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Contents

The Roots of NATO's Energy Security Discussion
From Riga to Bucharest: a Limited, Focused Mandate
What Complementary Role for NATO?
The Complexities of a NATO Role in Energy Security
Conclusions

Energy Security: NATO's Limited, Complementary Role

Andrew Monaghan¹

NATO cannot avoid discussing energy security. As both the international situation and the alliance evolve, it becomes increasingly important and relevant to do so: clear and direct links exist between the security of NATO member states and the interruption of their energy supply. Indeed, given the range and potential scale of these threats it would be, as stated by the alliance's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, alarming if NATO did not at least discuss it. NATO could not simply 'stay on the sidelines' watching such threats emerge.² Discussion of energy security can take place under the framework of the alliance's Washington Treaty, as outlined in Article IV. But the role proposed by the alliance is a limited one – and, as Jamie Shea has noted, discussions mean neither automatic agreement that NATO will act, nor that the alliance would necessarily adopt a leading role in any response.³

This article has three main aims. First, it seeks to provide a broad history of the evolution of discussions about an energy security role for the alliance – the roots of today's discussion, as it were – in two parts, first, the background discussions, then developments between the Riga and Bucharest Summits. Then it outlines the potential contributions NATO could make. Finally, the article examines some of the complexities and difficulties in establishing a clear agenda.

The key points to emerge are the limited and complementary nature of the proposed role and the unclear nature of the signals being emitted by the alliance – a point complicated by the higher profile of non-NATO proposals which are often taken to represent the alliance's position.

¹ Research Adviser, Research Division, NATO Defense College, Rome.

² Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the 44th Munich Security Conference, 9 February 2008.
www.nato.int

³ Shea, J. "Energy Security: NATO's Potential Role", *NATO Review*, No.3, Autumn 2006.
<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue3/english/special1.html>

The Roots of NATO's Energy Security Discussion

NATO's proposed energy security role has two main intertwining roots. The first has a more military security focus, reflecting the dual need for the alliance to conduct practical and logistical planning to protect energy supplies (particularly petroleum) to maintain the wider stability and security of its member states and its own operational capacity. This involves considering military threats to energy facilities and supply lines and routes. The threat of large scale, state-to-state conflict is generally considered to be receding. Nevertheless, energy security is an issue considered likely to trigger such a conflict: so closely linked is it to national security that a threat to the former is often considered a threat to the latter and as such may lead to war to seize or defend such resources. Indeed, according to some commentators, the 'possibility that access to energy resources may become an object of large-scale armed struggle is almost incontestably the single most alarming prospect facing the international system today'.⁴ Piracy and terrorist attacks supplement this risk: one study suggests that there have been at least 330 terrorist attacks on oil and gas facilities across the world between 1990 and 2005, including in NATO member and partner states.⁵

The second of these roots focuses more on political threats to energy security and came to prominence in NATO following the Ukraine-Gazprom gas dispute of early January 2006. Indeed, this event stimulated both a higher profile discussion of "energy security" within the alliance and simultaneously a somewhat different focus and understanding of energy security – as one of member state consumer dependence on a potentially unreliable producer state.⁶ The dispute led directly to the Bush administration introducing discussion of energy security to NATO in February 2006, with the support, according to one US commentator, of the United Kingdom and Germany.⁷

Thus in February 2006, in an international context of threatened and actual attacks on major installations and supply routes and concerns about the political reliability of major suppliers, de Hoop Scheffer announced that energy security was one of the issues that should be brought to NATO's agenda for discussion. Though on one hand couching his phrase in the Strategic Concept (1999), suggesting it was not a new subject for the alliance, and on the other avoiding mention of Russia, he stated: 'today, for reasons that are obvious – including the potential of terrorists targeting our energy supplies – it makes sense to me that the allies should discuss this issue'.⁸ As if to prove his point, there was an attack on the huge Abqaiq oil refining facility in Saudi Arabia later that month. The attack was thwarted, but nevertheless clearly highlighted the dangers to energy infrastructure.

This announcement signalled the start of an important but highly contentious process: both roots, but particularly the political root, began to excite support and opposition for a NATO role in energy security in roughly equal measure within the alliance and outside it. The fact that there are two similar but essentially different roots and therefore effectively two parallel and distinct but also intertwined arguments for and against a NATO role has made it all the more difficult for the alliance to reach consensus over the role it should adopt.

⁴ Moran, D. & J.A. Russell, "The Militarisation of Energy Security", *Strategic Insights*, Vol.7, No.1, February 2008. p.2.

⁵ Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism Study, cited in Ibid, p.7.

⁶ This appears to echo US concerns about Europe importing significant quantities of energy from the USSR and the potential political influence the USSR might be in a position to exert over the European members of the alliance in case of dispute. But the argument about the reliability of Russia, and the threat it might pose to the interests of the member states, while superficially similar, is different.

⁷ Gallis, P. "NATO and Energy Security", *CRS Report for Congress*, March 2006. p.1.

⁸ Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the 42nd Munich Security Conference, 12 February 2006. www.nato.int

In fact, the two roots, while apparently enhancing the case for NATO involvement in energy security by increasing the reasons for it to do so, reflect a conceptual divergence in aims: should the alliance adopt a wider, “thematic” approach to energy security, in which the interests of “producer”, “transit” state and “consumer” are seen effectively in a similar light – against threats which undermine the interests of all, such as a major attack on a supply route? Or should it adopt a more regional and directed one, in which the interests of “producer” and “consumer” differ – essentially bringing the influence of a powerful alliance to succour the “consumer” in what is considered to be a competitive dialogue between “producer” and “consumer”?

In the following months, a number of speeches and seminars were held and a range of proposals made from different quarters within the alliance and from without, examining whether or not the alliance *should* become involved in energy security and what its potential roles might be. These were met with equally strong rebuttals and arguments against a potential NATO role.⁹

Debate crystallised in a series of activities held around NATO’s summit in Riga in November 2006, which proved to be an important moment in the discussion for two reasons. First, the resulting Riga Summit Declaration included a short paragraph explicitly announcing (for the first time) that energy security is a concern for NATO and mandating the alliance to explore the specifics of that role. The Declaration thus altered the nature of discussion: it was no longer about whether the alliance *has* a role – it asserts that it does. The question is now on the *nature* of that role.

Second, the paragraph, while important for internal NATO discussions – and key to understanding what is being proposed and discussed by the alliance, was overlooked by nearly everyone else. What took most of the international public attention was the speech delivered on the fringes of the summit by US Senator Richard Lugar.¹⁰ Unencumbered by the limits of consensus which bind the alliance, and thus speaking in terms considerably more robust than official NATO statements, he noted the threats posed by instability and terrorism, and that energy would be the most likely source of armed conflict in the European theatre and the surrounding regions. Thus he argued that it would be ‘irresponsible’ for NATO to decline involvement in energy security. But his particular focus was the potential for political manipulation of resources and the use of the “energy weapon”.¹¹

Lugar’s speech accentuated the high-profile and robust proposals for a NATO role by those on the fringes of the alliance over and above the lower profile and limited mandate officially being discussed and given to the alliance.¹² A result of this is that there are few experts in either the energy or foreign policy communities who understand what the alliance is actually attempting to do. Nearly all energy experts oppose the notion of NATO involvement without knowing what is being proposed – but on the basis of the robust fringe proposals; nearly all foreign and security policy experts reject a NATO energy role on the basis of what they see to be highly contentious fringe proposals.

⁹ For an examination of these debates, see Monaghan, A. “Energy Security – What Role for NATO?”, *NATO Defence College Research Paper*, No. 29. September 2006.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Katik, M. “The NATO Summit: Energy Security, Georgia are Hot Topics”, *Eurasianet*, 28 November 2006. <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav112806a.shtml>; Socor, V. “Lugar Urges Active Role for NATO in Energy Security Policy”, http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371701; Dempsey, J. “US Senator Urges Use of NATO Defence Clause for Energy”, *International Herald and Tribune*, 28 November 2006; Kupchinsky, R. “NATO Prepares for Energy Wars”, *Radio Free Europe*, 6 December 2006; <http://www.nationalinterest.org/>

¹¹ For the text of the speech, see Lugar, R. “Energy and NATO”, Keynote speech delivered to the German Marshall Fund Conference, Riga, 27 November 2006. <http://lugar.senate.gov/energy/press/speech/riga.cfm>

¹² The clearest illustration of this came from one commentator, who noted that Lugar had called for a NATO role (in advance of the summit), but NATO did not answer. Haslam, J. “A Pipeline Runs Through it”, *The National Interest Online*, December 2007.

Since the Riga Declaration, the “political” root has continued to take a higher profile, not least because of the oil dispute between Belarus and Russia (more specifically and accurately Belneftekhim and Transneft) in December 2006-January 2007. The authors of the document “Towards a Grand Strategy” note that the increase in global competition for scarce resources swells the possibility of suppliers abusing their position for leverage. Furthermore, dependence on oil and gas is a ‘vulnerability’ that some governments will seek to exploit – ‘the Gazprom crisis demonstrated how easily demand can be manipulated’.¹³ The document also noted the role played by OPEC in maintaining artificially high oil prices, and the exploration of the idea to form a gas OPEC by Russia and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁴ On the eve of NATO’s Bucharest summit, the public expert debate over a NATO’s role continued to reflect such arguments (which in turn serve to exacerbate opposition to a NATO role); indeed the Riga Declaration hardly features.¹⁵

From Riga to Bucharest: a Limited, Focused Mandate

The paragraph included in the Riga Declaration is an important starting point for any analysis of NATO’s role in energy security, not least because it reflects an important degree of consensus in the alliance. It is worth citing in full:

As underscored in NATO’s Strategic Concept, alliance security interests can also be affected by the disruption of the flow of vital resources. *We support a coordinated international effort to assess risks to energy infrastructures and to promote energy infrastructure security.* With this in mind, we direct the council in permanent session to consult on the most immediate risks in the field of energy security, in order to *define those interests where NATO may add value* to safeguard the security interests of the allies and, *upon request, assist national and international efforts.*¹⁶

In some respects, the statement may appear vague, with its references to coordinating, consulting, defining and supporting. With whom might there be coordination? What is the timescale for consultation? Is there a timescale for turning such consultations into practical measures? How far does the mandate go beyond defining the interests where NATO may add value?

Nevertheless, the phrasing clearly indicates the nature of NATO’s intentions. Three points particularly emerge, illustrated by the emphasis added to the quotation above. First, NATO is adopting a primarily discursive position to define more clearly the nature of the threats. This is not to be a knee-jerk military reaction or simply putting “boots on the ground”, rather it is assessing the type of threat, estimating threat levels and prioritising threats.

Second, NATO seeks to ‘support a coordinated international effort’, and ‘upon request assist national and international efforts’. These are important indicators that the alliance does not seek a lead role in energy security; indeed it understands energy security to

¹³ Naumann, K., Shalikashvili, J., Inge, Lanxade, J., & H. van den Breemen, *Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World. Renewing Transatlantic Partnership*, Lunteren: Noaber Foundation, 2007. pp.47-8. The ‘Gazprom crisis’ statement is actually ambiguous – the trend of the argument suggests that the authors mean the Ukraine-Gazprom price dispute, or more broadly, the view that Gazprom has brought significant pressure to bear on a number of consumers in the former USSR (FSU) to pay higher prices for their gas. But the phrase “Gazprom crisis” could also refer to the important debate about Gazprom’s production, which some have argued is stagnating to the extent that Gazprom is a company itself “in crisis”. See Fredholm, M. *Gazprom in Crisis*. CSRC Paper 06/48. Swindon: Defence Academy of the UK, October 2006. This is an important distinction which goes to the very core of the debate about what constitutes energy security, Russia’s role in energy security and the nature of resolving energy security problems.

¹⁴ Naumann, et al. pp.47-8. For similar views, particularly regarding Russia, see “Energy Security: a States Side View”, Interview with Tom Lantos, *NATO Review*, No. 4. December 2007. Experts on both Russian energy politics and international gas markets are sceptical about the prospects for an “OGEC”, largely since it would be difficult to maintain any form of coherent aim among producers.

¹⁵ See, for instance, “Opposing Views: Should NATO Defend Europe Against Russia’s Energy Weapon?”, *RFE/RL*, 2 April 2007. www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2008/04/7eaf21bc-2497-48b49b3-acb530738286.html

¹⁶ Riga Summit Declaration, Paragraph 45. <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm> Emphasis added by the author.

be a multi-dimensional issue in which other actors have key, and, in many cases, leading roles. NATO's role thus is a *complementary* one, one in which it seeks to 'add value', having defined clearly what this may be in an international discussion.

Third, the declaration clarifies the existing parameters of discussion for the alliance, and illustrates the limited nature of the role envisaged by NATO itself. Previously, the alliance had noted the issue rather vaguely as 'disruption of the flow of vital resources'.¹⁷ Defining 'disruption' has been a key challenge for the alliance, illustrating the gaps in consensus between military threats to vital resources and political ones. The Riga mandate provides some clarity of the interests of the alliance in focusing on *energy infrastructure security*, rather than other dimensions of energy security.

The focused and limited agenda defined in the Riga declaration formed the background for official discussions in 2007 and early 2008 (in rather stark contrast to the fringe and public discussions). The Secretary General reiterated that the alliance considered energy security to be a 'collective' challenge to which a 'collective' response must be provided, a response which reflects a 'multifaceted approach' and a 'great deal of coordination between national governments and international organisations'.¹⁸ Further, NATO's role in such a collective response would be focused on where it could 'add value': the alliance could consider a role protecting shipping lanes, particularly with regard to liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers on the high seas, and protecting *critical energy infrastructure* when there is a *specific high level threat*. 'Again,' he confirmed, 'only where NATO can *add value*'.¹⁹ Further clarification – reflecting more sober debate and clearer focusing of proposals – was provided in early 2008: NATO's role should be complementary to that of other organisations, such as the European Union (EU). Moreover, the discussion was to identify potential niche roles for NATO where it would *not infringe* on areas where other organisations were already active or where they are better placed to intervene.²⁰

At the Bucharest summit in April 2008, the same approach was confirmed: the alliance will ensure that NATO's efforts 'add value and are fully coordinated and embedded within those of the international community, which features a number of organisations that are specialised in energy security'; 'sharing' and 'supporting' are key terms. While there are still some vague phrases – the alliance will engage in 'projecting stability' and advancing international and regional cooperation – the focus on civil defence and emergency management and energy infrastructure remains clear.²¹ This leads us to consider the 'niche' roles that NATO might be able to play.

What Complementary Role for NATO?

NATO can contribute a role which "adds value" to a coordinated international effort to enhance energy security in two broad areas: information sharing and planning and response. Since the alliance would be working with other organisations, governments and actors of different types, these are likely to vary in degree on a case-by-case basis. But there is a clear range of niche roles for NATO in both areas. Some of these roles may be considered more passive, such as the alliance reducing its own fuel consumption, others more active, for instance contributing assets; some reactive, such as contributing civil defence and emergency management assets, others anticipatory, such as planning and providing training.

¹⁷ See the Alliance's Strategic Concepts of 1991 and 1999, paragraphs 12 and 24 respectively. The documents can be found at <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911107a.htm> and <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>.

¹⁸ Speech at 44th Munich Security conference.

¹⁹ Cited in "EU Energy", *Platts*, no.166, September 21st, 2007, p.27. Emphasis added.

²⁰ See the "Review of the Seminar 'The Security of Energy Supplies: the Role of NATO and Other International Organisations'", Brussels, 17 January 2008. www.hcss.nl p.5.

²¹ Bucharest Summit Declaration, NATO Press Release (2008/049) 3 April 2008. www.nato.int

First, information sharing is one of the key tenets of energy security. NATO can contribute by acting as an important bridge between the energy and security communities.²² Clearly falling under the bracket of discussion outlined in the Riga Declaration, and reinforced by the Bucharest Declaration, NATO can add value to information sharing by acting as a forum for intelligence sharing. Some suggest that this could be enhanced by the creation of a permanent monitoring and assessment mechanism, working with the International Energy Agency (IEA) and others, including companies.²³

The alliance can also add value to information sharing through the practical use of its assets: using maritime surveillance and alert assets could provide important situational awareness of the main shipping lanes that are insufficiently covered by national capabilities, generating a clearer maritime information picture. This also means identification of the critical points in the supply chain: Northwood's primary mandate is the provision of maritime situational awareness; additionally, it is mandated to identify the exact location of all oil rigs and related installations in the North Sea.²⁴

NATO adds value to information sharing through the nature of its membership and partner relationships. Energy security is a trans-national, indeed a trans-regional problem and should be addressed as such. NATO includes, or has developing relations with, almost all the key consumers, transit states and consumers in a trans-regional context.²⁵ Its transatlantic membership provides a more developed international context for European energy security, including as it does Norway, Turkey and Canada.²⁶ Furthermore, it includes the USA – one of the world's largest producer, transit and consumer states and the key contributor of military assets with global reach to international energy security.

NATO's relationships with Russia in the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) and other Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) states in the FSU provide more established connections with a wider range of states in the region than those enjoyed by the EU and IEA. NATO could complement the EU's relationships with North African states through its Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and also its developing relationships with Middle Eastern states through Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). Though some of these relationships remain in their formative stages, drawing them together provides important connections with states with different views of energy security thereby enhancing the exchange of information.

Second, NATO could contribute to energy security through its coordinated military assets and expertise, an area where the alliance has particular proficiency and potential capacity to contribute without "infringing" on areas where other organisations are active. As the authors of the document "Towards a Strategy" note, while the EU has a role to play and is formulating its own energy strategy, this is in "soft" terms: there is no discussion about the protection of energy sources and transportation means in hard, military security terms.²⁷ As suggested above, this can be in a number of ways, particularly by contributing maritime surveillance and alert capabilities. Equally, it can be through training personnel and response capacity building.

²² See Cornell, P. "Backgrounder: The Energy Environment and Impacts on European Security", in Idem, (ed.) *Energy Security and Security Policy. NATO and the Role of International Security Actors in Achieving Energy Security*. Oberammergau: NATO School, November 2007, p.6.

²³ Shea.

²⁴ Haas, H. "Energy Security and Dependence on the Sea", in Cornell, P. (ed); Shea.

²⁵ Though there are notable exceptions, including China and India.

²⁶ Norway and Canada are of course two leading international producer states, Turkey is establishing itself as a key transit state, the "fourth main artery" of European energy supply.

²⁷ Naumann et al, "Towards a Grand Strategy", p.48.

Beyond this, NATO can add value by contributing assets in response to an energy-related emergency. State conflict and terrorist threats usually take the headlines regarding energy security, but it is infrastructure safety rather than security which poses the main problem: accidents form the most frequent “threat”. While the EU coordinates and audits safety measures, NATO could, where appropriate, contribute assets in civil defence and emergency management in response to natural disaster or accident.

Looking again towards security, the alliance could provide important protection capabilities. NATO could consider developing security assistance packages for allies, exemplified by the support given to the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 or the command and control arrangements NATO provided Turkey in Operation Display Deterrence in 2003.²⁸

Energy security is multifaceted and does include addressing certain military threats. These might include seizure or destruction of energy assets or facilities and attacks on main supply arteries which may result in their destruction or blockage. Thus, in extreme cases, the alliance could contribute a defensive capability, involving short-term escort and patrolling and protection of critical infrastructure, *where there is a specific, high-level threat*.²⁹ Such activity is already foreseen in MC 401 which outlines a NATO role in protecting oil and gas facilities in the North Sea in case of armed attack. Furthermore, as the Secretary General noted, NATO naval assets could be used to protect oil and gas shipments, for instance protecting LNG tankers. Others point to protecting shipments of oil and gas from the Horn of Africa and West Africa, particularly the Gulf of Guinea against piracy and terrorist attack.³⁰ Such threat response capabilities were exemplified by Operation Steadfast Jaguar, conducted in June off the Cape Verde Islands in June 2006.

The Complexities of a NATO Role in Energy Security

So, NATO has a mandate to examine its potential energy security role as a response to the international context. This is not a new role, given past experience and planning, but it is one that received a considerable boost and outwardly new appearance in 2006. The alliance conceives this role to be initially discursive, first to establish where NATO could contribute and add value without infringing on, or complicating unnecessarily, the activities of others; essentially therefore, one of contributing military experience, expertise and knowledge, and planning and command and control capacities, but also *in specific, extreme cases*, assets to protect infrastructure to a wider energy security effort.

But much of this remains at the discursive stage: a series of complexities limit the remit established at Riga and have slowed the practical definition and preparation of a NATO role. These complexities reflect and illustrate ongoing divisions of opinion not just between the two roots, but within them. One may be deduced from the wording of the Riga declaration: ‘the alliance will assist national governments upon request’. This is an important limitation given that some national governments have been unwilling to view energy security as a subject for the alliance, even in focused and limited infrastructure protection terms, except perhaps *in extremis*.

As with the discussion amongst EU member states about a role for the EU, officials and commentators from a number of NATO member states have argued that energy security remains a national issue, and one to be dealt with as such. According to one commentator, a scenario placing NATO troops on platforms or guarding pipelines is precisely what many allies seek to avoid.³¹ Responding to ‘speculation that western troops could be deployed as

²⁸ Legendre, T. “The North Atlantic Alliance Treaty Organisation’s Future Role in Energy Security”, *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy & International Relations*, Vol.8, No.2, Summer/Fall 2007. p.33.

²⁹ de Hoop Scheffer, cited in “EU Energy”, *Platts*, No.166, 21 September 2007.p.27. Emphasis added.

³⁰ Haas, p.42.

³¹ Cornell, p.5.

“pipeline police” in places such as the Caucasus’, one NATO diplomat was obliged to clarify the NATO role thus: ‘energy security and the security of installation and transportation routes are a *national responsibility*’, the alliance should be ‘looking to offer advice and help rather than putting boots on the ground’.³²

Norwegian State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Espen Barth Eide, further illustrated this, commenting that while there seems to be a

fairly broad agreement within the Alliance regarding NATO’s role in protecting energy-related infrastructure on the territory of member states... [he finds] it somewhat difficult to understand why this question in particular needs to be given more attention or addressed more thoroughly than other types of national infrastructure that need protection... This would not in any way change the fact that it first and foremost is a national responsibility to protect energy-related infrastructure.³³

Turkish experts have also suggested as much: Turkey has had to defend itself from attacks by (the separatist group) the PKK – and thus already ‘has done more than NATO’ in the area of energy infrastructure protection. ‘Should NATO then really be looked at as the organisation that looks after critical infrastructure on [member state] soil? How feasible would this be – and could it actually do it?’, asked one.³⁴

Partners, including those with which there are growing energy security relationships have voiced similar views. NATO is ‘considering the possibility of providing security’ for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, according to Robert Simmons, NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative to the Caucasus and Central Asia;³⁵ and has a growing energy security partnership through its IPAP with Azerbaijan. But Azerbaijan’s Deputy Prime Minister Abid Sharifov noted that NATO ‘does not have experience in protection of oil pipelines and communications running via the countries which do not enter the organisation’,³⁶ making it unclear what the added value might be. Others have noted that the BTC does not need further protection: on one hand, the Azerbaijani government protects it, on the other, company representatives consider it to be well protected already by other measures.³⁷

Moreover, there is continuing debate amongst member states about the wider agenda being set. Some argue that an energy security role would serve to re-balance NATO’s agenda. An Icelander, Bjorn Bjarnason, has argued that the growth of oil and gas shipping via the Norwegian Sea and Greenland-Iceland-UK gap means that maritime security and safety issues must be discussed. In his view, it is of ‘vital importance that NATO nations on both sides of the Atlantic work together on energy security as a central part of the alliance’s security policy’, though this would be shipping safety first, energy security second. Energy security is the new dimension that is ‘reintroducing the northern reaches of the north Atlantic region to the political and military scene in NATO’: it ‘reaffirms the maritime identity of

³² Cited in “Climate Change May Spark Conflict with Russia, EU Told”, *The Guardian*, 10 March 2008. Emphasis added.

³³ “Energy Security: A Common Security Concern”, speech by State Secretary Ministry of Defence Espen Barth Eide, 25 October 2007

http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/fd/dep/politisk_ledelse/Statssekretar_Espen_Barth_Eide/taler_artikler/2007/Energy-security-A-common-concern.html?id=486901

³⁴ Cited in “EU Energy”, *Platts*, No.167, 5 October 2007, p.12.

³⁵ Interestingly the gas pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) was not mentioned.

³⁶ “NATO Not Responding Positively to Azerbaijan’s Appeal for Provision of Security of Pipelines: Deputy Premier”, <http://news.trend.az/index.shtml?show=news&newsid=1064148&lang=EN> 30 October 2007.

³⁷ These include construction measures such as burying the pipeline deep and social measures, such as giving the local population a vested interest in pipeline security. Of course, the pipeline also passes through Georgia and Turkey. This does not change either the position of the BTC company, nor the view that infrastructure protection seems to be considered a national matter by at least two of the governments involved.

NATO'.³⁸ This is part of a broader question: should energy security have its own agenda, or be part of other agenda, such as counter terrorism? Nevertheless, others argue that an energy security role would dilute or undermine NATO's core agenda to the detriment of existing missions.

Energy security has also become bound up with other complex agenda issues for NATO, for instance discussion about further enlargement and extending Article V to include energy security. Importantly, on these issues, there has been something of a gap between alliance intentions and fringe discussions lobbying the alliance. In his fringe speech at the Riga summit, Senator Lugar proposed that an effective energy strategy should include new relations with the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia – and that especially in its relations with Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, 'eventual NATO membership must be on the table'.³⁹

Furthermore, he advocated considering energy as an Article V commitment, since 'an attack using energy as a weapon can devastate a nation's economy and yield hundreds or even thousands of casualties'. Thus the alliance 'must commit itself to preparing for and responding to attempts to use the energy weapon against its fellow members'.⁴⁰ Though Lugar was not advocating a military response to such manipulation (instead offering 'refuge') such suggestions incited considerable opposition, even amongst states who were advocating a NATO role, not least because it is unclear what "refuge" the alliance could add, particularly given that such support lies much more in the EU's realm.⁴¹ Moreover, some argued that in opening up Article V to legal reconsideration, more might be lost than gained: a new interpretation might weaken the Article rather than strengthen it.⁴²

Though collaboration with other international organisations is an important intention outlined in Riga, this is also proving problematic. While a NATO role brings a range of other states to the table facilitating broader discussion, which may be beneficial, the issue of different memberships poses drawbacks. This may be illustrated by the difference in defining energy security threats at national and institutional levels. Given their different geographical locations, resource bases and infrastructure capacities and thus their individual energy strategies, most nations in the EU and NATO view the energy situation differently. Thus within each organisation, there is the problem of defining to any advanced degree of clarity and consensus the nature of the threat – and to whom. The parallel difficulties in achieving consensus in each organisation serve to undermine the ability to define a cooperative agenda between the two organisations.

While some members may see a foreign and security dimension to energy security, a number of EU states which are also NATO member states continue to view it as an economic issue to be regulated by the market rather than foreign or security policy tools. Such a view is also broadly espoused by the European Commission. Thus the problems are seen in a further, different light. An illustrative generalisation would be that the USA tends to view energy security as the protection of supply, whereas the EU defines it in terms of management of demand. As US commentators noted in 2001, most Europeans are less concerned than the US about the likelihood of, and the political consequences of, an oil supply disruption. (Western) Europeans consider that even if one occurred, it would be of limited duration and they would prefer other measures including diplomacy, economic engagement and oil reserve stockpiling.

³⁸ Bjarnasonar, B. "Energy Security, the High North of Europe and NATO", 4 February 2007. <http://www.vardberg.is/?p=36>.

³⁹ Lugar, R. "Energy and NATO". Lugar also suggested that diversification is an important element of energy security, though this too is a somewhat contentious proposal, and more for the EU than NATO. See Monaghan, A. *Russia and the Security of Europe's Energy Supplies: Security in Diversity?* CSRC Paper 07/01. Swindon: Defence Academy of the UK: January 2007.

⁴⁰ Lugar, "Energy and NATO". Though Lugar mentions Iran, briefly, his main focus is Russia.

⁴¹ One indication of the opposition this provoked is that he felt obliged to reiterate this point in a subsequent publication. Lugar, "A Concert in Energy Security", p.24. In March 2006, the Polish Foreign Minister had also proposed an "energy Article V" pledging all signatories to help a state in case of disruption. As one commentator noted, however, such a proposal was at the extreme end of the spectrum and was never widely shared, even among states advocating a firmer line towards Russia, since it was considered too confrontational. Cornell, p.4.

⁴² Dempsey.

Given that it is not understood as a matter of access, the commentators argued, there is ‘no basis for the belief that European governments would be prepared to go to war solely over the price of oil’.⁴³ The difference is perhaps less distinct now than then, but the same largely holds true today.⁴⁴

This definitional difference was underscored and further complicated by the diverse reactions within both NATO and the EU to some of the very issues that have brought energy security to the NATO agenda: the Ukraine-Gazprom and Belneftekhim-Transneft disputes over trade and transit in gas and oil respectively. Indeed, this served to deepen the split in another way: the EU is itself split over the nature of political threats to energy and in response to Russia.⁴⁵

Differences understanding these episodes further undermined the prospects for a complementary EU-NATO energy relationship. Some sought to involve NATO not so much in a *complementary* way to the EU but more as a *replacement* for it – reflecting a lack of confidence in the EU and IEA’s abilities to resolve emerging energy security threats.⁴⁶ The conceptual gap between the EU and NATO was underscored (and again, perhaps, deepened) by talk of “deterrence” and adapting NATO’s Article V to include energy security. Even the reference to discussing this aroused serious opposition in a number of influential European quarters. Thus, despite the potentially beneficial complementarities of roles of the two organisations, there has been little progress in establishing a relationship.

Finally, beyond its own internal discussions, and beyond the complexities of its relationship with the EU, the alliance is emitting a range of signals to partners and other non-member states. Though the alliance is building practical relationships with partner states through the NRC, IPAP and ICI frameworks particularly, practical progress remains limited. Sharifov noted that NATO is ‘not responding positively’ to requests by Azerbaijan.⁴⁷

Indeed, given the second root of discussion about a NATO energy security role, one of the key challenges the alliance faces is to avoid giving Moscow the signal that NATO’s involvement was simply anti-Russian.⁴⁸ But while there is some energy cooperation in the NRC,⁴⁹ and some Russian analysts see no threat in what is outlined in the Riga summit,⁵⁰ Vladimir Putin and other senior Russian officials have expressed concern that such a role is ‘unfriendly’. Putin declared that ‘the North Atlantic Bloc is examining issues related to energy security based on the supposition that Russia is clearly unfriendly. We see this. Why is this? Have we ever breached our obligations? No’.⁵¹ (Western observers less acquainted with Russia may consider the statement that Russia has not breached its obligations surprising – it is, however, the view widely and genuinely held in Moscow and is one more reflection of the current wide gulf in understanding between western communities and Russia on a number of issues.) Though not mentioning the alliance specifically, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov clearly implied it in condemning the politicisation of energy security to the detriment

⁴³ Sokolovsky, R., et al, *Persian Gulf Security: Improving Allied Military Contributions*. RAND: 2001. p.52.

⁴⁴ See, for instance Lugar’s comments that ‘our experiences provide little reason to be confident that market rationality will be the governing force behind energy policy and transactions’. Lugar, R. “A Concert in Energy Security: Building Trans-Atlantic Cooperation to Confront a Growing Threat”, *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, Vol.8, No.2, Summer/Fall 2007. p.23. For another US view of the continuing different agenda between the US and some European governments, see Gallis.

⁴⁵ Despite efforts to enhance coherence in EU policy towards Russia, evident divisions between what can broadly be termed “Russia critics” and “Russia friends” remain over understandings of Russia’s energy security role. A similar process with regard to Russia is visible in NATO, where there are also efforts to enhance coherence on Russia, with mixed success.

⁴⁶ See Monaghan, “Energy Security: What Role for NATO?”.

⁴⁷ “NATO Not Responding Positively to Azerbaijan’s Appeal for Provision of Security of Pipelines: Deputy Premier”, <http://news.trend.az/index.shtml?show=news&newsid=1064148&lang=EN> 30 October 2007

⁴⁸ “Allies Struggle to Define Energy Security”, *Defence News*, 5 March 2007.

⁴⁹ There are cooperative pipeline protection studies, for instance, and a NRC workshop on surveillance and protection of infrastructures in Moscow in 2006.

⁵⁰ Sokolova, P. “Bukharest: varianti resheniya”, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 2 April 2008.

⁵¹ Transcript of Annual Big Press Conference, 14 February 2008. www.kremlin.ru

of producer states in late 2007, arguing that what is a purely economic problem is becoming politicised with attempts to unite consumers to oppose a Russian energy monopoly.⁵²

Such comments should be seen in the context of Russian concerns about NATO more broadly: Putin's comments that the alliance is conducting 'obvious muscle flexing' against Russia through enlargement and building up its resources right by Russia's borders reflects a widely held view.⁵³ Furthermore, many in Moscow believe that Russia can no longer rely on the general assurances of NATO's good intentions – Moscow has already had its 'fingers burnt' doing so in the 1990s.⁵⁴ This is relevant to a NATO role in energy security in two ways. First, such views are stoked by a blurring of issues and misunderstanding of NATO's role: one Russian commentator on energy politics believes that NATO links energy security to a human rights agenda. Thus Lugar's speech and particularly the point about extending Article V to include energy security have taken the attention in Moscow after Riga, not the declaration itself.⁵⁵

Second, this compounds problems in the wider NATO-Russia relationship. Konstantin Kosachov, Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the State Duma, noted the Western view (particularly as espoused in 'scandalous fashion' by Tom Lantos in advocating an energy security role for NATO, according to Kosachov) that Russia's 'energy muscles' were allowing it to carry out confrontational policies towards the West.⁵⁶ The growing gap in mutual mis-comprehension between the West and NATO,⁵⁷ of which energy is a significant part, is becoming formalised; as NATO begins to discuss energy as a security matter, so does Moscow, which is formulating a new Military Doctrine in which energy security seems likely to feature. Preliminary discussions suggest that the broader scope of this new doctrine is that there is widespread consensus that the West poses the major threat to Russian security; the conceptual definitions being that war is just a sub-set of wider conflict and that Russia may need to respond to non-military threats with military capacity.⁵⁸ Energy security, it seems, could easily fit in to such a definition.

Conclusions

The alliance is evolving: it is a comprehensive security provider that must consider a range of threats to its member states. These threats, which include energy security, are widely accepted as threats by both the international and national policy making and academic communities – yet there is a reluctance among many to accept a role for NATO in addressing them.

Energy security does lie within the alliance's existing remit: Article IV of the Washington Treaty stipulates that the parties 'will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, their territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened'.⁵⁹ Article V, too, is *potentially* relevant, given the nature of many of the threats – 'the parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or

⁵² Sergei Lavrov "Other States are Politicising Energy Security", speech in Kazakhstan 29 October 2007, cited in *RFE/RL Newsline* Vol.11, No.201. Pt 1, 30 October 2007.

⁵³ Cited in "Putin Reacts to NATO Muscle-Flexing", *International Herald and Tribune*, 20 November 2007. p.6.

⁵⁴ See, for instance, Kokeev, M. "Russia-NATO Relations: Between the Past and the Future", *Russia in Global Affairs*, No.2, Apr.-Jun. 2007.

⁵⁵ "Elopuikhateli pomorshshilis", Interview with Simonov, K., *Expert Online*, 21 May 2007, www.expert.ru This reflects the impact of Lugar's speech, in which he noted the importance of energy relationships with states in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where a substantial improvement is needed in democracy, the rule of law and civil society, and is again evident in Sokolova's article, which refers to Lugar's 'sensational initiative' of applying Article V (and the use of force) to energy security. See also Kiriunin, V. "Minsk, Riga Host CIS, NATO Summits", *International Affairs, Moscow*, Vol.53, No.1 2007. pp.88-9.

⁵⁶ Kosachov, K. "Russia and the West: Where the Differences Lie", *Russia in Global Affairs*, No.4, Oct.-Dec. 2007.

⁵⁷ See Monaghan, A. 'An "Enemy at the Gates or "From Victory to Victory"? Russian Foreign Policy', forthcoming, 2008.

⁵⁸ For excellent discussion of the preparation of the new Russian Military Doctrine, see Keir Giles, *New Focus for Russian Military Doctrine*. ARAG Paper, Swindon: Defence Academy of the UK, Forthcoming, 2008.

⁵⁹ Article IV of the Washington Treaty, www.nato.int

North America shall be considered an attack against them all'.⁶⁰ Given that this does not distinguish energy facilities from other targets, and that the nature of threats to energy infrastructure posed by terrorists, pirates and even states are likely to be in the form of armed attacks, it can be imagined that an armed attack on an energy facility might be a cause for invoking Article V.

Yet this is not what is under discussion. Indeed, the proposed agenda for a NATO role in energy security is widely misunderstood and subject to considerable speculation, almost entirely negative. Too often, such a role is oversimplified and understood to be an either/or response – either the EU or NATO should deal with energy security. Too often NATO involvement is considered a simple military response – “boots on the ground”. And too often such speculation, driven by uncertainty about the alliance’s actual intentions, is exacerbated by an advanced but unrealistic agenda – altering Article V to include energy security and potential membership for Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. Yes, it is important to have a strategic horizon, even a provocation to discuss, but such an agenda should not wholly overshadow the nature of the current agenda. Such signals are all important, given that they create the international context in which the alliance works.

The alliance has encountered the same difficulties as other organisations, national and international, in discussing energy security. In defining its role in energy security, the alliance faces two parallel debates centring on the definition of the term “disruption”. For NATO, given the nature of its enlarged composition and consensus nature of its decision-making – and thus the definition of its role, this is key. Understanding the different definitions of the word is central to grasping both the two roots of energy discussions in NATO and the difficulties of achieving consensus on a NATO role; it is central to understanding the tension between whether the alliance seeks a wider thematic and constructive role or the more focused, regional, and potentially confrontational role.

Is this a *military* disruption, caused by armed attack, perhaps in the context of competition for access to resources? This is where the alliance has to date focused, as illustrated by discussions in January and again at the Bucharest Summit. Even if this definition continues to prove contentious, there is a clear potential role for the alliance. This includes, in the first place, discussion of problems, out-reach and cooperation with partners where relevant and appropriate, capacity building, defence reform and training of partner countries. *In extremis*, this may also include the protection of infrastructure against attack. Along such lines, the alliance is making progress in defining its role, as illustrated in the Bucharest declaration. Equally, such progress still needs to be built upon, not just within the alliance but also by clarifying it to the alliance’s partners.

But the second root still exists alongside this discussion, and, enhanced by fringe discussions, the question continues to hang of whether disruption also includes political causes, which are more difficult to define or even prove. This, as the EU and many member states of both organisations have already found, is yet more contentious – and thus it is harder to envisage a consensus-based role for the alliance here. Equally, such discussions may serve to broaden the range of *solutions* considered within the alliance, including indirect and passive contributions – one such example might be that the alliance could seek to improve its own consumption efficiency as a means of diminishing broader reliance on external sources.

⁶⁰ Article V of the Washington Treaty, www.nato.int