

The Evolution and Failure of NATO's Nuclear Posture

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As a military alliance with nuclear capabilities, NATO's nuclear posture has gone through a very interesting evolutionary period, shaped by the security environment during its existence. Not only has the Alliance shifted its focus in terms of conventional/nuclear forces ratio following the end of the Cold War, it has gradually changed its vision of nuclear weapons and their role in the world. Alliance remains a nuclear power, at least until the global elimination of all nuclear weapons. However, that goal remains a distant one. Will the Alliance adopt a proactive strategy when it comes to nuclear weapons? Will it modernize its nuclear posture? This article attempts to tackle these questions, while also providing an outline of the stages of the evolution of NATO's nuclear posture. At the same time, it is argued that Alliance's nuclear posture is currently failing, and urgently requires reforms and a new vision.



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Introduction

Since its establishment in 1949, NATO has evolved considerably. Its nuclear policies, priorities and posture in general have been influenced by internal developments both across the organization and within member states. It has to be pointed out

US have emerged out of WWII not only with nuclear weapons, but with least casualties and damage done to the state that became no less dominant in the world, if not stronger. that the US (arguably the primary driving force behind the Alliance) was the first state to develop and use nuclear weapons, and therefore plays a significant part in the general discussion of NATO's nuclear policies. Moreover, the US have emerged out of WWII not only with nuclear weapons, but with least casualties and damage done to the state that became no less dominant in the world, if not stronger.¹

Furthermore, during the Cold War, nuclear deterrence played a major role in the standoff between the Alliance and the Eastern bloc, led by the USSR. Accordingly, the nuclear posture of NATO was shaped by Cold War contexts and stereotypes. However, with the dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, the situation inevitably began to change, prompting the revision of the nuclear policies in all the nuclear states. Given that three members of the “nuclear five” (namely the US, UK and France) are members of NATO, it can be safely said that evolution of nuclear posture played a crucial role in the overall evolution of NATO's approach toward defending and deterring against all perceived threats.

As NATO's overall posture has evolved, the prospects for the potential use of nuclear weapons in any future conflict have declined. Emphasis has shifted towards the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons and focus of confidence for the Alliance's members.² This clear policy shift has prompted changes in the international security discourse, bringing both NATO's conventional capabilities and the debate on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to the forefront of the discussion. The post-Cold War era has brought different perspectives on these issues. However, while the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is reflected in contemporary NATO policies, this organization remains far from

¹ Gaddis, J. (2005) *The Cold War: A New History*. London: Penguin, pp. 8-9.

² NATO Parliamentary Assembly (2010) *212 DSCFC 10 E REV 1 - U.S. Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons in Europe: A Fundamental NATO Debate*, paras. 22-26.

becoming a non-nuclear Alliance.

This paper will review the evolution of NATO's nuclear posture, starting with the Cold War period, proceeding to the immediate post-Cold War period, and concluding with an assessment of modern approaches and trends in NATO nuclear policies. These three periods will be analyzed in order to identify milestones in NATO's nuclear posture in different international security contexts. The paper will discuss NATO's approaches to its deterrence and defense functions from the nuclear standpoint. This will be helpful for drawing conclusions in the final part of the paper.

The roots of NATO's nuclear posture date back to its establishment and the beginning of the Cold War.

Establishment of NATO and Its Nuclear Posture during the Cold War

As mentioned earlier, the US emerged from WWII confident in its ability to operate as a dominant world power, rebuild Europe and achieve supremacy over the Soviet Union; by the end of the 1940s only the US had nuclear leverage. Essentially, Washington's false belief that the US would have monopoly in the field of nuclear weapons for perhaps another decade after the war, allowing them to raise Europe up from the ashes while deterring USSR through nuclear capabilities, triggered – in the context of the prevailing international security conditions - what we know now as the Cold War. The Cold War was based around the nuclear standoff between the Western Alliance and the Eastern bloc. In fact, the USSR acquired nuclear weapons in 1949, the same year that NATO was established. Thus in formal terms, it was the Alliance that was engaged in the nuclear power play, and not just the US. Thus, the US required a new strategy to handle the Soviet Union under these new conditions and in the framework of the new integration project established by the North Atlantic Treaty.³

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Due to the situation in post-WWII Europe, along with other objective factors, it was the US that was almost exclusively respon-

³ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, pp. 34-35.

sible for shaping NATO's policy on nuclear weapons. To try and gain ground on the Soviet Union, the US was forced to upgrade conventional forces while stationing some of them on European soil, build more nuclear weapons to gain leverage in terms of volume, and start research in thermonuclear areas to build a hydrogen bomb, taking nuclear weapon development to a whole new level.⁴ NATO, in due course, produced "The Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Area" (1950). NATO became a nuclear alliance by definition following the adoption of NSC-162/2, now commonly known as the doctrine of Massive Retaliation. At that time, the Alliance struggled to find a balance between nuclear and conventional forces, but found itself locked into a posture that was heavily reliant upon nuclear weapons, taking into account the perceived superiority of conventional forces of USSR and the Warsaw Pact. This enabled European nations to take more control over the nuclear arms based on their territories, thereby reducing US dominance within NATO.⁵ This nuclear posture of NATO prevailed throughout the Cold War long into 1980s, arguably until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In line with this approach, in 1953-1954, the US began the deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe. It was believed that these relatively short-range and less powerful nuclear arms would provide deterrence, and act as counterweights against the conventional forces of Warsaw Pact if needed. NATO's Military

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Committee clearly believed that these non-strategic nuclear weapons could prevent the swift occupation of Europe in the event that deterrence failed.⁶ The allocation of this nuclear arsenal probably served to reassure the European states that the US was capable of using its nuclear potential in defense of the continent. With this in mind, at the beginning of 1960s, the US managed to position its non-strategic nuclear weapons in West Germany, Italy, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and Turkey. France hosted US nuclear weapons until 1959. The Europe-based nuclear weapons arsenal included a wide range of nuclear arms, from very com-

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 36.

⁵ Lindley-French, J. and Macfarlane, N. (2006) *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization: The Enduring Alliance*. London: Routledge, pp. 22, 28-29.

⁶ North Atlantic Military Committee (1954) *Decision on M.C. 48: A Report by the Military Committee on the Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years*. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/stratdoc/eng/a541122a.pdf>, pp. 2, 6-7 (Accessed: 20 May 2015).

pact landmines to mid-range cruise missiles with ground launchers. In 1970s these nuclear weapons numbered more than 7000, but with the end of the Cold War that number declined.⁷

It must be pointed out that NATO members did not always agree on how to proceed with national and/or multilateral nuclear programs during the Cold War. The United Kingdom and France developed their own nuclear programs. Italy and West Germany introduced an arrangement allowing for multilateral nuclear forces, i.e. with the participation of all the European Allies. However, the US never stopped trying to maintain dominance with regard to NATO's nuclear policies, while trying to keep all the non-nuclear European Allies under its umbrella, thereby preventing them from pursuing their own nuclear ambitions. Nonetheless, the Allies were able to reach common ground (the ongoing challenges notwithstanding) on using nuclear capabilities and sharing corresponding responsibilities. For example, if NATO authorized the use of nuclear weapons, European states would assume responsibility for the delivery of US nuclear arms, while the U.S. would maintain control over the nuclear charges until the actual moment of deployment. These steps prompted the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group inside NATO in 1966, mandated to make decisions on nuclear policies. The High Level Group was subsequently created in 1977 (where U.S. still presides) tasked with advising the Nuclear Planning Group on policy, planning and posture. Much of that system remained even after the end of the Cold War in the form of shared physical and institutional framework of NATO's decision making on nuclear matters.⁸

NATO's Nuclear Posture in the Post-Cold War Era

The dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War changed the international security framework so dramatically that even the reasons for the continued existence of NATO and US involvement in European security were put into question. However, neither the US nor Europe were ready to disband NATO and end collaboration on security matters.⁹ The subsequent Gulf War and Balkan conflict convinced the Allies of the prevailing threats

⁷ Kristensen, H. (2005) *U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe: A Review of Post-Cold War Policy, Force Levels, and War Planning*. Natural Resources Defense Council, pp.24-34.

⁸ NATO Parliamentary Assembly, *U.S. Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, paras. 17-21.

⁹ Kaplan, L. (2004) *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance*. London: Praeger, pp. 113-115.

to North-Atlantic community, and it would have been premature to dissolve NATO.

However, due to the change in the nature of threats and their sources, NATO's nuclear posture has been adapted. With the adoption of the new Security Concept in 1991, NATO affirmed that it would adopt and transform itself in accordance with the

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new security realities in the Post-Cold War era. That also meant revising nuclear security policies, taking into account that NATO's purpose was now exclusively self-defense.¹⁰ Thus, nuclear weapons were moved from being the means of first resort to the last. As an early indicator of that switch, in 1991 the START treaty between US and Russian Federation was signed, reducing their respective nuclear arsenals to 3500 warheads.¹¹

The largest reduction in numbers was witnessed in Europe's non-strategic nuclear arms. NATO's tactical nuclear doctrine and strategy were criticized in the mid 1980s, mostly for the concentration and growing reliance on strategic nuclear weapons, leaving the tactical nuclear doctrine in stagnation and the arsenal in deterioration. NATO needed to change its tactical nuclear posture in Europe due to the shift in the strategic environment. This critique pushed for changes in strategy, advocating a flexible response as an alternative to the existing tactical nuclear doctrine, and calling for the reduction of non-strategic nuclear arsenal in Europe.¹² It was only logical that following these trends the US would reduce the number of non-strategic nuclear weapons at the beginning of the 1990s. This complied with NATO's Strategic Concept and the overall changes in NATO's nuclear posture, marking a shift from Cold War era policies. Tactical nuclear weapons were no longer the actual combat-ready means of the forward defense, as propagated by NATO during the 1950-1980s.

As a result, the US started the unilateral withdrawal of all ground-launched, short-range non-strategic nuclear weapons globally; from Europe it withdrew nuclear-warhead artillery ammo, surface-to-surface missiles and anti-submarine bombs,

10 Behnke, A. (2013) *NATO's Security Discourse after the Cold War*. London: Routledge, pp. 79-80.

11 Lindley-French and Macfarlane, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, pp. 61, 64.

12 Maiorano, A. (1983) *The Evolution of United States and NATO Tactical Nuclear Doctrine and Limited Nuclear War Options*. Thesis: Naval Postgraduate School, pp. 4-11.

around 2500 units in total. The free-fall B-61 bombs carried by special fighter-jets were the only kind of tactical nuclear weapons left in Europe. Most of that arsenal was also removed from Europe, leaving only about 600-700 bombs available. Moreover, in line with the reduction of quantities came the reduction of quality. Nuclear attack readiness times were reduced, and potential threats for weapons to target were no longer specified. NATO's reductions were part of the political move to push the Russian Federation to undertake corresponding reductions: a strategic 'cool down'. The presidents of the US and Russia were very active in their initiatives to unilaterally reduce their nuclear potentials in the 1990s. What slowed down the process was the absence of a mechanism to mutually verify these steps, creating concern that some of the reductions may be exaggerated or transferred into shadows - the other side not following up on its obligations.¹³

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By the end of the 1990s, estimates showed that only about 500 US tactical nuclear warheads remained in seven European states. In 2001, the US retracted the twenty warheads that it had been keeping in Greece. This marked the first total retraction in the post-Cold War period, since 1959, when France first requested the withdrawal of US warheads. Starting from 2004, the U.S. began gradually to remove around 130 nuclear warheads from Germany, leaving estimated 10-20 warheads in position. A further 110 tactical weapons were removed from the UK.¹⁴

NATO's post-Cold War nuclear policy has proceeded precisely in line with the terms of the 1990 London Declaration, which promised to downgrade nuclear weapons to weapons of last resort. Whereas the 1991 Strategic Concept believes that the use of nuclear weapons already seems even more remote than in the realities of the Cold War. However, the slight caveat is that non-strategic nuclear weapons still provide a special link to strategic nuclear weapons that support the "trans-Atlantic link". This was largely reaffirmed in the 1999 Strategic Concept, which identifies non-strategic nuclear weapons as sub-strategic forces of NATO that at minimal levels should adequately preserve peace and stability for the Alliance.¹⁵

13 NATO Parliamentary Assembly, *U.S. Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, paras. 22-24.

14 Kristensen, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, pp.53-62.

15 NATO (1990) *London Declaration on transformed North Atlantic Alliance*. Available at: <http://bit>

While the post-Cold War period saw the reduction of nuclear capabilities on both strategic and tactical levels, new threats and challenges in the nuclear area have emerged and must be addressed.

Modern Approaches and Trends in NATO's Nuclear Posture

The reduction of nuclear weapons has been maintained in NATO's nuclear policies since the early 2000s, both at the US' own initiative and with lobbying from the European Allies. That lobbying have arguably culminated in 2010 on the eve of the adoption of NATO's new Strategic Concept in Lisbon. Calls for a serious revision of NATO's nuclear posture and for the elimination of US nuclear arsenal in Europe were voiced inside the Western European branch of the Alliance, especially Germany. That met with opposition from Central European members (geographically closer to Russia), who argued that nuclear weapons remained critical for the security of the Alliance. In spring 2010, the US

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administration released a Nuclear Posture Review report that called for the reduction of the role and volume of US nuclear arsenal to the minimum level required to serve as an adequate deterrent for the US and its allies and partners. The US declared that the single purpose of nuclear weapons was as a deterrent against nuclear attack on US territory or the territory of its allies and partners.¹⁶

With this in mind, NATO adopted a new strategic concept that used much stronger language on the improbability of the use of nuclear weapons by the Alliance, calling it "extremely remote". However, the new concept reaffirmed that as long as nuclear weapons exist in this world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance with strategic nuclear weapons (mainly belonging to the US) as a key security guarantee. Moreover, it reaffirmed the Alliance's approach toward collective defense planning on nuclear roles, further diminishing the dominant role of the US and focus on the appropriate combination of nuclear and conventional forces.

ly/1zjzvnD (Accessed: 20 May 2015); NATO (1991) *The Alliance's New Strategic Concept*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1GZjuJA> (Accessed: 20 May 2015); NATO (1999) *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1vdHssg> (Accessed: 20 May 2015).

16 Pifer, S. (2011) *NATO, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control*. Paper 7. Washington: Brookings, pp. 10-12.

At the same time, the new strategic concept reflects NATO's desire to create conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons, and does not specify the "trans-Atlantic" link between US-based strategic nuclear weapons and non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, unlike previous concepts.¹⁷ While the Alliance has not completely reduced the role of nuclear weapons within the frame of its deterring and defending posture, it has indicated that there is a strong desire to diminish their role to the bare minimum until the time comes to eliminate last of the nuclear weapons and declare the world and the Alliance free of this burden. However futuristic and improbable that goal may seem in the near future, it is a clear development of the NATO's nuclear posture at present time. It has to be pointed out though, that such a change in posture have its own very clear rationale.

By the time the new strategic concept was adopted in Lisbon, NATO had been through a very challenging ten years, which had transformed many aspects of the Alliance. The Strategic Concept clearly states that NATO has entered the new phase in its development, and needs to remain effective in a changing world against new threats with new capabilities and new partners.¹⁸ This was a logical outline of what NATO have experienced in the conflicts and different crisis situations in 2000s. Security environment is now perceived globally, with the nuclear deterrence functions in stagnation and conflicts stripped of nuclear character on both political and physical levels. The proliferation of nuclear weapons themselves (as opposed to the system of mutual nuclear deterrence) is emphasized as a global threat. Monitoring the international environment to anticipate and identify potential crises, as well as acting to prevent them from developing into conflict situations has become increasingly important. This, rather than nuclear deterrence, is underscored in the 2010 Strategic Concept. Terrorism on global level was a push that shifted the perspective of how the new threats should be viewed and treated by the Alliance.¹⁹

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¹⁷ NATO (2010) *Active Engagement, Modern Defense: Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf> (Accessed: 21 May 2015).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Behnke, *NATO's Security Discourse after the Cold War*, pp. 79-80. Lindley-French and Macfarlane, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, pp. 162-166.

Moreover, by the time the 2010 Strategic Concept was adopted, there was (and still is) a growing discontent among five European Allies with regard to NATO's current nuclear sharing arrangements. Essentially, they are tired of hosting the remaining US non-strategic nuclear weapons - namely B61 gravity bombs. This position ultimately influenced NATO's overall nuclear posture discourse. Even with the establishment of the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) and the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) Control and Disarmament Committee to support it, the European Allies' position has not changed significantly, though there have been compromises. In addition, there are varying approaches among the Allies towards Russia - from those who favor a kind of appeasement to the more hardline perspective of Russia as a nuclear-armed enemy. Though the Alliance seems to find the balance between these approaches, such compromises have led to changes in nuclear posture at the global level. Slowing the change in nuclear posture is usually the position taken by France, via its voting patterns in the North Atlantic Council, despite the efforts of Nuclear Planning Group.²⁰ However, despite these obstacles, NATO's nuclear posture is now very different from the 1950s when these challenges first emerged. At the same time, NATO arguably faces no less (if not more) challenges that it had during the Cold War than it has in contemporary security environment.

The Failure of NATO's Nuclear Posture

With all the challenges that NATO faces as a military alliance, it is still lagging behind in adopting new effective principles in terms of its nuclear posture and in introducing modernized approaches to nuclear weapons. These changes are long overdue in both WMD-related policies, as well as in the political context that Alliance is promoting globally.

First of all, NATO's policy decision to reduce nuclear arms was justified from many perspectives. Nuclear disarmament, maintenance cost-reduction, recycling of nuclear material, strategic changes in nuclear arms defense mechanisms, 'means of last resort' policy, etc. - all of these are positive trends in relation to

20 Seay III, E. (2012) *Dissecting the DDPR: NATO's Deterrence and Defense Posture Review and the Future of Nuclear Sharing*. Nuclear Policy Paper No.10. London/Washington: BASIC. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1zXz0Cl>, pp. 1-2 (Accessed: 21 May 2015).

the ongoing reduction of the arsenal that Alliance have carried out since 1990s. However, such reduction of the arsenals have brought a lot of questions from European Allies, in terms of their vulnerability due to such drastic reductions and softening of the posture, as well as left a lot of gaps in the nuclear defense capabilities of the Alliance as a group of states; now heavily relying on the good will of only one member – the US.

Secondly, the changes in nuclear posture have been carried out with a focus on the prevailing political context. This means that political messages and ‘nuclear rapprochement’ with Russia and China have been a priority in formulating strategies of reduction of nuclear arsenals, as opposed to focusing on strategic and tactical nuclear defense *per se*. As a consequence, modernized approaches to nuclear defense have suffered greatly. It is evident that despite modernization of conventional forces, nuclear capacity remains constrained by the technologies of Cold War era. Of course there are new warheads and carriers, new rocket-launching systems being tested and implemented, but those are based on the warhead-delivery systems of the 1950s and 1960s.

With that in mind, NATO has failed to comprehensively develop its nuclear posture both politically and technologically. Politically, it has failed to maintain the same level of psychological security for European Allies as before, when it had greater nuclear arms capacity. Technologically, it failed to justify the reduction of nuclear weapons with the implementation of smart technologies that would change approaches to nuclear defense and overcome the negative effects of reduction of arsenals.

It is clear that in the modern security environment, there are different types of threats, never seen in the Cold War era when nuclear posture was born. Non-state actors are a very real threat nowadays; this has significantly changed the context of national security. Nonetheless, the introduction of smart technologies into WMDs are lagging far behind, even though introducing this technology could have mitigated many of the attendant security concerns (e.g. that WMDs could end up in the hands of non-state actors or ‘rogue states’). Even such a sophisticated organization as

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NATO is long overdue in this area, concentrated on the conventional weapons modernization.

NATO's failure to achieve true political consensus on the reduction of nuclear arms is even more evident. European Allies in the east, closer to Russia, are generally skeptical of the progressive reduction of NATO's nuclear arsenals. On the other hand, western European Allies are tired of hosting nuclear weapons both due to maintenance costs and to the psychological effects of hosting foreign WMDs on their territories. Their perception of the Russia-based nuclear threat is quite different among the countries to the east. Here, the US could play a crucial role in shaping the discourse to improve not only the effectiveness of trans-Atlantic link, but also to ensure consensus among European Allies by introducing clear and multi-vector reforms in nuclear defense that would justify the reduction of arsenals without damaging NATO's overall nuclear deterrence capabilities.

For now, NATO's nuclear posture does not demonstrate a comprehensive stance on the present and future status of nuclear weapons. Recent events clearly show the reactiveness of NATO policies in this regard. Russia's plans to increase its nuclear arsenal have sparked US countermeasures; Washington is enlarging the assortment of heavy weapons in eastern European Allies, including the Baltic states. These allies are increasingly concerned about Russia's assertive nuclear policy decisions.²¹ Nonetheless, NATO's reaction seemed disproportionate. It seems that the Alliance is not ready for this turn of events and underestimates the changing nature of nuclear security context. To salvage its failing nuclear posture, NATO needs to come up with a clear vision of political and technological reforms before it is too late.

Conclusion

NATO's nuclear posture have been through more than sixty years of evolution that brought it to the modern period with no less questions and competitive approaches for going forward in its development than it was in the beginning of the Cold War.

²¹Tsetvetkova, M. (2015) *Putin says Russia beefing up nuclear arsenal, NATO denounces 'saber-rattling'*. Reuters. Available at: <http://reut.rs/1Legyua> (Accessed: 22 May 2015).

If it was very clear for the Alliance during the times of Cold War who the enemy was and who should be deterred through nuclear capabilities and arms race, after the end of the Cold War it took some two decades for the Alliance to reevaluate its nuclear posture under the present conditions. The process cannot be labeled as a fast one, which is understandable from the point of view that such changes do not happen overnight in the Alliance guided by the democratic principles and relying on common consent. Differences in approaches, views and positions of the Allies have arguably slowed the evolution of the nuclear posture down, but from the other side have been going into the only possible direction of deemphasizing the role of nuclear weapons. That was in its turn a quality result based on the common grounds and not on unilaterally-imposed reforms.

Differences in approaches, views and positions of the Allies have arguably slowed the evolution of the nuclear posture down, but from the other side have been going into the only possible direction of deemphasizing the role of nuclear weapons.

The striking difference in today's international security environment must also be taken into account. During the Cold War, the Alliance had to depend on its non-strategic nuclear capabilities to counter Warsaw bloc's supremacy in conventional forces. Nowadays, it is probably the other way around. The combined conventional forces of the Alliance can outflank the conventional forces of any potential adversaries. Thus, it is only natural for the Alliance to seek the elimination of all the nuclear weapons, firstly because of their potential for global destruction, and secondly because of the understanding that its superiority in conventional forces (outranked only by the nuclear capabilities of others) is unlikely to be challenged even in the long term.

Within this framework the steps that NATO has taken do not seem entirely logical. For example, the reluctance of some of the Allies to eliminate all non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe is understandable, especially considering that NATO will not gain anything by taking this action unilaterally (i.e. without commitment from Russia to carry out similar reductions). However, if we also consider the current concerns about nuclear terrorism and general proliferation of WMDs - the challenges to NATO's nuclear posture become very clear. Thus, NATO's efforts in the near future will be likely focused on maintaining a balance between changing its stance on collective nuclear deterrence, while at the same time avoiding a loss of confidence in the Alliance's commitments.²²

²² Pifer, *NATO, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control*, p. 36.

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With that in mind, one can conclude that NATO has failed to implement the reforms and changes to its gradually failing nuclear posture and will soon face serious problems, especially when it comes to the proliferation of WMDs. This very apt quote from Lindley-French and Macfarlane provides a succinct and useful summary of the concerns addressed in this paper:

“Sixty years ago, NATO stood on the verge of the first nuclear age; today the Alliance stands on the verge of the third. The Alliance will need to play a role in the new deterrence that will become the new reality. Indeed, the technology of destruction was the preserve only of the most powerful sixty years ago, but today it is slowly spreading as the non-proliferation regimes that were created for one age, leak and crack in the face of another. Counter-proliferation will necessarily provide vital reinforcement for non-proliferation, but can Europeans and Americans agree on the application of coercion when faced with the fact of WMD threat? They need to because whilst the U.S. continues to offer Europe protective power at the higher end of the conflict spectrum, the European democracies still afford the U.S. its greatest pool of democratic legitimization, and both are needed in the coming struggle.”²³

²³ Lindley-French and Macfarlane, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, pp. 61, 64.