



EDITOR'S NOTE / NOTA EDITORIAL

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This special issue on NATO has a particular relevance. NATO finds itself in a process of deep reflection on the challenges and threats, the tools and means to confront and manage them and the implications that the reconfiguration of the international system is creating.

Given the importance of NATO engagement in Afghanistan for its own future, the special issue focuses primarily on that. The first part of the issue, coordinated by Professor Sten Rynning, deals with this engagement. This part tries to illustrate the complexity of the tasks to the reader, as well as the shortcomings in the recent approaches to the conflict and the stabilization of the region. The authors touch many different subjects: the evolution of NATO strategies, the responsibilities of the different agents involved, the partnerships developed or to be developed, the difficulties, the shortcomings, the differences among the allies, the flaws in NATO transformation, the importance and weaknesses in NATO “comprehensive approach”, and finally the President Obama strategy.

A second part is oriented to the discussion of other central issues: the essence of the Alliance. One crucial question is if NATO can be maintained primarily as a regional political-military alliance or has to become a more global alliance, in line with the global interests of the United States. Another crucial question is the policies and tools for dealing with global challenges and threats. The article by Professors Javier García and David García, as well as the article by Professor Antonio Marquina, are complementary. They explain that transatlantic relations have to face a different international system, an increasingly multipolar world, and that means a sea change in NATO. In the US case, the new US administration has to adapt to a post-American world where European security is no longer US priority. In the EU case there is an apparent contradiction, the European Security Strategy mainly focuses on global challenges and threats whereas the EU security and stability priorities are in its own neighbourhood. This implies that for the EU, NATO has as its main task to solve its neighbourhood challenges, including deterrence to Russia, which will become or induce pressing security challenges for the European continent. That obviously is not very attractive to the US and will lead to important tensions in the Alliance. Both articles also emphasize the different perceptions and some difficulties for collaboration, given the fragmentation of responsibilities that still exists at the EU level. To this, Antonio Marquina emphasizes the contradictions in the theoretical approaches that are behind the EU approaches for dealing with its own security challenges and threats, “very near to the approaches of traditionally neutral European Member States”, and the lack of sufficient civilian and military tools, civilian and normative power and political will for being a decisive agent in their

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management. Also it shows the complications for the development of the “comprehensive approach” in NATO.

All these asymmetries have clear implications for NATO transformation and in the discussions for the renovation of the NATO Strategic Concept. Two articles, one by Cor. Enrique Fojón and Gillem Colom on NATO military transformation and the second one by Vice Admiral Enrique Ramírez on the NATO Strategic Concept show the complexity of the NATO adaptation task. The article on NATO transformation explains how the allied transformation was carried out in the last decade, the complex and different environments, the crucial question of capabilities, the EBAO concept and its limitations, the “comprehensive approach” concept and the difficulties in coordination with other non-military agents, and the need for a solid concept for the employment of forces, comprising from deterrence to humanitarian assistance.

The article on the NATO Strategic Concept tries to explain the importance of the Strategic Concept in NATO, the lack of precision and the inadequacies existing in the 1999 Strategic Concept and the need to address properly the risks and threats of the 21st century.

Finally the journal includes three interesting articles on the NATO impact on the Spanish Armed Forces. In these articles one critical aspect for maintaining the Alliance, the impact of NATO on the transformation and adaptation of the military forces of Member States, is presented. In the case of Spain this aspect is explained in detail for the three Services by three very distinguished high ranking Officers: Brig. General Federico Yaniz, Div.General Jesús Argumosa and Vice Admiral José Ruesta. NATO’s impact on Spanish military organization, training, command structure, procurement, standardization, transformation and planning, doctrine, operations and intelligence, leadership and logistic support has been decisive and vital in the modernization of the Spanish Armed Forces. And now they can make a significant contribution to share security and defence and collective defence. NATO, as the only military and effective defence organization, is considered central for dealing with the challenges and threats of the 21st century.