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A Critical Response to NATO Rethink, Realign, React

Résumé

Cette note est une critique des recommandations proposées dans le rapport *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* de l'Institute for Eastern Studies. Elle vise à montrer qu'un durcissement des positions de l'OTAN à l'égard de Moscou pourrait entraîner de nouvelles tensions qui pourraient mener au pire. Il est au contraire nécessaire de trouver des voies et des moyens d'une 'désescalade' avec Moscou qui pourrait passer par la reconnaissance d'une Ukraine décentralisée et neutre.

Abstract

This note critiques policy recommendations proposed by NATO Rethink, Realign, React, a report produced by the Institute for Eastern Studies. The note, based on a discussion held

at the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (June 13, 2016), argues that engaging in a much tougher NATO stance toward Moscow, as proposed by the NATO Rethink, Realign, React report, will cause a greater escalation in NATO-European-Russian tensions that could soon prove uncontrollable. What is needed is a new round of NATO-European-Russian negotiations that involve concrete proposals and compromises, such as the mutual recognition of a "neutral" and "decentralized" Ukraine, and which are aimed at the eventual implementation of a new system of Euro-Atlantic security that thoroughly incorporates legitimate Russian security concerns.



I

First, let me thank the organizers François Lafond, Yves Boyer, Timothy Riback, and the Institute for Eastern Studies, for putting together this important discussion on the report, *NATO Rethink, Realign, React*.¹

I will never forget the title of Yves Boyer's chapter for my first edited book, *The New Transatlantic Agenda* (Ashgate, 2001)² whose publication and policy recommendations I believe were overshadowed by the September 11, 2001 attacks. Boyer had entitled his chapter, "NATO Forever!" which I understand to mean the indefinite "open enlargement" of the Alliance.

There have been two major consequences of "NATO Forever!" after NATO, the Europeans and Russia were unable to implement a new system of Euro-Atlantic security in the period immediately after Soviet collapse in 1991. The first consequence is that the expansion of NATO by 1999 into the so-called Russian "near abroad" represented a major factor in helping to cause a Russian backlash once Vladimir Putin came to power, much as two of the major founders of the strategy of "containment" against the Soviet Union, George Kennan and Paul Nitze, had forewarned.³ The second consequence has been the relative weakening of the European Union as a security and defense identity so that, as the report *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* states, the US pays for roughly 70-75% of the defense burden, while the Europeans, as so-called "free riders", pay roughly 25-30%. (Lafond, p. 21) At NATO's origins, George Kennan had expected roughly equal power and burden sharing between the US and Europeans.

NATO Rethink, Realign, React offers a number of important observations and policy recommendations on contemporary NATO-European-Russian relations in the aftermath of the 2014 Russian « annexation » of Crimea and political-military interference in eastern Ukraine. A number of these observations and policy proposals need to be discussed and debated at the upcoming NATO summit in Warsaw in July.

1. Kinga Redłowska, ed. *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* (Warsaw: Institute for Eastern Studies, 2016).

2. Yves Boyer, "NATO Forever!" in Hall Gardner and Radoslava Stefanova, eds. *The New Transatlantic Agenda* (Ashgate: 2001).

3. On Kennan and Nitze, among others who opposed NATO enlargement, and the failure to implement a new Euro-Atlantic system of cooperative-collective security, see Hall Gardner, *Dangerous Crossroads: Europe, Russia and the Future of NATO* (Praeger, 1997).

NATO Rethink, Realign, React examines crucial issues ranging from US-European relations within NATO (including the defense industry), to terrorism, cybersecurity and propaganda, in Chapter 2 by François Lafond, Chapter 3 by Greta Tuvkte and Deivisas Stekys and Chapter 5 by Tim Stuchtey.

Yet for this discussion, I would like take issue with what I consider the main themes of the report that deal with NATO strategy and that are discussed primarily in Chapter 1 by Przemysław Zurawski vel Grajekski, in Chapter 4 by Philip Karber and Phillip Petersen, and in Chapter 6 by Julian Fota. Each of these chapters argues for a much tougher NATO stance toward Moscow, and for abandoning any ideas of a US-European-Russian "reset" as generally hoped for in the period 2008 to 2014.

Instead of abandoning efforts to achieve a new rapprochement with Moscow, as generally proposed by this report, I believe the NATO Warsaw summit should look to ways to find the appropriate balance between toughness and the full-fledged negotiation. The major difference between my views and those of *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* is that NATO needs to better re-define its long term objectives in such a way as to reach real compromises with Moscow which can lead to a new system of Euro-Atlantic security—despite the fact that NATO is now engaged in a dangerous game of power-based bargaining with Moscow.

Here, for example, NATO needs to consider the possibility of negotiating a formally "neutral," yet decentralized, Ukraine, for example, while suspending its policy of "open enlargement." And instead of demanding Moscow "to evacuate Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, as well as Crimea and Donbass" as proposed by the report, NATO—and the European Union—should press for joint power sharing arrangements, joint peacekeeping, overlapping security accords, and joint political-economic and financial cooperation, where possible.

In a word, NATO and the EU need to better coordinate their own strategies in seeking to defuse tensions with Moscow. Here I have called for a grand compromise between NATO, the EU and Russia, a "neo-Jaures strategy".⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski has called for

4. I have called for a "neo-Jaures plan" for peace in Europe, after the French political leader, Jean Jaures, had pressed for reconciliation with Imperial Germany despite the latter's forceful annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. See Hall Gardner, *Crimea, Global*

the “accommodation” of Russia based on a Finnish-like neutralization of Ukraine.⁵ French General Desportes (retired) has called for a “gentleman’s agreement”⁶ between the Europeans and Russia. While I disagree with the view of General Desportes that NATO should be dissolved at this time, I do agree that the US, NATO, as well as the Europeans, should seek a “gentleman’s agreement” with Moscow—even if President Putin does not, at least at present, appear to be acting with a “gentleman’s” manners.

II

First, I concur with the general analysis as set forth in *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* that the contemporary situation is not at all similar to the ideologically-charged Cold War era (Karber and Petersen, p. 31). But “capitalist” vs “communist” ideology is not the primary difference between now and then and “democratic” vs. “authoritarian” ideology has largely taken its place.

The main difference between now and then is that during the Cold War, US-Soviet relations were more of a two-power or bipolar balance and there was a more clearly demarcated division of Europe into NATO and Soviet spheres of influence and security, at least after the Berlin crises. By contrast, in contemporary circumstances, the world has entered a more dangerous period of highly uneven polycentrism in which Moscow is struggling to sustain the remnants of the former Soviet Union after that empire’s collapse.⁷

This struggle appears most evident in Russian efforts to safeguard its naval base at Sevastopol and its military intervention in support of Al-Assad in Syria so as to retain Russian influence in Syria, and throughout the ‘wider Middle East’ region as a whole, including the northern Caucasus. At the same time, both NATO and the European Union have not yet defined their borders and continue to expand into Russian-declared spheres of influence and security.

Rivalry, and the Vengeance of History (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). See also, Hall Gardner, *The Failure to Prevent World War I: The Unexpected Armageddon* (Ashgate, 2015).

5. Zbigniew Brzezinski, interviewed by Adam Garfinkle, *The American Interest* (March 3, 2014) <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/03/06/coping-with-crimea-in-ukraine-and-beyond/>

6. Vincent Desportes, Discussion « OTAN : Poutine, Notre Meilleur Ennemi » FR5 : *C'est dans L'Air* (June 8, 2016).

7. Hall Gardner, *Crimea, Global Rivalry, and the Vengeance of History*, op. cit.

In fear of further disaggregation, Moscow is now playing hardball and I do not believe we should expect unilateral concessions in response to NATO “toughness” as was the case under Mikhail Gorbachev. Not discussed in *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* is the probability that an even more intransigent leadership could follow Vladimir Putin—if some form of grand compromise or accommodation cannot be reached with Putin’s government, or at least proposed, in the near future.

III

The term « Russian aggression » that is used in several chapters is not very helpful in explaining the deeper roots of contemporary crisis. The deeper problem is that following Soviet collapse, Moscow has engaged in a delayed reaction to the largely uncoordinated « double enlargement » of NATO and the European Union.

NATO expansion was seen as potential « threat » at the time of the 1999 war « over » Kosovo, a war which helped overturn Boris Yeltsin, who was then replaced by Vladimir Putin. In 1999, the US had not only announced that three new states would enter NATO as members, it also engaged in the war ‘over’ Kosovo without a UN mandate, which Moscow considered an “illegal” act and which had excluded Russia from the UN co-decision-making process. During that year, the US Senate also passed the National Missile Defense Act (97-3), leading to global Missile Defense deployments. The US Senate likewise raised the prospects of the potential membership of Georgia and Ukraine in NATO, in its debate over NATO’s “open enlargement.” These actions provided Vladimir Putin with the grounds to formulate a new Russian national security consensus.⁸

At the same time, there was nevertheless some hope in the period 1999-2014 that the US and Russia could eventually find a *modus vivendi* over strategic nuclear weaponry, Missile Defense deployments as well as NATO expansion. But here, as long as the question of NATO enlargement formally remained on the table, it appeared dubious that Moscow would ever agree to some form of compromise accord. The Baltic states, brought into NATO in 2004, had already been considered a “red line” by the generally pro-Western Yeltsin administration. Georgia and Ukraine now represent the new “red line.”

8. Hall Gardner, *NATO Expansion and US Strategy in Asia* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013).

With respect to the European Union, Moscow did not see EU expansion as a potential « threat » until the European Union attempted to implement Association Accords with former Soviet bloc states in 2007-08 to the exclusion of Russia. Rightfully or wrongfully, Moscow has tended to see the 2008 European Union Eastern Partnership that has been aimed at bringing six eastern European neighbors—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine into new Association Accords—as a way for the new Europe to draw Ukraine, Georgia and other former Soviet states away from Russian spheres of influence and security. The Eastern Partnership, it was feared by Moscow, would twist the political-economic allegiance of Ukraine, and other former Soviet republics, toward Europe and away from Russia—if Moscow did not also form part of the accord.⁹

Having already “lost” its Warsaw Pact buffer, and fearing “loss” of its so-called « near abroad » (as well as its so-called “inner abroad” in Chechnya and the northern Caucasus), Moscow reacted in a form of *preclusive imperialism* to prevent both NATO and the European Union from drawing former Soviet bloc states in a NATO-EU sphere of influence and security. This action appears to be a flashback to the past when Moscow cracked down on Poland and Czechoslovakia when it was feared that the 1947-48 US Marshall Plan would draw eastern European states away from Soviet influence, particularly if Moscow itself was not somehow included in the accord.

Moscow’s efforts to establish full control over Crimea—at least from a geostrategic perspective—have been intended to prevent what Russian President Vladimir Putin called « NATO sailors » from eventually taking over Sevastopol—in that the 2014 Maidan movement had urged Ukraine to join both NATO and the European Union, and intended to press the Russian Black Sea fleet out of its base at Sevastopol. Russian political military interference in eastern Ukraine has concurrently been intended to block closer ties between Kiev and NATO and European Union...

In this view, Russia’s actions can be considered *preclusive*; at the same time they are still *imperialistic*. And because they are imperialistic they generate new tensions not only in the Black Sea region and Caucasus, but throughout the eastern European countries that border Russia and elsewhere. In Chapter VI of the *NATO Rethink, Realign, React*,

9. Gardner, *ibid.*

Julian Fota argues that Moscow hopes to turn the Black Sea into « Russian lake ». But here it appears that Moscow can only hope to dominate the northern region from Abkhazia to the Donbass, thus partitioning the Black Sea, in large part in order to protect its trade hub at Novorossiysk. Given sufficient Ukrainian resistance, it appears dubious that Russia will be able to expand its influence into Odessa, for example.

The *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* report is correct that Russian control of Crimea (and the abolition of the Kharkiv accords) permits Moscow to engage in greater power projection in the region and beyond. At the same time, NATO-member Turkey, which has been dangerously augmenting tensions with Moscow in Syria and throughout the region, still controls the Straits. A NATO-Russian military build-up in the Black Sea region risks undermining the 1936 Montreux Convention.

IV

It appears dubious that Russia can continue to thrive on the “destabilization” and “disintegration” of its neighbors—particularly Ukraine as a whole—as generally argued by *NATO Rethink, Realign, React*. Such a destabilization is resulting in major political, economic and military costs that have begun to backfire on Moscow itself. And Moscow does generally recognize that it needs a stable Ukraine for its own political-economic stability and security.

Instead of trying to further isolate Moscow, as the Report proposes, what is needed is a concerted framework involving the US, European Union members and Russia that better balances the interests of the major powers and central and eastern European states. As energy prices will probably remain relatively low for some time and as new energy producers and new forms of energy come onto the highly competitive global market, and as energy demand from China appears to drop, Moscow may soon begin to see that it needs to engage in major structural economic reforms. Moscow could also realize that only the US and Europeans, and not the Chinese, possess the technologies and expertise that Russia needs to develop and modernize its industrial and agricultural and consumer sectors. This is for European and American diplomacy to explore. (See discussion on Russia and China that follows in Section VI of this article.)

Yet how is a more « concerted » US-European-Russian relationship to be established? How is it possible to reach an accommodation with

Moscow given the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine and the “illegal” seizure of Crimea, plus other threats, such as the penetration of NATO defenses by Russian aircraft and submarines?

Chapter 1 of *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* put the matter bluntly in opposing dialogue without simultaneously engaging in a military build-up: « *the lifting of sanctions on Moscow—without reinforcing NATO eastern flank will be interpreted by Moscow as « consent « to further expansion » and « The result of a policy not to « aggravate » Russia and instead to seek « constructive dialogue » will be war »* (Grajekski, p. 9).

This is a repeat of the anti-« appeasement » argument in a contemporary situation which possesses more differences than similarities to that of the late interwar period when Hitler came to power. By contrast, today’s situation can be better compared and contrasted to the early interwar period during the Russian revolution when Russia began to assert its interests against Poland in Ukraine. It can also be compared and contrasted to the period before World War I, but in a situation in which Russia is trying to hold onto its remaining spheres of influence rather than attempting to obtain new ones, as was the case for Imperial Germany, which then lost all continental and overseas buffers and spheres of influence after World War I and prior to the rise of Hitler.¹⁰

Thus, despite the report’s implied analogy to Nazi German expansion, I believe there are still ways to bargain from a position of relative strength without necessarily « aggravating » Moscow in return. The promise to lift sanctions must be seen as *only one* of the tools of a much larger and coordinated bargaining strategy that is intended to reduce NATO-EU-Russian tensions. The problem here is that this crisis involves both NATO and the EU, and thus makes a resolution even more difficult to achieve without a common US-NATO-European diplomatic, defense and political-economic strategy.

The concern raised here is that if it does prove necessary to build up NATO power capabilities involving a threat to use force, much as a number of the chapters of *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* advocate, then that military build-up will only escalate tensions—if it is not simultaneously accompanied by a detailed plan for an alternative system of European

security and a full willingness to compromise with Moscow over what many may be considered « vital » interests.

Zbigniew Brzezinski¹¹ has argued that the US and Europeans may need to build up some forces in eastern Europe. (Here I would argue only on a rotating basis). Yet as Brzezinski also points out: “*But we can only do that (build up US forces and other measures) if we have a larger strategy and a sense of balance between deterrence and capitulation on the one hand, and deterrence and accommodation on the other hand. What enticements could encourage the Russians to find some way in which we both settle together on an arrangement for Ukraine... somewhat like Finland. Finland is very much part of the West—politically, socially, culturally—but it has simultaneously good relations with Russia and is at the same time not a member of NATO*”¹² (My emphasis).

The major point is that the US and Europeans need to define clear objectives that can convince Moscow that they are sincerely seeking to forge a grand compromise. The US and Europeans thus need to provide positive incentives and enticements and not just threats and sanctions in order to convince Moscow that a general militarization of Europe and a closer Russian alliance with China is not in Russian interests.

Here, however, with respect to Brzezinski’s observation, it should be noted that even Finland’s relations with Russia are changing. Finland, along with Sweden, has been moving closer to NATO, as the *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* report correctly observes. The question now becomes how close should these formerly “neutral” states of Sweden and Finland move toward NATO and to what extent can the ‘threat’ of these states joining NATO be considered part of a larger bargaining strategy to create a new system of Euro-Atlantic security that includes, not excludes, Russia?

If bargained cautiously, a resource rich yet “neutral” and decentralized Ukraine could play a significant role as a « gateway » between Europe and Russia. A neutral, yet

11. Zbigniew Brzezinski’s anti-Soviet policies eventually worked to draw the US into the “global war on terrorism” yet Russia is ironically now needed as a full coalition partner. On Brzezinski’s role in making the Soviet Union more likely to invade Afghanistan and in building up pan-Islamic movements, see Hall Gardner, *American Global Strategy and the ‘War on Terrorism’* (Ashgate, 2007).

12. Zbigniew Brzezinski, op cit.

10. See Hall Gardner, *Crimea, Global Rivalry and the Vengeance of History*, op. cit.

decentralized, Ukraine could begin to defuse tensions between NATO and Russia and thus minimize the ostensible need to expand NATO membership to Sweden as well as Finland. At the same time, it appears dubious the Donbass question can be settled without also settling the question as whether NATO should eventually enlarge to Ukraine.

The Warsaw NATO Summit must consequently determine whether Ukrainian membership in NATO is truly a « vital » interest for the US and Europe. I am thus arguing that NATO should formally announce at the Warsaw Summit a full suspension of NATO enlargement, as part of a larger negotiation process that is intended to reach a deal with Moscow over eastern Ukraine and the Caucasus—among other issues that are dividing the three sides.

V

The situation in the Ukraine appears to be moving toward one of a « mutually hurting stalemate » (in the language of conflict resolution theorist I. William Zartman). This situation could well lead to the establishment of yet another « frozen conflict » or else toward social and political compromise between the eastern and western regions of Ukraine. The U.S. and European states have appeared to have granted Kiev sufficient financial and military assistance to counter autonomist movements that are not-so-secretly backed by Russia so that a rough ‘mutually hurting stalemate’ appears to have been achieved.

After a severe critique of the Minsk II accord (in which the « victim » Ukraine is seen as « being restrained by its Western interlocutors » (Karber and Petersen, p. 34), the *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* report does propose the need for the deployment of a « multinational brigade of neutral but armed peacekeepers with unrestricted access throughout the Donbas » (Karber and Petersen, p. 36) in order to enforce Minsk II—otherwise Minsk II will fail.

This proposal has merit and the possibility of peacekeepers is beginning to be considered by Russia and Ukraine, even if Moscow has thus far agreed only to a temporary and limited presence, while Kiev wants to set up a more permanent and expanded peacekeeping force.¹³ The only other option might be a

13. Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, “The political and military implications of the Minsk 2 agreements”, Mathieu Boulègue, [http://](http://www.frstrategie.org/publications/notes/the-political-and-military-implications-of-the-minsk-2-agreements-11-2016)

highly instable partition of the country which will not benefit either side and which will create permanent tensions beyond Ukraine...

Nevertheless, even if Kiev and Moscow have not yet reached an agreement on the nature of peacekeeping for the Donbass, this proposal presumes the absolute need to strengthen NATO’s *Partnership for Peace* (PfP) which could be eventually deployed in the Donbass area, or elsewhere, under an OSCE or UN mandate. I would accordingly put the need to strengthen the PfP on the agenda of the NATO Warsaw Summit. The PfP is an underused tool that can succeed *on the ground in helping to build trust between warring parties*—if given the proper resources.

VI

I totally agree with the *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* report’s statement that, « If one considers the consequences of the conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine, it could be said that neither Russia nor the US, but China, who has emerged the winner. » (Fota, p. 54)

Yet in contrast with the report’s general theme, from a global geostrategic perspective, the rise of China as an increasingly global political-economic, financial and military power ironically represents a potential key to helping to resolve the NATO-European-Russian dispute. On the one hand, it is not in the US/NATO interest to press Russia and China into a tighter alliance, which is a real possibility that has largely been underestimated.

On the other hand, it also does not appear to be in the Russian interest to become an increasingly indebted serf to China’s sovereign wealth funds. In other words, does Moscow want to permit itself to become a junior partner to Beijing? Here, the European Union has a major role to play in attracting Moscow closer to Europe if the EU could eventually offer a political-economic accord that meets both Russian and Ukrainian political-economic concerns as part of a staged reduction of US and European sanctions on Russia in exchange for mutual diplomatic compromise over Ukraine in general accord with Minsk II.

I thus believe it is the rise of China in the background that can potentially provide the US, EU and NATO diplomatic leverage to reach what I have called a « grand compromise » with Moscow... that is, if such

www.frstrategie.org/publications/notes/the-political-and-military-implications-of-the-minsk-2-agreements-11-2016

diplomacy can be played correctly in the not-so-long term.

VII

We are entering a very danger period. Will NATO's actions and efforts to build up its military capabilities in Poland and the Baltic states and strengthen ties to Sweden and Finland—in order to make a feared Russian advance into the Baltics sometime in the future much more costly—represent acts of true “deterrence” or “dissuasion” in French terms? Or will such a military build-up be perceived by Moscow as an act of escalation that will be met by Russian counter-escalation?

The answer depends, in large part, upon the ongoing dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council, which not-so-successfully began in April 2016 after breaking off relations in 2014, a dialogue which is hopefully to be continued in July. NATO has thus far opted for a two-track strategy of military build-up and dialogue. But there will only be continued military build-up if there is no real dialogue and no positive compromise. The viability of the 1997 NATO-Russian Founding Act is at stake.

The issue is this: If NATO insists on a military build-up to protect the Baltic, Central European and Black Sea fronts—and if the US, EU and NATO bargaining position insists that Russia be asked to “evacuate Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, as well as Crimea and Donbass” as proposed by *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* (Grajekski, p. 15), then there will be no end to NATO-Russian tensions. Moscow would definitely consider such a demand as a *casus belli*. Moscow has gone too far in annexing Crimea and in interfering in a number of regions, most recently, the Donbass, to capitulate to NATO demands.

Yet in contrast to the demand to evacuate these regions, I would propose a compromise position: joint NATO-Russian or else multi-national Partnership for Peace (PfP) peace-keeping deployments (under a general mandate of the OSCE or UN) in Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia—in addition to the deployment of PfP peacekeepers under a UN or OSCE mandate in the Donbass region as previously discussed. As for Crimea, I would suggest pressing for an international free trade zone—but that Crimea would remain under Russian sovereignty despite its “illegal” takeover. And I would push for the same for Kaliningrad to become a free trade zone as well. These proposals would be

coupled by a step-by-step joint demilitarization of both regions.

Instead of engaging in a full military build-up of the Baltic states, which can be relatively easily countered by Moscow, as the *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* report itself acknowledges (Karber and Petersen, 40-42), I propose other options: joint NATO-Russian air policing of Baltic region and joint naval and air patrols in Black Sea region, for example. Concurrently both sides need to jointly reduce conventional and nuclear military capabilities in all theatres, while seeking ways to cooperate where possible in the “global war on terrorism”.¹⁴

There should be immediate discussions to reduce, if not eliminate, all tactical nuclear weaponry as soon as politically possible. As mentioned in the *NATO Rethink, Realign, React* report, Moscow is enhancing its A2/AD denial tactics in Kaliningrad by deploying S-400 air defense missiles and tactical, nuclear capable, Iskander surface to surface missiles, plus shore based cruise missiles (Karber and Petersen, p. 40) so as to block NATO from potentially re-supplying the Baltic states in case of war. But in addition to the considering the upgrading and deployments of the B-61 tactical nuclear weapon (among other nuclear weapons systems), the US is deploying new Missile Defense systems and penetrating radar in Romania and Poland—which Moscow sees a potentially capable of protecting a nuclear first strike. To reach a compromise, the US and Russia should re-visit some of the previous proposals for joint Missile Defense systems that were proposed before UN P-5 plus 1 negotiations pressed Iran to give up on its nuclear program—while also looking for ways to reduce conventional and tactical nuclear weaponry.

There is almost no strategic nuclear confidence between Washington and Moscow once the US unilaterally dropped the ABM treaty in 2002 without seeking a substitute treaty with Moscow. It will still take some time to build up trust, and as I have argued, Moscow will not give up unilaterally or even compromise without very tough power-based bargaining. Nevertheless, I do not believe these proposals are utopian. They can succeed if proposed by the US and Europeans in a

14. For a brief outline of proposals, see Hall Gardner, “The Reset was Never Reset” NATOwatch Briefing Paper No.49 (April 2014) <http://natowatch.org/node/1449> For more detail, see Hall Gardner, *NATO Expansion and US Strategy in Asia*, op. cit. and Hall Gardner, *Crimea, Global Rivalry and the Vengeance of History*, op. cit.

unified and concerted fashion and if all sides demonstrate a practical effort to forge a new system of Euro-Atlantic security that incorporates *legitimate* Russian security and political economic concerns and that protect Moscow's *truly* "vital" interests.

The NATO Warsaw Summit could prove to be a pivotal historical event that could help bring permanent peace to Europe. Or, more pessimistically, the Summit could once again lead to down the path of intermittent NATO-European-Russian confrontation in the form of "hybrid" or "non-linear" warfare that could

then unexpectedly result in catastrophic war.¹⁵ It is crucial that the NATO Warsaw Summit find ways not to further isolate Moscow in Europe by keeping open the door to mutually beneficial political and economic cooperation while concurrently seeking to engage all sides in building a new system of Euro-Atlantic security from the Baltics and Eastern Europe to the Black Sea and Caucasus.◇

15. Hall Gardner, "Hybrid Warfare: Iranian and Russian Versions of "Little Green Men" and Contemporary Conflict," No 123 (December 2015) NATO Defense College, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=885>

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