

Background Guide Topic Two:**Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in NATO***Introduction*

For years, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) nuclear policy centered on the concept of nuclear sharing; the idea that nuclear states can base their nuclear weapons on the territory of their non-nuclear allies. This policy in conjunction with the concept of a nuclear umbrella, where nuclear states guarantee to defend their allies, formed the backbone of NATO's nuclear policy during the Cold War.¹ At the time, the Alliance viewed nuclear forces as a means to deter a major war in Europe as a part of their strategy of flexible response. As a part of this strategy, "the Alliance maintained a variety of targeting plans which could be executed at short notice" and maintained "high readiness levels and quick-reaction alert postures for significant parts of NATO's nuclear forces."² It is safe to say that nuclear weapons played an indispensable role in the Alliance's security policy during the Cold War, and that the strength of its forces hinged on their reliance on their weapons.

But since the end of the Cold War, and in light of the new post-Cold War security environment, NATO has strived to decrease its reliance on its Nuclear Forces.³ Though the looming threat of the Soviet Union no longer exists, the threat of internal strife and terrorism still present a huge security risk for the alliance. With these threats comes a concern about the safety and security of nuclear weapons on European soil, which is why the alliance hopes to reduce their nuclear forces. Starting with the Strategic Concept in 1991, NATO has added arms control and deterrence to its official policy and since then has reduced the number of nuclear weapons kept in Europe. There are now only five countries that house nuclear weapons in Europe; Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Turkey.⁴ Although the Alliance has made a commitment to try and reduce its forces, they still receive a lot of criticism for not removing all US weapons on European soil. Interestingly, Belgium and Germany have taken the lead in this critic asking that all weapons be withdrawn from Europe.⁵ As the alliance comes together to develop a new Strategic Concept in November of this year, it will be interesting to see how and if there will be any changes to their nuclear policy. Based on the recommendations made by the Group of Experts, it seems like no changes will be made, but will all this internal dissent there will most likely be

1 <http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb0206.htm>

2 <http://www.nato.com>

3 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50068.htm

4 <http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/euro/euro.pdf>

5 http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100219_2293.php

a struggle to maintain the status quo.⁶

History

Formed during the beginning of the Cold War, a period of political tension between the USA and the former USSR, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty. Signed on April 4th, 1949, it states that NATO's purpose is to "promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area", as well as to "unite their efforts for collective defense ... for the preservation of peace and security."⁷ The original members consisted of non-Communist Western European States which aligned themselves with their cross Atlantic neighbors in an effort to discourage a possible attack by the USSR. In a sense, "NATO embodies the transatlantic link by which the security of North America is permanently tied to the security of Europe."⁸ NATO sought to achieve its goals of maintaining stability and deterring an attack through a policy of Collective Defense. The US was one of the largest military powers of the day, and by aligning themselves with them, the Europeans were able to benefit both by standardization of their militaries, wherein many adopted US policies and technology, and by being brought under the protection of the US' Nuclear Umbrella.⁹

Article 5 of the North Atlantic treaty formalizes the concept of Collective Defense when it states that, "the Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all."¹⁰ When such an attack occurs the alliance, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter, "will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area."¹¹ Fundamentally, Article 5 states that if another state attacks a NATO ally, the other members of the alliance promise to respond and help their ally by any means necessary, using armed force or nuclear weapons if the situation calls for such extreme measures.

6 <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>

7 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

8 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm

9 http://www.mdn.gov.pt/NR/rdonlyres/D3B3C895-E087-4B36-945E-FA9803D320E2/0/20091129_DGAED_Servicos_BrochuraNSA.pdf - pg. 9

10 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

11 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

The Defense Doctrine, also written in 1949, expands on how the NATO countries will coordinate and standardize their forces and carry out the promise made in Article 5. According to this doctrine, states must contribute as much aid, technology, and manpower, “as can reasonably be expected of it,” considering its size and economic standing, and “should undertake the task, or tasks, for which it is best suited.”¹² The most important clause in this doctrine falls under Article 7 which defines NATO’s nuclear policy when it states that effective coordination is essential to, “insure the ability to carry out strategic bombing including the prompt delivery of the atomic bomb. This is primarily a U.S. responsibility assisted as practicable by other nations.”¹³ This clause lays the foundation for the policy of nuclear sharing; a policy wherein nuclear states place some of their nuclear weapons within the territory of their non-nuclear allies.

In the case of NATO, this meant that the US, the only member of the alliance with nuclear weapons at the time (the United Kingdom and France did acquire nuclear weapons later, in 1952 and 1960 respectively, though not to the quantity of the United States), sent some of their weapons to be placed on European soil. The “US first deployed nuclear weapons to Europe in September 1954 when the first weapons arrived in Britain. Within 10 years, deployments spread to Germany, Italy, France, Turkey, the Netherlands, Greece, and Belgium, and in 1971 the deployment peaked with approximately 7,300 nuclear warheads deployed in Europe.”¹⁴ During times of peace these weapons remain under the control of the United States who is responsible for maintaining and securing these stockpiles, but in the agreement there is a provision that during times of war or crisis the US can transfer control of the weapons to the state which physically possesses them. The legality of this provision has often been questioned as it seems to violate the spirit of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), of which the United States is a member, which asserts that nuclear states will not transfer nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states.¹⁵ NATO has never successfully explained why their policy of nuclear sharing does not violate the NPT which is why many, both inside the Alliance and out, have called for this policy to be terminated and for the removal of all American nuclear weapons from European soil.¹⁶

12 http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/issues/nato-nuclear-policies/1949-11-28_a491128a_nato_int.pdf

13 Pg. 23, http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclear-weapons/issues/nato-nuclear-policies/1949-11-28_a491128a_nato_int.pdf

14 <http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/euro/euro.pdf>

15 <http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.html>

16 <http://www.bits.de/public/researchnote/rn97-3.htm>

In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO met to reassess their purpose and develop their new Strategic Concept. The security environment in Europe had undoubtedly improved because “the monolithic, massive and potentially immediate threat which was the principal concern of the Alliance in its first forty years [had] disappeared.”¹⁷ Former Soviet satellites were regaining their sovereignty, and the risk of total nuclear war was no longer a looming threat. In this new security environment, many questioned whether or not there was still a role for NATO in the global arena, but although the situation was markedly better, a great deal of uncertainty remained and new threats emerged. The threat no longer came from a singular common enemy, “but rather from the adverse consequences of instabilities that may arise from the serious economic, social and political difficulties, including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes, which are faced by many countries in Central and Eastern Europe.”¹⁸

As NATO formulated their new Strategic Concept, they acknowledged that in this new security environment diplomacy would play a larger role, and the elements that came to characterize the Allied security policy were; dialogue, co-operation, and the maintenance of a collective defense capability.¹⁹ Although diplomacy was increasingly important, NATO wanted to keep a strong collective defense and was not ready to disarm their nuclear forces, because they maintained that, “the fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war.”²⁰ Even so, the Alliance did begin to decrease the number of weapons on European soil, and placed some provisions for arms control and disarmament in the Strategic Concept.

NATO met again in 1999 to formulate another Strategic Concept very similar to that of 1991, but this was before the tragic events on September 11th, 2001 which changed the world and a new Strategic Concept is necessary to cope with the new security environment.²¹ Though internal turmoil is still a viable source of tension, non-state actors and terrorism are now an ever greater threat to the security of Europe and the Atlantic. With this in mind, it is time for NATO to once again reassess their role in the global arena and determine the best defense policy for handling these new threats. The world will have to wait and see what the alliance decides when they meet at the upcoming Summit in Lisbon on November 19th and 20th, 2010 where they will decide on their new Strategic Concept.

17 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm

18 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm

19 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm

20 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm

21 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm

Current Situation

The non-proliferation and disarmament debate began shortly after the creation of the first nuclear weapon, and has gained popularity since the end of the Cold War. The first serious discussion of nuclear arms control was the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which tried to call for total disarmament in 1970, but the subject often got swept under the rug as the nuclear states wanted to quietly and discreetly hold on to their stockpiles while preventing non-nuclear states from acquiring their own weapons.²² When the Cold War ended many in the public and government questioned whether nuclear weapons were necessary in a unipolar world and this sparked a renewed interest in disarmament. Most publicly was in 2007, when George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn, the former “four horsemen” as they were called, wrote an opinion editorial in the Wall Street Journal stressing the importance of moving towards total disarmament of nuclear weapons.²³ President Obama, of the United States, also recently made a bold move when he, “described his policy as part of a broader effort to edge the world toward making nuclear weapons obsolete, and to create incentives for countries to give up any nuclear ambitions.”²⁴

Concerns over nuclear proliferation have increase in the last decade and NATO’s policy of nuclear sharing has come under fire repeatedly. The Alliance has already drastically reduced the number nuclear weapons on European soil from the 7,000 once stored there in the 1970s. There are now only 5 non-nuclear NATO states which house US weapons; “Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands have 10-20 each, but most are stockpiled at US bases in Italy (70-90) and in Turkey (50-90).”²⁵ These reductions are not sufficient to satisfy many critics who want to see the withdrawal of all weapons from European soil. Several Alliance members are amongst those critics including Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and Luxembourg who all made a joint statement calling for the US to withdraw their weapons.²⁶ Belgium's Parliament had already unanimously requested that NATO withdraw the weapons, as they have made it clear that they support a world free of nuclear weapons, and a “a 2006 poll found that almost 70% of people in the [other] four countries want the U.S. nukes withdrawn.”²⁷

22 <http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.html>

23 <http://www.yale.edu/faith/downloads/A%20World%20Free%20of%20Nuclear%20Weapons%20-%20WSJ.com.pdf>

24 <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/world/06arms.html>

25 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/feb/22/nato-states-us-nuclear-arms-europe>

26 http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100219_2293.php

27 <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1943799,00.html>

Germany has also made a strong commitment towards these goals making statements directly to both the US and NATO at a meeting in Tallinn in late April.²⁸

There was an informal meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Tallinn, Estonia in late April in preparation for the Lisbon summit in November later this year. The discussion of NATO's nuclear posture was on the agenda, and although there several dissenters, the Alliance remains, "firmly committed to maintaining the security of its members, but at the lowest possible level of nuclear weapons."²⁹ At that meeting, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO's Secretary General, stated that in a world where nuclear weapons exist, "*NATO needs a credible, effective and safely managed deterrent. Nevertheless, the Alliance must also do what it can to support arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation*".³⁰ Alliance leaders also met in April 2009, in Strasbourg/Kehl and called upon the Secretary General, "to convene a broadly-based group of qualified experts to prepare the ground for a new NATO Strategic Concept."³¹ The Group of Experts, led by its chair Madeleine K. Albright and vice-chair Jeroen van der Veer, began work in September 2009, and through "an extensive series of seminars and consultations with scholars and officials, civilian and military alike," created a list of recommendations for the policies which should be adopted in the new Strategic Concept.³² Amongst the list were several recommendations for future nuclear policy.

Many of the nuclear recommendations in the "Expert Report" presented in November 2009, were echoed in the sentiments Rasmussen expressed at the meeting in April stating that, "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO should continue to maintain secure and reliable nuclear forces, with widely shared responsibility for deployment and operational support, at the minimum level required by the prevailing security environment."³³ The Report calls for a continuation of nuclear sharing policies stating that US weapons on European soil should remain in Europe soil to reinforce, "the principle of extended nuclear deterrence and collective defense."³⁴ The report goes on to justify nuclear sharing by stating, "broad participation of the non-nuclear Allies is an essential sign of transatlantic solidarity and risk sharing. Participation by the non-nuclear states can take place in the form of nuclear deployments

28 <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,680174,00.html>

29 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_62852.htm

30 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_62852.htm

31 <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/roadmap-strategic-concept.html>

32 <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/roadmap-strategic-concept.html>

33 <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>

34 <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>

on their territory or by non-nuclear support measures.”³⁵ But in an effort to appease those who want to see further reductions in NATO’s nuclear forces, the report also recommends that NATO re-establish the Special Consultative Group on Arms Control to facilitate reduction debates, and continue to talk to Russia, “on nuclear perceptions, concepts, doctrines, and transparency. These talks should help set the stage for the further reduction and possible eventual elimination of the entire class of sub-strategic nuclear weapons.”³⁶

Based on these recommendations it appears that the nuclear policy in the upcoming Strategic Concept will resemble that of past and there will no changes. Nuclear sharing will continue to be the policy of choice, and the weapons might be slightly reduced, but will remain on European soil. But it is important to note that the Alliance has never faced this must resistance towards this policy, and the internal dissenters will certainly make it difficult for NATO to keep those weapons on European soil. It will be interesting to see how an organization who emphasizes a commitment to unity and agreement on its defense policy will decide how to maintain its nuclear forces when they are so clearly divided on the issue.

Directive

Though long since the days of nuclear safety drills, where school children would practice hiding under their desk to protect them from radiation, the threat of a nuclear attack is still very possible. Most people associate Nuclear War with an antiquated idea left over from Cold War days, but some would argue that the threat today is greater than it ever was back when US and the Soviet Union acted as a deterrence against each other reducing the threat of a nuclear attack. What made deterrence work is the fact that they were consequences for acting badly; if the Soviets decided to bomb an American city, they could expect the Americans to act in an equal or greater manner. Today the threat comes from rouge states developing nuclear capabilities, and though unlikely, non-state actors such as terrorists organizations who might acquire nuclear weapons by theft. Some experts cite “the return address problem,” how can these groups be deterred if there is no destination for retaliation? Or even worse, if they just do not care about the consequences? ³⁷

35 <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>

36 <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>

37 <http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/1410.200905.garfinkle.nucleardeterrenceterrorism.html>

With this new and dangerous security environment, there are inevitable concerns over the safety and security of nuclear materials and weapons that are spread out all over the world. Would it be possible for these to get into the hands of a terrorist organization? This question has led many to want to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world, and some have even called for a push towards total zero, the complete disarmament of all nuclear weapons. Several NATO countries have joined in with these sentiments. Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg have all stated that NATO should disarm, and rid Europe of the remaining nuclear weapons left over from the Cold War.³⁸ Is it possible for an organization whose central policy for decades hinged on its nuclear forces to be able to give those up in hopes of a nuclear free future?

Delegates should debate on the importance of nuclear forces as part of the Alliance's new strategy for conflict deterrence. Delegates should also formulate ideas for replacing nuclear forces, and consider the implications and viability of these alternatives. It is also important to take into consideration the recent actions of non-ally states attempting to acquire nuclear forces. Delegates should discuss how these actions affect the Alliance, if they constitute a threat, and whether or not they should be taken into consideration as the Alliance formulates a new nuclear policy when they meet to discuss their new Security Concept.

38 http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100219_2293.php