



## NATO RESILIENCE SYMPOSIUM 2022

WARSAW, 4-6 May 2022

### Principal Session: Impact of the Ukraine War on Alliance Resilience

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Russia's war on Ukraine offers the most vivid and horrific evidence that Atlantic Alliance stands today at an historic inflection point – its fourth since World War II. The first came with the end of that terrible conflict, the start of the Cold War, and the creation of NATO. A second came with the 1967 Harmel Report and the dual-track approach of defense and diplomacy with the Warsaw Pact. The third moment came when the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union dissolved.

For the next quarter century, a new paradigm took hold across much of Europe. The continent's divisions would be overcome by a magnetic, largely unchallenged, and gradually expanding democratic order, in which eastern Europe and eventually Russia could potentially find a place, the United States would continue as an affirmative European power, China – comfortably remote – would emerge as a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system, military tensions and military forces would be reduced, and growing interdependencies and open borders would lower conflict and generate greater security and prosperity.

We achieved a great deal during that era of stability. But we must have the courage to acknowledge that it is a paradigm lost. We are now at a fourth inflection point. Stability has given way to a more dangerous and volatile age of disruption, a world of ambiguous, asymmetric, and potentially instantaneous threats.

The new Strategic Concept must guide NATO's answer to this age of disruption. The appealing paradigm created after the fall of the Berlin Wall is being challenged by:

- two revisionist authoritarian states determined to disrupt the current international order;
- disruptive non-state actors who seek to impose damage, inflict terror, gain revenge or win profits;
- disruptive technologies that can undercut societies and upend both diplomacy and defense; and
- disruptive natural phenomena such as pandemics and climate change.

As a result, many critical functions of our societies are increasingly susceptible to disturbances, interruptions, and shutdowns. This is where resilience comes in. If done well, it can be a transformative tool for our age of disruption, much like enlargement was our transformative tool for the era of stability.

Resilience has become a favorite buzzword of politicians and pundits, yet it needs to take on more operational meaning. Historically, resilience has been static, reactive, and local. We need to make it dynamic, proactive, and shared. Resilience mechanisms cannot just preserve and restore; they must anticipate, adapt, improve, and bounce forward. And we cannot just focus on the resilience of our own communities; we must consider the resilience of communities to which our societies are connected. Doing this well is a big job. It is not a challenge for NATO only or even primarily, but it is a challenge for NATO too. It has become a challenge on par with NATO's other core tasks. It is both essential to the other three tasks,

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and it must also deal with a spectrum of challenges that are not addressed adequately by those other tasks.

So far, allied approaches to resilience have been defined rather narrowly and statically as pertaining particularly to critical infrastructures. Responses have been largely identified on a country-by-country basis. It is time to adapt a more comprehensive and dynamic approach that embraces a broader spectrum of resilience challenges and operationalizes the mutually reinforcing concepts of democratic resilience, shared resilience and forward resilience.

Let me start with **democratic resilience**. In recent years, much strategic discussion has focused on competition among states of “great power.” It is becoming clear, however, that this competition extends beyond traditional measures of power; it centers increasingly on forms of governance.

Adversaries big and small are selling autocracy as “efficient.” They tout their own systems and use a broad array of tools to amplify fissures and undermine confidence within democracies. When they can’t do that successfully, they use diplomatic and other means of coercion. Others are beginning to follow their model. This puts democratic resilience at the heart of international competition in this era of disruption. Allied cohesion, grounded in resilient democratic institutions, is the most formidable defense against these threats.

Countries with weak protections for democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law are vulnerable to subversion, corruption, mis- and dis-information. Malign influences within allied states could give non-NATO countries influence over NATO decision-making. Resilient democracies, in contrast, have historically been less likely to experience intra- and Inter- state conflict, generate refugees, and harbor violent extremists. They are better at maintaining transparent institutions, civilian control of the military and intelligence services, and building trust and confidence with each other and with additional countries, all of which are essential to NATO’s ability to collectively defend its members, manage crises, and cooperate with partners. That is why it is so important, as part of the new Strategic Concept, for Allies to reaffirm their commitment, as expressed in the Preamble and in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to safeguard democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and our free institutions. This is not a throw-away, a “nice to have” – it is foundational to NATO’s future.

This leads to **shared resilience**. Each NATO member state bears primary responsibility for ensuring the resilience of its own democratic society. Resilience begins at home. However, in an age of potentially catastrophic terrorism, networked threats and disruptive cyber-attacks, no nation is home alone. Few of the flows that sustain the societal functions of an individual country are limited today to the national borders of that country. Strong efforts in one allied country may mean little if a neighbouring ally is weak. The upshot: governments accustomed to protecting their territories must also be able to protect their connectedness — the vital arteries that are the lifeblood of open societies. Resilience will never be achieved on a country-by-country basis; Allies dependent on mutual flows of people, power, goods and services must move from country-by-country baseline requirements to shared resilience, by establishing together metrics that can ensure our mutual security.

So far, the Alliance’s resilience efforts have largely been framed by Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, in which allies commit to developing their capacity to resist armed attack through “continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid.” Until now, NATO’s resilience efforts through country-by-country baseline requirements have focused on the first part of that phrase: “self-help.” Embracing shared resilience would give meaning to the second part of that phrase: “mutual aid.” Article 3 also provides the basis for NATO’s cooperation on resilience with partner governments and the private sector.

This leads to the concept of **forward resilience**, which has two components, one spatial and one temporal. The spatial component essentially means projecting shared resilience forward



to non-NATO partners. Ukraine, for instance, is being used by Russia as an experimental laboratory for hybrid threats and disruptive attacks on critical societal functions. Russia has attacked and infected the country's digital networks. It has incapacitated electricity grids, subway systems and airports. Because Kyiv is largely unable to retaliate, Russia has found Ukraine to be a useful testing ground for its cyberwarfare capabilities. If it works in Ukraine, Russia takes it on the road. The precursor to the Solar Winds attack in the United States, for instance, was the NotPetya attack in Ukraine. The same has happened to other allied societies. What happens in Ukraine doesn't stay in Ukraine. In the current crisis, NATO has acted to help Kyiv become more resilient to such attacks. That is good – but we should not think of such help as a “one-off” in the middle of a passing crisis, we need to think of it as an ongoing, integral part of NATO's mission going forward. Ukraine is not a lone example. All across Europe's southern and eastern peripheries disruptive challenges to weak democracies can ripple back into NATO territory. These examples underscore NATO's interest in forward resilience: projecting resilience capacities forward to vulnerable democratic partners.

Forward resilience also has a **temporal** connotation, as in thinking and acting forward in time –anticipating disruptive challenges coming our way, and acting to prevent or adapt to them. This is another reason to consider a NATO Office of Net Assessment. It can also inform NATO's efforts to mitigate and adapt to the security consequences of climate change and disruptive technologies. Addressing the spectrum of resilience challenges is a job for NATO, but it is not a job for NATO alone. Fortunately, NATO and the EU already work closely on resilience issues related to critical infrastructure protection; they should extend that cooperation to issues of democratic, shared, and forward resilience.

Resilience should also be incorporated into the new US-EU Security and Defense Dialogue. There are many operational consequences to these challenges. Operationalizing the concept of forward resilience, for instance, would mean generating a more systematic and sustained version of what Allies have been doing to support Ukraine and other non-NATO partners on an *ad hoc*, improvised basis over the last few months. A more systematic approach to forward resilience for Ukraine could supplement NATO HQ coordination of supplies of military equipment and training to the Ukrainian armed forces with measures to increase Ukraine's resilience against cyber-attacks, financial, infrastructure and energy disruption, disinformation, economic warfare and political subversion. Similar efforts could be initiated with other non-NATO partners such as Georgia, Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. There may be related opportunities with partners to NATO's south as well.

Some are reluctant to elevate comprehensive resilience to a fourth core task for NATO, believing it to be part of the other tasks. Resilience is indeed essential to collective defense and deterrence, to crisis management and to cooperative security. But it also goes beyond them. Subsuming it under other tasks will not drive bureaucracies. It will limit necessary partnerships with critical actors in our societies. And it will not address a much broader spectrum of disruptive threats.

During world wars and the Cold War, we knew where the front line was. Today, and especially tomorrow, the front line can be anywhere – Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, the Frankfurt Airport, the Hoover Dam, Italy's food supply, France's social media platforms. For the past decades NATO's mantra has been “out of area or out of business.” In this new age of disruption, security concerns reach so deeply into our societies that NATO's mantra now must be “in area, or in trouble” – with comprehensive resilience a key goal of Allied strategy.

By seizing the resilience opportunity, the Alliance can give itself some transformative tools to address our age of disruption. And as part of a public-facing Strategic Concept, it can better explain to our citizens why NATO will be as essential to our future challenges as to those we have faced in the past.