

Presentation on NATO

by Bombspotting - Vredesactie (www.bombspotting.org - www.vredesactie.be)

Contact: international@bombspotting.org

1. Introduction

We first give an introduction to the place of NATO in the international relations. Then we talk about the functioning of NATO to continue with the main issues are connected to NATO membership nowadays.

2. NATO has seen an evolution from a Cold War military alliance to a global intervention power nowadays. NATO was established in 1949 as an international military organisation for collective defense against the Soviet Union. The collective defense role is specified in art 5 of the NATO Treaty and states that an armed attack on one of its members is considered as an attack on all its members. Europe was divided in two blocks with each massive conventional armies alongside the Iron Curtain and nuclear weapons pointed at each other. The US, Canada and 10 European countries were the first members, while in the fifties Greece, Turkey and Germany joined. When Germany joined in 1955 the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries formed in reaction the Warsaw Pact.

For the US the role of Europe was forward defense. The US strategy was to make sure that wars were fought outside the American continent. By putting its troops in Europe it made sure a war with the Soviet Union would first be fought there, while the Soviet Union did something similar with Eastern Europe (although intercontinental missiles with nuclear warheads changed this calculation again). In East-Asia and the Pacific a similar story can be told about Japan, South-Korea, the Philippines and islands like Guam, which functioned as the forward defense on the other side. A similar organisation as NATO was established, SEATO, but it never reached the same importance as NATO and became disfunctional after the Vietnam war.

With the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 the common enemy disappeared. The collective defense role became less important. From this moment on NATO is legitimating itself with a series of vague and potential treats. In the Strategic Concept of 1991 and the actual version of 1999 the spill-over effects of instability outside NATO territory, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disruption of the flow of vital resources and actions of terrorism and sabotage are named as potential treats.

The following years sees the enlargement of NATO towards the east. First with the reunification of Germany, followed by a first round in 1999 with Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, and a second larger round in 2004. This enlargement was prepared in the Partnerships of Peace, a NATO program for military cooperation in order to create trust and to enable the military to work together in multinational operations. In this enlargement you still see the forward defense strategy but this time the frontline moves. This enlargement was in first instance presented as a stabilisation of Europe by creating common institutions, but this story became less credible when NATO was enlarging in former USSR territory.

In the nineties with the civil war in Yugoslavia NATO found a new role: humanitarian operations. After smaller operations in 1995 NATO launched in 1999 its first full-scale 'humanitarian war' against Serbia over Kosovo. After 3 months of air bombardements Serbia agreed to withdraw from Kosovo. 11 September 2001 gave another reason of existence: the war on terrorism. NATO decided that its forces had to transform into intervention forces and started to establish a standing rapid reaction force: the NATO Response Force.

3. I already indicated the importance of NATO for the US during the Cold War, in the role of forward defense. In the new role of NATO as instrument for military interventions, NATO gets a new importance.

First as forward base towards Middle East, Central Asia and Africa through the US military bases in Europe and the use of transport infrastructure for its troops.

Secondly as force multiplier. Europe delivers extra troops and pays part of the bill.

For Europe the importance of NATO lays still in its old collective defense role, but this is mostly in the perception of its new Eastern European members. For the other European states NATO is an instrument through which they can play a bigger role in world politics. Both NATO and EU are instrumental in great power dreams of the European elites.

Last but not least, NATO is a way to have influence on the US policy and to limit its unilateralism. At least, that is what a lot of diplomats are saying. You can wonder if this influencing has any impact and if the real influence does not work the other way round.

The visions of the European elites on NATO's future are not very clear or outspoken and on the European level there is a lot of internal division. On the US side one vision has come to the foreground the last years, that of a global NATO or NATO as a global alliance of democracies, about which we talk more later.

4. NATO and world military expenditure

To show a bit the craziness of all this security stuff, some figures:

Military expenditure 2009: (SIPRI - In constant 2008 US\$)

NATO (-US): 355,000,000,000 (22.6% world)

US: 663,000,000,000 (42.1% world)

NATO total: 1,018,000,000,000 (64.7% world)

World: 1,572,000,000,000 (1572 billion)

China: 99,000,000,000 (6.3% world)

UK: 69,000,000,000 (4.4% world)

France: 67,000,000,000 (4.3% world)

Russia: 61,000,000,000 (3.9% world)

Expenditure for development aid 2009: US: 29 billion \$ (source OECD), EU: 49 billion euro (source EU, this includes a billion for hosting refugees and deporting them)

NATO realises 2/3 of the world military expenditure. Their biggest potential enemies no more than 6.3% (China) and 3.9% (Russia). The typical rogue states where we have to be afraid of like Iran, spend even less (0.5%).

Since all these military expenses are now also done for humanitarian reasons, it is also good to compare them with the development aid expenditures. In Europe 8-10 euro's are spent on the military for each euro on development aid, in the US 12\$ on the military for each \$ development aid.

5. All this makes clear that globalisation is not just something economical, but that it has its military counterpart. When we talk about globalisation we mostly think about world trade, international finance and institutions like the IMF, the World Bank or the WTO. But globalisation also has a military backside.

The New York Times' columnist Thomas Friedman stated: "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist --McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley 's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."

The free market is not something which comes falling out of the air or something 'natural', but it is politically regulated. Behind the ideological presentation of the free market we find geopolitics: military competition for acces to economical resources and energy, for control of global commons like waterways or space, ...

6. In the following we go deeper into these issues, but first some explications about the functioning and structure of NATO.

NATO is a military alliance of 26 member states, but also an international organisation with distinct structures.

It has a political structure, with the North Atlantic Council (NAC) as main body. This body is responsible for the political decision-making inside NATO. It meets with sometimes a different composition of member states representatives. When the government leaders will meet in Strasbourg, they will meet mainly as North Atlantic Council. Also when the NATO member states ministers of foreign affairs or of defense meet, they do it as NAC. For the daily affairs, the NAC meets at least weekly at the NATO HQ in Brussels, composed of the permanent representatives. The NAC is assisted by the NATO Secretary-General, at this moment the former Danish prime minister Rasmussen, and his international staff.

The work of the NAC and all regular activities are done through an extensive committee structure, with each time representatives of the member states.

Aside of that there is a military structure. This consists mainly of a headquarter command structure, lead by the SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe) who is always a US general.

In case of war, that is a self-defense case foreseen in art.5 NATO-treaty, all designated troops come under the unified command of this SACEUR.

In the non-art. 5 operations, that are all operations from 1995 till now, the member states make a case-by-case decision about which troops to contribute and for how long.

France left this military structure because it does not want to put its military under permanent US command in case of self defense. Nowadays this issue has lost its importance as all operations are non-art.5-operations. France wants to join the military structure again, on condition it can still keep the command of its troops.

7. Important in this story is that NATO is no more than a headquarter structure. There is no NATO army. All the troops stay national troops. For operations the member states contribute troops for multinational operations led by one of this headquarters.

In this headquarter structure you have three levels. The strategic headquarter or SHAPE (in Mons, Belgium) does the general force planning. The operational headquarters, together with its component headquarters are involved in the actual operations. The headquarter in Brunssum is leading the Afghanistan-operation, while the HQ in Naples is responsible for the Kosovo-operation.

The EU works with a similar, although much smaller, set of headquarters contributed by some member states. Again the member states contribute troops for operations at an ad-hoc basis.

This means the only difference between a NATO and a EU operation is the headquarter leading the operation. The troops on the ground are troops from the national armies, which can serve once in a NATO-operation and another time in a EU-operation. The actual operations are done in the same way, the troops are not trained differently for a EU-operation or for a NATO-operation.

The main difference between a NATO and a EU operation is the fact that the decision making is done by a different grouping of states, which results in another composition of political interests and constraints.

The EU is no alternative for NATO, but is in its military operations more of the same.

8. As said NATO has no army of itself but is just a headquarter structure. It has no troops of itself, although NATO has invested in a very limited set of military assets for collective use. Best known are the AWACS radar planes, used for surveillance of the airspace. NATO also has some pipeline networks dating from the cold War (which means they go from the western shores to the former frontline bases) and communication networks.

New in this row will be the missile defense command installations. More info later in this talk.

To bring the NATO policy in practice NATO takes care to provide a general framework, but the practical work is done by and between the member states.

Ex:

- The deployment of nuclear weapons is decided by NATO, but the actual deployment is regulated by bilateral treaties between the US and the host member states.
- NATO has a general SOFA (Status of Forces agreement), but the establishment of military bases and transports to and from those bases are regulated by bilateral treaties between the concerned

member states.

Member states have started to pool or to share military assets in multinational projects to lower costs or for political reasons.

An example is the Eurocorps. This is a headquarter, set up by France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg and now also Poland, which can be send out as operational headquarter in an intervention zone. In this capacity it has been deployed to Kosovo and Afghanistan. This headquarter was not set up for cost reasons but for political aims: to create an embryonal European structure and to increase interoperability.

The financial reasons are seen in the investments for strategic transport. Big transport planes like Antonov-124 or C-17's are very costly. So several multinational solutions are developed. The SALIS-projects leases access to 6 An-124 planes for military use by the participating states, of which 2 are permanently present in Leipzig. In a similar way a grouping of states has bought 3 C-17-planes, which are now deployed in Papa, Hungary. These planes can be used both for a NATO-operation or for an EU-operation by the participating states according to their financial contribution. Another logistical project is the Movement Co-ordination Centre Europe (MCCE), through which excess sea, air or land transport capacity is shared between the participating states. Again it are not all the NATO member states participating, and again it can be used both for NATO and the EU. Another project, shared by 15 countries, is the AGS- Allied Ground Surveillance-system, meant for long distance surveillance. It consists of Global-Hawk drones or unmanned planes, with surveillance sensors, and will be based in Sigonella (Sicily) from 2012 onwards. It has a range of 13000 km and can reach war zones like Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen.

9. What is at stake with NATO today? What are the consequences of NATO membership by your country?

First: thanks to NATO, we are in war. The bombs are not falling in Europe. They are falling several thousands of km away in Iraq and Afghanistan. But still war is waged from Europe. Europe serves as a launch pad for military interventions worldwide. Europe hosts a large military intervention machinery.

Europe was and is essential in the Iraq war, as it was carried out from US bases in Europe, which are here because of NATO. Now also the European countries themselves are all engaged in the war in Afghanistan. And through the NATO Response force they build up a more efficient intervention posture.

Thanks to NATO several European countries still have nuclear weapons on their territory and all member states are involved in the nuclear policy. NATO is also the framework through which European states are forced into acceptance of the US missile defense system.

Last but not least, the continuing expansion of NATO towards Ukraine and Georgia leads us to renewed confrontation with Russia. In the future this expansion can go global with the proposals for more global partnerships and eventually membership.

In the rest of this presentation we go deeper into these issues.

10. Through NATO the European countries are now fully engaged in the Afghanistan war. NATO commands the ISAF-operation (International Security Assistance Force). This operation started in 2001 around Kabul, first commanded by individual willing allies and from 2003 by NATO, and enlarged in several phases its area of operation to the whole country since 2006. Called a 'peace mission', it is a full scale counter-insurgency operation. And not a very succesful one, as the insurgency seems to get stronger and to spread to the whole of Afghanistan.

ISAF has now 119000 soldiers of which 35000 come from Europe, 78000 US soldiers and 6000 from other countries (Canada, Australia, Georgia, South-Korea, New-Zealand, ...). The main European contributors in August 2010 were the UK (9500), Germany (4600), France (3750), Italy (3400), Poland (2600).

In several countries discussion the latest troop enlargement was accompanied with promises on withdrawal dates. The Netherlands is withdrawing its soldiers, after the government collapsed over the question. Canada did put an end date in 2011, while in Poland the minister of defense talked about an end date in 2012. Even the US announced it would 'start to withdraw' in 2011. All this shows that the continuing war effort has weak public and political support.

Since beginning nineties so-called peace operations became the new core business of the Western militaries. During the nineties an evolution can be seen towards more forceful interventions or peace-making. It reflects a larger belief in the possibilities of military force and technocratic approaches to so-called state-building to overcome the constraints of the local political dynamics.

NATO's peace-keeping and peace-making doctrine is modeled on the British one. In practice peace-making comes down to counter-insurgency. This military doctrine is a modernisation of the old colonial military doctrines and based on experiences in fighting insurgencies in Asia, Africa and more recent North Ireland. The French have their own doctrine based on its own colonial experience like the Algerian war. The US doctrine has taken this colonial heritage as a base in the Vietnam war and created its own counter-insurgency doctrine out of its experiences in interventions from Vietnam to Iraq.

11. The changing objectives of the military led to the demand of transforming the armies of NATO member states and to acquire the assets for long-distance operations. One result of this transformation is the NATO Response Force. It is a standby rapid reaction force. Because the slow and ad hoc method of collecting troops for the non-art-5 military operations (out-of-area and not in case of self-defense), the need was felt for a rapid reaction force where this force generation process was done before a decision to do a specific operation. Each 6 months other troops are designated to participate in the NRF by the member states. These troops stay standby to be available for immediate use when so decided.

The NRF is a force of 25000 soldiers, able to deploy in 5 days. It has a brigade-size land component with forced-entry capability, a naval task force (including a carrier battle group, an amphibious task group and a surface action group) and an air component capable of 200 combat sorties a day. In other words a complete army which immediately can start military operations and continue this for a short period of 30 days, till other troops are raised for the longer-term military operations.

12. What it means when we say 'war starts from Europe' can be illustrated by the Iraq war in 2003. 54000 US military based in Europe deployed to the war zone in and around Iraq or worked in direct support for it. 320000 ton of military material came out of or passed Europe.

The US Army had 26000 soldiers deployed from its bases in Germany and Italy to start the invasion of Iraq. At the same moment bombing flights directly going to Iraq took off from bases in the UK and from the aircraft carrier of the US 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean. In total there were 3000 combat sorties and 36 missile attacks coming out of Europe on Iraq. From bases in Italy and Greece aircrafts with troops took off to have them parachuted in North-Iraq. Detainees were moved to Guantanamo through Europe.

Without the use of its European bases and European logistics the US would never have been able to go to war with Iraq. The European governments could have prevented this war by refusing to allow the use of these bases and infrastructure. Instead they consented to it, even when they were officially against the war.

This military role of Europe in the Iraq war still continues and has grown as well for the Afghanistan-war. In 2009 more than half of the US Army personnel in Europe deployed, was preparing to deploy or just returned from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. At any time 25% of the US Army personnel was deployed to the war zones. 75% of the military equipment for Iraq and Afghanistan passes Europe.

13. This was all possible because of the US military bases in Europe. The official legitimization of the US military presence in Europe is NATO. Although NATO was officially not involved in the Iraq war, it was instrumental for it. NATO is no alternative for US unilateralism, it is what makes it possible.

Today there are about 80000 US military in Europe (without the 6th Fleet), in the future this amount will be lowered to 66000. These forces are commanded from their headquarter in Stuttgart: EUCOM (European Command). The EUCOM commander is always also the supreme NATO commander (SACEUR).

The main US Army forces consist of 2 Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) in Germany (Vilseck) and

Italy (Vicenza). These are combat forces with all necessary material and support elements to conduct military operations. 2 extra heavy BCT's are still in Germany till 2012-2013, but will be withdrawn to the US (although this decision is still under discussion).

The US Air Force has about 77 bases and 220 aircraft in Europe. Its main bases are Lakenheath (UK), Mildenhall (UK), Ramstein (D), Spangdahlem (D), Aviano (I), Lajes (P - Azores), Incirlik (Turkey).

The main US Navy forces in Europe is the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean. It has its main support bases in Italy and is commanded from Naples. A line of US support bases can be found alongside the Mediterranean towards the Suez Canal: Rota in Spain, bases in Sicily and near Naples, Souda Bay on Crete, ...

All these bases and infrastructure provide the US with the capability to operate autonomously out of Europe, as long as the European countries accept this. NATO is the instrument through which this acceptance is shaped and produced.

14. A remnant of the Cold war is the stationing of nuclear weapons in Europe. The US has still about 150-240 nuclear bombs in Europe, to be delivered by military aircrafts of their NATO allies. Active nuclear airbases can be found in Belgium (Kleine Brogel), Germany (Büchel), Italy (Gheddi Torre, Aviano), the Netherlands (Volkel), Turkey (Incirlik). On this map Lakenheath (UK) and Ramstein (Germany) are still indicated as active bases, but during the last years indications have been found that the nuclear bombs are withdrawn from these bases.

It is the airforce of the host countries which has the wartime role of delivering the nuclear bombs and which is training for this role. The bombs are under control of a US military unit and in wartime they are handed over to the airforce of the host nation. This policy is in clear contradiction with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which forbids the delivery of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear weapon states. But the NATO countries state that such handing over will only take place in case of war and in wartime arms control treaties like the NPT are considered to lose their validity.

These nuclear weapons are just a small part of the existing US nuclear arsenal and have no real military value anymore, not even for hardline Cold Warriors. NATO still defends its presence in Europe as hedging, a sort of insurance policy against sudden new threats. But main reasons for keeping the nuclear weapons in Europe is to press European NATO members into acceptance of US nuclear policy by making them accomplices. Another reason is the fact that once withdrawn it is almost impossible to bring those weapons back. Now the deployment of these nuclear weapons is accepted as a relic of the past, once gone the public will be more reluctant to accept new nuclear weapons.

These nuclear weapons are a big obstacle for further nuclear disarmament steps and fuel nuclear proliferation, as it is difficult to convince other countries not to acquire nuclear weapons while you say you still need them yourself for your security.

Inside NATO a discussion about nuclear weapons was avoided the last years. With the upcoming review of the Strategic Concept a discussion is unavoidable. Or the role of these nuclear weapons disappears from this Strategic Concept, or they get a new role against so-called rogue states like Iran. The discussion proves to be difficult. Germany and with a weaker voice also Belgium and the Netherlands want the nuclear weapons to disappear, while the Baltic states and Poland want them to stay. A possible outcome is that the Strategic Concept will contain a vague paragraph, while the discussion is prolonged in a NATO Nuclear Posture Review in 2011.

Both France and the UK have their own nuclear weapons. The UK ones are also given a NATO role. France has stayed outside the NATO military structure, which means also outside NATO's nuclear planning. Both countries are busy modernizing their arsenals while reducing them a bit. Both countries attach importance to these weapons as symbols of their big power-status, although the military value of these weapons has disappeared or diminished.

France is eager to create a European legitimation for its nuclear weapons and to use them to give itself the role of European protector. Till now other European states have been reluctant, but in the Lisbon Treaty a similar 'solidarity' clause as art 5 of the NATO-treaty is included and the development of a similar defense posture as NATO is potentially possible in the EU-framework. A logical next step would be the development of an own security strategy including the self defense policies like nuclear weapons. Again, it shows that the military instruments itself is the problem.

Placing them under another institution is no solution.

15. The newest US toy in Europe is the missile defense system. First a little explanation where it is about. Basic idea is that, once a missile is launched, it gets detected early by satellites. After detection this missile is tracked by radar stations. An interceptor missile is fired and guided with the information of these radars to the incoming missile.

This picture still shows the old plans under the Bush presidency. They were cancelled by the Obama administration, but only to exchange it for plans for another missile defense system. Technically it comes down to the same thing.

16. What the Obama-administration wants to put in place is a slower build-up of the missile defense system, in accordance with the evolution of the threat. That means with the presumed missile capacity of Iran.

This plan is called the Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA):

In phase 1, that is by 2011, sea-based interceptor on AEGIS ships would be deployed to southern Europe (Turkey and/or Greece) as well a transportable radar system to Bulgaria or Turkey. This is an existing system for theatre missile defense, in other words only capable for a shorter range than in the Bush plans.

In phase 2, by 2015, more capable interceptor missiles would be deployed in Romania, as well as more advanced sensors.

Phase 3, by 2018, would see again new and more advanced interceptor missiles, this time in Poland.

Phase 4, by 2020, consists of an upgrading to again more advanced missiles. These would have a range and speed which would allow them to threaten intercontinental missiles. This makes it still a system creating worries in Russia.

All this is a US system, but it would now be integrated in the NATO air defense system. This through connecting all the national missile defense capacities in a new NATO command and control center, probably in the Czech Republic. Cost price is 260 million \$, decision will be taken on the Lisbon summit.

Already involved are the radar sites in Fylingdales (UK), Thule (Greenland), Vardo (Norway). The US also plans to put a portable radar in one of the Gulf states and will probably link as well the new delivered X-band radar at Nevatim airbase in Israel.

The integration of this US system into NATO has stopped most criticism at state level in Europe, but some important criticisms stay unanswered. Apart from doubts about its reliability and its cost, the main criticism is that it changes the nuclear balance in Europe (if it works). It would give the US a first strike capability towards Russia. At the moment none of the two can risk a nuclear attack without risking a destructive counter attack. With a functioning missile defense system the US could try to destroy the main part of Russia's nuclear forces in a nuclear attack, and stop the counter attack by the remaining Russian nuclear missiles with its missile defense system. The missile defense system would be unable to stop a full-scale nuclear attack by Russia, but it could be big enough to stop a counter-attack when it has destroyed most of Russian nuclear weapons in a first blow. As such this system is indeed a defensive system, but combined with the nuclear arsenals it becomes very offensive.

This possibility angers Russia and provokes military counter-measures. It risks to start up a new round of armaments races. Also the fact that the US starts building bases nearer to its borders is perceived by Russia as a violation of the political agreement to end the Cold War.

17. Both the remaining nuclear weapons and the missile defense system can be seen as part of the former US strategy to use Europe for forward defense. This forward defense has moved nearer and nearer to Russia borders with the enlargement of NATO to Eastern Europe and even to the territory of the former Soviet Union with the Baltic States. The enlargement of NATO fits in an encirclement strategy towards Russia. Ukraine & Georgia are the next steps.

Another motive behind the enlargement to Georgia is energy politics. Georgia can be used as a route to the gas resources in the Caspian Sea, without having to pass Russia.

Both the governments of Ukraine and Georgia have demanded a Membership Action Plan, a preparation program for membership. But NATO membership is a contested issue in these countries. In Ukraine the majority of the population is against membership and wants to keep good relations with Russia. Ukraine stays an internally very divided country with a strong Russian minority.

Georgia is the scene of strong internal nationalist conflict as in former Yugoslavia. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Georgia gave way to strong Georgian nationalism. This was felt as a treat by the population in Russian speaking regions like South Ossetia and Abchasia, which both also lost their autonomous status. Historically the regions were made part of Georgia by Stalin and never felt themselves part of a Georgian nation. These tensions led to a civil war and ethnic cleansing on all sides beginning of the nineties. With help from Russia this civil war was halted and became a 'frozen' conflict till the war this summer.

This conflict is now instrumentalised in NATO-Russia confrontation and both sides have turned for help to their mightier allies. NATO countries do not let hear any word of criticism about the ongoing Georgian nationalism, while the Russian 'protectors' let happen ethnic cleansing by South-Ossetian militias. This instrumentalisation makes the local conflict impossible to solve and can easily lead to escalation.

In both cases NATO membership leads to more internal struggle. The internal conflicts can only be solved if they are separated from big power politics. The solution here is not more NATO but less NATO.

18. Global Nato?

One vision of a future NATO has come to the foreground in recent years. That of a NATO with global aims and members from all over the world. NATO should evolve from a European-American military alliance to a worldwide, military security organisation. A kind of 'United Nations of the Willing', which will result in the marginalisation of the actual United Nations. In more ideological terms, NATO should become an Alliance of democracies. Both Republicans as Democrats have been promoting this idea, like Ivo Daalder, advisor of Clinton and now Obama. Also European right wing politicians like the former Spanish prime minister Aznar and in Australia Rupert Murdoch are big fans.

As potential new members Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South-Korea are often mentioned. Sometimes Israel and India as well, as democracies to involve in such a League.

This idea is controversial in Europe, especially as it is seen as a way to weaken the demand for a strong and separate European pillar and to give the US a pool of nations from which it can choose its coalition of the willing. But this does not mean this idea is blocked, only that the US has to push the idea forth in small steps. Partnerships and cooperation agreements are now a first step, just like the PfP (Partnership for Peace) was a first step towards membership in the earlier enlargement rounds. These new partner countries are regularly in involved in discussions on Afghanistan, while also the cooperation with Israel is growing.

However, this step is not self-evident. Partnerships with Australia and Japan, suddenly give NATO a role in the Pacific and drastically change our relationship with China. Becoming a member means that the guarantee of collective defence is extended to countries in the Pacific. This transforms NATO into a worldwide military alliance. If there is a conflict in the Pacific then Europe is automatically involved. World-War I showed clearly how a local conflict can escalate into a World War through treaties promising military support. It can be regularly heard in American military circles that the next big conflict will be with China. Do we really want to get involved?

What does this mean for countries who are not part of this military alliance and who could potentially be defined as a security threat? For them these developments are a threat to which they will strive to respond to militarily. The result will be a new arms race and militarisation of international relations. The idea that the threats are global could well become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

In a similar way NATO cooperation with Israel function to align the Europe countries with the US policy towards Israel. In the report of the Expert Commission a possible NATO role in a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine is mentioned.

19. The upcoming NATO summit in Lisbon will decide on a new version of the Strategic Concept.

This Strategic Concept is the main policy document on NATO's objectives and on the political and military means to be used in achieving them. The latest version dates from 1999. The year after this summit all aspects of NATO policy will be on the discussion table and the next summit will make a final decision on a new Strategic Concept. This new Strategic Concept will shape NATO policy for the coming 10 years!

A lot of issues that have been mentioned are now on the political agenda for discussion.

On the Afghanistan intervention the member states try to show a united stand, but in the background is discussed how large NATO's military intervention role has to be.

On the question of objectives and aims probably energy security will be included. This means that the flow of oil and gas is considered as a vital interest for which NATO is ready to use force.

The new Strategic Concept will also have to give an answer on enlargement and membership issues. How many space will it leave for NATO to become a global alliance?

Nuclear weapons will be on the table as well. Or the role of these nuclear weapons disappears, or they get a new role against so-called rogue states like Iran. This discussion will be very decisive for the deployment of US nuclear weapons in Europe. This is at the moment the subject where a consensus between the member states is very far off. It is possible that the discussion is prolonged for a year with a NATO Nuclear Posture Review.

Missile defense will be introduced for the first time in the Strategic Concept and its role defined.

Another issue will be the relation between the EU and NATO. With the Lisbon Treaty the military role of the EU is expanded and theoretically will be similar to NATO's. The role of the EU military policy and areas of cooperation will receive extensive discussion during this review and will be reflected in the Strategic Concept.

For us the question is, do we need and want such a NATO? Protest and actions before, after and during the summit will be necessary. The more that happens, the more our politicians feel that their room of manoeuvre is limited. 2010 is a very defining year for NATO and it is up to us to make sure we can have some impact.