THE ROLE OF WESTERN BALKANS IN NATO STRATEGIC THINKING: REFLECTIONS ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGES IN SEEKING FOR A NEW RELEVANCE

Dragan Đukanović, PhD[1]
Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Marko Dašić, PhD[2]
Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Abstract: Recently changed global political, security, and strategic context put NATO strategic thinking to new tests. The ability to adapt to unique circumstances and find a suitable position in international society are again on the NATO's agenda. This paper investigates processes on the road ahead of the NATO members to a new NATO strategic concept, emphasizing Western Balkans countries and territories and their efforts to play new roles. Contemporary perception of China threat, Russian aggressive behavior in its neighborhood, pandemics, and climate change seem to put away Western Balkans from the NATO's agenda. The authors claim that NATO must hold back its tier built in previous decades. Some Western Balkans countries became members, but the others remained possible sources of regional instability. Also, this is the region where most great powers clash their interests and fight diplomatically and economically for achieving their particular foreign policy goals. If striving to remain relevant in the area, NATO must (re) discover new roles with appropriate answers.

Keywords: NATO Strategic Concept(s), Western Balkans, Brussels Summit 2021, NATO 2030.

INTRODUCTION

We are witnessing NATO's several temptations to find its own new role since the end of the Cold War. The need to justify the existence of a military-political alliance, which as a legacy of the ideological division of the world after the Second World War was often referred to as the dustbin of history, did

---

1   dragan.djukanovic@fpn.bg.ac.rs
2   marko.dasic@fpn.bg.ac.rs

not abate in the 1990s, and especially not in the first 20 years of the 21st century. Creativity, innovation, and shift in the nature of threats, challenges, and risks for which effective responses needed to be devised, have kept NATO on the world stage of important actors in international relations. It was, by huge part, because of the careful strategic planning and reflection processes conducted inside of the Organization. There were many attempts to find suitable and effective answers to the new strategic and geopolitical contexts: 1951– Committee of Three; 1956 – "Three Wise Men"; 1967 – Harmel Report (Kecskemethy, 2021: 118).

Along with developing new security concepts, innovating strategic thinking, and building on rich institutional experience, NATO learned on the go and turned the strategic compass in the right direction in a timely manner. The alliance was able, by learning, to start a partnership program with countries that are not part of, or do not want membership in the Organization (Partnership for Peace), to improve cooperation through dialogue with, for example, the Russian Federation or Ukraine, but also to recognize the importance of institutionalizing communication with the Mediterranean and Middle East region. Finally, the enrichment of the agenda was accompanied by a successful expansion of membership, especially in the context of the accession of Central and Eastern European countries.

The same can be said for NATO's presence in the Western Balkans. In peacetime, NATO did not miss the opportunity to materialize the position and role built by its field presence during the armed conflict. The original part of monitoring the implementation of international agreements whose adoption established peace in the region (Dayton Agreement 1995, UNSC Resolution 1244 and Kumanovo Military Technical Agreement 1999, Ohrid Agreement 2001) (Đukanović, 2010: 106), was soon upgraded by multilateralism and cooperation embodied in joint and coordinated actions with the European Union, but also the United Nations, i.e., the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Thus, instead of establishing and preserving peace, NATO's mission in the Western Balkans region has been redefined and focused on the rule of law or the fight against organized crime. Of course, one should not forget that, given that these countries are still going through transition and reform processes, an essential aspect of the NATO presence in the monitoring and advisory assistance to security sector reforms. Thanks to the permanence of its open-door policy, the adjustment of activities has led to the accession of the Western Balkan countries, at least those that pursued the foreign policy goal after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia (Đukanović, 2010: 107).

The authors of this paper seek to prove that there is a need to redefine NATO's role in the Western Balkans region. The broader process of building a new strategic concept of NATO, a condition pointed out for several years, and which was formally started in December 2019, provided us a framework of time and content in which we searched for a potential relationship with the Western Balkans. Of course, a brief analysis of NATO's previous actions towards the Balkan countries, i.e., a review of the current situation, also finds its place in the paper. It was further inevitable to pay attention to the change of the geopolitical context that goes beyond the Western Balkans. It is also important to understand the circumstances in which NATO's regional and global role is being adjusted.

DIPLOMATIC PROCESS OF THE NATO'S NEW ROLE RE-CALIBRATION

At the time of writing, the strategic concept adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2010 is the basis for identifying and evaluating NATO's strategic direction. Its dilapidation is often the target of criticism, and the need to reach an internal consensus among member states is becoming more pronounced

THE ROLE OF WESTERN BALKANS IN NATO STRATEGIC THINKING: REFLECTIONS
ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGES IN SEEKING FOR A NEW RELEVANCE

327

as time passes. Donald Trump's presidential mandate, which was marked, among other things, by sharp criticism of the allies regarding the lack of funds they allocate for joint defense, is just one of the manifestations. There were also more pessimistic ones, such as the statement of French President Emmanuel Macron, who "declared" the brain death of NATO due to the lack of American leadership. On the margins of these processes, debates are (again) taking place, both constructive and those that cannot boast of that epithet. They have a common purpose. It is increasingly difficult to answer the question: How to modernize NATO's role in the changed global circumstances and preserve its current relevance?

The authors absolutely agree with Kulesa and Wieslander (2019), who show the obsolescence of the current strategic concept prominently and simply. Assessments such as "existing peace in the Euro-Atlantic area" or taking as a given joint contribution of the Russian Federation and NATO "creating a common space of peace, stability, and security" (Kulesa and Wieslander, 2019) were denied shortly after the adoption of the document in 2010. They have not withstood the test of time, rapidly changing circumstances, unpredictability, and uncertainty inherent in international relations. Aware of this, NATO allies gathered in London in December 2019 and made official the beginning of a process, named NATO 2030, that will seek to modernize and strengthen NATO's role in the future (NATO, 2019). From the moment Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg appointed a team of 10 experts (NATO, 2020a), through his speech in June 2020, which unequivocally pointed out the need for NATO to remain "strong military, be more united politically, and take a broader approach globally" (NATO, 2020b), taking into account the fact that the process is taking place in an "increasingly competitive world" (NATO, 2020b), numerous steps have been taken to improve NATO's strategic thinking.

The one-year discussion, organized in different formats and involving various actors, resulted in a report by a group of experts entrusted by the Secretary-General with a mandate at the very beginning of the process. Guided by the following central principles: "1) reinforcing Allied unity, solidarity, and cohesion (...) 2) increasing political consultation and coordination (...) 3) strengthening NATO's political role and relevant instruments to address current and future threats (...)" (NATO, 2020c: 3) experts provided member countries, as well as the interested public, a vision of the necessary adjustments and ensuring NATO's active position in the future. A rich diplomatic process generated a meaningful document in an endeavor of polylateralism (Wiesman, 1999), which involved all governmental, non-governmental, and individual actors. Although not large, the document provided over 100 suggestions for strengthening NATO's position on the global stage. The almost entire content was accepted by the Secretary-General, and then by the member states at the pivotal summit in Brussels, on June 14, 2021 (NATO, 2021a).

Despite the abundance of seemingly different ideas, recommendations, and suggestions, they seem to have a common thread. The authors believe that the need for a new strategic concept is a motive that is built into almost every one of the recommendations in the report. Although there were voices against the need to devise a new strategic concept at the beginning of this diplomatic process of NATO's adjustment to the new world, the team of experts, and later representatives of member states, did not give up this, in our opinion, good strategic planning practice. It is also a feature of NATO from the very beginning, considering that the first document of this kind was adopted in January 1950 (NATO, 2021b). Neither the experts nor the representatives of the member states succumbed to the criticism, which can be roughly divided into two columns. The first is made up of those who believed that the process of devising a new strategic concept for one of the undesirable outcomes would only deepen existing differences among members and "expose, or even aggravate, rather than heal, existing rifts within the Alliance" (Kulesa and Wieslander, 2019). The other group of authors is, among others, those who oppose the existence of written strategic documents, argue their views with the need "to

maintain a significant degree of strategic flexibility given it is in the process of adapting to new threats" (Kulesa and Wieslander, 2019).

The overarching goal of NATO is the consolidation of the transatlantic alliance. Given the political change in the United States after the 2020 presidential election, it is clear that this goal will be much easier to achieve than if such a change had not occurred. The "facilitated" realization of this goal is supported by the revival of "systemic rivalry, persistently aggressive Russia, the rise of China, and growing emerging and disruptive technologies" (NATO, 2020c: 12), which was also considered during the preparation of the report. The perception of modern threats adopted in this way, even if one looks at the old strategic concept in which they are entirely absent, would significantly accelerate solidarity and cohesion among members. In order to maintain their identity, to be consistent with the basic ideas, values and interests that member states hold together, the authors of the report saw the new strategic concept as a suitable tool that would "preserve NATO's three core tasks (…) and update content related to the principles undergirding the NATO Alliance" (NATO, 2020c: 12) in a perfectly balanced way.

How much the circumstances have changed in relation to the context in which the current strategic concept of NATO was created is shown by the fact that the role of the two main systemic competitors, Russia, and China, has completely altered. Russia is no longer invited to, as adopted in point 33 of the "old" Strategic Concept, "a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, and we will act accordingly, with the expectation of reciprocity from Russia" (NATO, 2010: 29). Instead of striving to build a strategic partnership, a "dual-track approach of deterrence and dialogue" was recommended (NATO, 2020c: 12). China, which was not being considered at all in 2010, now occupies a prominent place in the list of potential threats to which NATO must have a ready response. However, there is a noticeable lack of precision in terms of recommendations. The reason for this is twofold. First, the Chinese presence in the world is still developing and has not reached its final form. Therefore, member states are recommended to develop mechanisms within NATO that are consultative and coordinating in nature. Obtaining information and actively monitoring the development of the situation was the maximum that a group of experts managed to provide as advice at a given moment. Secondly, it is not clear whether the world in which China plays an increasingly important role will be terrain for conflicts between China and NATO. The recommendations gave some flexibility because they left the possibility to "keep open the prospect of political dialogue with China on shared interests and differences (…)" (NATO, 2020c: 28).

NEW WORLD, NEW CHALLENGES, AND NATO IN BETWEEN

The process of creating and adopting a new strategic concept is not over. Still, a rich discussion has yielded a range of potential tasks that will test NATO's effectiveness and its ability to adapt to change. Previously briefly presented individual parts of the report prepared by experts in the preparatory phase of the process proved the complexity of the work facing NATO members. It is enough to look at the dominance of political recommendations, in relation to the military, which out of a total of 138, participate with the number of 120, and conclude that this is a document that requires further operationalization to be truly functional. The authors of this paper, therefore, consider the views offered by Tardy (2020) to be fully justified when he says that "many of the recommendations on how to improve political consultations will sound like wishful-thinking to many observes" (p. 4) or that "the Report is not about NATO in a post-COVID world" (p. 4). However, its analytical value would be significantly improved if this was considered.

THE ROLE OF WESTERN BALKANS IN NATO STRATEGIC THINKING: REFLECTIONS ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGES IN SEEKING FOR A NEW RELEVANCE

329

NATO will challenge internal cohesion during the next decade, according to NATO 2030 Report. That's not a new fact. What should be new are the ways in which it will be arranged. There are three circles or rows of the actors that should be addressed in a way that will change the nature of previously established relations. If we ignore for a moment members, because it is a matter of internal organization and decision-making process; or partner and like-minded organizations, for example EU, because that would require a separate analysis; we are on an uncertain terrain of regulating relations with actors through already established patterns and institutional mechanisms. Some of them proved efficiency, but others are ripe for adjustment and calibration. The potential solution lies in fostering a "global partnership plan, where more effective cooperation with countries of partnership initiatives is needed to advance NATO's strategic interests" (Kecskemethy, 2021: 123).

Although there are some assessments that "NATO is going through one of the greatest crises in history which (…) jeopardize its own survival" (Ferreira da Cruz, 2021: 28), the authors consider it as an unnecessary exaggeration. What needs to be approached is evaluating the current strategic environment and proposals for the new positioning of NATO. The list of possible issues that should be addressed, although not final, implies: burden-sharing, Russia, partnerships, open-door policy (Kulesa and Wieslander, 2019), or, additionally, a new approach to terrorism, climate change, China threat, pandemics, disruptive technology, like it is emphasized in NATO 2030 Report. Member states proclaimed that "NATO is the strongest and most successful Alliance in history" (NATO, 2021c). Still, it is unclear from the 2021 summit communiqué how they can maintain that perception in the eyes of others. In the global arena, there are rivals whose actions undermine the order established, among others, by NATO actions. What is missing is the operationalization of commitments. The list of possible directions of operations, divided into eight parts, seems over-ambitious and unattainable in the context of recent global changes. (NATO, 2021c).

WESTERN BALKANS AND NATO: A STEP FORWARD OR THE STATUS QUO

It was not surprising that the Western Balkans found itself in one out of 79 points at the Brussels Summit Communiqué. NATO's commitment to "the security and stability of the Western Balkans and to supporting the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the countries in the region" was reiterated (NATO, 2021c). There is a lack of "strong" words that would bring the effect of not only declarative support to the region to the level of a relevant competitor to the interests of other nations that project their power in the region. Especially when it comes to Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The incentive given by the open-door policy for admission to the membership of Northern Macedonia is not well materialized through public diplomacy. According to relevant public opinion polls, for example in Serbia, support for NATO membership has stagnated at a meager percentage, rarely reaching double digits in the past two decades. There is a noticeable delay in the European integration process, considering that during 2020 and 2021, no cluster was opened in the accession negotiations led by Serbia, despite the acceptance of the new methodology. Keeping in mind the coexistence of the interests and goals of NATO and the EU, their "duplication, overlap, European strategic autonomy and burden-sharing" (Tardy, 2021: 1), the situation becomes even more unclear regarding the future role NATO should play. The independent policy of enlargement, which undoubtedly fell deadlock with the admission of the last member from the region (Larsen, 2020: 2), raises the question of deepening cooperation and qualitative improvement of the existing situation. Along with the inter-organizational processes of a "new bargain that would clarify the division of tasks, set more realistic objectives, and better ensure

the relevance and credibility of the two organizations" (Larsen, 2020: 5), NATO would have to incorporate into its new strategic concept the projection of a new role in the Western Balkans in a quest to refresh significance.

In December 1995, NATO deployed about 60,000 troops to implement military parts of the Dayton Accords. In 2021, this sentence has almost no foundation in the new reality. Peacekeeping missions belong to the past. Although numerous criticisms have been directed at the functionality of the political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is estimated that the IFOR and SFOR missions (since 1996) have achieved their goals in the mandates entrusted to them. The gradual transformation, the transfer of responsibilities to the European Union Mission (EUFOR), and the multiple reductions in the number of troops on the ground have led to a complete shift in NATO's role in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is now about advising on security sector reforms and those concerned with Bosnia and Herzegovina's participation in the Partnership for Peace program. For that purpose, a NATO headquarters was opened in Sarajevo (similar to the one that existed in Albania until 2010), so that their presence would remain visible and institutionalized. There is a similar situation in Northern Macedonia (liaison office, until membership), i.e., Serbia (MLO – military liaison office, since 2006). Thus, there is a visible shift of focus from the exclusive tasks of military oversight of the implementation of peace agreements to strategic and reform orientation, i.e., aiding in improving the entire security sector and harmonizing with NATO standards (Lord, 2016: 42–43).

Frequent voices coming from NATO analytical circles claim that "current trends are far from positive" in the Western Balkans (Larsonneur, 2020: 1). Apart from the criticism directed at the Western Balkan countries for violating the parameters of the value of democracy, sermons on unresolved bilateral issues, ethnic divisions as a legacy of the recent past, and exports of violent extremism are increasingly prominent (Larsonneur, 2020: 3–8). However, the Western Balkans remains a "region of strategic importance for NATO" (NATO, 2021c).

The letter of the final document of the NATO summit in Brussels in 2021 considered the above-mentioned facts. "Long history of cooperation and operations" (NATO, 2021c) is a legacy that NATO does not want to leave to other stakeholders and is making efforts to remain proactive in the region. This is especially true of two phenomena. As is often said in the Euro-Atlantic community, the first is to curb the "malign" influence that external actors project in the Western Balkans. Although the lack of space in this type of document is a justification for the absence of a detailed elaboration of what the malignant influence should mean, i.e., which actors are in question, it is clear from the contextual analysis to be the Russian Federation and increasingly the People's Republic of China. The second concerns the unresolved status of Kosovo and Metohija. Expressing support for the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina under the auspices of the EU, NATO members "urge the sides to seize the moment and engage in good faith towards a reaching a lasting political solution" (NATO, 2021c).

Bosnia and Herzegovina received a particular point in the text of the Brussels communiqué. The only country in the region that has adopted a Membership Action Plan and has a confirmed aspirant country status, received a guarantee of commitment to its own territorial integrity and sovereignty and praise for participating in NATO operations. However, the wording that has attracted more public attention concerns "encourage domestic reconciliation and urge political leaders to avoid divisive rhetoric" (NATO, 2021c). This suggests that the concerns of the representatives of the member states regarding the coexistence of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are still present. Further reform processes will undoubtedly be under the scrutiny of international actors, and NATO will undeniably have a prominent role thanks to its field presence.

THE ROLE OF WESTERN BALKANS IN NATO STRATEGIC THINKING: REFLECTIONS
ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGES IN SEEKING FOR A NEW RELEVANCE

331

The rigidity of the document left us too much room for anticipation of future NATO's role within the region. Leaning on many research papers about historical and present relations between NATO and Western Balkans countries, we could say that the main reasons for the unclear position of NATO in the near future owes to "external spoilers and lack of unity of command or effort amongst the key Western nations". (Hope, 2017: 13). Of course, there are also political misunderstandings and a lack of internal strategic consensus inside Western Balkan countries on the question of what role NATO should play in the future (Đukanović, 2019: 343–349).

Nevertheless, there is a projected image of role enhancement. The authors of this paper completely agree with the attitude announced by Hope (2017) when he stated that "What is needed from NATO in the Western Balkans is an overarching operational theatre design linking all NATO and partner activity and locations, preventing a 'Balkanization' of our collective efforts." (p. 15). First, there is a strong need for internal cohesion enhancement as a precondition for unique and united performance towards the Western Balkans region. In our opinion, the constructive step should be a non-military, soft power-oriented public diplomacy strategic approach. A lack of two-way communication among all relevant stakeholders, local and international, generates low visibility of current NATO efforts to bring Western Balkans' countries closer to their interests. It can be a tangible way for compelling Western Balkans that NATO is still securing and overseeing its stability.

The second part of the puzzle should be harmonizing and synchronizing endeavors with the EU as a key economic, social, and political regional actor. As mentioned earlier, one can easily identify overlap and unnecessarily time mismatch of activities of NATO and EU policies. An enhanced process of political and security consultation should occur, particularly in terms of the enlargement policy of each organization. Keeping in mind the whole political landscape of the Western Balkans and the conflicting interests of the major great powers, it should be acknowledged that NATO should rely on the already acquired positions in the coming period. Qualitative improvements are only possible in terms of using existing instruments of membership, partnership, and open-door policy, that is, crossbreeding and their complementary use. Viewed from a perspective of the already mentioned new regional (and global) role and projected interests of Russia and, especially China, there is a need within NATO for new policies, based on improved means and tools, to oppose their interests. It is hard to say precisely what the ingredients of those policies are. What can be said with certainty is its urgent formulation and application. This is a crucial aspect of the ongoing and forthcoming process until adopting a new strategic concept.

CONCLUSION

NATO has played multiple roles in recent history (since the early 1990s) towards the region we today call the Western Balkans. In the literature, there are so many passages about NATO enlargement during the 1990s, changing focus on terrorism after the 2001 attacks on the US, or seeking an adequate response to Russian policy towards its neighbors. But, the (Western) Balkans was continuously on NATO agenda, although it wasn't at the forefront.

Seeking a new position in the international arena and a new role and purpose, NATO intervened for the first time out of the area in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The missions of establishing and preserving peace, which extended territorially to the then Macedonia and Kosovo and Metohija, also took place. Using their field presence, they did not hesitate to, in parallel with changing their own role in the world, transform themselves into an organization that contributes to building the capacity of

countries that overcome the severe hardships of the transition process. Although the efforts of NATO missions were focused primarily on the security sector, their activities certainly included the improvement of the building of broader state capacities, i.e., the progress of the rule of law.

Complementary to this, the prospect of participating in the Partnership for Peace Program was offered, especially to those who later proclaimed military neutrality (such as Serbia) or to actors without an internal political consensus on NATO membership aspirations (such as Bosnia and Herzegovina). During the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, NATO succeeded in supplementing the deepening of cooperation among its members by opening the door for new members, primarily from the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

For the next ten years, the Western Balkans will be overshadowed by the key challenges facing NATO. Enhancing internal cohesion, redefining relations with actors who see the world order in a complementary way to core interests of NATO, and projecting power in a world that has more than one competitor, we see as crucial for NATO "survival".

REFERENCES

1. Đukanović, D., (2010). NATO's New Strategic Concept and its Influence on the Stability of Western Balkans. *Croatian International Relations Review*, 16(60-61), 105–110.

2. Đukanović, D., (2019). Bosna i Hercegovina na neizvesnom putu ka članstvu u NATO. [Bosnia and Herzegovina on the uncertain path towards the membership in NATO] *Međunarodni problemi* LXXI(3), 335–360.

3. Ferreira da Cruz, M. A., (2021). NATO 2030: Survival in a New Era. *JANUS e-journal of International Relations* 12(1), 13–30.

4. Hope, I. (2017). The Western Balkans and the Revenge of History. *Research Paper* (142). Rome: NATO Defence College.

5. Kecskemethy, K. S., (2021). The NATO 2030 Report: Strategic priorities of the Alliance, *International Conference Knowledge-Based Organization* 27(1), 118–124.

6. Kulesa, L. and Wieslander, A., (2019). A New Strategic Concept for NATO's 70th Birthday? *European Leadership Network*. Accessed on August 9, 2021. https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/a-new-strategic-concept-for-natos-70th-birthday/

7. Larsen, H., (2020). The Western Balkans between the EU, NATO, Russia and China. *CSS Analyses in Security Policy* (263), ETH Zurich. Accessed on August 10, 2021. https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse263-EN.pdf

8. Larsonneur, J.C., (2020). Key Challenges to Maintaining Peace and Security in the Western Balkans, *Defence and Security Committee – Sub-committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation*, Accessed on August 9, 2021. https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=/sites/default/files/2020-12/032%20DSCTC%20%20E%20rev.%202%20fin%20-%20WESTERN%20BALKANS.pdf

9. Lord, W.T., (2016). NATO in the Western Balkans: time for a new approach?, George S. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. Accessed August 10, 2021. https://www.marshallcenter.org/sites/default/files/files/2020-09/pC_V8N1_en-4_Lord.pdf

THE ROLE OF WESTERN BALKANS IN NATO STRATEGIC THINKING: REFLECTIONS ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGES IN SEEKING FOR A NEW RELEVANCE

333

10. NATO, (2010). *Active Engagement, Modern Defence – Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation adopted by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon*. Accessed on August 10, 2021. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_68580.htm

11. NATO, (2019). *Secretary-General: as the world changes NATO will continue to change*. Accessed on August 9, 2021. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_171581.htm

12. NATO, (2020a). *Secretary-General appoints a group as part of NATO reflection process*. Accessed on August 9, 2021. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_174756.htm

13. NATO, (2020b). *Secretary-General launches NATO 2030 to make our strong Alliance even stronger*. Accessed on August 12, 2021. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_176193.htm

14. NATO, (2020c). *NATO 2030: United for a New Era*. Accessed on August 10, 2021. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf

15. NATO, (2021a). *Leaders agree NATO 2030 agenda to strengthen the Alliance*. Accessed on August 10, 2021. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_184998.htm?selectedLocale=en

16. NATO, (2021b). *Strategic Concepts*. Accessed on August 8, 2021. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_56626.htm

17. NATO, (2021c). *Brussels Summit Communiqué Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021*. Accessed on August 07, 2021. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm

18. Tardy, T. (2020). NATO 2030. United for a new era: a Digest. *NATO Defence College*, Policy Brief no. 23, Accessed on August 9, 2021. https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1509

19. Tardy, T., (2021). For a New NATO-EU Bargain. *Security Policy brief* (138), Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations. Accessed on August 9, 2021. https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2021/02/SPB138.pdf?type=pdf

20. Wiesman, G., (1999). Polylateralism and New Models of Global Dialogue, *Discussion Papers* (59). Leicester: Center for the Study of Diplomacy.