

SDA Evening Debate

Can NATO's solidarity
crisis be fixed?



**Results and Recommendations
of the *New Horizons* Study**

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Rapporteur: Judith Crosbie
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SECURITY & DEFENCE AGENDA

Bibliothèque Solvay, Parc Léopold,
137 rue Belliard, B-1040, Brussels, Belgium
T: +32 (0)2 737 91 48 F: +32 (0)2 736 32 16

E: info@securitydefenceagenda.org W: www.securitydefenceagenda.org

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Can NATO's solidarity crisis be fixed?

Programme

Can NATO's solidarity crisis be fixed?

Evening Debate – Thursday, March 26, 2009

Bibliothèque Solvay, 17:30-20:00



17:30 - 18:00 Presentation of main findings

Rob de Wijk, Director, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Rem Korteweg, Policy Analyst, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

18:00 - 19:30 Debate

The role of international institutions is being challenged by the growing complexity and unpredictability of today's strategic environment. This context stretches the transatlantic community's capabilities and political cohesion, severely testing NATO's credibility as a constructive global security player.

In an attempt to generate truly innovative thinking on NATO's future, the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies launched the *New Horizons* project, a broadly inclusive online consultation with different stakeholder communities in interaction with leading experts from the transatlantic community.

Do the principal findings of the study prove a trend of weakening solidarity within the Alliance? Or are they an opportunity for strengthening ties and rethinking the identity and role of NATO?

Speakers

Sven Biscop, Director, Security & Global Governance Programme, Egmont – The Royal Institute for International Relations

Rob de Wijk, Director, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Cristina Gallach, Spokesperson of the Secretary General & High Representative for CFSP, Council of the European Union

Zoltan Martinusz, Ambassador, Delegation of Hungary to NATO

Jamie Shea, Director for Policy & Planning, Private Office of the Secretary General, NATO

Moderator

Giles Merritt, Director of the Security & Defence Agenda

19:30 - 20:00 Cocktail Reception

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Debate on the New Horizons Study

NATO is at a crossroads, according to a recent debate hosted by the Security and Defence Agenda (SDA). A study carried out by the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) went to the heart of this debate by consulting a wide variety of stakeholders including EU and NATO officials, academics, experts, students, industry and non-governmental organisations. The research showed that three out of four participants believe NATO should reassess its strategic concept. Such a review, to be kick-started at the NATO Strasbourg/Kehl summit (3-4 April), is one of a list of issues prompting the organisation to examine its future role and action. The others are the external factors – from the ongoing threat of terrorism to newer threats such as climate change and energy scarcity to the dwindling resources in the face of a financial crisis.

The reasons for NATO's difficulties should not come as a surprise since global security over the last two decades has seen three different systems at play – a Cold War situation, a unipolar system dominated by the US and now a multi-polar system, said **Rob de Wijk**, Director of the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. "The 9/11 attacks signalled that American supremacy would not go unchallenged and recently we have witnessed a further shift to a kind of multi-polar world," he said.

The world's financial crisis will speed up the move towards a multi-polar system and therefore NATO urgently has to reassess what it does. "The alliance should change its mindset. It should transform from an organisation based on collective defence and operating outside NATO's area to an organisation based on collective and cooperative security where military deterrence is augmented with crisis management capabilities and societal resilience," said de Wijk.



Rob de Wijk

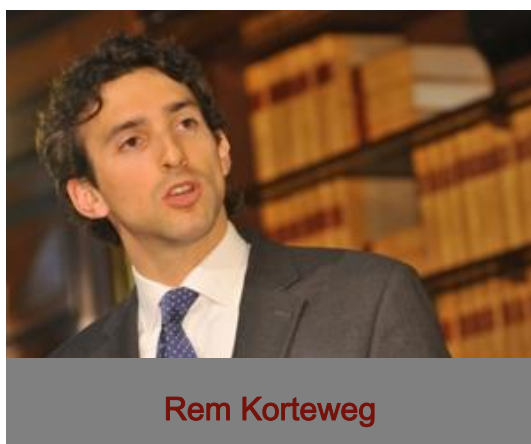
The problems NATO faced led to "de-solidarisation" and a weakening of the alliance, said **Rem Korteweg**, Policy Analyst at the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. "The dilemmas, if left unresolved, we believe will constitute trip-wires for safeguarding alliance solidarity," he warned.

He listed eight key dilemmas identified by the study:

- Respondents in the study said the financial crisis meant NATO would have reduced political relevance and a diminished capability to act. But economic instability around the world would mean a greater need to act.
- Energy and resource scarcity were among the greatest security challenges for the future. However, "respondents believe NATO remains undecided how to respond and deal with this issue", Korteweg said. The Arctic presented a particular problem for the alliance's members.
- While nuclear proliferation is a big challenge, with three of the original five nuclear states as members, NATO could drive a new consensus on this issue.

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- NATO needs to adjust in order to deal with the threats arising out of global interdependence such as state failures and instability in developing countries as a result of demographic trends.
- The mission in Afghanistan presents a particular problem for solidarity in NATO. "There was no consensus as to what success in Afghanistan is and there was no consensus



Rem Korteweg

on how this could be achieved. There was consensus that a comprehensive approach of some sorts needed to be developed," said Korteweg.

- The areas of other concern, according to respondents, were NATO's eastern periphery, central Asia, the Middle East and north, central and eastern Africa – each presenting its own needs in terms of military capability.
- Russia is the main focus of eastern periphery concern with divergent views on whether it should be seen as a threat or a partner.
- NATO enlargement has presented difficulties as it "has been considered both as inevitable and undesirable by the participants".

Jamie Shea, Director for Policy and Planning, Private Office of the Secretary General, NATO, said the study "was a fair reflection of the state of the alliance today". Solidarity in the alliance was a problem for four reasons. There were more challenges and more operations which NATO is getting involved in: "The further you go to confront challenges the more

challenges that come on to your agenda," Shea said. Members have different levels of political will to deal with security challenges. "If you've been attacked like the United States in 9/11 you see terrorism very differently than if you've not had any incidents on your territory for several years," he said. Members also have unequal military capability and what they can offer to different operations. In the 1990s consensus was harder to reach with the resulting operations being shorter and relatively successful. Now it is easier to launch campaigns but they are longer missions which are



Jamie Shea

more difficult. "I see in this respect an organisation that has left the 20th century but hasn't quite yet fully finished connecting with the 21st century," said Shea.

But problems with solidarity should not mean NATO reverting to a Euro-centric organisation where it defined its operations based on its capability. "I believe there is no retreat from the more global alliance out there in the world dealing with the new security challenges," he said. Therefore to overcome the obstacles NATO should: de-link the political function from military operations and consult on threats all over the world without feeling the need to launch operations everywhere and take the security of members seriously: "I think we have to realise that as long as we have allies who do not feel secure it would be hard for them to engage Russia or engage fully and whole-heartedly on challenges outside Europe," Shea said. He also thought NATO should have a more "persistent" policy on Russia and bridge the divide between members who see it as a risk and those who see it as a partner. He saw a role for NATO in help-

ing members initiate defence transformation and guide them on their capabilities. One thing which wouldn't change at NATO was the need for US leadership but how this is achieved without discouraging European countries was a difficult question, said Shea. "In other words how you have American influence without American domination," he said.

Zoltan Martinusz, Hungary's ambassador to NATO, questioned whether there was a solidarity crisis in the alliance since it was successful in continuing to expand its membership, conducting its operations, and "managing a complex relationship with Russia". "Where is that solidarity crisis?" he asked. The absence of a large external enemy, as existed during the Cold War, meant there was room today for more debate among members. Martinusz also questioned whether there was a need to reassess NATO's strategic purpose. "The environment is different so we are going to have to adapt to it. But the strategic purpose is going to remain the same: keep the Americans and Europeans together, provide a forum for consultation, provide a forum to develop a unity of purpose, and, if necessary and if we like so, this is an institution for joint action," he said.



Zoltan Martinusz

The economic crisis presented a challenge in that there is not going to be more funding for defence but the way around this could be integration of defence capability. "Will we have the political motivation to go for more integration in NATO, to go for more efficiency in defence spending and in capability development?" asked Martinusz.

The EU's security strategy, written in 2003 and updated last December, identified the same threats as those which NATO faced,

said **Cristina Gallach**, Spokesperson of the Secretary General and High Representative for CFSP, Council of the European Union. But ten years of development of ESDP means NATO's reassessed strategic review should take the EU into account. "Definitely there is a different actor in security issues now than in 1999 when NATO did review its security strategy," she said.

The fundamental security threat Europe faces is from Russia and NATO is not providing the answers on this. "We are not going to solve this question just with the NATO, which is performing with Russia in the manner which it is performing now and Europe has to do more," Gallach said.



Cristina Gallach

The problems between NATO and the EU have to be solved at the political level. "We have difficulties which can only be solved if we really tackle the problem of the relationship at the level where it has to be done, which is the very high-level," she added.

From a European point of view much of the political consultation on security issues was now happening in the EU with resulting operations being launched through the ESDP, NATO or the UN, said **Sven Biscop**, Director, Security & Global Governance Programme, Egmont – The Royal Institute for International Relations of Belgium. "NATO has already lost much of its primacy; I don't think NATO is still the place where the debate between Europeans and Americans is taking place," he said.

Biscop added: "I do see the political centre of gravity shifting from NATO as such to what are de facto its two main pillars - the United States and the EU."

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With this in mind the EU (and, for that matter, the UN) should have its own command structure with the EU defining what it should contribute to global security. The definition should include territorial defence. "If territorial defence should happen it would no longer be in Germany where our troops



Sven Biscop

used to be but somewhere quite far," he said.

He added: "My guess is therefore if Georgia had been a NATO member we could have assisted it the way we assisted Poland in 1939 – 'hold out under occupation while we come, or maybe not'."

The EU should have more direct contacts with the US on political and military matters and then use NATO if a joint operation is decided upon. "In a way then yes, NATO becomes for me a technical platform, an executive body," Biscop added.

The onus was on Europe to decide what it wants to do – by being fragmented and divided it is of no help to the US. "Europe should act as one pole in an increasingly multi-polar world, a united pole: not just an economic pole but a pole in the field of diplomacy and defence as well," he added.

In the question and answer session, topics raised included whether NATO wants to stay on in Afghanistan just to keep itself in a job, if the alliance should take on civilian capabilities and if the problem with NATO is in fact a European unwillingness to decide what kind of defence it wants.

Nigel Hall, Senior Associate Fellow, Ad-

vanced Research & Assessment Group, Defence Academy of the UK, asked whether the strategic concept review was a cop-out when in fact leadership was the real problem. Shea said if the review resembled "a traditional communiqué exercise" then it wouldn't solve NATO's problems. Setting up a panel of eminent experts who could come up with controversial ideas, for example on reform of NATO headquarters, could be a way to ensure the process is not futile. Martinusz said there were a number of countries which were "fed up with the concept of panels of eminent people" and that this was to an extent due to those experts being sourced from the same countries every time.

Martinusz disagreed with what he described as the "false choice" presented by some speakers that Europe should choose its own defence or go with NATO. "It's not either/or; it's not a zero-sum game. The EU's growing importance does not necessarily mean NATO's will correspondingly go down." He added: "I am always baffled by the logic of the argument that here in the EU we have global instruments, we are a global player, we have global challenges and when comes to representing these interests and tackling the challenges we are better off without the only truly global player in the world. Quite honestly, I just don't get it," he said.

Biscop said he was not presenting a zero-



sum situation but believed Europeans should cooperate more than they did currently. NATO could still be used if the military situation dictated it. "If you look at recent history there are a number of clear instances where US policy in my view has clearly run counter to our interests and I would be happy to know that there was a

separate platform where we as Europeans could talk about it and then engage the United States as a whole," he said.

Martinusz also questioned the need to have forces in place for territorial defence. Hungary, which lies at the outer borders of NATO, has only six battle tanks which are for training purposes. "Do we have in place forces to fight some kind of a Third World War which would reflect a totally out-dated concept? Actually no, we don't. I think we are fighting a shadow enemy when we talk about countries keeping in place large forces that would be good for a classic territorial defence," he said.

Jacques Cipriano, Vice President, European Affairs, Safran Group, asked whether it was easier to deploy civilian forces because the funding for them came from the EU budget as opposed to military missions which came from national budgets. Civilian operations funded through the Common Foreign and Security Policy budget, which amounted to at most €200 million, were relatively less expensive compared to military operations, said Gallach. In Chad, the EU contributed €109 million for the first year for the 3,700 troops while national governments paid "much more than a hundred million" for the upkeep of these troops. The EU had nine civilian operations in Europe, Africa



and the Middle East which included 5,000 lawyers, police officers, judges and prosecutors and who were paid through "the small CFSP budget", she added.

Andrew Mathewson, Head of NATO and Europe Policy Division, Ministry of Defence, UK, said the ESDP rather than NATO was the problem for European security. The ESDP has failed to address problems in capabilities expenditure and was only prepared to get involved in low-risk, low-stake operations such as

Congo and Darfur. "Europe is hiding its crisis in NATO. The NATO problem is a European problem," he said.

Biscop agreed that there was a problem in Europe since neither the European Defence Agency nor the Allied Command Transformation had helped transform Europe's armed forces. "The problem is the Europeans shoot themselves in the foot, we divide and rule but we divide ourselves and somebody else rules," he said.

Gallach pointed out that half of the troops in NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) based in Afghanistan were from EU member states.

Nawab Khan, Correspondent with the Kuwait News Agency, said there was "growing uneasiness" in Asia and the Muslim world "that having lost its job in the Euro-Atlantic area, NATO was now getting involved in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq". He asked if NATO preferred a protracted mission in Afghanistan in order to keep itself in a job. This was not the case, said Shea, since a long operation would be "as detrimental to the alliance as if we were there too briefly". But he did say it was time to look at other things NATO could become involved in such as countering nuclear proliferation so that it wouldn't be seen just as a "taxi company which activates a military service at the behest of others".

The different views of NATO member states did not constitute a solidary crisis, said Brigadier General **José Fernandez Demaria**, from Allied Command Transformation. But NATO should communicate better to the general population about what it does in order to get support to continue its missions, he added.

Jeffrey Reynolds, also of NATO's Allied Command Transformation, asked if NATO should develop civilian capabilities to help deal with the new threats and if so how would the EU react. Gallach said the EU was developing more civilian forces while Shea said he did not think NATO taking on civilian operations was a good idea since NATO's primary function was military.

While solidarity was important it should not be over-emphasised as it can lead to people con-

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tributing to operations for the wrong reasons, said Shea. "You have too many Europeans in Afghanistan today saying 'we are there to be nice to the Americans' or 'we are there out of a sense of being loyal to the Americans' to which the Americans say, 'no, you should be in Afghanistan because you recognise that it's in your fundamental security interests just like we see it in ours'," he said. What was needed was a greater connection between the decision to launch an operation and participate in it since now countries can agree on a mission but refuse to send troops, he said. The strategic concept should be less about what the security environment was and more about how NATO can "influence the world in the direction we would like to see it going", Shea added.

Hungary, which spends relatively small amounts on defence would consider common funding either in NATO or the EU, Martinusz said.

Much depended on the financial crisis and its consequences, said de Wijk. If the eurozone breaks up then it will affect "the whole thinking about defence and security in this part of the world". But he added, "If not, if this will be the road to more integration, the crisis could have favourable consequences not only for ESDP but also for NATO."

Concluding, **Giles Merritt**, Director of the Security & Defence Agenda and moderator of the debate, said while everyone was agreed on the

sations" on NATO's future or get down to deciding if there was a need for a political deal with the EU, how to deal with Russia and China and how funding should be apportioned, he added.



Giles Merritt

need for a security review of NATO, people seemed to mean different things when it came to strategy. The definition was important since it could either result in "heart-warming generali-

List of Participants

Madi Abulgazin

First Secretary
Embassy of Kazakhstan to Belgium

Akyildirim Muzaffer

Defence Counsellor
Mission of Turkey to the EU

Al-Adwani Mubarak

First Secretary
Embassy of Kuwait to Belgium

Aliyev Alibaba

Master Student
University of Kent

Anten Louise

Head of the Conflict Research Unit
Netherlands Institute of International Relations
(Clingendael)

Baes Paul

European Commission, Directorate General for
External Relations

Bell Robert

Senior Vice President European Business
Science Applications International Corporation
(SAIC)

Bell Robert

Senior Vice President European Business
Science Applications International Corporation
(SAIC)

Bird Juliette

1st Secretary Security and Terrorism
Permanent Representation of the United King-
dom to the EU

Cami Geert

Co-Founder & Director
Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

Carnes Stephanie

Project Manager
Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

Chu Henry

London Bureau Chief
Los Angeles Times

Cipriano Jacques

Vice President, European Affairs
Safran Group

Coelmont Jo

Senior Associate Fellow (Security)
EGMONT, the Royal Institute for International
Relations

Craanen Claire

Crisis management policy, Operations
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

Crosbie Judith

Rapporteur
Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

Cross Mai'a K. Davis

Assistant Professor of International Relations
School of International Relations, VKC
University of Southern California

Damen Annelene

Research Assistant
Netherlands Institute of International Relations
(Clingendael)

Davis Jacquelyn

Vice President
Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (IFPA)

De Spiegeleire Stephan

*Programme Director for Defence Transforma-
tion*
The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

De Wijk Rob

Director
The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Delaney Joan

Independent Consultant

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Denève Olivier
Senior Manager
Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

Dranga Ovidiu
Ambassador
Embassy of Romania to Belgium

Fernandez-Demaria Jose
DACOS SCPI
NATO - Allied Command Transformation
(ACT)

Flaherty Paul
Deputy Permanent Representative
Delegation of the United Kingdom to NATO

Gari Michel
Partner
DMG Consult sprl

Ghianda Andrea
Conference Manager
Copura

Hale Julian
Freelance Journalist

Hall Nigel
*Senior Associate Fellow, Advanced Research
& Assessment Group*
Defence Academy of the United Kingdom

Hartinger Michael
Capability Development Plan Project Officer
European Defence Agency (EDA)

Henderson Jessica
Senior Strategy Development Manager
Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

Ida Kanako
Brussels Bureau Chief
Asahi Shimbun

Kasendi Merle
Researcher
Estonian School of Diplomacy

Kendry Adrian
Senior Defence Economist
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

Khan Nawab
Correspondent
Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)

Kloesch Bernadette
Deputy Head of Mission
Mission of Austria to NATO

Kochukov Viktor
Senior Counsellor
Mission of the Russian Federation to NATO

Koronakis Basileios
Deputy Head
Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

Korteweg Rem
Policy Analyst
The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Kosarev Dmitry
Correspondent in Belgium
Rossiyskaya Gazeta

Koutras Charlotte
Parliamentary Assistant
European Parliament

Kouvo Sari
*Senior Programme Fellow, Head of
Afghanistan Programme*
International Center for Transitional Justice
(ICTJ)

Labrique Jean
Secretary General
Western Defence Studies Institute

Liem Tjien-Khoen

Principal Scientific Officer, Security Research and Development
European Commission, DG Research

Lotton Pierre-Arnaud

Policy Analyst, Internal Market and Simplification
European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry

Lunelli Pier Paolo

Deputy Italian Military Representative to EUMC
Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU

Lunn Simon

Senior Fellow
Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

Margaras Vassileios

Visitor Researcher
Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

Massart Pauline

Senior Manager
Security and Defence Agenda (SDA)

Mathewson Andrew

Head of NATO and Europe Policy Division
Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom

Meindersma Christa

Deputy Director
The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Melvin Emilie

Intern Journalist
Agence Europe

Merritt Giles

Director
Security and Defence Agenda (SDA)

Milinkovic Branislav

Ambassador, Special Envoy to NATO
Mission of Serbia to the EU

Minas Harris

Project Assistant
Security and Defence Agenda (SDA)

Mölder Katrin

First Secretary Political Affairs
Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU

Monaco Annalisa

EU and NATO Relations Specialist
Boeing International

Nielsen Nikolaj

Trainee
European Commission, DG Information Society and Media

Nutter Deborah Winslow

Senior Associate Dean
Tufts University

O'Brien Dan

Senior Editor/Economist
Economist Intelligence Unit

Parrein Pieter-Jan

Researcher Middle East
Institut Royal Supérieur de Défense

Perks Rick

Commander, Canadian Navy - Strategic Concepts Staff
NATO - Allied Command Transformation (ACT)

Podkolinski Richard

Policy Analyst
The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

Post Wim

Program Manager
Noaber Foundation

Preineder Alois

Military Advisor
Mission of Austria to NATO

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Radovanovic Nikola

Ambassador
Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Belgium and to NATO

Rasmussen Peter

National Technical Expert/Industrial Advisor, NATO C3 Agency
Delegation of Denmark to NATO

Revelas Kyriakos

Senior Security Policy Analyst, Security Policy Unit
European Commission, DG External Relations

Ryan Michael C.

Defence Advisor
Mission of the United States of America to the EU

Sablon Vinciane

Conflict Studies Department
Ecole Royale Militaire of Belgium

Savic Bojan

Teaching Assistant, PhD Candidate
University of Kent

Savolainen Charlotta

Masters Student
University of Kent

Schoffer Petricek Jan Peter

Head of Civil Society Relations Section
European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Schultz Teri

Freelance Journalist
National Public Radio (NPR)

Semaska Darius Jonas

Permanent Representative to the PSC
Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU

Serandour Réjane

Project Assistant
Security and Defence Agenda (SDA)

Shultz Richard

Director, International Security Studies Program
Tufts University

Siklosi Peter

Counsellor, Head of the Defence Policy Section
Delegation of Hungary to NATO

Simion Mircea

Diplomatic Counsellor
Embassy of Romania to Belgium

Siragusa Aldo

Honorary Head of Division
Council of the European Union

Stevens Willy

President
VIRA, Association for International Relations

Szenes Cecilia

Secretary to Delegation
Delegation of Hungary to NATO

Taniguchi Nagayo

Journalist
Sentaku

Terzano Paolo

Deputy Assistant Director, Plans and Policy Division
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

Tigner Brooks

Europe Defence Technology Editor
Jane's International Defence Review

Tsuruoka Michito

Resident Fellow
The German Marshall Fund of the United States

Ueta Takako

Ambassador, Deputy Head of Mission
Mission of Japan to the EU

Van Bochoven Leendert

Global Business Services, NATO Account Executive, Defence Leader Europe/ Network Centric Operations
IBM Nederland B.V.

Wellesley Rick

Business Strategy
Agusta Westland

Vermote Lieven

Member of the Executive Board
VIRA, Association for International Relations

Yamamoto Machiko

Adviser
Embassy of Japan to Belgium

Vvedenskaya Anja

Journalist
Newsweek

Yang Xiaoguang

Second Secretary
Mission of China to the EU

Weiss Stefani

Director
Bertelsmann Foundation

Zorin Dmitry

Counsellor
Embassy of Belarus to Belgium

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The Security & Defence Agenda (SDA) is the only specialist Brussels-based think-tank where EU institutions, NATO, national governments, industry, specialised and international media, think tanks, academia and NGOs gather to discuss the future of European and transatlantic security and defence policies in Europe and worldwide.

Building on the combined expertise and authority of those involved in our meetings, the SDA gives greater prominence to the complex questions of how EU and NATO policies can complement one another, and how transatlantic challenges such as terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction can be met.

By offering a high-level and neutral platform for debate, the SDA sets out to clarify policy positions, stimulate discussion and ensure a wider understanding of defence and security issues by the press and public opinion.

SDA Activities:

- Monthly Roundtables and Evening debates
- Press Dinners and Lunches
- International Conferences
- Reporting Groups and special events

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Bibliothèque Solvay, Parc Léopold, 137 rue Belliard, B-1040, Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 737 91 48 Fax: +32 (0)2 736 32 16 E-mail: info@securitydefenceagenda.org
www.securitydefenceagenda.org