



## The United States and NATO: From Obsolete to Not Obsolete

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty. Today it is a security alliance of 28 countries from North America and Europe. NATO's essential purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.

- **POLITICAL** - NATO promotes democratic values and encourages consultation and cooperation on defence and security issues to build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.
- **MILITARY** - NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty - NATO's founding treaty - or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organizations.<sup>1</sup> NATO provides a unique opportunity for member countries to consult and take decisions on security issues at all levels and in a variety of fields. A "NATO decision" is the expression of the collective will of all 28 member countries since all decisions are taken by consensus.

When NATO's founding members signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949, one of its main objectives was to deter the expansion of the former Soviet Union while supporting the political integration of Europe after the end of the war. The member States reaffirmed their faith in the principles of the United Nations while "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual

liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.”<sup>2</sup> The fourteen articles of the treaty provide the member States with means to “...contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations...” while strengthening the United Nations. Article 2 calls on member States to “... seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.” Whereas Article 3 states, “In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.”<sup>3</sup> Significantly, Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty also have an important purpose in reducing international conflicts including in the economic arena.

The member States have declared themselves "resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security." The greatest threat to these objectives was a military attack by a hostile power. Article 5 is the foundation of the collective defence policy of the treaty. 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...”<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, this action in individual or collective self-defence, is as recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations<sup>5</sup> and needs to be reported to the United Nations Security Council as well. The Article further states that, “Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.”

In the close to seven decades, the Alliance has changed and so has the international environment in which it operates. It is unlikely that America or Europe would face a traditional armed forces attack. In the contemporary times the challenges before the alliance range from both traditional and non-traditional threats such as conflicts within different factions of a State, terrorism, piracy, cyber-attacks, and nuclear proliferation.

In the years since the end of the Cold War, the alliance has tried to transform itself to address the current international threats. At their meeting in London in July 1990, NATO's Heads of State and Government agreed on the need to transform the Atlantic Alliance to reflect the new, more promising, era in Europe. It resulted in the formulation of the New Strategic Concept<sup>6</sup>. The document stated, “The political division of Europe that was the source of the military confrontation of the Cold War period has thus been overcome.” While stating the changes that were taking place in the former Eastern bloc nations it also mentioned the changes in West such as the unification of Germany and the coming together of the European community to strengthen

European security. The document further mentions the various agreements that promote arms control including reduction of nuclear forces of the United States and the former Soviet Union.

The document while pointing to the, “...security challenges and risks which NATO faces are different in nature from what they were in the past. The threat of a simultaneous, full-scale attack on all of NATO's European fronts has effectively been removed and thus no longer provides the focus for Allied strategy. ...”<sup>7</sup>, also acknowledged that, “the risks to Allied security that remain are multi-faceted in nature and multi-directional, which makes them hard to predict and assess. NATO must be capable of responding to such risks if stability in Europe and the security of Alliance members are to be preserved.”<sup>8</sup> It identified these threats as “... 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. ... They could, however, lead to crises inimical to European stability and even to armed conflicts, which could involve outside powers or spill over into NATO countries, having a direct effect on the security of the Alliance.” Nonetheless, it noted that the “... Alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disruption of the flow of vital resources and actions of terrorism and sabotage.” “...Soviet military capability and build-up potential, including its nuclear dimension, still constitute the most significant factor of which the Alliance has to take account in maintaining the strategic balance in Europe..... To protect peace and to prevent war or any kind of coercion, the Alliance will maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces based in Europe” Elaborating on the character of the nuclear forces it stated that, “The fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war.” “The Allies concerned agreed to move away, where appropriate, from the concept of forward defence towards a reduced forward presence, and to modify the principle of flexible response to reflect a reduced reliance on nuclear weapons.”<sup>9</sup>

The Alliance's Strategic Concept<sup>10</sup> (1999) approved by the Heads of States and Governments in Washington D.C., stressed that “The Alliance operates in an environment of continuing change. ... Within this evolving context, NATO has played an essential part in strengthening Euro-Atlantic security since the end of the Cold War. Its growing political role; its increased political and military partnership, cooperation and dialogue with other states, including with Russia, Ukraine and Mediterranean Dialogue countries; its continuing openness to the

accession of new members; its collaboration with other international organisations; its commitment, exemplified in the Balkans, to conflict prevention and crisis management, including through peace support operations: all reflect its determination to shape its security environment and enhance the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.” It further states, “Notwithstanding positive developments in the strategic environment and the fact that large-scale conventional aggression against the Alliance is highly unlikely, the possibility of such a threat emerging over the longer term exists.... The existence of powerful nuclear forces outside the Alliance also constitutes a significant factor which the Alliance has to take into account if security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area are to be maintained.” The document further stated, “the Alliance will maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces based in Europe .... the Alliance's conventional forces alone cannot ensure credible deterrence. Nuclear weapons make a unique contribution in rendering the risks of aggression against the Alliance incalculable and unacceptable. Thus, they remain essential to preserve peace.”

The 2010 Concept document<sup>11</sup> “... commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons – but reconfirms that, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.” It highlights that, “the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, threatens incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity. During the next decade, proliferation will be most acute in some of the world’s most volatile regions. Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly. ...modern technology increases the threat and potential impact of terrorist attacks, in particular if terrorists were to acquire nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological capabilities.<sup>12</sup> “The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance...” The Warsaw Summit Communiqué (2016) continued with the policy of NATO as a nuclear alliance. It stated “As a means to prevent conflict and war, credible deterrence and defence is essential. Therefore, deterrence and defence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defence capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy. ... NATO must continue to adapt its strategy in line with trends in the security environment ... to ensure that NATO's overall deterrence and defence posture is capable of addressing potential adversaries' doctrine and capabilities, and that it remains credible, flexible, resilient, and adaptable.”<sup>13</sup>

The Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Area (1949), states that, “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.”<sup>14</sup> It was thought that a future major war in Europe would start with a surprise Soviet attack and would involve massive nuclear exchanges, it did not limit NATO use of nuclear weapons to a retaliatory strike after Soviet first use. Thus Military Committee of the NATO called for the NATO Military Authorities to be authorized to “plan and make preparations on the assumption that atomic and thermo-nuclear weapons will be used in defense from the outset”.<sup>15</sup> The NATO’s nuclear policy was based on the fact that, nuclear weapons would be based on territories of non-nuclear weapons States of the alliance or the nuclear sharing arrangement. The Alliance is dependent on the “...the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States; the independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France, which have a deterrent role of their own, contribute to the overall deterrence and security of the Allies.”<sup>16</sup> The Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) was as founded in December 1966, to establish a consultative process on nuclear doctrine within NATO. It continues to be an important committee of the NATO. For the Alliance, nuclear weapons play a unique and specific role in its deterrence posture. Their role is to prevent major war, not to wage wars.

During the 1990s, the NATO alliance altered its nuclear strategy to reflect the demise of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, but also did not adopt a “no-first use” policy. Since 2009, NATO does not follow either a nuclear First-Use or No-First-Use policy. The Alliance does not determine in advance how it would react to aggression. It leaves this question open, to be decided as and when such a situation materialized. In so doing, Allies seek to ensure uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies’ response to aggression. In the current international strategic environment, Allies have declared that the circumstances in which they might have to contemplate any use of nuclear weapons are extremely remote<sup>17</sup>. The idea that the Alliance and Europe needs nuclear weapons is now in questioned, especially since the Alliance has taken significant steps over the years to reduce the number of nuclear weapons. The Alliance has also developed a formula whereby it feels that there is no need or any plan to deploy nuclear weapons to new NATO member States.

The Alliance is now expanding its role beyond nuclear security for Europe. The Strategic document (1999) states, the alliance will “... contribute to effective conflict prevention and to engage actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations. To further define its

relevance, NATO has been involved in anti-piracy operations off the coast of Africa, in counter-terrorism operations in the Middle East. In 1994, the Alliance founded the Mediterranean Dialogue which seeks to contribute to security and stability in the Mediterranean through better mutual understanding.<sup>18</sup> It has also started to participate in 'out of area operations' such as during the Balkan crisis. NATO offered its full support to United Nations efforts to end war crimes, including direct military action in the form of a naval embargo. Soon the enforcement of a no-fly zone led to airstrikes against heavy weapons violating UN resolutions. The Alliance carried out a nine-day air campaign in September 1995 that played a major role in ending the conflict. In December of that year, NATO deployed an United Nations-mandated, multinational force of 60,000 soldiers to help implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and to create the conditions for a self-sustaining peace.<sup>19</sup> In Afghanistan, following the overthrow of the Taliban regime, UN Security Council Resolution 1386 authorized the deployment of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), a multilateral force in and around Kabul to help stabilize the country and create the conditions of a self-sustaining peace. In August 2003, NATO took over command and coordination of ISAF.<sup>20</sup> In 2004 NATO took on an additional out of area mission training Iraqi troops in Iraq and other countries in the region.<sup>21</sup> NATO has also included cyber defence as part of the alliance's core task. The proposal was accepted in Warsaw Summit (2014). The top priority is the protection of the communications systems owned and operated by the Alliance.<sup>22</sup>

Today, NATO is evolving itself to not only remain relevant to address the new security challenges but also to remain relevant to its alliance members. For Europe, NATO is a source of security and allows it to project hard power, where as for the United States, NATO provides it with an opportunity to partner with other nations to maintain peace and security outside of the United States.<sup>23</sup>

### **The United States and NATO**

The United States is a founding member of the alliance, helping shape the treaty that forms the alliance. The commitment was not only political, an advance agreement to treat an attack on any NATO member as an attack on the United States; it had a practical military dimension – a willingness for the United States to maintain substantial forces in Europe and to lead in a multinational military command. It also allowed the United States to assist in the political integration within the continent. NATO has remained at the centre of American foreign and security policy throughout the Cold War.<sup>24</sup>

According to the United States Mission to the NATO, the reason why the United States is a part of the alliance is because, “As a political and military alliance, what we (US and NATO) do together at NATO directly contributes to the security, the prosperity, and liberty of the people of the United States and every Ally. (The US’) NATO links are solid, forged over 60 years of history.... In the history of NATO, Article 5 has been invoked just once, and that was in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States.”<sup>25</sup> The alliance came together to fight the war against terrorism.

The US Department of Defence in its strategic guidelines document (2012) titled ‘Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defence’ states that, “The global security environment presents an increasingly complex set of challenges and opportunities to which all elements of U.S. national power must be applied.... For the foreseeable future, the United States will continue to take an active approach to countering these threats by monitoring the activities of non-state threats worldwide, working with allies and partners to establish control over ungoverned territories, and directly striking the most dangerous groups and individuals when necessary.” The document further goes on to name missions against counter terrorism and irregular warfare as primary missions of the US armed forces. It states that, “The United States has enduring interests in supporting peace and prosperity in Europe as well as bolstering the strength and vitality of NATO, which is critical to the security of Europe and beyond. ... the United States will maintain our Article 5 commitments to allied security and promote enhanced capacity and interoperability for coalition operations. In this resource-constrained era, we will also work with NATO allies to develop a ‘Smart Defense’ approach to pool, share, and specialize capabilities as needed to meet 21st century challenges. In addition, our engagement with Russia remains important, and we will continue to build a closer relationship in areas of mutual interest and encourage it to be a contributor across a broad range of issues.”<sup>26</sup>

As a candidate during the elections, President Trump (in a meeting with the editorial board of the Washington Post [21 March 2016]) had stated that, U.S. involvement in NATO may need to be significantly diminished in the coming years, breaking with nearly seven decades of consensus in Washington. He stated, “NATO was set up at a different time. NATO was set up when we were a richer country. We’re not a rich country. We’re borrowing, we’re borrowing all of this money. ... NATO is costing us a fortune and yes, we’re protecting Europe but we’re spending a lot of money. Number 1, I think the distribution of costs has to be changed. I think NATO as a

concept is good, but it is not as good as it was when it first evolved. And I think we bear the, you know, not only financially, we bear the biggest brunt of it”<sup>27</sup>

In his interview to The New York Times (26 March 2016) he stated, “... I have two problems with NATO. No. 1, it’s obsolete. When NATO was formed many decades ago we were a different country. There was a different threat. Soviet Union was, the Soviet Union, not Russia, which was much bigger than Russia, as you know. And, it was certainly much more powerful than even today’s Russia, although again you go back into the weaponry. But, but – I said, I think NATO is obsolete, and I think that – because I don’t think – right now we don’t have somebody looking at terror, and we should be looking at terror. ... But we have to be looking at terror, because terror today is the big threat. Terror from all different parts. You know in the old days you’d have uniforms and you’d go to war and you’d see who your enemy was, and today we have no idea who the enemy is.” He further added, “I’ll tell you the problems I have with NATO. No. 1, we pay far too much. ... NATO is unfair, economically, to us, to the United States. Because it really helps them more so than the United States, and we pay a disproportionate share. ... So NATO is something that at the time was excellent. Today, it has to be changed. It has to be changed to include terror. It has to be changed from the standpoint of cost because the United States bears far too much of the cost of NATO.”<sup>28</sup>

During a rally in Wisconsin he reiterated his criticism that other NATO countries were “not paying their fair share” in comparison with the United States. “That means we are protecting them, giving them military protection and other things, and they’re ripping off the United States. And you know what we do? Nothing,” Mr. Trump said at a rally on the outskirts of Milwaukee. “Either they have to pay up for past deficiencies or they have to get out.” “And if it breaks up NATO, it breaks up NATO,” he concluded.<sup>29</sup> As President Elect, Mr. Trump in his interview to the The Times and Bild (16 January 2017) reflected that, “I said a long time ago — that NATO had problems. ... I took a lot of heat for two days. And then they started saying Trump is right — and now ... they have a whole division devoted now to terror, which is good .... With that being said, NATO is very important to me.”<sup>30</sup>

Post his inauguration, at the MacDill Air Force Base (Tampa, Florida, 06 February 2017), he stated that, “We strongly support NATO. We only ask that all of the NATO members make their full and proper financial contributions to the NATO Alliance, which many of them have not been doing. Many of them have not been even close, and they have to do that.”<sup>31</sup> His comments have been viewed as one that will add to the distance between the Euro-Atlantic alliance

partnerships. His comments on twitter during the visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel “...I had a GREAT meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Nevertheless, Germany owes vast sums of money to NATO & the United States must be paid more for the powerful, and very expensive, defense it provides to Germany!” (@realDonaldTrump, 18 March 2017), were countered by the former Ambassador of the United States to NATO, Mr. Ivo Daalder. In his series of tweets he stated that, “This is not how NATO works. The US decides for itself how much it contributes to defending NATO. ... Those who currently don’t spend 2% of their GDP on defense are now increasing their defense budgets. ... US does provide large military commitment to NATO. But this is not a favor to Europe. It is vital for our own security.” (@IvoHDaalder 18 March 2017)

However, it would seem that the President is reassessing his critique of the alliance. At the Munich Security Conference (18 February 2017), Vice President Mike Pence stated, “Today, on behalf of President Trump, I bring you this assurance. The United States of America strongly supports NATO and will be unwavering in our commitment to this transatlantic alliance.”<sup>32</sup> In a joint statement (12 April 2017) with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President Trump stated that, “...what more NATO can do in the fight against terrorism. I complained about that a long time ago and they made a change, and now they do fight terrorism. I said it was obsolete; it's no longer obsolete.” In explaining why he felt that NATO was no longer obsolete President Trump, in his interview to the Associated Press (23 April 2017)<sup>33</sup> said, when he had made those comments on NATO being obsolete he did not know a lot about NATO. However, he clarified that he felt that NATO was obsolete because it did not focus on issues such as terrorism. He further stated that he would continue to be ‘*very strong*’ on other alliance members ‘*paying*’ their fair share for the cost of the alliance.

For the last several years internal frictions have brought differences between the alliance on issues of ‘threats’ and ‘resources’ into greater prominence. Arguments regarding threats range from policy towards Russia to the validation of non-conventional threats. Resourcing arguments extend from capability shortfalls for NATO’s ISAF mission in Afghanistan to inadequate levels of national defence spending.<sup>34</sup> Member countries make direct and indirect contributions to the costs of running NATO and implementing its policies and activities. In 2006, NATO member countries agreed to commit a minimum of two per cent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to spending on defence. This guideline principally served as an indicator of a country’s political will to contribute to the Alliance’s common defence efforts. Additionally, the defence capacity of each member country has an important impact on the overall perception of the Alliance’s credibility as

a politico-military organisation.<sup>35</sup> And while the United States does not cover the cost of all operations, it does mean that there is an over-reliance by the Alliance as a whole on the United States for the provision of essential capabilities, including for instance, in regard to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; air-to-air refuelling; ballistic missile defence; and airborne electronic warfare.<sup>36</sup> Only five of NATO's 28 members -- the U.S., Greece, Poland, Estonia and the U.K. -- meet the 2 percent target. It is this imbalance that President Trump wants to address. He has argued that the United States will be upgrading its military but it would be to protect the United States' national interest. Under his presidency the United States would not be interested in regime change. He would like European nations to step up to take over the challenges that are being faced in the region. And while this does not mean the United States would disengage, it would mean that it would not like to play the role of the 'first responder' in crisis situation. This idea became clear during President Trump's address to the delegates of the Arab Islamic America Summit in Saudi Arabia (21 May 2017). He said, "America is a sovereign nation and our first priority is always the safety and security of our citizens.... America is prepared to stand with you – in pursuit of shared interests and common security. But the nations of the Middle East cannot wait for American power to crush this enemy for them."<sup>37</sup>

President Trump addressing his first NATO Leader's summit meet in Brussels (25 May 2017), in the aftermath of the Manchester terrorist attack (24 May 2017), stated that the alliance needs to address the challenge of '*Islamic*' terrorism. His speech at the NATO 'Unveiling of the Article 5 and Berlin Wall Memorials' reiterated his stand that, "The NATO of the future must include a great focus on terrorism and immigration, as well as threats from Russia and on NATO's eastern and southern borders."<sup>38</sup> His views on including immigration among the issues the alliance should look at, was an addition to his focus on terrorism. He also reiterated, "NATO members must finally contribute their fair share and meet their financial obligations, for 23 of the 28 member nations are still not paying what they should be paying and what they're supposed to be paying for their defense. This is not fair to the people and taxpayers of the United States. And many of these nations owe massive amounts of money from past years and not paying in those past years. Over the last eight years, the United States spent more on defense than all other NATO countries combined. If all NATO members had spent just 2 percent of their GDP on defense last year, we would have had another \$119 billion for our collective defense and for the financing of additional NATO reserves."<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, his speech did not mention or directly endorse Article 5 of the Treaty, which was invoked for the first and only time after the attacks on the World Trade Centre, New York. He unveiled a piece of a steel beam from the North Tower of

the World Trade Centre alongside two sections of the Berlin Wall that divided the German city until 1989, in a ceremony at the site of NATO's new headquarters. However, prior to his visit, Secretary of Defence General James Mattis, in his remarks at the NATO Headquarters (Feb. 2017) had stated, "The alliance remains a fundamental bedrock for the United States and for all the transatlantic community, bonded as we are together. As President Trump has stated, he has strong support for NATO."<sup>40</sup> He further added at the Munich Security Conference, "The NATO-E.U. joint declaration signed in Warsaw reflects the reality that American security is permanently tied to the security of Europe."<sup>41</sup> Secretary for State Mr. Rex Tillerson had also expressed similar views during the NATO Foreign Ministers Talk in March 2017. He had stated, "the U.S. commitment to NATO is strong and this Alliance remains the bedrock for transatlantic security. The United States is committed to ensuring NATO has the capabilities to support our collective defense. We understand that a threat against one of us is a threat against all of us, and we will respond accordingly. We will uphold the agreements we have made to defend our allies."<sup>42</sup>

In Europe, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said, "We have seen that plain speaking of President Trump before." Press Secretary Sean Spicer said that there was no need to restate the support for the Alliance as it was the foundation of the relationship. This was reiterated in a article in The Wall Street Journal (30 May 2017) by NSA H.R. MacMaster and Mr. Gary Cohen, where they stated that, "NATO is rooted... in the...commitments that bind us together. While reconfirming America's commitment to NATO and Article 5, the President challenged our allies to share equitably the responsibility for our mutual defence."<sup>43</sup> President Trump also laid to rest speculation when he stated at a press conference (June 2017) that, "I'm committing the United States, and have committed, but I'm committing the United States to Article 5. And certainly we are there to protect. And that's one of the reasons that I want people to make sure we have a very, very strong force by paying the kind of money necessary to have that force. But, yes, absolutely, I'd be committed to Article 5."<sup>44</sup>

## **Conclusion**

President Trump's stress on "America First" during the campaign and critique of NATO had brought uncertainty to the Euro-Atlantic relationship. Alliance members have adopted a wait and watch approach in trying to understand if the United States is committed to leading the international order or not under the present Administration. It was thought that during the NATO Summit he would be able to take forward the view he had expressed when he had clarified why he no longer felt NATO was obsolete. During his speech he had stressed on the need for the

alliance to fight terrorism, nonetheless, he has been criticised for what many have termed 'lecture' to the European leaders. His continued stress on the need for burden sharing, while not committing to Article 5 of the charter, has brought more uncertainty to the relationships between Europe and the United States.<sup>45</sup> This was in contrast to President Barack Obama who in his Prague speech (2009) had stated, "We are bound by shared values and shared history and the enduring promise of our alliance. NATO's Article V states it clearly: An attack on one is an attack on all. That is a promise for our time, and for all time."<sup>46</sup> He had reiterated the same at the NATO Summit in 2010, "Our Article 5 commitment remains the centre of our approach"<sup>47</sup> and in his last speech at NATO as President of the United States (Warsaw 2016). President George W. Bush in his remarks at the NATO Accession Ceremony in Washington DC 2004 had stated, "... some questioned whether NATO could -- or should -- survive the end of the Cold War. Then the alliance proved its enduring worth by stopping ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and by ousting the armies of a tyrant in Kosovo. Some wondered whether NATO could adapt to the new threats of the 21st century. Those doubts were laid to rest on September the 12th, 2001, when NATO invoked -- for the first time in its history -- Article Five of our charter, which states that an attack against one NATO ally is an attack against all. NATO's core mission remains the same: the defense of its members against any aggression."<sup>48</sup> A similar sentiment was expressed by President William (Bill) J. Clinton when he had remarked (1996), "The bedrock of our common security remains NATO.... To adapt NATO we have taken on missions beyond the territory of its members for the first time, and done so in cooperation with non member states, shifting our emphasis to smaller and more flexible forces prepared to provide for our defense, but also trained and equipped for peacekeeping."<sup>49</sup>

The recent remarks by Chancellor Angela Merkel, saying "we Europeans must really take our fate into our own hands — of course in friendship with the United States of America, in friendship with Great Britain and as good neighbours wherever that is possible also with other countries, even with Russia." is being viewed as a result of recent NATO Summit.<sup>50</sup> She had made a similar comment in January 2017 during a talk to student in Brussels, "I am convinced that Europe and the EU must learn to take more responsibility in the world in the future... From the viewpoint of some of our traditional partners, and I'm thinking of transatlantic ties, there is no guarantee of perpetuity for close cooperation with us Europeans. We have to continue to work at that..."<sup>51</sup> As a founding member of the European Union, her words are being viewed as a signal that the European Union would need to bolster its security apart from the United States.

Europe has also been concerned about President Trump's relationship with Russia, particularly over sanctions imposed after its 2014 military involvement in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea.<sup>52</sup> Former FBI director Robert Mueller has been appointed as special counsel to oversee the Department of Justice's into relations between President Trump's election campaign and Russia. His special advisor, Mr. Jared Kushner is also now under investigation. President Trump has also been criticised for sharing classified information on ISIL with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during their meeting in the White House. It was pointed out that the information was shared by a partner countries intelligence agency under confidence. The Administration has also been facing criticism for leaks on intelligence shared by the United Kingdom related to the Manchester city attack. Prime Minister Teresa May stated, "We have strong relations with the United States, our closest partner, and that is, of course, built on trust. Part of that is knowing intelligence can be shared confidently, and I will make clear to President Trump that intelligence shared with law enforcement agencies must be secure."<sup>53</sup> It has been reported that British intelligence had suspended sharing information stating that the leaks from the United States may hamper the investigation. President Trump has ordered an enquiry into the leaks to be conducted by the Justice Department.

It has been said that the first visit by any head of government to the NATO Leader's Summit is the opportunity to meet their counter-parts and understand the working of the alliance. President Trump's has brought mixed responses. While some commentators stated that he continued to stand his ground and his views were on expected lines, others feel that he was unable to bridge the gap between the views of the United States and Europe on key issues. President Trump and Europe continue to have divergent of views on issues that range from trade to Climate Change. President Trump has announced that the United States would no longer be part of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In his speech he stated that, "in order to fulfill my solemn duty to protect America and its citizens, the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord but begin negotiations to re-enter either the Paris Accord or a really entirely new transaction on terms that are fair to the United States, its businesses, its workers, its people, its taxpayers. So we're getting out. But we will start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that's fair. And if we can, that's great. And if we can't, that's fine."<sup>54</sup> In their joint press statement, the leaders of Germany, France and Italy said, "'We deem the momentum generated in Paris in December 2015 irreversible and we firmly believe that the Paris Agreement cannot be renegotiated, since it is a vital instrument for our planet, societies and economies."<sup>55</sup>

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to view the trans-Atlantic relations only with the limited view of NATO or security relations. The United States and Europe through various government departments cooperate with each other on issues such as refugees, on border-patrols, better policing, shared views on human rights etc. A gulf in the relationship would not be in the interest of either. To take the relationship forward both would have to find common ground and cooperate to re-strengthen the relations.

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*Disclaimer: Views expressed are of author and do not reflect the views of the Council.*

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> NATO, "Basic Points," <http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>, Accessed on 05 May 2017.

<sup>2</sup> NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/stock\\_publications/20120822\\_nato\\_treaty\\_en\\_light\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf), Accessed on 05 June 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations: Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.

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## Annexure

### **The North Atlantic Treaty** (Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949)

The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments.

They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.

They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security. They therefore agree to this North Atlantic Treaty:

#### Article 1

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

#### Article 2

The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.

#### Article 3

In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

#### Article 4

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.

#### Article 5

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 and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so

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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.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

#### Article 6

For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France<sup>2</sup>, on the territory of or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;

on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

#### Article 7

This Treaty does not affect, and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations under the Charter of the Parties which are members of the United Nations, or the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

#### Article 8

Each Party declares that none of the international engagements now in force between it and any other of the Parties or any third State is in conflict with the provisions of this Treaty, and undertakes not to enter into any international engagement in conflict with this Treaty.

#### Article 9

The Parties hereby establish a Council, on which each of them shall be represented, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council shall be so organised as to be able to meet promptly at any time. The Council shall set up such subsidiary bodies as may be necessary; in particular it shall establish immediately a defence committee which shall recommend measures for the implementation of Articles 3 and 5.

#### Article 10

The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its

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instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.

#### Article 11

This Treaty shall be ratified and its provisions carried out by the Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Government of the United States of America, which will notify all the other signatories of each deposit. The Treaty shall enter into force between the States which have ratified it as soon as the ratifications of the majority of the signatories, including the ratifications of Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, have been deposited and shall come into effect with respect to other States on the date of the deposit of their ratifications. (3)

#### Article 12

After the Treaty has been in force for ten years, or at any time thereafter, the Parties shall, if any of them so requests, consult together for the purpose of reviewing the Treaty, having regard for the factors then affecting peace and security in the North Atlantic area, including the development of universal as well as regional arrangements under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

#### Article 13

After the Treaty has been in force for twenty years, any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the United States of America, which will inform the Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation.

#### Article 14

This Treaty, of which the English and French texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America. Duly certified copies will be transmitted by that Government to the Governments of other signatories.

The definition of the territories to which Article 5 applies was revised by Article 2 of the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the accession of Greece and Turkey signed on 22 October 1951.

On January 16, 1963, the North Atlantic Council noted that insofar as the former Algerian Departments of France were concerned, the relevant clauses of this Treaty had become inapplicable as from July 3, 1962.

The Treaty came into force on 24 August 1949, after the deposition of the ratifications of all signatory states.