



Deter and Engage: Making the Case for Harmel 2.0 as NATO's New Strategy

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This intervention by Ulrich Kühn argues that NATO needs a new strategy towards Russia. The current strategy is imbalanced because it over-emphasizes power and risks negatively affecting the European security order. A new strategy should recall the 1967 Harmel Report, which successfully combined the security elements of power, order, and liberal values. Today, such a balanced strategy is again needed. A new Harmel strategy (Harmel 2.0) should, like its predecessor, rely on a combination of deterrence and engagement. This intervention thus argues that in the realm of power, NATO needs to respond to Russia's hybrid warfare threats with conventional reassurance and societal soft power measures and that securing the Allies' economic vulnerabilities while leaving NATO's current nuclear posture untouched will also be crucial. In the realm of order, NATO needs to re-engage on cooperative security and the instruments of arms control, and it is argued that a pause to further NATO enlargement would be helpful. Finally, in the realm of liberal values, the Allies should lower their expectations as a gesture of recognition that they cannot change the domestic situation in Russia in the short term, but they should address the attitudes of certain member states in that realm. In order to succeed with such a multi-pronged strategy, the Allies need to better coordinate their policies in the OSCE and amongst EU countries.

NATO – in Search of a New Russia Strategy

In this intervention, a tripartite theoretical approach to international security based on the grand traditions of Thomas Hobbes, Hugo Grotius, and Immanuel Kant and the implications these lines of security thinking have on the conduct of international relations is developed. Then, the conditions under which the Harmel Report incorporated these ideas are explained. Departing from the historical analogy, the three theoretical realms of power, order, and liberal values are applied in order to analyse NATO's responses to recent security challenges and to identify its political shortcomings and the inherent problems with these responses. In each case, concrete policy recommendations are provided on how to advance a better strategy, drawing on the example of Harmel's balanced combination of the three realms.

With the war in Ukraine, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and the continued Russian intimidation of NATO member states, the days of trying to build a post-Cold War strategic partnership between NATO and Russia seem to be over. Russia has violated a number of central tenets of the European security order, such as the principle of the inviolability of frontiers, and has rhetorically threatened NATO Allies. So far, NATO has reacted by ramping

* http://ceenewperspectives.iir.cz/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/NP_2015_01_Kuhn_NATO_Harmel2.pdf

up its defence readiness and suspending the dialogue with Russia at the working level. It seems that Europe is entering a new phase of increased competition and tension. But is NATO really ready for the challenges this new phase brings? When trying to answer this question it is helpful to recall some historical lessons from the late 1960s, when Allies decided to rethink their overall strategy towards the Soviet Union.

The so-called Harmel Report of 1967 suggested a well-balanced strategy that reflected three grand schemes of European philosophical thinking about advancing international security: power, order, and liberal values. This successful strategy allowed NATO to blend effective deterrence with a commitment to institutional interdependence and the defence of values, rights and laws, which gave it the moral as well as the military high ground. Today, NATO has deficits in all three realms of security. This is the result of Russia's seemingly unexpected and aggressive power play, certain historical developments in the realm of order, and the Alliance's internal challenges in the economic as well as the societal realm.

NATO's current response to the conflict with Russia is almost solely based on the concept of power. Continuing down this path and not addressing the deficits in the realms of order and liberal values would be potentially dangerous. Such a policy would risk the complete breakdown of Europe's already strained security order, would fail to address NATO's own institutional and liberal deficits, and could provide fertile ground for a military tit-for-tat with Moscow which could easily lead to a renewed arms race.

It is therefore high time to restore the balance between the three essential elements that have made the Harmel Doctrine so successful in the end. European security would benefit from a new Harmel 2.0 strategy that would effectively buttress deterrence and provide channels of communication and engagement with Russia. A multidimensional approach of preserving the remaining institutions of cooperative security in Europe, addressing hybrid warfare threats and securing the realms of economic and societal policies is best suited to make NATO more immune to divide-and-rule tactics. Changing NATO's nuclear posture should not become part of the equation.

As this intervention will show, NATO's current strategy is imbalanced because it over-emphasizes Hobbesian aspects of power. NATO should remember its successful strategy from the Cold War days, which gave equal effect to the Grotian tradition of cooperation, diplomatic dialogue, and institutionalized order. Strategic patience and cooperative security arrangements, including instruments of arms control, must go hand in hand with strengthened defence in order for the Allies to be ready to seriously discuss liberal values with Russia once the Russian leadership is ready for that.

NATO cannot achieve all that on its own. Many of the issues at stake go beyond the institutional authority of the Alliance and would involve the OSCE and the EU. What it needs in the first place is a coordinated leadership of NATO countries and the individual countries' support for a multi-pronged strategy. Last but not least, it would need the Kremlin to accept that the real costs of the renewed confrontation by far outweigh the perceived benefits for Russia. Only a balanced approach that would take account of and address each of the realms identified in this intervention – power, order, and liberal values – stands a chance of achieving this and, in so doing, replicating the success of the Harmel doctrine in shoring up the European security order.

