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COOPERATIVE SECURITY REQUIRES A BUDGET

POLICY BRIEF



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INTRODUCTION

The preservation of peace and security today is at great risk. An abundance of adversaries are challenging the rule of law, exploiting individual liberty, and flaunting the principles of democracy to undermine stability and threaten our well being. The strength of transatlantic defense continues to force those who would do us harm to find alternative means to pursue their aims. It is time for Europe and North America to fully accept this reality and to raise the core task of Cooperative Security to the same level as Collective Defense and Crisis Management. The principle mechanism for raising security to the level of defense in our institutional understanding should be to establish an accounting of security spending within nations, NATO and the European Union on par with our understanding of defense spending. Thinking in terms of a “single security budget” would catalyze our efforts to organize, train, and equip our security and defense forces for the tasks at hand.

A single security budget perspective would give the transatlantic link several distinct advantages in the current situation:

- Given our rapidly developing understanding of how our adversaries are operating within and around our geographic, information, cyber, and financial space, a comprehensive inventory that compares our required responses to the monetary support those friendly response elements receive would immediately highlight where our security apparatus might be insufficiently resourced.
- Such a comprehensive inventory of spending would also reveal where unnecessary duplication is drawing resources away from the development of more focused and efficient security capabilities.
- The single security perspective would also highlight in real terms where like elements could be brought closer together to enhance their performance, perhaps at lower cost. Any apparent cost savings could, and should, be reinvested in enhancing those areas of the security structure found financially wanting.
- A full financial accounting will enable sound policy decisions. Robbing Peter to pay Paul can result in the inadvertent creation of new vulnerabilities and weaknesses, which adversaries would quickly learn to exploit. New proposals for which financial support would not exist could be shelved without prolonged debate. Successful innovation could be rapidly reinforced and expanded within the context of a collective fiscal perspective.

Auditing the collective effort in financial terms as if it were a Single Security Budget would provide a robust mechanism to inform debates. Such a “budget” analysis would offer clarity as to where our gaps, seams and vulnerabilities remain at risk. That analysis, in turn, would stimulate as well as inform the awakening of Cooperative Security as the principal core task.

The foundation for a successful full embrace of Cooperative Security is in place. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization embarked on non-Article 5 and out-of-area operations with a force designed for Collective Defense. In the process of conducting Crisis Management operations with an ill-fitting force NATO and its partners, by necessity, rediscovered the Comprehensive Approach, which aims to bring a wide variety of non-military actors into the creation of a cooperative security environment on a limited scale. The European Union for its part continues an integrated approach to blend all EU instruments into a cooperative security approach to its neighborhood and beyond.

In drafting policies, designing processes, and building structures to employ a Comprehensive Approach for crisis response, nations have, almost despite themselves, gained the understanding, forged the relationships, and set the precedents necessary to actually engage in Cooperative Security on a daily basis at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Why is this necessary?

“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”

Preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty



DEFENDING OUR WAY OF LIFE

Our adversaries operate among us by exploiting our weaknesses, which are primarily the gaps in our capabilities, the seams between our nations, our organizations, and our security and defense forces, and our vulnerabilities within our structures and within our societies. Despite our best efforts, despite our amazing technologies, and despite multiple national and multi-national defense and security organizations, our adversaries continue to pressure us and threaten us. The threats are seemingly everywhere from extremism to cyber, from pandemic diseases to state-sponsored asymmetric attacks. To fight these threats which are undermining and may soon threaten our very way of life we need to look at the entirety of the challenge and the context in which these challenges are able to threaten us. This requires a Cooperative Security dialogue that employs a Comprehensive Approach — a grand strategic debate that includes and involves all the elements of power at our disposal.¹ Such a debate, to be successful, must be grounded in fact not fantasy. A single security budget perspective provides such a foundation for rational debate on not only the effective expenditure of resources but, because limited supplies of money are involved, a rational debate on priorities.

The British strategist B.H. Liddell Hart suggested in 1967 that the modern era requires a grand strategy, which is to say an overarching “policy which guides the conduct of war.” The role of grand strategy, or higher strategy, in his view “is to co-ordinate and direct all of the resources of a nation, or band of nations, toward the attainment of the political object of the war – the goal defined by fundamental policy” (Liddell Hart, Strategy, 1967, 335 -336). Grand strategy deals with economic, diplomatic, commercial, ethical, and military aspects of war in addition to questions about securing peace after a conflict (Liddell Hart 1967, 335 -336). Grand strategy in this way imagines and pursues a Comprehensive Approach to Cooperative Security as well as Collective Defense.

Such a high-level debate, by fiscal necessity will force us to develop an integrated concept of security and defence that would replace narrow concepts of internal and external security and defence to facilitate international cooperation against hybrid and non-conventional threats and to improve the focus of forward planning and prevention. Several Allies and Partners have already embarked on such an approach within their national strategies. Efforts by NATO and the European Union to enhance the resilience of their members and to strengthen their capacities to support and sustain military operations by necessity involve elements of the security sector as well as civil society. Nevertheless, these efforts lack an effective mechanism for ensuring that this community of countries is, within the constraints of our collective means, effectively and efficiently preserving our security against an increasingly imaginative, capable and diverse array of adversaries.

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ALL DEFENCE IS SECURITY NOT ALL SECURITY IS DEFENCE

“Don’t tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I’ll tell you what you value.”

Joe Biden
Former Vice-President
of the United States under
President Obama

Our defensive strength is forcing adversaries to adopt new strategies and tactics, but our defense too is under increased pressure in the east and the efficient application of our capabilities is continuously required in crisis management operations and activities in the south, the southeast and further afield. A security spending perspective, therefore, cannot replace our current defense spending one lest we invite further aggression through weakness. Clearly, we are already spending a great deal on security and defence, just how and how much in the security sphere is not generally well known nor well understood to the level that it is in defence.

Equitable burden sharing is the basis of the 2% pledge within NATO and within that pledge there are specific commitments to continue to develop military capabilities to enhance the overall strength of the Alliance, which is now facing renewed and increasingly dangerous conventional challenges. The notion that each nation retain a full-spectrum military capability has long been abandoned in favor of a more collective approach to meeting NATO’s level of ambition. Within this collaborative planning approach nations contribute specific capabilities which they possess. Spending at 2% of GDP is one way, therefore, to level the playing field between nations making diverse contributions to Collective Defence.

Building on 2% for defence with the addition of a clear perspective on current security spending, many nations, especially those on the front lines, could and probably would demonstrate a significant increase in their share of the overall defence and security burden within the core task of Cooperative Security. In the current challenging threat environment the continued expenditure of 2% of GDP on Collective Defence, i.e., the current measure of burden sharing, would be a subset, albeit an incredibly important one, of a larger understanding of the overall security burden nations are carrying on behalf of one another. In this context, one must imagine a security spending target that adds to the 2% for defence and does not replace it. Attaining a level of understanding regarding collective spending on security would enable such a target to be realistically set.



ANTI ACCESS AREA DENIAL (A2AD)

Threats seem to be operating with impunity within our borders, our systems and among our populations. Security forces are doing an admirable job so far but increasingly they are warning of the growing dangers. Simply put, we must be able to keep adversaries out while allowing friends in. We must prevent access to our systems and deny entry to our territory by those with nefarious intent. In prioritizing the Cooperative Security debate, in informing this debate with a single security budget perspective, and in understanding that “anti access and area denial” is our aim ministries, nations, organizations and civil society can begin to understand the nature of the challenge and start to plan effective action, acquire or repurpose the necessary capabilities, and work collectively to ensure our gaps, seams and vulnerabilities are secure, well-defended, and to the extent possible, eliminated.

In short, if we know what we are spending on security, we can then discuss how we are spending it; and when we discuss how we are spending it, we naturally think about how to spend it better so that we can get more effect for the money available. This conversation must be an important part of the collective discussion of how to protect ourselves daily through Cooperative Security.

The distinct advantages a single security budget perspective provide enable answers to the following key questions for decision makers:

- Does our current spending align with our priorities?
- Are we getting value for the money we are spending?
- Are we unnecessarily duplicating effort?
- Are we reinforcing success?
- Are we anticipating our adversaries next actions or are we getting caught off guard?

Our defence remains strong. Our security remains adequate. Our adversaries remain active. They are actively learning how we operate, where we are weak, and which of our many vulnerabilities they can exploit. If we continue to operate as we have we present our foes with a predictable, slow, and lucrative target. If we are willing to make changes, we can out-think our adversaries and anticipate their activities. We can preserve our peace and security.



CONCLUSION

In the end, we get what we pay for; therefore, it's incumbent upon us to know what we are paying for and what exactly we are getting. A single security budget perspective in the context of a Cooperative Security debate that leverages our Comprehensive Approach experience will help us understand ourselves, our capabilities, and our way forward.

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”

Sun Tzu

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