

Panel Proposal: List of all abstracts
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From Guarding the Fulda Gap to Addressing a Knowledge Gap: Updating our Understanding of NATO Security Politics for a New Strategic Era

Chair: Marcel Plichta (University of St. Andrews)

Discussant: Ana Verdnik (University of Oxford)

Presenters: Sofia Macedo (European Labour Authority, EU); Sam Seitz (University of Oxford) and Julia Carver (University of Oxford) [co-authors]; Kersti Lasrdotter (Swedish Defence University); Nicholas Blanchette (MIT)

1. Re-bordering NATO: the strategic dilemmas of yesterday and tomorrow

Sofia Macedo (European Labour Authority, EU) [SPEAKER],

Branislav Micko (Charles University)

Borderwork and its connection with strategic dilemmas have seldom been reflected in the academic literature on NATO. Territorial expansion of any international organisation is associated with constructing new borders, as the former internal and external differentiations need to be replaced. At the same time, new borders and related borderwork produce additional challenges in ensuring the new members are reined in, and the organisation is adapted to a new strategic environment. We argue this connection can be seen in the case of NATO expansion in the 1990s and early 2000s. A novel set of (re-)bordering practices was introduced, reflecting the longer border to be defended outwardly and inculcating the new differentiations on the inside. The installation of NATO-standard radios to supplement Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) systems on new members' MiG-29 aircrafts, concerns over the Suwałki Gap, or accession's democratic requirements illustrate this perspective. Such changes led not only to opportunities that NATO could pursue from its renewed geopolitical setting but also to a redefinition of challenges which required a more robust posture to deter adversaries and defend the expanded Alliance area. The presented paper thus identifies a connection between required bordering practices and the strategic dilemmas the Alliance had to face. In this regard, we use comparative analysis to examine the proposed relationship during and after NATO's post-Cold War expansion and apply our findings to the potential integration of Finland and Sweden.

Keywords: NATO, NATO Expansion, strategic dilemmas, bordering, military alliance, historical analysis.

2. NATO's Nordic Neophytes: How Sweden and Finland's Accession to NATO Alters the Military Balance in Northeast Europe

Sam Seitz (University of Oxford),

Julia Carver (University of Oxford)

Does the accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO alter the strategic balance in the Baltic? The recent decision by Sweden and Finland to join the alliance has rendered most analyses on this question moot, as extant scholarship has focused on how the two countries could cooperate with NATO *outside* the alliance. To redress this gap, this paper assesses how Nordic NATO expansion shifts the military balance in northeast Europe using a mixed-methods approach with campaign models and elite interviews. Specifically, it employs logistics and combat models to evaluate Russia's ability to deploy force against Finland. It further assesses the implications of the extension of the Russia-NATO border on force density levels and Baltic conflict scenarios. Finally, it models how control of the port of Stockholm and island of Gotland alters NATO maritime logistics capacity in the event of the closure of the Suwalki Gap. Our findings suggest the addition of Sweden and Finland meaningfully diminishes Russian force projection capabilities while simultaneously increasing NATO's regional maritime control and logistical capacity. Interviews allow us to corroborate these findings against the strategic assessments of key NATO and European policymakers, to explore how NATO officials' perceptions of strategic balance shape their engagement with and understanding of feasible operational concepts vis-à-vis the Baltic, and to probe the extent to which their strategic judgements mirror popular discourse around NATO expansion. Our findings contribute to the academic literature on territorial control and conflict, and they have important implications for ongoing policy debates by suggesting that NATO's Nordic expansion is net positive for the alliance. It substantially enhances the regional power of the alliance and reduces the viability of a Russian fait accompli in the Baltic.

Keywords: NATO, strategic balance, strategic perceptions, territorial expansion, mixed-methods

3. NATO and Military Support in Times of War

Kersti Lasrdotter (Swedish Defence University)

Military support to friendly states and non-state actors is a common feature of contemporary international relations. Indeed, NATO member states have been supporting a range of state and non-state actors that are not part of the alliance. For example, France and the US are training, equipping and advising foreign militaries in several African states, several NATO states have supported Afghan military forces for many years, and most NATO states are supporting the Ukrainian forces in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. While military support can have a substantial impact on the security of the sponsor state, both in positive and negative terms, NATO states do not seem to have (had) a joint strategy for military support to non-members. However, according to realist theories of war, changes in the security environment should have a large impact on military cooperation and strategies within an alliance. Are changes in the security environment (war in neighbouring states as well as changes in the territorial scope of NATO) changing NATO states' strategies of military support to non-members? This paper will investigate the objectives of military support as well as the choice of recipients of several NATO member states. Who are giving military support to whom? And for what purposes are these recipients supported militarily by the various NATO states? By tracing these phenomena over time, we can discern whether changes in NATO's security environment have had any consequences for military cooperation and strategies within the alliance.

Keywords: NATO, NATO Expansion, military cooperation, military support, case study analysis

4. A Quiet Place: Assessing SSBN Vulnerability in the Arctic Ocean

Nicholas Blanchette (MIT)

How secure are secure second-strike nuclear forces? For many, secure second-strike capability has been embodied by nuclear ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), whether deployed in open-ocean patrol patterns or in naval bastions. The historical record, however, highlights significant variation in the relative survivability of deterrent forces due to technological advancements in weapon accuracy and intelligence. This paper evaluates vulnerability with respect to SSBNs. Specifically, it focuses on the vulnerability of Russian sea-based nuclear deterrent forces in the Barents Sea to U.S. anti-submarine warfare (ASW) platforms engaged in an effort to trail SSBNs. Examining undersea competition in the Arctic using the campaign analysis method, this paper asks two questions. First, how vulnerable are Russian SSBNs? And second, how effectively can U.S. attack submarines (SSNs) detect and trail SSBNs in the Barents Sea? After considering the oceanographic characteristics of the campaign's environment and the availability and capability of U.S. and Russian forces operating in the Arctic, this study argues that U.S. SSNs would likely struggle to effectively and covertly trail Russian SSBNs in the Barents Sea. Importantly, U.S. challenges do not equate to Russian advantages in ASW against the United States. Instead, in an environment characterized by shallow water and ever-quieter submarines, both sides risk playing "blind man's bluff" in the Barents.

Keywords: Campaign/military analysis; Strategic Stability; Nuclear Security; European Security