



MULTILATERAL BRIEFS

YATA Multilateral Briefs – 2014 / I.

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YATA Germany – Felix F. Seidler

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1) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for NATO in 2014?

Since 1992, NATO has been engaged in out-of-area and combat missions. Simply due to the lack of political will, resources and money, this era is ending. After ISAF's end, NATO will become more like a toolbox and a platform, rather than a force involved in high-intensity, expeditionary missions. Creating consensus among member states in this transformation process from "out-of-area" to "platform/toolbox" – including the necessary adjustment to the new geostrategic realities, in particular in Indo-Pacific Asia – is NATO's most challenging issue in 2014 (and beyond).

2) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for your country regarding defense in 2014?

Germany is facing a moment of truth. In January, our Federal President, the Defense and the Foreign Ministers established high ambitions for a more proactive German foreign and security policy. The most challenging issue now is, if Germany can deliver, so that the stated new ambitions (at least partially) meet reality. Given the world sees nothing else from Berlin but words, Germany risks to lose its face. Hence, Germany should work for a much closer NATO-EU cooperation and take the lead in NATO/EU missions. Moreover, on either bi- or multilateral level, Germany has to become a motor for deeper military integration in Europe.

YATA Multilateral Briefs is a bi-monthly online series of interview briefs delivered by YATA Hungary with the contribution of fellow YATA Chapters.

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The current issue features:

YATA Germany

YATA Netherlands

Portuguese Atlantic Youth Association

YATA Slovenia

Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom



3) In your opinion who will be the most important actor shaping NATO's agenda in 2014? (person, organization or other)

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Hard to say, because Rasmussen's successor has not been announced, yet. Easier is to say, who will not shape NATO's agenda. President Obama has only two more years to go and he will not drop his' Pivot to finally develop a great interest in NATO. The same applies for Angela Merkel, who will keep reacting rather than governing. Moreover, organizations like the UN or EU will remain irrelevant in shaping global strategic agendas; in case of EU, even a new European Security Strategy would not change that. However, NATO's agenda is much more likely to be shaped by persons outside the alliance, like Putin, Al-Sisi, Assad or Khamenei.

4) What do you identify as the primary threat to the security of NATO members in 2014?

We are our worst own enemy. In principle, things look quite well: All NATO allies together remain superior to the rest of the world - economically, technologically, militarily, soft power. In practice, the West's performance has been very poor. In Syria, Russia, China, Iran and Assad have very successfully played cats & dogs with the West – resulting in the long to be impossible declared survival of Assad's regime. Even worse, Americans and Europeans let it happen that they became victim of Putin's divide & rule game, under use of the chess pawn Snowden. However, NATO states could succeed together, but this depends on strategic foresight and – most important – on political will.

5) What do you expect to be the most important result delivered by the 2014 NATO Summit in the United Kingdom?

Given no global shocks or trigger events occur, the Summit is likely to offer three relevant results: Declaration of a face-saving end for ISAF, a long summit declaration that only NATO-nerds will read and a new Secretary General. The most important one will be the new SecGen, because Rasmussen's successor will be responsible for the transformation from "out-of-area" to "platform/toolbox" as well as for the consensus among member states about it.



YATA Netherlands – Laura Hof

Laura Hof is a Board Member of YATA Netherlands. Before her Traineeship at the Embassy of the Netherlands in China in 2013, she was the Secretary of YATA Netherlands. She has completed the MA American Studies and is in the final stage of completing her MA specialization in History of International Relations. She can be contacted at b.j.c.m.hof@gmail.com

1) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for NATO in 2014?

Notwithstanding important talking points for the 2014 NATO Summit, in my humble opinion the biggest challenge is not solely to come up with an agenda to ‘keep NATO relevant’ post-ISAF, but to reflect on how NATO remains relevant in the public eye. In Holland, for example, support for NATO again decreased in 2013.

Besides international security, it is not always clear to the public in which ways and how exactly NATO contributes to the security and well being of individual countries. Consequently, Defense has been an easy target for budget cuts, with the thereof attached consequences. Thus, how to communicate effectively the value of national defense and of having a strong NATO?

2) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for your country regarding defense in 2014?

Q1 applies to Q2. Last year, a high ranked Dutch Military official told me that since its decrease of defense contributions to NATO, Holland has simply less to say in the international arena. Thus, as a tiny country with a lower defense budget, Holland struggles with the question: ‘how to maintain (minimum) military capabilities and remain relevant?’

The challenge offers possibilities too, since it encourages international cooperation (e.g. ‘smart defense’). Although the issue of sovereignty arises politically, polls indicate that the Dutch are increasingly in favor of ‘burden sharing’. With international cooperation, however, you have to sow first, before you can reap the fruits.

3) In your opinion who will be the most important actor shaping NATO’s agenda in 2014? (person, organization or other)

Maybe too obvious of an answer. Still, I personally think that NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has generally been clear as to what the Summit agenda will be about. As he stated ‘this summit will shape the future of our alliance. We will make sure that NATO has the equipment and skills we need to deal with the threats we face, such as terrorism, unstable states, piracy, missile and cyber attacks’. Therefore, I argue that, as chief representative and spokesperson of NATO, Rasmussen has already proven to be the essential actor in shaping NATO’s agenda ahead of the Summit.



4) What do you identify as the primary threat to the security of NATO members in 2014?

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Although the first response would be to point out an external threat, I think it is internal. NATO has to change with time, in its form and in purpose. The defense capabilities of individual member states nowadays lead to more regional cooperation. Bridging the different capabilities between these regional cooperation structures is one, bridging EU and US capabilities is two. Interests and views about 'primary' threats differ according to the NATO member's regions (maybe more so with an expansion of new partnerships). For example, will the EU and the US come to more similar views regarding their interests in specific regions (e.g. Asia Pacific)?

5) What do you expect to be the most important result delivered by the 2014 NATO Summit in the United Kingdom?

Maybe the most important result will be to define NATO's post-ISAF agenda. However, because of its far-reaching consequences, I personally attach great value to the outcomes concerning the topic of 'enlargement' as well as the nature of 'NATO's partnerships'. Deliberations concerning future decisions as which countries, when and on which terms are eligible for NATO membership and how to manage different interests with regard to NATO's partnerships seem to me to be of vital importance. Primarily, because these topics touch upon, and could possibly affect, NATO decision-making procedures and structures, and its effectiveness, as well as NATO's agenda itself.



Portuguese Atlantic Youth Association – Francisco Costa

Francisco Costa graduated in International Relations in the School of Social and Political Sciences of Lisbon with a Post-Graduation in Marketing and Communication. In 2009 he was invited to join the Portuguese Atlantic Youth Association. He is currently Vice-President of the Portuguese YATA and Secretary-General of YATA International. Also, he is now working for the Portuguese government, in the Agency for Investment and Development (AICEP). Francisco can be contacted at fdcosta1@gmail.com.

1) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for NATO in 2014?

2014 is a time for looking backwards and forwards. While the dynamics of the war on terror are still very much in play, the withdrawal from Afghanistan and the re-escalation of violence in countries such as Iraq and Libya present an opportune context for sincere reflections on the disastrous consequences of war without borders. Such inquiry needs to look forward too, to the implications of the current administration's 'war-lite' and the unstoppable proliferation of remote control technologies. This is also the year where we have the chance to get the agenda right for the big international policy decisions of 2015. Looming elections may make it a difficult year for politicians in the US, Europe and many emerging powers to show leadership on such controversial issues. Thus, 2014 will be an important year in deciding whether we continue to control the symptoms of global insecurity or whether we begin to address seriously the inequalities and injustices that underlie it.

2) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for your country regarding defense in 2014?

At the moment, [Portugal's foreign policy towards security and defense](#) frames itself under a specific set of strategic priorities and those will be the most challenging issues for my country, specifically: safeguarding of maritime routes and commercial prosperity for Portugal and the Euro-Atlantic partners and allies; Counter-Terrorism operations and the fight against terrorism in all of its forms (providing support in operations and efforts, and training national security forces in previous terrorist safe-havens, such as Afghanistan); International operational support within the framework of the U.N. and NATO (on several theatres, including Kosovo); Intelligence sharing and international cooperation for the furthering of Portuguese national interest and the converging interests of its partners and allies; Non-Duplication of military assets, output and command structures. Thus, despite the development of E.U. based collective defense and security, Portugal focuses its investment primarily between U.N. and NATO operations, except for most anti-piracy operations which it frames majorly under the E.U.



3) In your opinion who will be the most important actor shaping NATO's agenda in 2014? (person, organization or other)

The next Secretary-General is going to have a key-role in shaping NATO's agenda. With the current proliferation of nuclear weapons, the spread of missile technology and the undoubted potential for devastating attacks on communication networks or for terrorist acts using state-of-the-art technology, formulating a narrative for NATO post-2014 is a must and should not be a mission impossible. The face of this new narrative/agenda should be the next Secretary-General.

4) What do you identify as the primary threat to the security of NATO members in 2014?

I see cyber attacks as the greatest threat to NATO members, a bit above terrorism. The magnitude of the cyber problem, combined with declining budgets, will challenge the Alliance for years to come.

5) What do you expect to be the most important result delivered by the 2014 NATO Summit in the United Kingdom?

The Summit, as the current Sec-Gen Rasmussen said earlier, is going to shape the future of the Alliance, by taking clear decisions on improving military capabilities, maintaining interoperability and deepening NATO cooperation with partners around the globe. The most important result delivered by the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales is going to be related with Afghanistan, for sure, once progress on the completion of the NATO-led missions there will be a topic of discussion.



YATA Slovenia – Daniel Fazlić

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1) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for NATO in 2014?

While the most challenging issue for NATO in 2014 will be Afghanistan and getting our troops and equipment home, this will overshadow the real issues. The Alliance will spend a lot of money and resources, allocated them to Afghanistan and that will foreshadow, in my opinion, the problem of [the widening gap of military budgets vs. capabilities](#). Like in any major military engagement, the time of ending missions takes a lot of strategic and political power to fulfil, but will also be used as a tool to expose the problems the militaries have. The real question is not what the most challenging issue for NATO will be in 2014, but what will follow soon after.

2) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for your country regarding defense in 2014?

Slovenia has little to no external threats that the government can use to justify defence spending. Furthermore, explaining the future scenarios and threats that can occur, is at times of austerity practically impossible. That is why I believe that Slovenia's number one challenge in 2014 will be to try to maintain the current level of readiness. At the same time, with the same amount of money and facing possible cutbacks, Slovenia will have to reorganise the armed forces and seek cooperation with nations in the region to produce or keep certain capabilities.

3) In your opinion who will be the most important actor shaping NATO's agenda in 2014? (person, organization or other)

This is not a hard one, and most people will agree that the United States will have the most important role of all in the alliance. The US still has the largest military budget and by far the biggest capabilities when we look at NATO. More or less all the foreign policy that NATO does is involved around the US. When we look at missions that were carried out in cooperation with NATO, the United States were always there to help and boost capabilities of countries willing to participate. It is said today, that without the United States any decent military operation in NATO would simply not be possible. With all these factors it becomes quite clear who is the most influential member of them all.



4) What do you identify as the primary threat to the security of NATO members in 2014?

The primary threat in 2014 will be the inability of member countries to form an efficient and real foreign security policy. Most member states have financial problems in just maintaining the armed forces' readiness and that is also shown in their limited ability to produce and project power outside of their region. Armies all across Europe are cutting back in all sectors and power projection capabilities, thus sending troops and peacekeepers abroad is increasingly difficult. This will cause numerous problems as areas of conflict will lose the stabilising or normalising effect that the troops deployed there would bring about.

5) What do you expect to be the most important result delivered by the 2014 NATO Summit in the United Kingdom?

The United Kingdom Summit will be a hallmark one, as NATO is slowly redefining its post-Afghanistan role. The transatlantic link was a bit damaged, but many have raised hopes of recuperation within the Alliance. A lot has happened since Chicago and more will happen after Afghanistan. That's why I think that the Wales summit will be one of the most important summits in the last decade, as the future of the Alliance will be on the podium. Hopefully the most important result will be a new declaration on the alliance – a transatlantic link agreement that will change how the United States will see future cooperation with their European allies.



Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom – Jonathan Boulton

Jonathan S. F. Boulton is a member of the Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom. He has completed an undergraduate degree in War, Peace and International Relations at the University of Reading and a Masters in Conflict Resolution in Divided Societies at Kings College London. He can be contacted at jonathanboulton14@hotmail.com

1) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for NATO in 2014?

For NATO redefining its role in a post Afghanistan environment will be one of the most challenging issues in 2014. As national militaries re-orientate from a sustained war fighting operation to a peace time role and as political establishments look to reduce military expenditure as a result maintaining NATO's relevance and capabilities will become an increasingly important issue for the alliance.

2) In your opinion what will be the most challenging issue for your country regarding defense in 2014?

For the UK cuts to the defense budget and the attempt to reorganize the armed forces, including cutting regular forces and establishing a larger, more integrated, reserve component, will be the predominant defense issues for 2014.

3) In your opinion who will be the most important actor shaping NATO's agenda in 2014? (person, organization or other)

The shape of NATO's agenda in 2014 will inevitably be increasingly determined by the electorate of each NATO country, with most voters currently more concerned about economic stability and growth, and less concerned about expenditure on military forces and foreign intervention, they will inevitably play a key role in shaping NATO's agenda in 2014.

4) What do you identify as the primary threat to the security of NATO members in 2014?

Complacency. There is a tendency in the UK among the political establishment, in the post Afghanistan environment, to argue that the UK will not fight any more wars for the next decade, however as was seen in the 1920's and 1930's countries with an ambivalence towards foreign security can precipitate a significant threat in its own right.

5) What do you expect to be the most important result delivered by the 2014 NATO Summit in the United Kingdom?

The key results of the 2014 NATO summit will most likely be decisions on the future direction of NATO and on the increased integration amongst national forces, alongside likely an increased emphasis on new threats such as cyber, drone and economic and the best way to combat them as an alliance.