Forward Resilience: Protecting Society in an Interconnected World
Working Paper Series

Resilience and Alliance Security:
The Warsaw Commitment to Enhance Resilience

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Introduction

Faced with the greatest security challenges in a generation, the NATO Alliance is currently implementing the most significant reinforcement of its collective defense capabilities since the end of the Cold War. While a great deal of public attention has been focused on NATO's military adaptation, concurrent efforts to strengthen the Alliance's ability to resist and recover from attack not just militarily, but also with civilian capacities, have so far been less visible. However, this is changing. At the Alliance's July 2016 Summit meeting in Warsaw, NATO leaders agreed an unprecedented "Commitment to Enhance Resilience." The 28 allies are now working urgently to put this commitment into practice.

The Alliance's renewed emphasis on resilience is based on the recognition of two uncomfortable, but increasingly important trends. First, armed forces today are more reliant than ever on capabilities and infrastructure that are civilian-owned or operated. To have assured access to these capabilities, NATO requires robust civil preparedness in allied nations, across both the public and private sectors. Second, civilian services and infrastructure are potentially vulnerable to outside attack or internal disruption - and such vulnerabilities could be exploited by potential adversaries. Not only could the Alliance's military capabilities be attacked indirectly, but civilian functions could become a primary target. In an age of hybrid threats, strengthening resilience, primarily by improving civil preparedness and cyber defenses, is therefore a critical component of NATO's efforts to deter and defend against the full range of threats.

Modern Resilience for Effective Defense

Resilience is not a new task for the Alliance. Article III of the Washington Treaty stipulates that allies have an obligation to develop and maintain the capacity to resist armed attack. Long before the advent of cyber threats and hybrid warfare, this notion of resilience was always understood to go beyond military capabilities. As early as the 1950s, NATO had put in place policies and planning for civil preparedness. By the late 1980s, the Alliance maintained plans for eight NATO civil wartime agencies, which could be stood up in times of crisis or war to coordinate and direct efforts ranging from industrial resource allocation and oil supplies to food production, civil transportation, and the management of refugee flows.

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[1] This chapter reflects the author's personal views and does not represent those of any institution or organization.

This early NATO collective resilience architecture involved more than 1,400 international civilian experts, as well as corresponding resources in all NATO members' capitals. However, following the momentous changes of the 1990s, it became one of the first peace dividends of the new era. By 2014, when the security environment shifted once again, funding and legal mandates for civil preparedness had all but disappeared in the majority of Allied nations. What remained in terms of residual civil home defense planning responsibility had often shifted to specialized agencies, such as fire and rescue services, which lacked the mandate and resources to undertake robust planning for homeland and Alliance defense.

The near absence, for a generation, of robust national and Alliance resilience planning became apparent when urgent steps were taken to improve NATO's deterrence and defense capabilities with the NATO Readiness Action Plan agreed at the September 2014 Wales Summit. Following an initial assessment by experts within NATO's Civil Emergency Planning Committee, a first report on the state of civil preparedness across the Alliance was presented to NATO Defense Ministers in February 2016. This assessment, together with parallel efforts to improve NATO's and NATO nations' cyber defenses, laid the groundwork for the now ongoing, systematic effort to improve resilience across the Alliance.

Based on an assessment of threats and vulnerabilities, allied defense ministers agreed on a set of minimum standards for national resilience, so-called "baseline requirements," in seven areas that were deemed most critical to NATO's collective defense tasks:

1. Continuity of Government – maintaining at all times the ability to make decisions, communicate them, and enforce them, and to provide essential government services to the population.

2. Resilient Energy Supplies – ensuring that energy supply, including national power grids, are secure and that nations maintain the necessary prioritization arrangements and redundancy.

3. Resilient Civil Communications Services – ensuring that telecommunications and cyber networks remain functional even in demanding conditions and under attacks.

4. Resilient Food and Water Supply – ensuring sufficient supplies are available to both civilians and the military, and safe from disruption of sabotage.

5. Ability to Deal with Large Scale Population Movements and to be able to de-conflict such movements from potential national or Alliance military deployments and other requirements.

6. Ability to Deal with Mass Casualties – ensuring that health systems can cope even in very demanding situations when there might be simultaneous pressure on civilian and military health care capabilities.

7. Resilient Civilian Transportation Systems – ensuring that NATO forces can move across Alliance territory rapidly and that civilian transportation networks remain functional and effective to support civil and military requirements even when challenged or attacked.

The Warsaw Resilience Commitment

The agreement by allied ministers on the baseline requirements was a key milestone. A few months later, the issue was brought into the political spotlight with the "Commitment to

Enhance Resilience" adopted by Alliance Heads of State and Government at the July 2016 Warsaw Summit.

The Warsaw Summit Resilience Commitment makes three critical points. First, it stipulates that resilience is an essential basis for deterrence and effective fulfillment of the Alliance's core tasks. Second, it makes clear that in order to be able to deter and defend against the full range of modern threats, allies need to maintain and protect critical civilian capabilities alongside and in support of military capabilities in an integrated way, and with the involvement of the whole of government and the private sector. Third, it constitutes a political commitment at the highest level by each allied nation to strive to achieve the agreed requirements for national resilience.

Beyond establishing resilience firmly among NATO's priorities, the Warsaw Summit Resilience Commitment is notable for a number of additional fundamental points. Although it takes a deliberately narrow, defense-focused view on resilience, the Warsaw document does note that the foundation for resilience lies not simply in infrastructure, planning and preparedness – but first and foremost in the NATO nations' shared commitment to common values. Democratic governance, individual liberty, and the rule of law are the first line of defense against hybrid and other threats. The Warsaw Commitment also points out that the NATO requirements, while critical to achieving the Alliance's core tasks, may not be the only lens through which nations view resilience and that there is not necessarily a single path to achieve them. Because resilience is first and foremost a national responsibility, nations must each develop and build systems that suit their own national circumstances and risk profiles, as well as their commitments *vis-a-vis* other bodies such as the European Union. They cannot and will not maintain more than one set of capacities to resist and recover from catastrophic events, be they natural disasters or armed attacks. Finally, the Warsaw Commitment recognizes that NATO's resilience can be enhanced by the work of other organizations, in particular the European Union, and by strengthening the resilience of partner countries in the Alliance's neighborhood.

The Road Ahead – Doing the Homework

NATO members are now working to achieve the Warsaw Commitment, while NATO is putting in place the necessary collective instruments to assist them in doing so. Considerable progress has been achieved in a short period of time, but there are also challenges.

Building resilience starts at home. NATO has defined a set of requirements, but allied nations will have to make the necessary arrangements to be able to implement these resilience requirements horizontally across government and the private sector; and vertically from the highest level of national governments down to state, county, and municipal level.

This will need investment. Capabilities and infrastructures such as transportation networks, energy grids, monitoring systems, and telecommunications networks will have to be improved, but the need for investment goes beyond physical infrastructures. An equally important gap exists in human resources and connectivity. National authorities charged with achieving the resilience requirements across the seven sectors will need the appropriate staff, training, and access to information networks to be able do so. For example, a Ministry of Agriculture cannot ensure that food supplies are resilient against hybrid threats if it is not given the manpower to do the necessary planning; the personnel security clearances to interface with intelligence agencies and with military authorities; and the training to develop modern resilience systems

for a modern security environment. The same is true for almost all other areas of government. Planning costs money.

Another area of homework concerns legislation. National governments must have the necessary legal basis to define resilience standards and to enforce them in peacetime and crisis. This begins with adequate provisions for government powers in situations that may remain below the traditional threshold of war defined in emergency legislation; and it may end with the necessary legal authority (and capabilities) to manage, if necessary, population movements in crisis or conflict. In between these are a whole range of other laws and regulations that affect governments' ability to permit movement of allied forces across borders and territory, and provide adequate host nation support even in the most demanding circumstances. Many significant improvements have been made in this regard over the past 24 months, but more work is necessary to ensure that improved legislation translates into more effective arrangements and support at all levels.

Allied nations must also further improve their ability to partner effectively with private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure and services. Although, in general, private sector owners and operators have a strong commercial interest in being able to minimize disruptions and outages, there are areas in which private sector security or business continuity planning does not go far enough to satisfy national and Alliance security and defense requirements. In these cases, there is a need for Allied governments to incentivize private sector support – be it through intelligence sharing, preferential contracting, or, possibly, funding arrangements. Where such incentives are not feasible or do not prove powerful enough, governments may need to consider enforcing private sector compliance with baseline resilience requirements through appropriate regulation or licensing.

While NATO can set requirements and guidelines, the Alliance itself does not possess legislative or regulatory powers over the private sector, nor is it a funding mechanism for national civil preparedness. This makes transparency and cooperation with the European Union a critical task. Several important steps have already been taken. Boosting resilience against hybrid warfare was highlighted as one of the priority areas for cooperation in the Joint Declaration on NATO-EU Cooperation that was signed on July 7, 2016 by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, and President of the European Council Donald Tusk. NATO and European Union staffs are actively working to develop further concrete proposals for cooperation and information sharing.

Setting and Assessing Requirements

While the primary responsibility for building a more resilient Alliance rests with national authorities and – where appropriate – the competent European Union bodies, there also remains homework to do for NATO collectively. A critical area is to refine the requirements and to assess progress against them. The Warsaw Summit Commitment sets out very clearly the problem to be solved and the primary ways of solving it, but it does not define in detail what constitutes success, nor does it set a definite timeline for achieving greater resilience. Refining these two aspects is a main priority.

NATO expert working groups are currently defining basic criteria for evaluation of resilience across all of the seven baseline requirements. Along with a set of guidelines that have already been issued to allied nations, these criteria for evaluation will form the basis of a fresh assessment of the state of civil preparedness across the Alliance in the near future. This

assessment will be conducted by leveraging the NATO Defense Planning Process, the Alliance's long-standing and proven mechanism to assign capability targets to allies and to assess their performance against them.

This is easier said than done. Unlike military requirements that can be easily quantified, none of the seven NATO baseline requirements are susceptible to a one-size-fits-all solution. For example, how a nation ensures the survivability and continuity of government functions is not only a sovereign prerogative, it is also contingent upon factors that vary widely among allies, including individual constitutional provisions and geography. Likewise, there are many different approaches and political traditions in NATO capitals regarding legislative provisions, cross-government coordination and planning -- including on sensitive matters such as use of the military for domestic purposes, intelligence sharing, or law enforcement powers.

Against this background, NATO cannot – and does not strive to -- develop a single detailed template for how to achieve resilience across the seven critical sectors. It can, however, be the platform on which Allies can share best practices and successful models in a context of shared purpose and confidentiality. NATO can also be a platform for engaging private sector interests in frank and open exchanges on respective requirements and expectations. The first series of such exchanges within NATO have been very promising, and they will be continued.

Collective Action

The Alliance must also be in a position to provide concrete practical support to those allies who request it. Many of the necessary tools for helping allies (and third countries) to improve their resilience are already in place. NATO has a cadre of civilian experts from government and industry at its disposal to advise both individual nations and, if necessary, the NATO military authorities, on all aspects regarding the use and protection of civilian resources and infrastructure. This unique expertise is now being reconfigured and trained to be available to member states of the Alliance, but also to third countries, as so-called Resilience Advisory Support Teams.

NATO is also improving training and awareness raising. Such efforts are crucial to ensure that as legislation and arrangements are improved, knowledge of improved procedures actually trickles down to the operational and tactical level. Beyond operational training, there is also a need to rebuild more systematically the links between national and NATO military structures on the one hand and national civilian authorities on the other. Until the 1990s, NATO CIMIC (civil-military cooperation) staff and national civilian resilience planners participated in systematic cross-training. Revitalizing this tradition in NATO military training and education will go a long way to integrating military and civilian aspects of resilience.

Finally, while achieving resilience is above all a national responsibility, NATO must be able to increase civil preparedness collectively, when a crisis situation demands it. The existing NATO Crisis Response System provides both the overarching mechanism and a set of detailed planning tools to achieve this. Civil preparedness must also be exercised, alongside Alliance military exercises. Ensuring that resilience considerations can be effectively integrated into military exercises are therefore a key priority and currently a major line of effort within the competent Alliance bodies.

Conclusion

Long considered a peripheral issue, resilience has once again become core business for the Alliance and for national security planners in allied capitals.

The Warsaw Summit Commitment to Enhance Resilience was an historic reaffirmation that resilience, ensured through systematic civil preparedness and effective civil-military planning, is a central pillar of NATO's collective defense. Requirements have been agreed and criteria for success are being defined. The basic process is thus in place, but delivering on the Warsaw Commitment remains a complex undertaking. It will require a holistic view on resilience, both within national governments, across governments and the private sector, between NATO and the European Union, and with partner countries beyond NATO.

Delivering on the Warsaw Commitment will also require continued high-level political attention and investment. NATO Heads of State and Government have provided the high-level political impetus. This must now be followed up at all levels, from national security councils and key government departments all the way down to municipal levels, and across the public and private sectors – to build a more resilient Alliance.