‘NATO; one of the three musketeers of European security?’

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Introduction

This paper presents a conceptualization of NATO by exploring its role in European security. Doing so, NATO’s role is compared with the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). All three organizations are dealing with European security, but in different ways. By putting NATO’s role into perspective and by comparing NATO with the other two institutions, the paper aims at exploring the question: what is NATO and what role does the organization play in European Security? The theoretical claim put forward is that due to the existence of a security dilemma between NATO and Russia, NATO cannot be considered a collective security actor similar to the OSCE or the EU. Although NATO might above all be a crisis management institution or a security community in the eyes of the Western member states, for Russia NATO is in first instance a military alliance. That seriously limits its room for maneuver when it comes to acting as a collective security provider.

The paper starts with an elaboration on European security and answers the question: what is European security (in broad terms) about in the 21st century? The argument is made that Russia plays a key role in the European Security Complex. Then the security identities of NATO, the EU and the OSCE are analyzed. How do these organizations define (European) security? The argument is put forward that although NATO increasingly deals with collective security tasks (out of area crisis management operations and ‘in area’ stabilization of (new) member states), collective defense is still regarded as the institutional core of the alliance. Thirdly, it is argued that the question ‘What is NATO?’ is answered differently by the three major theories of international relations: realism, liberalism and social constructivism. At best, every theory explains only one particular identity. It is argued that whereas the West primarily sees NATO from the liberal and constructivist perspective, Russia adopts a realist perspective. Given this Russian realist perspective, it is argued that when one wants to understand NATO’s role in European security, the institution can better be understood by using the security dilemma as a prism.

What European security?

When trying to understand the role of NATO (or the EU and the OSCE for that matter) in European security, it is necessary to find out first what European security means. In other words: what is contemporary European security about and who is it
actually for? First of all, European security can be understood as a European security complex. A security complex refers to ‘a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another’.¹ The notion of a security complex should not be confused with a security community, which is a situation in which states have become integrated to the point that they have a sense of community which makes the occurrence of war unthinkable.² Whereas a security community is defined by the existence of a stable peace, a security complex is defined by security interdependence (which might involve conflict and war instead of peace). Thus, together with North America, Europe forms a security community, whereas the European continent forms a security complex with its direct environment, including Russia, the Middle East and North-Africa.

Secondly, European security is more than the mere security of European states. During the nineteen nineties the concept of security has evolved from an exclusive state-centric notion to a multidimensional one which includes security for other referent objects than states; namely the individual, society or humanity as a whole.³ Therefore, European security is not (only) about the security of individual European states, but (also) about the security of the EU, NATO and the OSCE as collectivities and about the security of the individual European citizen (human security). That being said, the state still matters as a referent object within the European Security Complex. After all, the state has been the primary target of the EU’s and NATO’s security strategy towards the East. By including Central- and Eastern-European countries an attempt was made to expand the European Security Community. With several countries on the Western Balkans working on a closer association with the EU and NATO this process is far from being finished yet. The motivation of Central- and Eastern-European states was and is to join Euro-Atlantic institutions in order to tackle political, economical and security challenges. The latter

¹ A security complex refers to: ‘a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another’, Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, eds., Security. A new framework for analysis, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 12.
is particularly important within the context of this paper; by joining the EU and NATO the European Security Community was expanded and in that respect security increased. On the other hand, enlargement created new security issues as it was seen as a threat by the largest member of the European Security Complex; Russia.\(^4\)

Although one can think of many different security challenges for contemporary Europe, the management of relations with Russia stands out as a crucial factor determining European security. Not only because the West needs Russia to any make progress (if at all) in the case of frozen conflicts on the Caucasus, but also when it comes to issues like political stability on the Western Balkans, NATO-enlargement (Western Balkans, Georgia and Ukraine), counter-terrorism, the functioning of the OSCE, and energy security. These and other issues make Russia a central pillar of the European Security Complex. In terms of European security, a good relationship with Russia is crucial. Therefore, in this paper, European security will focus on the relationship between NATO and Russia.

Acknowledging the key role of Russia in the European Security Complex brings in the notion of collective security. Collective security reflects the idea that an attack upon one state is an attack on all states within the collectivity.\(^5\) In other words, ‘collective security refers to an arrangement where each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to aggression.’\(^6\) The United Nations (UN) system is the only global system of collective security. The OSCE can be seen as a regional collective security organization, although it lacks a strong commitment of response in the case of aggression. Therefore, the OSCE is often referred to as a system of cooperative security, rather than collective security.

The difference between collective or cooperative security on the one hand and collective defence on the other is that the latter refers to a situation in which states form an alliance (like NATO) in response to a specific external threat (in NATO’s case the Soviet Union). Whereas collective security is a more inclusive system in

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which threats may come from within, collective defence is primarily (though not exclusively) aimed to counter external aggression. In the case of NATO this is represented by Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, which entails the provision that an armed attack on one of the states parties is an attack on all states parties. Put in the historical context, the article was primarily meant to keep the Russians out of Western Europe.

Despite the predominance of Article V, NATO’s identity of a collective defence institution has been watered down in the 1990’s. At least in the eyes of many NATO-members the alliance has become a collective security institution. Article V is still considered to be crucial, but refers to many more threats than in the days of the Cold War. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, NATO as lost its natural enemy and this enabled the organization to adopt new ideas about its security identity. By doing so, its identity started to overlap with those of the OSCE and the EU. The question is, whether NATO’s security identity changed so much that it can successfully manage the relationship with Russia. The extent to which NATO, the OSCE and the EU can manage Europe’s relations with Russia successfully, depends for a large part on their institutional identity. What are these institutions actually about when it comes to maintaining European security? In the next section the security identities of the EU, OSCE and NATO are analyzed. This is done by looking into the principal security documents of these organizations. Based on these documents, the conceptualization of security and the threats identified by the organizations are listed and compared with each other.

**Overlapping security identities**

When it comes to how the EU, NATO and the OSCE define European security, there is much overlap in their basic security strategy documents. First, according to the EU’s European Security Strategy paper (2003) and the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy (2008), European security has internal (threats from

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within the EU) and external (threats from without the EU) aspects. A similar distinction is made by the OSCE in its Strategy to address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century (2003), which states that security threats may come from external sources (conflict between states) or internal sources (weak democracies). In its Strategic Concept (1999) NATO argues that internal security in the form of democratic institutions forms ‘one of the indispensable foundations for a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment’. At the same time in the Comprehensive Political Guidance (2006) NATO states that international (external) security developments increasingly impact the lives of citizens of NATO-members and other countries. Thus, NATO also acknowledges that European security has internal and external aspects.

Secondly, all three organizations emphasize that security is a multidimensional or comprehensive concept. In other words, security goes beyond mere military security and is strongly affected by globalization. The OSCE emphasizes the multidimensional (comprehensive) nature of security by highlighting the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects of security. The EU implicitly follows this logic by claiming that ‘none of the new threats is purely military’. In order to address contemporary threats to European security, a combination of political and economic instruments should be used according to the European Security Strategy. Further, the EU promotes human security policies ‘by reducing poverty and inequality, promoting good governance and human rights, assisting development, and addressing the root causes of conflict and insecurity’. Finally, NATO’s Strategic Concept mentions ‘the comprehensive adaptation of its approach to security’. It acknowledges that the security of NATO is subject to military as well as non-military risks, such as economic, social and political ones. Therefore it adopts a comprehensive approach to security, including what it calls security (defined as the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes), transatlantic consultation, deterrence and defence, crisis management, and partnership with other countries in the Euro-Atlantic area.

A third common denominator of European security is the congruence of the lists of specific threats mentioned in the documents. As shown by table 1, all three

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8 North Atlantic Council, ‘The Alliance’s Strategic Concept: NAC-S(99)65’.
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institutions mention terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), state failure, regional conflicts, conventional weapons (including Small Arms and Light Weapons) and organized crime as threats to European security. At the same time some specific threats have been identified by only one or two institutions. The OSCE seems to have the most comprehensive concept of security, because the scope of the identified threats is very large; ranging from the spread of WMD to environmental degradation. The OSCE is also the only institution which identifies the violation of human rights as a threat in its own right (rather than a consequence of the materialization of other threats; for instance armed conflict).

| Table 1: List of threats identified by the three security institutions |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **NATO**        | **EU**          | **OSCE**        |
| Terrorism       | Terrorism       | Terrorism       |
| WMD             | WMD             | WMD             |
| Failed/Failing states | Failed/Failing states | Failed/Failing states |
| Regional conflicts | Regional conflicts | Regional conflicts |
| Conventional weapons | Conventional weapons | Conventional weapons |
| Organized Crime  | Organized Crime  | Organized Crime  |
| Vital resources dependence | Vital resources dependence | - |
| Misuse of technology | - | - |
| -               | Climate Change  | Environmental Degradation |
| -               | -               | Human Rights violations |
| -               | -               | Economic disparities |
| -               | -               | Discrimination and intolerance |

Fourthly, all three institutions emphasize the importance of multilateralism. NATO (obviously) mentions the importance of the relationship between Europe and North America and considers the Alliance as the ultimate embodiment of the transatlantic link. Further, it gives high importance to close cooperation and coordination with the UN, the EU and the OSCE. The EU refers to multilateralism by expressing to attach great value to ‘a stronger international society, well functioning international

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institutions, and a rule-based international order. It even voiced the ambition to lead a renewal of the global multilateral order after the unilateral American invasion in Iraq in 2003 had put multilateralism (temporarily) on a side track. The OSCE also explicitly refers to the necessity of cooperation with other international organizations and institutions in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. More in particular the organization refers to its status as regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Moreover, the declared purpose of the Strategy to address Threats in the 21st century is ‘to contribute to a more cohesive and effective international system for responding to global threats and challenges’.

The fifth and final common element I want to discuss in this paper is the importance attributed to the direct environment of the institutions. This is reflected in the Neighbourhood Policy of EU, which was launched in 2004 in order to promote the prosperity and stability of the area surrounding the EU. The idea behind this policy is that a stable neighbourhood facilitates a stable Europe. The OSCE also has a neighborhood policy; the 2003 strategy document emphasizes the importance of intensifying cooperation with the OSCE’s Mediterranean and Asian Partners. Nonetheless, in the case of the OSCE a neighbourhood policy is less relevant for European security given the scope of the organization (‘from Vancouver to Vladivostok’). To a large extent, the OSCE includes the neighbourhoods of the EU and NATO. NATO, finally, has a Mediterranean dialogue and cooperative arrangements with Russia and Ukraine. Moreover, through the Partnership for Peace program, NATO attempts to forge practical security links with partners in the region (see below).

Taking these five elements into account it can be concluded that - at least based on these basic documents - the security identities of the three institutions are strongly overlapping. They have similar conceptualizations of security and they roughly define the same kind of threats. To a large extent all three institutions can be regarded as systems of collective security in the sense that all three accept that the security of one is the concern of all. That being said, there are also important differences between the security identity of NATO on the one hand and the EU and the OSCE on the other. When it comes to the institutional core, NATO stands out as

an organization of collective defence. This becomes very clear from the two strategy documents studied in this paper. In the Strategic Concept it is stated that the ‘essential and enduring purpose’ of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members.\textsuperscript{14} The Comprehensive Political Guidance is even more straightforward as it states: ‘Collective defence will remain the core purpose of the Alliance’.\textsuperscript{15} The fact that Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty is still considered to be the institutional core of NATO, the Alliance cannot be a provider of collective security within the European Security Complex in the way that the OSCE and EU might be. Before this will be elaborated upon, it is necessary to define NATO in theoretical terms. If NATO shares a large part of its security agenda with the OSCE and the EU, but is also different with respect to the function of collective defence, what kind of institution are we talking about? In the next section, this question is explored from the perspectives of the three major theories in international relations; realism, liberalism and constructivism.

**NATO in the eyes of a realist, a liberal and a constructivist**

In a recent article Richard Betts argued that NATO has three main functions or self-images; the enforcer, the gentlemen’s club and the alliance.\textsuperscript{16} These three ‘faces’ of NATO broadly correspond to the images one would get after answering the question - What is NATO in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century? – from the perspective of liberalism, constructivism and realism.

To start with the latter; a realist would argue that NATO is still primarily a military alliance (all be it not necessarily anti-Russia) which is ‘a necessary function of the balance of power operating within a multiple-state system’.\textsuperscript{17} NATO’s enlargement to Eastern and Central Europe would be explained in terms of an expanding Western (American) influence.\textsuperscript{18} According to the logic of an offensive realist like John Mearsheimer, the United States (US) uses NATO to maximize its power. Not only through enlargement, but also by deploying troops in territories far beyond NATO borders like Afghanistan. According to the realist view, this also

\textsuperscript{14} North Atlantic Council, ‘The Alliance’s Strategic Concept: NAC-S(99)65’.

\textsuperscript{15} North Atlantic Council, ‘Comprehensive Political Guidance’.


explains why NATO has not died yet. With the collapse of the Soviet Union NATO had to reinvent itself ‘on the basis of the new distribution of power in Europe.’ With the demise of the Soviet Union and preponderance of the US in the post-Cold War order, this new distribution of power initially favoured policies of enlargement as well as crisis management. NATO could conduct out-of-area operations, because Russia was not able to resist this. With the renewed Russian confidence as the result of high gas and oil prices in the beginning of the 21st century, the balance of power has changed again; at least with respect to Russia’s neighbourhood. A realist would argue that Russia’s invasion in Georgia in August 2008 proves the continued necessity of NATO as a military Alliance.

In contrast, a liberal would argue that NATO has evolved from primarily being an alliance into a collective security institution in which collective defence might formally be the primary purpose, but in which crisis management (a value in itself and not as a tool of American foreign policy) has actually become more important. This would be the image of NATO as an enforcer of international peace and security. The liberal view would emphasize the possibilities of institutional cooperation (like the NATO-Russia Council or the North Atlantic Cooperation Council before) rather than the everlasting confrontation with Russia. A liberal would explain how NATO’s enlargement resulted in the establishment and consolidation of democracy in Eastern and Central Europe. This would be in line with the democratic peace thesis, which suggests that security is enhanced with the proliferation of democracy, because democracies do not fight each other. As such NATO expansion would have brought stabilization to a potentially turbulent region after the Cold War ended. Next to the institutionalism and the democratic peace thesis a liberal theorist would try to determine the image of NATO by referring to the link between domestic politics and foreign policy. According to a liberal logic, NATO has become a collective security institution as the result of domestic pressures in the member states.

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20 Following Jackson and Sørensen, in this paper liberalism is broadly defined as including idealism (utopian liberalism), institutionalism (institutional liberalism), democratic peace theory (republican liberalism), transnationalism (sociological liberalism) and interdependence liberalism. See: Robert Jackson and George Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and approaches* (Third Edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
Thirdly, a social constructivist would argue that NATO is an institution of which the member states share basic values and norms; in other words a gentlemen’s club. NATO would primarily be seen as the embodiment of a security community. A constructivist would argue that NATO from 1949 on has been an institution aimed at transcending the traditional power politics between European states. NATO’s expansion would be seen as the extension of a benevolent security community towards Eastern and Central Europe. According to a constructivist account, NATO expanded in order to maintain its identity of an organization fostering liberal democratic values.

Thus the three major approaches within international relations give different answers to the question: What is NATO? All three explain NATO’s persistence after the Cold War by either giving priority to the image of a military alliance (realism), a crisis management organization (liberalism) or a security community (constructivism). The three images have one thing in common: they are all non-offensive seen from NATO’s perspective. NATO does not intend to change the status quo in Europe and is not necessarily anti-Russia. This is evidenced for example by the fact that Russia is not mentioned as a potential enemy in NATO’s nuclear doctrine. Neither is Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty specifically targeted against Russia. Moreover, from NATO’s perspective enlargement is not seen as changing the balance of power, but as a peaceful process increasing European security. From NATO’s perspective, the alliance is working to an expanding system of collective security, also benefiting Russia. Summarizing, it could be concluded that NATO itself adopts a liberal or constructivist perspective of the alliance.

However when looking at the relationship between NATO and Russia, it also matters how NATO is perceived by Moscow. For Russia, enlargement and out of area operations are seen as status quo changing activities. For Russia the post-Cold War era reflects a profound asymmetry in the sense that while ‘the structures that fought the Cold War (...) were dismantled on one side, they were retained on the other’.

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22 Ibid.
24 In line with this argument NATO’s Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer recently called the enlargement process one of the most important mechanisms to secure Europe as an inclusive, free and democratic zone of peace. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, ‘De NAVO 60 jaar: tijd voor een nieuw Strategisch Concept’, *Internationale Spectator* 63:3 (2009) 111-113, 113.
Therefore, Russia is (and cannot as will be argued below) be sure about NATO’s peaceful intentions. From the Russian perspective NATO is a status quo changing power; even if the change comes in a non-violent manner. Thus, it can be argued that Russia adopts a realist perspective on NATO.

This Russian perspective is illustrated by the diplomatic crisis surrounding the Conventional Armed Forces Europe (CFE) Treaty. Russia suspended its membership in December 2007, because it regards the agreement out-dated. The treaty was important in facilitating the end of the Cold War through limiting the amount of conventional weapons the Warsaw Pact and NATO were allowed to have. The treaty was revised in 1999 in which it was agreed that the limits would not apply to the Eastern or Western block any more, but to individual states. Due to differences of interpretation about the Russian commitment to withdraw its troops from Georgia and Moldova, this treaty has not entered into force. As a result the terms of the 1991 treaty still governs the arms control regime. That means that the armed forces of new NATO-members like Poland and the Baltic states (which are no state parties to the CFE) technically added to the amount of conventional arms Russia is allowed to have. Within this context, Russia also strongly opposed the establishment of American bases in Romania and Hungary. While NATO continues to carry out its commitments under the CFE-treaty (for example by announcing troop movements), Russia does not consider itself to be bound anymore. Seen from its realist perspective, Moscow regards the CFE not as a confidence building measure anymore, but as a contribution to the asymmetry between NATO and Russia.

The realist theoretical concept that can explain this Russian perspective and behavior is the security dilemma. From the Russian perspective, NATO’s involvement in collective security through crisis management and enlargement comes down to status quo changing behavior. In Russian eyes a secure NATO is not automatically the same as a secure Russia, because it is not a full member of the Alliance. Therefore, when one wants to understand the possibilities and limitations of NATO’s role within the European Security Complex, the prism of the security dilemma can help. It shows that although NATO has increasingly got involved in carrying out collective security tasks, in Russian eyes it primarily remains a military alliance that excludes Russia and might therefore be a potential threat to Russian interests.
NATO and the security dilemma

Regarding the security dilemma, Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler rightly argue that ‘any serious school or theory of international relations must have a conception’.\(^2\) They define the security dilemma as follows:\(^3\)

> ‘The security dilemma is a two-level strategic predicament in relations between states and other actors, with each level consisting of two related lemmas (or propositions that can be assumed to be valid) which force decision-makers to choose between them. The first and basic level consists of a dilemma of interpretation about the motives, intentions, and capabilities of others; the second and derivative level consists of a dilemma of response about the most rational way of responding.’

The core of the security dilemma is uncertainty in international politics. Although the security dilemma has been developed within the realist school of international relations, all three main schools of international relations have elaborated on this uncertainty, but from different angles. That leads to three different conceptions of the security dilemma. First, realists regard the security dilemma as an inherent characteristic of the international system that cannot be overcome, because it is impossible to distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons. Booth and Wheeler refer in this context to a ‘fatalist logic’.\(^4\) Liberals also regard the security dilemma as a defining element of international politics, but are more optimistic when it comes to the prospect of overcoming it. According to liberal intuitionalists and regime theorists, the security dilemma can be mitigated through international cooperation. Through the principle of reciprocity the mutual distrust and fear among states can be decreased.\(^5\) Finally, social constructivists regard the security dilemma not as being externally given by the international system, but as socially constructed. That means that it can be transcended by ‘changing the identities of two previously hostile states such that the welfare of one’s former enemy becomes part of how the self is defined’.\(^6\)

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\(^3\) Ibid., 4.
\(^4\) Ibid., 19.
\(^5\) Ibid., 83.
\(^6\) Ibid., 93.
Whereas the fatalist logic among NATO’s members has been overcome and has been replaced by a logic of mitigation of even a logic of transcendence (leading to a security community), that is not the case with the relationship between NATO and Russia. That relationship is still defined by the dilemmas of interpretation and interpretation. Whereas NATO interprets enlargement as a peaceful act, according to the fatalist logic Russia cannot rely on such an interpretation. Seen from the prism of the security dilemma it must take into account the possibility that NATO’s enlargement might prove to be offensive after all. Within the fatalist logic the most rational response is to prepare for the worst. The suspension of the CFE Treaty, the strong opposition against the American Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) shield, and the resistance against further NATO expansion with Georgia and Ukraine can be understood from this perspective. Therefore, in order to overcome the fatalistic logic, NATO must engage in what Booth and Wheeler call ‘security dilemma sensibility’, defined as follows:

‘Security dilemma sensibility is an actor’s intention and capacity to perceive the motives behind, and to show responsiveness towards, the potential complexity of the military intentions of others. In particular, it refers to the ability to understand the role that fear might play in their attitudes and behaviour, including, crucially, the role that one’s own actions may play in provoking that fear.’

Right after the Cold War NATO showed security dilemma sensibility by establishing the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which included all former Warsaw Pact members and was aimed to improve European security for all. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) followed in 1994, which was meant to improve operational security cooperation with Eastern and Central European countries. Further, the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 let to the establishment of a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) on year later. Not all these mechanisms worked as well as hoped

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31 Though the ABM shield with its planned radar and missile facilities in the Czech Republic and Poland is not a NATO-initiative, it has been approved by NATO in 2008. Moreover, the alliance is working on a ‘NATO Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence System’ and a classified study has been carried out on a ‘Missile Defence for the Alliance Territory, Forces and Population Centres’. Karel Koster, ‘Het raketschild: opmaat naar een nieuwe Koude Oorlog?’ Internationale Spectator 63:3 (2009) 151–155, 153 and 154.
33 Ibid., 159.
34 Ibid., 162.
for. The PJC for example was a forum of consultation, but to the disappointment of Moscow not a forum in which they could co-decide. It was disbanded in 1999 when NATO carried out a military intervention in Kosovo without the approval of the UN Security Council. A structural relationship between NATO and Russia was reestablished after the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001. A NATO-Russia Council was created to manage the relationship between the Alliance and Russia. This cooperative mechanism worked in the sense that it enabled a rather smooth round of enlargement in 2004. After the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland had joined NATO as the first former Warsaw Pact members in 1999, in 2004 the Alliance was successfully enlarged with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Due to the cooperation in the NATO-Russia council, NATO was able to organize a second round of enlargement without provoking Russia.35

However, despite the continued existence of cooperative arrangements between NATO and Russia, in the last few years it has become apparent that there are serious limits to applying successful security dilemma sensibility. Especially with respect to enlargement. Russia has never been an enthusiastic supporter of enlargement, but nonetheless accepted it in 1999 and 2004. But in recent years its attitude against enlargement seems to have hardened.36 NATO’s determination to accept one day Ukraine and Georgia as members has roused much opposition in Moscow.37 This can partly be explained by the transition of Russian foreign policy from a defensive approach towards a more confident and pro-active approach.38 Russia considers both Georgia and Ukraine as belonging to its sphere of influence and has regained the confidence to protect its interests. With that in mind, NATO is forced to exercise as much security dilemma sensibility as possible. However, NATO itself is strongly divided over the issue of how fast Ukraine and Georgia should be accepted as members. Those NATO-members who strongly support a fast track for these countries (notably the US, the Baltic States and Poland) cause a lot of unease in

35 Ibid., 164.
36 Sakwa, ‘New Cold War or twenty years crisis?’ 257.
37 NATO’s commitment towards Ukraine and Georgia was expressed during the Bucharest Summit of April 2008. Tom Shanker, ‘As U.S. pushes NATO growth, Western ties to Russia hang in balance’, International Herald Tribune 11 November 2008.
Moscow.\textsuperscript{39} One of the frequently heard arguments put forward by the Baltic States and Poland is that they regard NATO in the first place as a security guarantee \textit{against} Russia.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore, for these countries the main reason why Georgia and Ukraine should be accepted as soon as possible is that they also need this security guarantee. Moreover, as the result of the Russian military intervention in Georgia in the summer of 2008, Western states have also increasingly adopted the position that NATO is still relevant as a military alliance against a possible hostile Russia.\textsuperscript{41}

This image of NATO as an alliance mainly providing security guarantees against Russia hinders its function as a European collective security provider. For Russia, NATO cannot be an organization that provides security on a one for all and all for one basis. Mere cooperation with Russia seems not to be enough to overcome the structural problem that Russia has not joined NATO as an equal.\textsuperscript{42} In that respect NATO cannot be the third musketeer of European security. What about the two other musketeers?

\textbf{Comparing NATO with the EU and the OSCE}

Can the OSCE and the EU function as true collective security organizations? As we have established in table 1 there is a clear overlap between the three strategy documents of NATO, the OSCE and the EU. The main difference with NATO is that the alliance remains a collective defence organization in its institutional core. Obviously, this is not the case with the OSCE and the EU, which by definition makes them more suited to function as a European collective security providers. However, both institutions have their own specific problems.

To start with the OSCE; in 1990 the OSCE’s predecessor, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), was thought to become one of the principle European security institutions, if not the principle institution. This ambition was part of the call for a new world order in the post Cold War era. The Charter of


\textsuperscript{41} Bakker, ‘Het bondgenootschap kruipt uit het dal van de Irak-crisis: onenigheid en overeenstemming binnen de NAVO’, 116.

\textsuperscript{42} Sakwa, ‘New Cold War or twenty years crisis?’ 257.
Paris for a New Europe (1990) among others stated: ‘Our common efforts to consolidate respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, to strengthen peace and to promote unity in Europe require a new quality of political dialogue and co-operation and thus development of the structures of the CSCE.’ The CSCE was expected to have the quality for providing European security because of its comprehensive concept of security (including political, economic and humanitarian dimensions). In addition the CSCE, and from 1994 the OSCE, had the comparative advantage over NATO and the EU of having a broad membership; from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Moreover, the OSCE’s security regime is inclusive and cooperative; every memberstate has an equal voice. In that respect, the OSCE’s pursuit of collective security in Europe is not hindered by a security dilemma.

However, since 1999 the OSCE faces a serious institutional crisis. Cooperation has hampered because of strong differences of opinion between Russia and the Western members of the organization about how to manage European security. NATO’s intervention in Kosovo and the for Russia disappointing OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999 initiated a Russian course of confrontation within the OSCE. Russia accused the organization of: adopting double standards in the sense of having an exclusive focus on what happens in the former Sovjet Union and the Balkans, facilitating an overdevelopment of the human dimension of security at the expense of the military and economic dimensions, accepting self-marginzalization by not addressing the ‘real threats and challenges’ and by bowing for NATO and the EU, and finally exercising too little political control over its activities and therefore allowing the West to dominate the OSCE’s agenda.

Reform aimed to address these and other grievances has not been materialized yet. This explains the Russian call for negotiating a new comprehensive Euro-Atlantic Security Pact in October 2008. According to this proposal, a new treaty would have to include the provision that no single state or international organization has the exclusive right to maintain peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. In the eyes of Russia it is NATO which claims to have this right. Thus, as long as this grievance is not addressed properly according to Russia, the crisis in the OSCE will persist.

43 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, Paris 19-21 November 1990
means that while the OSCE is in theory an institution that might be very suited to provide European collective security due to its inclusive nature, in practice it is not able to do so.

What about the EU? Seen through the prism of the security dilemma the EU is more acceptable to Russia than NATO because it (so far) lacks a collective defence provision. For Russia, the EU is not regarded as a military threat. Nonetheless the EU is also somewhat problematic as a collective security provider, because just like NATO it also excludes Russia. At the same time the institution expands towards the east through its process of enlargement. Moreover, through its neighbourhood policy and the evolving European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) the EU is increasingly involved in countries situated in the Russian backyard. Like NATO, the EU attempts to address Russian concerns with cooperative arrangements. These arrangements are more fruitful than those of NATO, because it rarely involves military affairs. That makes the EU more acceptable to Russia than NATO as a collective security arrangement; the EU’s security is also a little bit Russia’s security. This is among others reflected by the instance of successful European conflict management during the war in Georgia. During the World Policy Conference in October 2008, Russia’s President Dimitri Medvedev declared that the EU had reacted to the crisis in a pro-active and pragmatical manner which could be a sign of a shared European future. It remains to be seen whether this course can be continued or whether the relationship with Russia will change as the result of an evolving EU Common Defence policy.

Conclusion

The question addressed in this paper was: what is NATO and what role does the organization play in European security? It was argued that European security for a large part depends on the relationship with Russia. Europe broadly has three institutions at its disposal to manage relations with Russia: NATO, the OSCE and the EU. When it comes to the security identities of these institutions there is much overlap, but NATO stands out as a collective defence arrangement. This image of NATO is emphasized by the realist school in international relations. The liberal and social constructivist schools tend to emphasize NATO as a collective security

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46 Ibid.
institution carrying out crisis management tasks and transcending traditional power politics among its members in favour of a security community. It was argued that whereas NATO itself adopted the liberal and social constructivist perspectives, Moscow still assesses NATO in realist terms.

That brings in the security dilemma, which determines the relationship between NATO and Russia and therefore also NATO’s role in the European Security Complex. The relationship between NATO and Russia still follows a fatalist logic in which defensive policies cannot be distinguished from offensive policies. Within the context of the more self-confident and pro-active Russian foreign policy, NATO’s enlargement (especially in the cases of Ukraine and Georgia) is increasingly regarded as an act which threatens Russian interests. Although NATO tries to apply security dilemma sensibility, its options are limited. Cooperative arrangements with Russia seem insufficient to overcome the security dilemma. Russia wants more than cooperation; it wants a real say in NATO’s decisions.

The consequence is that as long as Russia is not a full member of NATO, the alliance is not the first, but rather the last to choose when it comes to providing collective European security. In theory, the first institution would be the OSCE, but it cannot fulfill this role because it is paralyzed by fundamental differences over the institutional agenda. That leaves the EU as the institution with the best chances to manage relations between the West and Russia. However it remains to be seen whether this course can be continued or whether the relationship with Russia will change as the result of an eventual evolving EU Common Defence Policy.

For NATO the predominance of the security dilemma in its relationship with Russia means that it cannot provide collective security; it cannot adopt its self-chosen image a collective security provider. That means that it must either accept this or start working on overcoming the security dilemma with Russia. Perhaps that means in the end that Russia must be accepted as a full member of the Alliance.

Sources


