NATO in Africa

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1 PREFACE

This background report (BGR) is supposed to introduce you, the reader, to the topic of NATO in Africa. It is not to be considered an exhaustive or comprehensive work on this topic but rather a summary of the most essential information. You are highly recommended not to stop your research after reading this document (you may explore additional sources presented at the end of the BGR), especially for the purposes of writing a high-quality position paper. Seeing that this might seem like an overwhelming task at first, the questions included in the penultimate chapter of this BGR are designed to help the reader to better grasp the fundamental ideas and also to show what to concentrate on. In case of any questions or remarks concerning this document, please contact the author at vojtech.sikl@amo.cz

2 INTRODUCTION

„...We want to help implement African solutions to African problems"72

NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (2007)

2.1 Why Africa?

Thirty years ago this would have been a well-founded question to a world still suffering from the remains of Cold War geopolitical thinking. During the Cold War, Africa was a territory for many proxy wars. However, after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the world started to recognize the importance of security on a global scale. September 11, 2001, significantly affected the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (hereinafter NATO or the Alliance) and how it viewed its collective security. Moreover, these events also provided the catalyst for the next evolution of the Alliance at the Prague Summit in 2002.[1]

The Prague Summit finally defined whether or not NATO would be in the business of out-of-area operations. NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson stated that the *"Allies agreed that in facing new threats, artificial geographic limitations make no sense. They agreed that NATO should deter, defend and protect against threats from wherever they come. And that our forces must be able to go wherever they are required to carry out their mission."*[2] This determined NATO's new post-Prague direction.

Such threats may very well arise from networks operating in developing countries. This stance is clearly represented in the statement of former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice *"weak and failing states serve as global pathways that facilitate the spread of pandemics, the movement of criminals and terrorists, and the proliferation of the world's most dangerous weapons."*[3]

Furthermore, General James Jones, former Supreme Allied Commander, tried to answer the question of NATO's field of operation by stating *"...the future of NATO is not to be a reactive defensive static alliance, but it is to be more flexible, more proactive. We must take on the family of missions that actually prevent future conflicts instead of reacting to future conflicts once they've started...."*[4]

When discussing Africa, a variety of issues arises – terrorism, HIV/AIDS, environmental disasters, civil wars, instability, refugees, failing governments, only to name a few. Africa is home to nine of ten world's most neglected crises,[5] according to the Norwegian Refugee Council, attributing the continent's dominance to a lack of media attention, aid and political will. Moreover, in 2018, there were 21 active civil wars on the continent – the highest number

recorded in Africa since 1946.[6] It is clear that such problems may very well represent a danger on a global scale since initially minor crises can quickly develop and become transnational.

As French General Norlain noted, *"Europe should feel particularly concerned by what is happening on its doorstep, and by what is shaking countries with which some European nations have long-standing relations. The shortcomings of the current system have to be corrected."*[7]

With the previous statements in mind, it is evident that Africa is indeed becoming considered as important to the international community. Some NATO member states share the Mediterranean border with North Africa and are likely the first to be impacted by potential transnational risk factors stemming from the continent.

Therefore, from 1994 NATO has established Mediterranean Dialogue, which consists of cooperating with countries from the Mediterranean region, namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

The goal of this Dialogue is to
- » contribute to regional security and stability
- » achieve better mutual understanding
- » dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries

The introductory part tried to answer the question as to why should NATO be concerned about Africa. The issues and perspectives aforementioned thus lead us to many questions. Should NATO forsake its engagement in Africa and if so, to what extent? What problems should be resolved by NATO, if any? Hopefully, the introduction part offered a new perspective on NATO's global approach. As the Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg noted, during the launch event of NATO 2030, *"NATO 2030 is about making our strong Alliance even stronger...and more global"*[8].

I will try to elaborate on the historical context of NATO in Africa, especially conflicts in Africa followed by NATO's response and current fields of NATO-AU partnership. Furthermore, I will discuss a few

...the future of NATO is not to be a reactive defensive static alliance, but it is to be more flexible, more proactive. We must take on the family of missions that actually prevent future conflicts instead of reacting to future conflicts once they've started....

potential solutions for NATO and its endeavour on the African soil.

2.2 NATO's stance

After the Prague Summit, NATO proceeded with its out-of-area mindset at the Istanbul Summit in 2004. Former NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer remarked that *"territorial defence remains a core function, but we simply can no longer protect our security without addressing the potential risks and threats that arise far from our homes."*[9] Moreover, for the first time, in June 2006, NATO exercised its NATO Response Force (NRF) in Cape Verde, validating NATO's new expeditionary capabilities.[10]

What NATO brings to the table more so than any other security alliance or peacekeeping body is its interoperability.

Interoperability is the ability to operate together using harmonized standards, doctrines, procedures and equipment. It is essential to the work of an alliance of multiple countries with national defence forces and is equally important for working together with partners that wish to contribute in supporting the Alliance in achieving its tactical, operational and strategic objectives.

Interoperability is a result of decades of joint training, planning, procurement, and in the end joint experiences in combat and peacekeeping operations, which has produced a force able to operate effectively in any kind of hostile environment, despite thirty contributing member states.[11]

Much of day-to-day cooperation in NATO – including with partners – is focused on achieving this interoperability and NATO recognizes its importance. Therefore, in 2014, NATO launched the Partnership Interoperability Initiative, which inter alia launched mechanisms for enhanced cooperation with nations that desired to maintain deeper interoperability with NATO.[12] Subsequently, this wealth of experience needs to be shared with African Union, shared with African militaries, with the expectation that African states can build capacity and begin to solve problems locally, as many of their leaders have expressed the willingness to do.[13]

3 NATO AND ITS MISSIONS IN AFRICA

„The kind of NATO that we need – and that we are successfully creating – is an Alliance that defends its members against global threats: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and failed states… What we need is an increasingly global approach to security, with organisations, including NATO, playing their respective roles."[73]

NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

NATO and the United Nations reaffirmed their desire to share a commitment to maintain international peace and security. However, the source or nature of threats to peace and security was not clear to them. NATO states prepared for local, regional, and global eventualities. When threats emerged the United Nations Security Council Resolutions provided NATO with a mandate for operations outside of its traditional North Atlantic region. NATO and these regional organisations were like-minded in sharing similar goals which included joint operations. Moreover, NATO's new Strategic Concept was adopted at the Summit meeting in Lisbon, November 2010, stressing that NATO develops new capabilities and partnerships.[14]

However, despite the enlargement and the current commitment to transformation, problems remain. Funding remains a central issue for the Alliance. When NATO began to carry out the Darfur mission, in 2015, it was noted that only nine of NATO's 26 member states had kept above the NATO goal of member states devoting 2 percent of their respective gross domestic products (GDP) towards defence expenditures.[15] With multiple ongoing operations, the lack of financial support was beginning to strain the Alliance.[16]

Moreover, today's funding of the Alliance is based on the principle *"costs lie where they fall"*- meaning that for example, a country which offers troops for a mission has to pay to send and keep them there. This could be an issue for the NRF, as the Alliance may encounter hindrances whilst disputing about who pays for what.

So far, NATO has engaged in eight missions in, or the vicinity of, Africa. Three missions focused on support to the African Union peacekeeping endeavour.

3.1 Operation Unified Protector

NATO operation Unified Protector in Libya is a continuation of the Strategic Concept policy in these three following aspects:

» Desire to maintain international peace and security

» Desire to do so in collaboration with the United Nations and other regional organisations

» Policy in the North Africa region resulting from its first mission to Africa (Sudan 2005) for humanitarian purposes (more about the Sudan mission in 4.2)

By early 2011, two successful, non-violent ‚Arab Spring' protests in Tunisia and Egypt had lifted the veil of fear in Libya. The demonstrators took the streets of Tunisia and demanded the head of state, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, to step down. However, he refused and stated that he will remain in power until he dies. Moreover, Gaddafi appeared on state TV, calling on his supporters to hunt the "greasy rats" on drugs, "the dirt," as he described the demonstrators.[17] After that, Gaddafi ordered his forces to shoot peaceful protesters, killing thousands in just three days.[18]

After these events, on 17 March 2011, the United Nations authorized military intervention in Libya to protect civilians. The resolution condemned the *"gross and systematic violation of human rights, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and summary executions."*[19]While France, Great Britain, and the United States took immediate military action using air and missile strikes, the idea to hand the mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) emerged within days of the operation.[20]

On 22 March 2011, NATO responded to the UN's call to prevent the supply of arms material to Libya by launching an operation to enforce the arms embargo against the country. Moreover, NATO ships operating in the Mediterranean began cutting off the flow of weapons and mercenaries to Libya by sea. NATO maritime assets scrutinized any vessel they suspected of carrying arms, related materials or mercenaries to or from Libya. NATO then agreed to enforce the UN-mandated no-fly zone over Libya on 24 March 2011. The resolution banned all flights into Libyan airspace to protect civilian-populated areas from air attacks, except for flights used for humanitarian and aid purposes.[21] Operation Unified Protector ended after the fall of the Libyan regime on 31 October 2011.[22]

As the name suggests, a **no-fly zone** is a geographical area designated as forbidden to air traffic and is instituted as a way of preventing rogue regimes from bombing their own people. In order to be effective, a no-fly zone must be patrolled by military aircraft that have the authority to shoot down unauthorized planes.[74]

OUP has been described as a success—a success NATO badly needed. However, the Libyan operation was not without its critics. Described as a "war of choice" rather than a "war of necessity," it achieved its goals more by accident than by design, according to some commentators.[23] Moreover, many questioned NATO's neutrality as well as its "Responsibility to Protect" policy. However, the main goal of NATO was to protect civilians, and therefore, NATO acted along the lines of the R2P norm.[24]

Furthermore, unlike NATO missions in Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999), the Alliance did not follow up with post-conflict reconstruction in Libya. There are a few reasons as to why this renewal did not happen. Firstly, NATO tried to avoid civilian casualties and keep the costs down by embracing airpower strategy. The ground forces that could have potentially exercised bigger control and influence were thus limited. Secondly, NATO members were not unanimous on the extent of engagement, especially the US did not hide its reservations.[25] As the regime and its security forces collapsed, the security of Libya fell into the hands of different militias, which continued to enlarge after the conflict had ended. The belief that NATO helped to establish peace in Libya is misplaced. Even after the end of a brutal regime, it would be a mistake to assume NATO endeavour in Libya ended with the withdrawal of the military forces. The Alliance needs to proceed accordingly with its reconstruction process.[26]

3.2 Counter-piracy Operations

Today, 85 percent of all international trade in raw material and manufactured goods travel by sea, and tankers carry more than half of the world's oil.[27] The maritime domain is thus very significant for NATO members. NATO is determined to help protect its Allies from any possible threats at sea or from the sea.

Until 2008, piracy was largely seen as an irritation – not a major strategic problem. But in 2008, a Ukrainian-flagged vessel transporting 33 Russian tanks with depleted uranium ammunition was seized by Somali pirates. Since the growth of Somali piracy, the shipping industry has lost 13-15 billion dollars annually. Moreover, by some estimates, in the last 18 months, these acts of piracy have garnered as much as 100 million dollars in ransom.[28] Despite the danger of the activity, piracy has been assessed as worth the risk by thousands of people living in desperately poor and often unstable countries.

The international response against Somali piracy was initially *ad hoc*, with Canadian, Danish and French vessels escorting World Food Programme shipments along the Somali coast.[29] NATO's first counter-piracy mission, Operation Allied Provider, took over this duty from October to December 2008 and was then replaced by a similar European Union mission, Operation Atalanta, at the end of the year. [30]

3.2.1 Operation Allied Provider

As already mentioned, the first mission, launched in October 2008, was concerned primarily with providing escort vessels for the World Food Program and other aid organizations as well as to patrol the waters around Somalia.[31] During this operation, the Alliance provided an escort to the World Food Program on eight separate occasions and was able to provide security and ensure the safe delivery of over 30,000 metric tons of humanitarian aid to Somalia.[32] General John Craddock, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, pointed out the speed in which NATO responded to the threat, the number of humanitarian supplies that were safely delivered, and noted their ability to keep NATO forces present in the area.[33]

3.2.2 Operation Allied Protector

Operation Allied Protector also initially consisted of making port visits to South-East Asia. The anti-piracy operation was to be conducted while it was in transit to these ports. The port visits were to be conducted from 24 March To 29 June 2009. Anti Piracy did not become the first directive of the mission until an increase in piracy was seen. On 24 April the piracy threat was moved to the forefront of the mission objective. This policy change marked the first time that NATO ships were called into the area for the specific purpose of anti-piracy.

In its second mission, NATO overtook in 16 of 37 attacks and a lot of pirate equipment was confiscated. Operation Allied Protector's role ended on 18 August 2009.[34]

3.2.3 Operation Ocean Shield

NATO's mission evolved in August and was renamed Operation Ocean Shield. The mission now operates with the four main objectives to:
- » deter and disrupt pirate operations at sea
- » coordinate international counter-piracy efforts
- » enhance the maritime community's capacity to counter piracy effectively
- » develop a regional counter-piracy capability

In 2011 alone, NATO forces neutralized 96 pirate vessels. However, despite these efforts, the number of pirate attacks continued to rise, hitting a peak of 236 attacks in 2011.[35] The pirate gangs had responded to the increased naval presence by shifting their operations away from the heavily patrolled Gulf of Aden and out towards the Red Sea in the north, the Indian Ocean in the east, and the Mozambique Channel in the south. In this respect, in January 2011 a piracy envoy Jack Lang warned that the pirates were "clearly winning" their race with the international community, and becoming "the masters" of the Indian Ocean during a briefing to the UN Security Council.[36] Moreover, in 2011, NATO adopted a new Maritime Strategy. The Alliance Maritime Strategy identifies the four roles of NATO's maritime forces:

- » deterrence and collective defence
- » crisis management
- » cooperative security – outreach through partnerships, dialogue and cooperation
- » maritime security

Within a year of Lang's warning, Somali piracy was on the decline in terms of both success rate and a total number of attacks. By 2012, hijackings were down 50% from the previous year, with attempted attacks falling by 70%.[37] The explanation for this sharp decline in piracy is multifaceted.

From a military perspective, improved coordination among international naval forces and the adoption of more vigorous rules of engagement have been a contributing factor. After Strategic Assessment in March 2012, NATO modified its rules of responsibility and has increasingly engaged in the surveillance of pirate beach camps and ships.[38] Furthermore, an important factor would be the proactive measures from the shipping industry, too. Commercial organizations have continuously improved a set of Best Management Practices that provide guidelines on transit speeds, passive defence measures, and the use of anti-piracy citadels (safe rooms). [39]

There were no successful piracy attacks from May 2012 onwards, but even though Somalia-based piracy was suppressed, it certainly had not been eliminated.[40] Ocean Shield was terminated on 15 December 2016 after achieving its objectives.

According to the Warsaw Summit Communiqué, NATO is also ready to establish "working-level ties" with the Gulf Cooperation Council. At the Summit in Warsaw, NATO also announced the transformation of its Active Endeavour counter-terrorism mission in the Mediterranean to a more complex maritime security operation. The operation received the name Operation Sea Guardian. The mission's goal is to "maintain maritime situational awareness, deter and counter-terrorism and enhance capacity building."[41]

Some of the tasks of the mission are:
- » supporting maritime situational awareness
- » upholding freedom of navigation
- » maritime counter-terrorism
- » contributing to capacity building
- » countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and protecting critical infrastructure.

The reason for this operation is piracy uprisings caused by lower international presence as well as conflict in Yemen.[42]

3.2.4 Sustainability of NATO's Operations

Building on previous operational experience in the Mediterranean and Arabian sea, NATO has deployed three successive missions to the Gulf of Aden and Somali coast.

When analyzing NATO's anti-piracy missions, some evidence suggests that this operation lacks a united commitment

from the Allies. For instance, when NATO agreed to assist in its first anti-piracy missions it called upon its Standing Naval Maritime Group 2 to take the helm. Maritime Group 2 comprised of seven ships from a number of the Allies, including Germany, Greece, Italy, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[43] When this operation was put into action, however, only three ships were selected to carry out the mission. The ships that contributed to this mission were from Greece, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Oceans Beyond Piracy's report, The Economic Costs of Somali Piracy 2012, calculates that NATO's Operation Ocean Shield costs the Alliance $5.7 million in annual administration costs.[44] Measuring the cost of vessel deployments, which are stationed by contributing states, is more contentious. However, as any vessel and crew used for counter-piracy operations, it would still incur maintenance, training, personnel and logistical costs if it were to be deployed in any other active service as part of a Standing Maritime Group. The annual deployment and operation cost for the average of four vessels assigned to Ocean Shield is calculated to be approximately $75-million using Oceans Beyond Piracy methodology.

One could argue that the argument about the (un)sustainability of naval operations does not focus on the root causes of piracy – such as poverty, weak political institutions, insufficient level of security or poor living conditions. According to a recent World Bank assessment, such operations successfully diminish the number of successful pirate attacks, however, they are not sufficient to drive pirates out of business.[45]

4 COOPERATION WITH THE AFRICAN UNION

Since 2005, NATO has been cooperating with the African Union – a regional organisation with 55 members created in 2002 (one of the "architects" of AU was previously mentioned Muammar Gaddafi).[46] The NATO-AU relationship started modestly with AU requests for logistics and airlift support for its mission in Sudan.

4.1 Areas of cooperation

NATO-AU cooperation has mainly been pragmatic and driven by requests from the African Union for support in very specific areas. The principal areas of cooperation are:

4.1.1 Operational support

- *Logistical support*

The main objective of logistical support is to plan and carry out the movement of forces as well as the maintenance. Logistics covers the following areas of military operations:
  » design and development, acquisition, storage, transport, distribution, maintenance, evacuation and disposal of material
  » transport of personnel
  » acquisition, construction, maintenance, operation and disposition of facilities
  » acquisition or provision of services
  » medical and health service support[47]

- *Planning support*

NATO shares its knowledge in planning across different domains including maritime, finance, monitoring, procurement, air movement coordination, communications. The areas requested vary from year to year based on AU priorities. In this capacity, NATO experts work side-by-side with AU counterparts, offering expertise in specific domains for periods of six to twelve months, renewable at the AU's request.[48]

4.1.2 Capacity-building support

- *Education and training*

NATO offers opportunities for AU personnel to attend courses at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, the NATO Defense College in Rome, and other NATO training facilities. These education and training courses are offered based upon AU requirements and the availability of NATO training venues. On average, 20 AU students are sponsored at NATO training venues per year.[49]

- *Mobile training*

Since 2015 and in response to an AU request, NATO has delivered dedicated training to African Union officers through Mobile Education and Training Teams (METT) that deliver tailored courses in Africa. NATO has gradually increased the number of courses delivered and is providing three or more METT courses annually.

Mobile Education Training is an educational course performed by a NATO School Oberammergau training team at different (usually offsite) locations upon a specific request of an eligible organization. It offers over 100 different courses to Alliance members and partners on subjects related to NATO's policies, strategies, missions and operations.[75]

4.1.3 Support for the development of the African Union Standby Force

At the AU's request, the Alliance offers capacity-building support through courses and training events. NATO has also organised certification/evaluation and training programmes for AU staff.[50]

4.2 Assisting AU in Darfur

The conflict in Darfur initiated in 2003, when the Sudanese Liberation Movement and Justice and Equality movement commenced an insurrection against the Sudanese government. The rebels accused the government of oppressing non-Arab population. Consequently, the government began to support Arab militias - which fought against the rebels and more importantly, terrorized the civilians.[51]

The mission in Darfur consisted of:

» **Airlifting AU peacekeepers and civilian police**

Between 1 July 2005 and October 2005, NATO helped to provide air transport for peacekeepers from African troop-contributing countries into Darfur. It also has trained AU troops in strategic-level planning and operational procedures. The Alliance also arranged an airlift of 50 African Mission in Sudan civilian police.[52] The co-ordination of NATO's airlift was done from Europe.

» **Training AU personnel**

The goal of this training is to enhance an overall understanding of Darfur using various techniques. Moreover, the aim is to identify the areas where the application of AU assets could best influence the operating environment and deter potential crises. A total of 184 AU officers benefited from this training.[53]

Enhancing the mutual support of regional organizations (such as the mission in Darfur) in a capability building capacity offers perhaps the best option for NATO that helps it to gain credibility in international circles. Of note, the mission in Sudan could be characterized as the first of many operations where a regional African organization is supported logistically by the EU or NATO, with the blessing and political top cover of the UN.[54] As for NATO, a good first step for engagement in Africa should be utilizing aspects of NATO's Training Cooperation Initiative. Additionally, while still primarily on the drawing board, supporting initiatives as the AU's Standby Force, with training, may offer dividends in future crises.

The Africa Standby Force (ASF) is a peacekeeping force that acts under the direction of the African Union. The ASF is to be deployed in times of crisis in Africa. Its main goal is to engage in observations and monitoring missions as well as other types of peace support missions. The ASF may also intervene in a Member State due to grave circumstances.[76]

4.3 Present negotiations

At the 2016 Summit in Warsaw, Allied leaders agreed to expand NATO's diplomatic and practical partnership with the AU to address common issues. This has helped to stimulate a new momentum in NATO-AU relations to expand areas of cooperation.

On 4 November 2019, NATO and the African Union signed a new agreement, which laid the ground for more practical and closer collaboration. This agreement, signed in the margins of a two-day NATO-AU conference held at NATO's Joint Force Command in Naples, will serve as a starting point for even closer cooperation between the two organisations based on mutual respect and reciprocity. The AU's Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Smaïl Chergui, signed the agreement on behalf of the African Union.

At the meeting, Mr. Smaïl Chergui stated "*...radicalization remains one of the major threats to peace and security on the continent. Extremist groups (like the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and others) have perfected the art of recruitment, facilitated by the use of cyber platforms and structural vulnerabilities such as poverty, ethnic and religious fissures and competing political ideologies.*"[55] Moreover, according to Mr. Chergui, these groups have morphed into well-organized shadow-governments, providing services and in some cases acting as the judge, jury and executioner. They have also diversified their sources of funding.[56]

Furthermore, Mr. Chergui believes that "*there is a need to emphasis that the African continent is likely to remain vulnerable to transnational crimes including drugs, arms, as well as human trafficking as demonstrated by the number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. We are also likely to experience cyber threats and bioterrorism.*"[57]

„As we look toward the challenges ahead, we should aim to redouble our cooperative efforts at the technical and political levels. There is no shortage of areas in which the African Union Commission and NATO can come together to strengthen joint efforts to address these key peace and security challenges on the continent."[77]

Mr. Smaïl Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security

4.4 Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020

One of AU's biggest campaigns, Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 (also Vision 2020), aims to achieve a conflict-free Africa, prevent genocide, make peace a reality for all and rid the continent of wars.[58]

In international relations, Africa has been perceived as a "continent at war with itself".[59] Admittedly, the continent has hosted, and continues to be home to, several deadly conflicts that jeopardise human rights, international security and prevent many efforts, both domestic and foreign, from resolving them. This dilemma incited the AU Assembly to step in and try to diminish the amount of persistent conflicts for good while addressing them vocally. Therefore, in the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, African leaders decided not to pass this burden onto the next generation and to end all wars in Africa by 2020.[60]

The campaign is divided into different important areas of consideration in the quest of achieving Vision 2020:

4.4.1 Recurrence of conflicts

A major challenge in Africa's peace and security field is how to secure lasting resolutions to conflicts. Several regions in Africa have experienced armed wars caused by the resurgence of old problems previously deemed to have been resolved, or those that were managed to the point of dialogue. About half of all post-conflict countries relapse into conflict within a decade.[61] In developing and implementing plans aimed at realising Vision 2020, it is thus important to acknowledge the complexity of the security landscape requiring intervention, and to consider comprehensive approaches to deal with challenges.

4.4.2 Preventing versus resolving problems

Unlike conflict resolution, which addresses existing or current fights, conflict prevention aims to preclude the violence from occurring in the first place. Conflict prevention involves preventive measures that avert potential and possible escalations from happening. Strategies to manage or reduce conflict differ from those that are used to avoid it. For a long time, the management of conflicts in Africa has been largely reactive. In most situations, it is only when they have reached severe crisis levels that interventions are discussed to be resolved. Experts claim that while the initiatives of the AU Peace and Security Council are praiseworthy, the focus on reactive responses rather than cultivating a culture of proactive crisis prevention within the AU system and its member states obstructs any real progress.[62] Some narratives insist that most regional organisations, in Africa and beyond, lack the required resources and political will to become effective instruments for conflict prevention. What is furthermore required is a more sophisticated approach in diagnosing conflict-prone situations and launching early prevention actions.[63]

The Vision 2020 also recognized the need to tackle the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) as one of the most important topics. The illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons destabilises communities, negatively impacts security and compromises development in Africa.

Statistics on the terrible impacts of the proliferation of SALW in Africa identify the phenomenon posing one of the biggest hurdles to development on the continent. Over the last 50 years, Africa has suffered no less than five million fatalities attributed to SALW.[64] These deaths have been caused by the estimated 30 million firearms on the continent.[65]

NATO accommodates the similar concept of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. For example, NATO's ambition is to create and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. However, as NATO states, the Alliance will maintain its nuclear capabilities, as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world.[66]

Small arms include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns. **Light weapons** include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems and mortars of calibres less than 100 millimetres.[78]

5 FUTURE OF NATO IN AFRICA

„Because, to protect our territory, we must be willing to project stability beyond our borders. If our neighbours are more stable, we are more secure"[79]

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General (2016)

NATO has been putting greater emphasis on issues emerging from the African continent since the Summit in Warsaw in 2016. At this Summit, NATO adopted a Framework for the South.

At the 2018 Brussels Summit, the Allies defined three explicit objectives for NATO in the south, namely:

» strengthening NATO's deterrence and defence against threats from the south

» contributing to international crisis management efforts in the region

» helping regional partners build resilience against security threats such as terrorism.

This perspective was also reflected during the 2019 Parliamentary Assembly in Bratislava.[67] During the Assembly, the "Stability in Africa" draft report was presented. It tried to examine current issues in Africa as well as a strategy for NATO's future endeavour in the south.

NATO's anti-piracy missions provide the Alliance with another opportunity to demonstrate that its members are well prepared to face evolving security challenges, and highlight the shared strategic interests among the Allies. Clearly, NATO regards these operations as a symbol of its continued relevance and its ability to achieve its mission. At the same time, these operations have several points of weakness that hamper its ability to truly combat the piracy problem, which also raises larger strategic questions about the Alliance.

5.1. Another counter-piracy operation?

NATO's anti-piracy missions provide the Alliance with another opportunity to demonstrate that its members are equipped to meet evolving security challenges, and highlight the shared strategic interests among the Allies. Clearly, NATO regards these operations as a symbol of its continued relevance and its ability to achieve its mission. At the same time, these operations have several points of weakness that impede its ability to truly combat the piracy problem, which also raise larger strategic questions about the Alliance.

Despite these efforts, piracy in the waters off of South America – and off West Africa – has been increasing somewhat in recent years. Some of the conditions in those regions are similar to the ones that implicated the Somali

spike a decade ago: weak governments tangled in political violence, widespread economic torment and easily accessible weapons. Given that piracy's financiers and political enablers remain untouched and captured pirates are easily replaceable, such naval operations represent a sizable shock to the piracy enterprise but are not sufficient to drive it out of business.[68]

Most piracy ultimately affects poor countries with weak governments. The reason as to why is that most criminals try to accumulate money and support their land-based militias. For example, militant groups in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger River Delta region and the Gulf of Guinea, siphon oil off tanker ships and resell it on the black market. Even at this time, since governments are dealing with COVID-19, the absence of attention towards piracy creates a potential uprising of this issue.[69]

The issue above really poses the question, whether NATO should be permanently present in Africa. Using its interoperability and know-how, NATO may thoroughly train African forces instead of spending a few months protecting cargo ships.

5.2. Where should NATO apply its mind?

Much has been stated about allowing for "African solutions to African problems." But what happens when African solutions fail or do not achieve anticipated results? What will happen when the failure of African solutions threatens to destabilize regional security or international security? Should NATO change its policies in order to connect the already intertwined world even more? As Alliance's officials stated, its scope and reach transcends Europe and North America area-of-responsibility. Should NATO carry on with its former missions, or should it focus on providing humanitarian aid and military education? The bottom line simply is, to what extent and how should NATO, having a vision of establishing peace in the world, contribute?

Consequently, how should NATO approach cooperation with regional African organizations? Since a note of caution has been sounded about the use of African regional organizations. The concept of using African forces for African problems might also be viewed by the Africans themselves in two different lights.

It could be understood that the less effective, more poorly trained and equipped forces that traditionally predominate in the African regional organizations would be the only recourse to instability on the continent, whereas the better trained western or European forces would be deployed to more strategically significant locations, such as the oil-rich areas of the Middle East, or to ethnically-charged areas

A potential uptick in piracy for 2020

According to data from the first three months of 2020, this year is on track to see more piracy than happened in 2019. Worldwide economic conditions resulting from the pandemic may make things even worse.
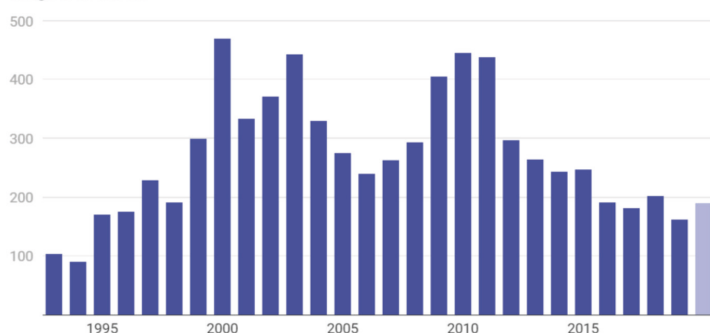
How piracy numbers are sizing up for 2020
Image: IMB Piracy Reporting Centre

on the European periphery. This belief has led some to conclude that Africa would only be offered a lower quality of peacekeeping.

The second and opposite charge is a legacy of the colonial-era. Any activity by western forces in conjunction with local African forces could be construed as infringing on the sovereignty of Africans. As one diplomat acerbically suggested, "Africans don't want to see white, European troops coming to Sudan."[70] When cooperating and working with these regional organizations, an effort needs to be placed on strategic communications to engage the population as to the intent of the effort, to discourage a potentially negative debate on the west's "ulterior motives" for operating in Africa.

6 CONCLUSION

"I am grateful for the opportunity to engage with you on important issues, to realign our common goals, and to reinforce the belief of our Member States in the collaboration with NATO. Integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa is in the making..."

Mr. Smaïl Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security

As already mentioned, Africa shouldn't go unheeded in today's world. When it comes to international security, it is desirable to provide assistance to less developed countries, as it diminishes the risk of prospective conflict. In this respect, NATO is starting to recognize Africa's importance in the field of international relations. Furthermore, cooperation with the African Union is getting more intensive. It is evident that NATO has strong interests in Africa.

However, not everyone is in favour of NATO's engagement out of its original area of operation. Some African Officials may believe that NATO's missions are an example of Western "overstretch", or confirmation of the Alliance's wish to become an "out of area enforcer". Here, the issue for some Africans is a perceived ideological threat: liberal internationalism as a cloak for new colonialism.[71]

The slow and steady progress of engagement has been underway since the Istanbul Summit, ensuring that all NATO members have a voice in framing future partnerships and potential courses of action with regards to being involved in new out-of-area commitments. This motivation has been also reiterated at subsequent Summits mentioned in this paper. There will still be a clear need for European involvement on the continent, to help stem the rising emergence of the litany of issues discussed.

Over the past decades, NATO has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and capabilities to help Africa tackle problems, preferably locally. Because such problems loom large in Europe, once they become transnational. This will be a long-standing process demanding continuous efforts.

7 QUESTIONS

1. Has your state contributed to the aforementioned missions? How?

2. Does your state have any motivation to engage in such missions?

3. Is NATO equipped, trained, and manned sufficiently to assume any type of role in Africa above and beyond its current obligations?

4. How should NATO fund operations? Is it necessary to continue with the counter-piracy missions in the vicinity of Africa?

5. Article 6 of the Washington Treaty states:

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

> » on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France (2), on the territory of or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;
>
> » on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

Since the potential attack on NATO's military outside the zone delineated above would not trigger Article 5. Hence the question, is the alternation of Article 6, in today's globalized world, desirable?

6. Would it be desirable to reorganize NATO's responsibility? Under what circumstances should Alliance engage outside of its member's territory?

7. What lessons has NATO learned from current out-of-area operations that might be applied for Africa?

8. What are the competing interests that would allow or hinder NATO forces in Africa?

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Pražský studentský summit

Pražský studentský summit je unikátní vzdělávací projekt existující od roku 1995. Každoročně vzdělává přes 300 studentů středních i vysokých škol o současných globálních tématech, a to především prostřednictvím simulace jednání tří klíčových mezinárodních organizací – OSN, NATO a EU.

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Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky (AMO)

AMO je nevládní nezisková organizace založená v roce 1997 za účelem výzkumu avzdělávání v oblasti mezinárodních vztahů. Tento přední český zahraničně politický think-tank není spjat s žádnou politickou stranou ani ideologií. Svou činností podporuje aktivní přístup k zahraniční politice, poskytuje nestrannou analýzu mezinárodního dění a otevírá prostor k fundované diskusi.

Vojtěch Šikl

Autor je spolupracovníkem Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky a členem přípravného týmu Pražského studentského summitu.