



Success of the NATO Warsaw Summit but what will follow?

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The Association for International Affairs (AMO) with the kind support of the NATO Public Policy Division and in cooperation with the Polish Embassy in the Czech Republic has organized an expert conference covering outcomes of the NATO Warsaw Summit 2016 titled: "NATO Warsaw Summit: What did Warsaw deliver and what's next?". The conference was held at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland with the participation of experts with academic, political as well as professional backgrounds on 6 September 2016.

In the evaluation of the outcomes of the NATO Warsaw Summit the debate focused in detail on the perception of these outcomes and the current direction of NATO through the eyes of experts with different national perspectives'. Several difficulties accompanying negotiations in the course of the Summit were discussed and likewise those connected with the implementation of the results agreed in Warsaw. The discussion covered challenges and changes in the security environment, which NATO is currently facing directly in the North Atlantic region as well as outside its borders.

Warsaw Summit

Poland hosted a **NATO Summit** for the first time in the Alliance's history from 8 to 9 July 2016. It was also the first chaired by Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General. Topics addressed covered **NATO-Russia relations** as well as those between the **Alliance and the Ukraine and Georgia** which were confirmed during the Summit. **Cyber defence, resilience, enduring engagement in Afghanistan, protection of civilians, NATO's presence in the Baltics**, a 360 degree approach to addressing the security **challenges to the South and to the East or NATO-EU cooperation**, affirmed by the Joint NATO-EU declaration, represent some of the issues discussed in the course of the Summit.

The participants of the conference acknowledged the **symbolic meaning of the Summit** valuing highly the unity and importance of the Alliance as such. Despite the fact that the experts evaluated the Summit as a thoroughly successful one, there were several **"elephants in the room"** mentioned which made negotiations more complicated and interfered with the smooth-running of the event. **The Summit coincided with the fresh issue of Brexit** following the UK referendum held on 23 June. Also impossible to ignore was the ongoing **presidential pre-election debate in the US** that touched on topics such as the financing of NATO, its questionable importance for US defence or the inability of European countries to defend themselves without the assistance of the US. Another sensitive issue attending high level meetings for the duration of the Summit was **NATO's relations with Russia** and the perception of Russia's actions linked to European security and the **situation in Eastern Europe** in contrast with Russia – NATO member countries' bilateral relations. The issue of Russia was referred to much more frequently than at the Summit in Wales of 2014.

The conference covered these topics, discussing the issue of **defence spending** and NATO's budget as well as the inconsistent setting of ties with Russia, not to mention an **unclear understanding of sufficient deterrence** accompanying NATO's **Deterrence and Dialogue** approach to Russia. Another sticking point of the conference proved to be the matter of the **European Army project** and its potential collision with unity and basic ideas of NATO's very existence.

National perspectives

In the course of the conference **national perspectives on the Summit** meetings and its results were discussed. Approached experts covered the perception



of the Summit and NATO as such through the lenses of national representatives. **The views of the Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, France and two non-member states - Sweden and Finland were given.**

For the Czech Republic as for other member states one of the most crucial debates was the discussion concerning **the defence investment pledge**. The Czech Republic strongly lags behind in this matter. In contrast, **Poland is proud to be one of the few countries fulfilling its obligation** in this area. However, **the Czech Republic could be proud of its commitment in the field of cyber defence**. Despite its economic as well as geographical limits, the Czech Republic should find its way to engage in active combat with Daesh. Czech concerns regarding the situation in Eastern Europe and the Baltics are traditionally strong. In this context, Czech activity within the Visegrad Group should not be overlooked. **Concerning NATO's presence in the Baltics, the Visegrad Group plays a significant role**, despite struggles with the determination of an appropriate deterrent addressing Russia in this area. The Visegrad Group was a significant actor throughout the NATO Summit in Warsaw even though **the unity of the group is inconstant** and this could be harmful for it in the wider context. Small states have also shifted distinctly their approach towards NATO enlargement. **Compared to their earlier stance, support for continuing NATO enlargement dropped substantially**. Poland as a part of the Visegrad Group as well as being a state strongly influenced by the development of events at the Eastern border of the Alliance forcefully stands for a **strong and stable Alliance where Poland has a strong voice**. On the other hand, Poland should not be perceived as a country whose focus is limited solely to the East.

Slightly different but also close in many ways are the positions of **Germany and France**. Both countries are busy solving issues other than Russia and the Alliance's Eastern border. **The Eastern question is not neglected but the approach is shaped by a more rational stance not only by geographical proximity**. They condemn the annexation of Crimea and Russian involvement in the civil war in the Ukraine. Germany sees **Russia as a business partner**, as well as France, but they also strongly **enforce sanctions against Russia**. The French viewing of Russia is more calculating than in the case of Germany. The essential issue for Germany is the **refugee crisis** and the interrelated political debate. The ideology and political perception is closely linked to the interpretation and implementation of the Warsaw Summit outcomes. Germany and France share a common perception of their obligations under the Alliance but they also stress the fact that **their capacities are limited. They support a strong and stable NATO**. France profoundly welcomes NATO's engagement that is not only limited to the East. The French approach towards European security is distinctly influenced by the experience with the **terrorist attacks** perpetrated on its territory. That sheds light on **French support of the parallel European Army project which is not remote to Germany** too.

The conference in Prague covered not only the perspectives of selected NATO member countries but also those of two non-member states building closer ties to the Alliance. **Sweden's cooperation with NATO** nowadays covers a broad range of issues. Mutual relationships began to form only 15 years ago. The Swedish position has shifted **from neutrality to solidarity**. Sweden should not be passive in the case of security threats in Scandinavia. Russia is perceived as a partner but **the perception of the threats which the Russian Federation represents has changed**. On the other hand, Finland has collaborated with NATO for a longer time; nevertheless **Finland is strongly self-reliant in the field of ensuring its own security**. An important partner in this connection is the US, counterbalancing the interests of Russia in the region. The security of both Sweden and Finland is strongly interrelated. The possibility of future NATO **membership of one, Sweden probably as the first, would be soon followed by the other**.



Deterrence or Reassurance?

The fact that Russia represented a frequently discussed topic in various security policy contexts throughout the Summit in Warsaw also influenced the topic coverage during the conference in Prague as was mentioned above. It is important to highlight that the NATO approach towards Russia, although defined by the **Deterrence – Dialogue framework, is not consistent and clear**. Not every member state of the Alliance perceives this topic in the same manner, nor is it clear considering the approach and activities of the Alliance itself. There is a significant prevalence of each state adopting a **rational and realistic approach** in its own characteristic way. **States which share a border with or which are geographically closer to Russia have different starting points than those which do not share the geographical proximity**, and to whom the existence of Russia and its activities do not represent a direct existential threat. But conversely, **the position of non-neighboring countries could be more ambivalent**, taking into account strong economic ties and deterrent and enforcement of the sanctions at once.

Deterrence in itself is a problematic issue. NATO member states are unsure in what way to implement the concept to their foreign and security policies. **There is no clear line that defines what a sufficient deterrent is or is not**. During the conference speakers strongly emphasized that the concept is built on Deterrence and Dialogue, meaning **Deterrence alongside Dialogue not Deterrence by Dialogue**. Some of the states could also **misunderstand the line between Deterrence and Reassurance**. These positions should be elucidated. The extent of a sufficient deterrent cannot be unequivocally expressed in its entirety taking into consideration **the sensitivity of this issue** and a certain degree of unpredictability. However, it is natural that states which should carry out the deterrence contemplate to what degree the deterrent is successful and enhances the security of NATO and **what has already decreased security and helps to drive the security dilemma**.

The performance of the deterrence is **heavily burdened by a political as well as the military dimension** of the issue. Although the political dimension influencing NATO action and reaction is often emphasized, the military dimension and military threat represented by Russia and strongly influencing **the Eastern European states cannot be ignored**. An example is the Russian use of the A2AD system close to NATO borders. The **direct threat of Russia is significant in the Baltics** where the activities of the Alliance are often associated with the issue of the unclear degree of sufficient deterrent. Given the importance and sensitivity of deterrence strategy **there should be a unified and shared approach** among all states of the Alliance even though their background and capabilities differ.

NATO and EU

The signing of the Joint Declaration between the EU and NATO is considered to be a great achievement of the Summit in Warsaw. The cooperation between those two regional organizations is valuable and **covers a wide range of distinct areas**. Mutual cooperation is nothing new. Both organizations are involved in the operations in **the Mediterranean Sea** and in **the South in general**. Another shared attitude is an emphasis on **hybrid warfare** although the approach to this problem is still in its infancy with regard to **the vagueness and inconsistency of its theoretical framework and understanding**.

In addition to these shared values and goals, there is also the questionable project of the European Army. After the Summit, there were visible and significant calls **celebrating the unity of NATO**. On the other hand, the very **same states**



support the defence project of the EU. There are **several concerns** present among the member states of NATO regarding engagement in the rival project as well as legitimate reasons for choosing this dual involvement. Logical argumentation opposing the EU project includes the issue of **limited budgets** or the meaninglessness of involvement of the same units in two different organizations especially when it would be necessary to use them under the auspices of both organizations. Another question is the weakening of NATO caused by **limited resources** invested in accordance with the needs of NATO as well as the EU. **The issue of duplication** and the need for an elaborate investment plan cannot be overlooked. **None of the experts undermined the importance of NATO.** Rather, they stressed that European security cannot do without NATO. On the other hand, **the EU also cannot rely on NATO to such a great extent.** Not to mention the potential lower US involvement after the presidential elections. States supporting the EU project are seeking **an alternative and supplement to existing security structures.** It should be expected that the EU will increase its activity in the security area and **strengthen its presence beyond European borders even further.** On the other hand, it should not be expected that NATO will simply disappear from the European security architecture.

The participants of the conference agreed that the **outcomes and the Summit itself should be considered a success.** There is also **no need to make great and spectacular steps. Small but confident and stable ones** in line with the Member States' obligations and the Summit results **would bring a more certain contribution** to the fulfilment of those goals and commitments to the Alliance.



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