- Is the Open Door Policy viable for Georgia after the 2008 Georgia-Russia war? Should NATO accept Georgia as a member state?
- How can NATO address Russia's geopolitical concerns regarding NATO expansion?
- Should NATO recognize regions like South Ossetia and Abkhazia as being independent?
- Should NATO reinforce the existing EU monitoring mission to Georgia? Can NATO help Georgia secure its territorial integrity?

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⁷ Osborn, A., 6 August 2018, "Russian Prime Minister Threatens Conflict If Georgia Joins NATO," *Atlantic Council*, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/russia-s-prime-minister-threatens-conflict-if-georgia-joins-nato>.

⁸ Hall, A. H., 8 August 2018, "The Russia-Georgia War: Not Frozen and Not Forgotten," *Atlantic Council*, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-russia-georgia-war-not-frozen-and-not-forgotten>.

⁹ NATO, "Relations with Georgia."

¹⁰ Ibid.

Papava, V. (1 February 2017). "Post Communist Georgia: Between Two Alternatives – EU and the EAEU." *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*. <https://www.csis.org/blogs/post-soviet-post/guest-post-post-communist-georgia-between-two-alternatives-eu-and-eaeu>.

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Topic B: Resolving Frozen Conflicts

Introduction

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a series of secessionist conflicts have broken out on Russia's periphery. Quasi-independent territories hang in a state of limbo. Despite the sense of stability in the term "frozen conflicts," these areas of tension contain the seeds for future violence. Most importantly, Russia has utilized frozen conflicts as a strategy in its confrontation with the West, and efforts to halt the expansion of NATO. Frozen conflicts are a key theater of past, current, and future potential escalations with Russia, as they remain unresolved and active conflicts. It is of utmost importance is that NATO develops multifaceted response to these entanglements to maintain peace on its periphery.

Russia and Frozen Conflicts

Frozen conflicts in this region have led major actors to adopt a hands-off approach and are hesitant to advance reconciliation, such as peace talks, in resolving the underlying tensions. They prove hard to end because powerful interests don't want them to.¹¹ "These seemingly disparate conflicts across different states are, in fact, inherently interconnected; together, they demonstrate a pattern of Russian foreign policy, which manufactures frozen conflicts as a means of increasing Moscow's long term influence and leverage over target states in its near abroad."¹² Russia pursues a strategy of "regional fracture," in which it "splinters and shatters its borderlands, from Donbas in Europe to Damascus in Asia. Russia's vast Eurasian borderlands have become the Kremlin's buffer zones – a nearly uninterrupted expanse of armed conflict and war."¹³

These conflicts can be roughly divided into three categories, based on the level of Russian involvement. In the first category are conflicts that Russia has played some role in, but operates from a distance, maintaining the balance of power. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict is in this category, remaining one of the most active of all frozen conflicts in Eurasia. In 2016, skirmishes broke out, killing some 50 people, and involved helicopters, tanks and artillery.¹⁴ The second category comprises of conflicts in which Russia maintains a veto over any development, but is content with a drawn-out stalemate. Transnistria, the border region of Moldova facing Romania belongs in this category. The third category includes areas which Russia considers vital enough that it is willing to risk a direct confrontation with external actors, such as NATO and the EU, to ensure these frozen states do not leave Russia's orbit. Russia's support of frozen conflicts in the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and the three breakaway regions, created in the

¹¹ The Economist, 23 October 2014, "What defines a frozen conflict," <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2014/10/23/what-defines-a-frozen-conflict>.

¹² Grigas, A., 2016, "Frozen Conflicts: A Tool Kit for US Policymakers," *Atlantic Council*, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Frozen_Conflicts_web_0627.pdf, p. 1.

¹³ Ohanyan, A., 12 September 2018, "Why Russia starts so many conflicts on its own borders," *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/12/russia-has-a-lot-of-conflicts-along-its-borders-thats-by-design/?utm_term=.941a7f4e90d3.

¹⁴ The Economic, 15 April 2016, "The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh," <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2016/04/15/the-conflict-in-nagorno-karabakh>.

Ukraine conflict, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea. Many commentators consider Ukraine as a new frozen conflict.¹⁵

As the most important military alliance in Europe, frozen conflicts pose a set of dilemmas for NATO. The elephant in the room is Russia. In many of these frozen conflicts, Russia has played a significant destabilizing role – challenging the alliance through military actions in its periphery.¹⁶ Russia's actions in creating the conditions for and maintaining frozen conflicts is perhaps the most egregious demonstration of its wider strategy of confrontation with the West. "Russia has breached the values, principles and commitments which underpin the NATO-Russia relationship."¹⁷ Anticipation of a Russian campaign of interference in the Baltic states such as Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia could call for an Article 5 response. How can NATO prevent Russia from replicating its frozen conflict strategy on Alliance members?

Past NATO approaches have included sanctions, public diplomacy, and engagement with frozen conflict regions. For instance, in Transnistria and Crimea, US sanctions target leadership, companies and individuals in the autonomous zones.¹⁸ Additionally, training operations or "war games", like the recent Trident Juncture 2018 exercise in Norway, demonstrates NATO's commitment to defending NATO allies.

Conclusion

In the past Russia has used asymmetric tactics, such as disinformation to spread fear among Russian speaking minorities. In states with ongoing frozen conflicts, NATO can support local actors maintain sovereignty. Promoting good governance programs would deny Russia opportunities to exploit state weakness. Further, training local forces, especially in hybrid capabilities would help states protect their own autonomy.¹⁹ NATO's crisis management abilities include the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) initiative that was adopted in Wales, and has contributed to support Georgia and Moldova.

Guiding Questions:

- How can NATO suppress the frozen conflict strategy from further eroding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity?
- Does NATO have a role in working with other international organizations present in mediating the conflict in Ukraine, such as the OSCE?
- What action can NATO take in deterring Russia's frozen conflict strategy on Baltic states such as Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia?

¹⁵ Dempsey, J., 22 September 2014, "Europe's New Frozen Conflict," *Carnegie Europe*, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/56686?lang=en>.

¹⁶ NATO, 2016, "Warsaw Summit Communiqué," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Grigas, A., 5 July 2016, "How the US can confront Moscow's frozen conflicts," *The Hill*, <https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/international/286461-how-the-us-can-confront-moscows-frozen-conflicts>.

¹⁹ NATO, 2018, "NATO Summit Guide: Brussels, 11-12 July 2018," https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_07/20180718_180711-summit-guide-brussels.pdf.

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Topic C: NATO-Africa Union Counterterrorism Cooperation

Introduction

As NATO aims to expand its horizontal partners, the Brussels Summit re-committed to establishing strategic networks, like with the African Union (AU), to contribute to international security. Although the AU is not a traditional partner to NATO, the Alliance is committed to expanding its political dialogue and cooperate with actors that share the same values in the interest of international peace and security.

The Rise of Terrorism and On-Going Conflict in Mali: A Case Study

The rise of terrorism stemming from ongoing conflicts in Africa is of great concern for the Alliance. In countries like Mali, an increase in political and religious extremism has led to an ongoing security crisis. Mali's conflict stems back to the 1960's, with its colonial legacy inflicting a divide between the countries north and southern regions and amongst different religious groups. Since then, Mali has had three coups that were motivated by ethnic tensions, unemployment, a failure on the government's part in stabilizing the northern regions and its inability for service delivery. As such, Mali continues to be stuck in a capacity trap that is driven by its issues of legitimacy.²⁰ Currently, there are numerous insurgent and rebel groups that have close ties to ISIS and Al-Qaeda in Mali. This raises huge security concerns for the Alliance.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was initiated in 2013 by UN Security Council Resolution 2100. The mission aims to support political processes in the country, carry out several security-related tasks, support the transitional authorities of Mali in the stabilization of the country and the implementation of the transitional roadmap. The UN has coined this to be the deadliest mission in history, at 177 fatalities as of November 18th, 2018.²¹ It should be noted that prior to the deployment of the UN, the AU had trouble organizing and deploying into Mali. This led to strife between the two international organizations. The French have deployed in 2013 with Operation SERVAL and were mandated in counterinsurgency. A follow up operation, Operation Barkhane, was initiated in 2014 and is still ongoing.

At the 2014 Wales Summit, NATO acknowledged the growing human, drug, and arms trafficking networks threatening the Sahel's regional stability.²² In recognition of these networks at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO leaders agreed to strengthen and expand the Alliance's political and practical cooperation with the AU.²³ NATO recognizes the growing rate of radical Islamic extremism in Mali and is deeply concerned by potential spillover into neighbouring nations that could destabilize the entire region. The Malian Government's inability in providing adequate security has impacted its service delivery (education and health care). This is of growing concern as it fuels further violence amongst rebel and insurgent groups. Trafficking networks have led to the forcible recruitment of child soldiers, a growing drug issue in the country, and an

²⁰ Carment, D. and Samy, Y., 2017, "Working Paper: Exiting the Fragility Trap," *United Nations University UNU-WIDER*, <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/exiting-fragility-trap>.

²¹ UN Peacekeeping, "MINUSMA Peacekeeping," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma>.

²² NATO, 2014, "Wales Summit Declaration," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm.

²³ NATO, 2016, "Warsaw Summit Communiqué," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

illicit arms network that extend beyond Mali's borders. These growing trafficking networks are of great concern due to Malian diasporas within NATO Member States that could lead to an increase of extremism in the European theatre. The Alliance currently recognizes its role in capacity building and security stabilization to ensure international security is preserved. However, there has been minimal, if any, documents or statements made by NATO on potential missions to the region. NATO is prepared to explore, upon request, where it can contribute to these challenges.

Conclusion

Future challenges that arise with the Malian conflict are the increase of radical extremism attacks on civil society that have the potential for destabilizing the region. NATO can work alongside the AU and MINUSMA in deliverance of training and support for the Malian Armed Forces. Further, by enabling support capabilities, the Alliance can deepen its ties within the nation for state-building. NATO must look beyond its traditional mandate as a military alliance and examine the deeper connections of state fragility and how military intervention can work towards supporting initiatives that also work towards capacity building.

Guiding Questions:

- What role does NATO have, if any, in the Malian conflict and with working alongside the UN and the AU?
- How can the Alliance members address the legitimacy and capacity traps Mali is stuck in?
- How can the Alliance address the drug, arms and human trafficking issues in Mali that have great potential for spillover into neighbouring nations?
- Violence around elections and the legislature is prominent, how can the Alliance aid in stabilizing the growing instability in the north and central regions of the country?

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