

# NATO after the Wales Summit: Assessing the Costs of a Free Ride

*Citizen's Controversy, 18 November 2014*

The emergence of instability alongside the European Neighbourhood raises, once again, uncomfortable questions about Europe's strategic dependence on the US, institutionalised by NATO. On the one hand, the collective defence pact remains a source of tension between Europe and Russia, and an incentive for European governments to free ride on security issues in order to make budgetary savings. On the other hand, NATO seems to remain the only source of security for Europe, given the reluctance of European countries to organise the EU as a political actor on the global stage. Has this persistent dependence cost the EU the current crisis with Russia and its potential exacerbation? At what price will the US keep bearing their transatlantic responsibility, accounting for 75% of NATO budget? How is the institutional architecture of NATO likely to evolve, and to serve what purpose, in the current political environment?

*A Citizen's Controversy with*

**Olivier de France**

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*Moderated by:*

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**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** begins by pointing out that the distribution of defence spending among NATO Allies has been the subject of controversy since the birth of the Alliance. The reason burden sharing has

remained so high on the agenda is because it raises fundamental questions, not only about the role that each ally plays in the Alliance, but also about its capacity as a whole to defend itself. Logically, if too many allies are not pitching in what they should, then there will be shortfalls that leave everybody exposed. A narrow focus on burden sharing can easily distract from more important questions — namely whether the alliance has a clear collective purpose and whether it has a sense of strategic goals and priorities. **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** believes that it is the latter that has gotten NATO into the current crisis vis-à-vis Russia.

The typical starting point for thinking about free riding is Olson’s “Theory of Collective Action”, which sees ally defence as a public good. It is difficult to exclude individual allies from enjoying the benefits of this good, even if they do not contribute. Olson predicted two main implications from this — free riding by smaller state and reduction of the public good supply, in the sense that the alliance as a whole would produce less defence than allies thought desirable or necessary. The theory suggests that there will be individual benefits, but collective costs of free riding.

Within the current situation, **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** draws attention to the fact that NATO defence spending has been declining vis-à-vis Russia and China. Where NATO used to account for 75% of global military spending, it now accounts for 60%. Is that a cause for worry? The good news is that, from NATO’s perspective, it still accounts for 60% of global military spending — but also it is important to keep in mind that military expenditures are an extremely crude measure of military power. It is a flow measure, meaning that it tracks current resources that are devoted to operating, renewing, and replacing and expanding military capabilities, but it does not measure the stock pile of acquired military hardware, organizational infrastructure and experience that has been accumulated over time. It does not tell us a lot, but that said, obviously if current spending trends continue, then eventually NATO will be at a disadvantage.

Even within NATO, **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** points out that there are large spending gaps. America continues to outspend Europe, and outspending Europe more than ever before. In 1999, the US accounted for 55% of NATO military spending. In early 2000s, that figure had risen to 60%; today it is nearing 70%. The spending gap between NATO members has not been this wide since the early 1950s. There are a number of possible reasons for free riding to consider. Of course, European austerity measures have played a role, but there are much deeper political structural reasons why Europe is increasingly dependent on the US.

One reason for this, **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** contends, is the fundamental shift in NATO’s focus. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has

changed its focus away from territorial defence to a regional and global security management. Increasingly, the Alliance has emphasized two core functions: to provide nuclear deterrence and to engage in out-of-area crisis management. This has encouraged free riding because, unlike territorial defence in the event of a Soviet ground invasion, global security management is a more singularly public good — once it is applied by one or two states, others can enjoy the benefits without making any contribution.

The second reason for growing free riding, according to **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni**, is a looser alliance structure and a broader membership. According to Standard Collective Action Theories, smaller is better: when a public good, such as defence, is produced by a small group, then each member is more likely to perceive that their country's contribution is indispensable, and therefore more likely to be motivated to contribute. But since the end of the Cold War, Alliance enlargements have doubled NATO's membership, and increased heterogeneity within the Alliance to the extent that it is difficult to adopt a unified, strategic position. This in turn enhances the difficulty of eliciting contributions, since there is no clear agreement on the strategic goals that those contributions are meant to serve.

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** believes that the creation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has made matters worse, because it has created a parallel framework to NATO within the EU, which draws political and military resources away from the Alliance in a number of ways. There is evidence that CSDP encourages intra-European free riding, in turn further reducing European military expenditure.

A further driver of free riding, argues **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni**, is a general uncertainty about what collective capabilities are needed in today's strategic arena. In 1952, NATO leaders met in Lisbon and agreed that the Alliance needed military capabilities that were roughly equivalent to the Soviet Union. They also agreed to specialise efforts — the US would primarily be responsible for nuclear deterrence and strategic air force, while Western Europeans would take care of conventional forces. There was a clear threat perception and an agreed target to measure defence spending against. Today, spending targets are defined in terms of percentages of GDP, rather than in terms of what strategic goals. Of course, the Alliance does have a list of priority capabilities, but lack of agreement on strategic goals makes it more difficult to motivate states to contribute towards those targets.

One way that free riding may have contributed to the current crisis in Ukraine is by undermining deterrence: a declining emphasis on territorial defence might have led Moscow to calculate that it could engage in a sort of piecemeal westward expansion and go relatively unpunished. This is rather unconvincing, as the tactics used by Moscow in Georgia and Ukraine have relied on exploiting the pro-Russian sentiment within a large segment of the population and on economic pressure. Military forces have only come in later and in relatively limited numbers — it is hard to imagine that a massive build-up of conventional forces on Europe's eastern flank or tactical nuclear weapons would have been credible to deter such tactics.

What has triggered the crisis? **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** agrees with experts who place a

large portion of the blame on NATO. America's interest in strengthening and enlarging alliances and on pushing or establishing a forward presence has antagonised Russia for a number of years. Ahead of the first NATO enlargement, the West sought to reassure Russia through the NATO-Russia Founding Act, in which NATO promised not to place any permanent bases, significant numbers of troops, or nuclear weapons in any of the new member states. Since then, successive enlargements have broadened the boundaries of the EU and NATO right up to Russia's borders; we now have nine former Warsaw Pact members in NATO, leaving only Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia as remaining buffers. Russia has warned that it sees these developments as a threat to national sovereignty, but the West has continued to issue accession agreements and fan democratic revolutions in Russia's immediate neighbours. NATO has bitten off a large chunk of what used to be Russia's sphere of influence, pretending that Moscow probably would not mind. This was wishful thinking.

How does that relate to burden sharing? **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** contends that one way to connect the points is to look at how the confrontation with Russia is driven by the same factors that motivate free riding. Namely, a lack of clear, strategic purpose, and a lack of clearly delineated strategic priorities and goals. Throughout the 1990s, NATO formulated a range of quite loose strategic goals and policies that were often in conflict; it defined its core tasks as collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security, choosing to emphasize the latter two. It singled out Russia as a key partner in the fight against terrorism, achieving non-

proliferation, nuclear disarmament, but at the same time it defines rapid NATO enlargement as crucial to Euro-Atlantic stability, and provided security assurances to a non-nuclear Ukraine. Essentially, this lack of clear strategic vision, evident in these contradictory policies, is part of what has brought us the current crisis, but also part of what underlies the general unwillingness to contribute vastly to the alliance.

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** states that a second important way free riding links up with the current crisis is how persistent free riding has reduced the European voice within NATO. Beginning in the early 1990s, enlargement sceptics — primarily Europeans — warned that enlargement might provoke Russia and dilute alliance unity. Although both Germany and France endorsed and supported the first round of NATO enlargement, they were very meticulous on insisting on consultation and assurances to Russia; the NATO-Russia Founding Act was a French initiative. Yet, in the years that followed, this European cautiousness lost out to American expansionism when it came time to line up countries for membership. This was partially because Europeans themselves disagreed over what countries they wanted in, and which ought to be kept out, resulting in all the prospective countries being allowed in. However, it was also because Europeans were too dependent on continued US leadership within the Alliance to strongly assert their opinion and will.

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** believes this tension between European caution and American expansionism came to a head in 2008 at the Bucharest Summit. Despite staunch objections from most Western European states, the Bush administration strongly pushed for admitting

Georgia and Ukraine to NATO. In the end, there was a compromise — NATO did not launch a formal accession process, but instead the Summit Declaration stated that these countries would become members of NATO. That step underlies part of the crisis we have seen play out today. Once that crisis blew over, Europeans continued to lose out to Washington in terms of what should happen next. Washington pushed Europeans to slap stronger sanctions on Russia than most European countries were probably comfortable with, which have done little to solve the crisis.

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** moves on to the long-term implications of these strategic mistakes. The answer starts in Wales — where the Lisbon Summit of 2010 stressed crisis management and cooperative security as being the pillars of NATO's mission; in Wales the Alliance strongly seemed to favour return to basics — focusing on collective defence. The Summit approved a Readiness Action Plan, specifically citing the need to respond to strategic challenges from Russia. Part of this plan will create a High Readiness Task Force — 4000 troops to deploy within 48 hours. In addition, it was agreed to reverse the trend of declining defence budgets, bringing everybody up to the 2% budget target within the next decade. But there was no clear decision on the long-discussed withdrawal of US tactical nuclear weapons from Europe. It is safe to assume that these plans will be shelved for now, as they will not help further discussions about reduction of strategic weapons. Apart from that, there was a lot of inflammatory language. The summit declaration condemned Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea, although in

practice NATO has already accepted this, so that seemed unnecessary.

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** concludes that the crisis in Ukraine might be a turning point for NATO. If it continues the renewed focus on collective defence and traditional Article V commitments, it could trigger an increase in European defence spending, and would improve burden sharing within the Alliance — but the result would not be added security. There are two ways to enhance security: you can either build up your capabilities, or you can try to reduce threat. NATO seems bent on doing the former by returning to a Cold War policy of enhanced defence and deterrence. The timing of this is unfortunate: after 25 years of missions outside Europe, this ought to be the time when NATO could turn its full attention to post-Cold War priorities, such as nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, cooperative security and anti-terrorism, in all of which Russia is a vital partner. But instead, we are finding ourselves now in a situation in which the West and Russia are unable to cooperate on a range of issues that they would have otherwise. This, one could fear, may inflict serious harm on a range of western security goals going forward, much more so than dwindling European defence spending.

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**Olivier De France** used to tell his Cambridge students that the good thing about philosophy is that if you do not know the answer to the question, you can always say that the question is not being asked correctly, or

that it is the wrong question to ask. The question being debated here — assessing the costs of a free ride — is a tricky one because it is counterintuitive; it asks us not to think about the benefits, but the costs. So De France wants to focus initially on how the terms of the debate are inaccurate.

First thing to note, according to **Olivier De France**, is that if you look at the question from the outside, it is a very strange debate. If you accept the premise of the question, which is that there is free riding, that this is the term that should be used, and that free riding has a cost, then you are already caught up in the taxonomy that NATO uses to frame this debate. You are left with facing whether the EU and NATO are complementary or if they are in competition; debating burden sharing and free riding on the one hand, and comprehensive approach and pooling and sharing on the other—just a very binary debate with what it involves in terms of intellectual blinkers.

The debate, **Olivier De France** continues, pits people who are completely alien to the EU mindset against those that are unclear about NATO. By framing the debate as free riding and burden sharing, using the NATO terminology and

rhetoric, the conversation becomes locked into talking about Berlin Plus, what worked and did not work, when it stopped working and so on — eventually realising it is the exact same conversation that has been going on for 20 years. Is there a functional division of labour between NATO and the EU, is there a regional division of labour between the EU and NATO, especially with the current focuses — NATO defence looking East, EU looking South. Once the regional and functional debate is over, suddenly it is clear that we have two superb solutions, the EU and NATO, that have become two problems in and of themselves, thereby creating the third problem of how to get these two organizations to work with each other. Instead of having two solutions, we have created three problems.

There is another way to go about this problem, according to **Olivier De France**, which is to take a step back and look at what Europe is trying to achieve, what it wants to achieve collectively, how to achieve it, and with what means and capabilities. This needs to be done irrespective of the banner of one organisation or another, of the theological questions, of the institutional questions.

The problem, **Olivier De France** believes, is that when the EU asks what they are trying to achieve and how, it hits a bit of wall because people do not necessarily know. Firstly, the EU has no clear idea what it is trying to achieve on the global stage. At some point it thought it did: exporting liberal democracy and market economy outside of Europe for example, and making the world a better place. And then came Iraq and Afghanistan, and as a former colleague at ECFR Nick Witney has argued, the realisation that this came at a

price, and that it was not quite sure if it really wanted to do it anymore. Effectively what happened was that the overarching narrative became the fact that there wasn't really any overarching narrative, which allowed the EU to develop the comprehensive approach.

**Olivier De France** suggests NATO did not have a great grasp of what its purpose was either for a while, with the reason it was created for having disappeared with the Warsaw Pact. As such the conclusions from the NATO Summit do have a clarifying virtue: they say the Alliance will defend Ukraine's territorial integrity, but the rest of the text shows basically the opposite. What they are actually doing is clarifying where NATO's frontier lies, which is on Ukraine's western border, not its eastern border, and solidifying that border by giving Ukraine money to train troops.

The issue is, **Olivier De France** contends, that this soul-searching extends to how NATO wants to undertake operations. The problem with this type of soul searching is that it is not always compatible with the capabilities issue, which is a long-term one; if you are trying to build capabilities and develop them, you are going to need a specific set of skills, a strong defence industry. You need to know what you are going to do with these capabilities in the long term; this is where we have a problem. When you talk about assessing the cost of a free ride, it might imply something quantitative, and as Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni said, it is not quantitative. We all know that the 2% goal is a primarily political statement, and what matters is how you spend this money. At the NATO Summit, Belgium signed up to aiming to achieve the 2% goal — so long as GDP grows — but two weeks later they decided to

cut their defence budget by 10%. The 2% goal is clearly not binding in the first place, because if Germany wanted to spend 2% on its defence, they would have to spend €20 billion more a year, which is not going to happen.

**Olivier De France** points out that Europe still spends more than Russia and China on defence, so the issue here is not how much we spend, but how, as most of our troops are not deployable. **Olivier De France** calls this the “Maginot Moment” (from the Maginot Line) in France — when there are all these military capabilities, but they do not perform their military function, save for ornamental use.

**Olivier De France** is afraid that we are reaching this threshold, not just in small European countries, but in some of the main European military powers as well. Remember the recent issue in Germany where the Defence Minister tried to go to Kurdistan but was not able to because the two strategic transport planes she was planning to use fell apart. The Italian Defence forces only have about 15% operational availability for helicopters. For the UK, obviously Afghanistan and Iraq takes a toll, but there are 40 fighter jets available out of 170.

The question, according to **Olivier De France**, is what to do with these advanced, expensive capabilities? What actual power are you going to project with them? **Olivier De France** believes that a choice has to be made: do we want our capabilities in Europe to achieve any military end whatsoever? Whether that means deployment capability, projecting power, or using force, it boils down to “do we want to be able to have a role on the global stage or not”? The answer does not have to be yes. If it is no, let the EU become a

super-Switzerland, a hyper-soft power: it is what the EU is rather turning to anyway, without really choosing to do so. Maybe it is a strategic decision to not be strategic, not to have these capabilities, because we do not feel threatened by the same things – maybe an implicit strategic decision not to be strategic. **Olivier De France** is not sure that this approach is the best answer with how the world works today, but it is a choice and it is a respectable one, because at least it is a choice.

If the answer to this choice is yes, and Europe wants a role on the global stage, **Olivier De France** believes the EU is not really doing things right. If we continue to do things in such short sighted fashion, on a strictly national scale, we will eventually come to a “super-Switzerland” without having chosen it, and that is a worse idea than choosing it. Not choosing is very expensive, because we are maintaining undeployable, personnel-heavy armies with old equipment that is expensive to maintain, and on top of that, buying new capabilities that are always of use. The cost of free riding, for De France, is ultimately this lack of choice: free riding is what comes between us and making that choice.

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## DISCUSSION

A participant states that the US sees Europe as a museum, with nothing to sell and nothing to be taken from it, which is why NATO will not defend us. This leads to the obvious question of what use is it to say within NATO? Beside everything **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Olivier De France** have said, NATO was built in times when there was a necessity; but it is not the case any longer. What interest do we have, what justification do we have, whether economic or financial, to stay within NATO?

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** starts by pointing out that, though she and Olivier De France came at it different ways, they both ended up arguing that Europe does not know what it wants strategically, which has caused much of the burden sharing facing the EU and NATO now. Burden sharing is not just a question of making the decision to say, “we are willing to invest in this military hardware, [and] we are willing to pay the cost,” but also of taking responsibility for defining strategic goals. This is where Europe has failed. It has adopted a reactive attitude, sometimes endorsing and sometimes being a bit more uncertain about American goals. A second deep problematic barrier of European free riding — the one important feature of what went on in the 1990s, is the cooperative threat reduction programme that came out of the first Bush administration and has been massively expanded since then. One area where Washington has almost exclusively paid for these efforts and Europeans have taken a back seat is the effort to

ensure better non-proliferation, arms reduction in Europe, and to safeguard all nuclear warheads and materials leftover at the end of the Cold War. This is something where, if anything, Europe should have been able to see a direct interest, and sign up, and get on board.

**Olivier De France** wants to play devil's advocate and put logic all the way on this question of NATO creating the threat. The case could be made that in 1999 and 2004, when Russia's GDP was basically the GDP of the Netherlands, perhaps instead of bullying Russia, we could have made a real effort to put Russia on the negotiating table and create a real union. When Russia's power was at its lowest, maybe that was the moment to put it around the table. There is a case to be made for that, but there is also equally a case to be made for not having an alternative to NATO.

With regard to sleepwalking into the crisis, **Olivier De France** reiterates that the Newport Summit was a positive moment of clarification, but that does not mean NATO is not sleepwalking to a certain extent. There are a number of issues where NATO has the same underlying issues — take the EU Battlegroups, for example. Everyone is very dismissive of the Battlegroups, which have not been used, but look at when the NATO Response Force has been used: it was used in the Athens Olympic Games, Hurricane Katrina, Pakistan for the earthquake. Is reducing the reaction time addressing the core issue, which is the will to deploy them? **Olivier De France** thinks that the problems are similar across NATO and the EU, in the same way as Article 5. To what extent are the West and western public opinion ready to use force? To what extent are political leaders ready to use Article 5? If Putin chooses the

lob a short range, tactical nuclear weapon at a Baltic country, what are we going to do? What store do we set by Article 5? Do the Western leaders have the will to use the nuclear deterrent, to use force, to use a Rapid Reaction Force? If there is a crippling cyber attack that destroys a country's entire infrastructure, how are we going to react to that? A majority of these threats were actually created with Article 5 in mind, in order to attack a country and not to trigger Article 5. Hybrid warfare is a prime example — guys with uniforms that do not have insignias, propaganda, de-civilisation, they are meant to not have any kind of advanced warning. The whole thing about what Article 5 is and what it stands for — all of these issues are not just issues that the EU has, but issues in the West in general.

A participant asks about Europe's military goals, and their role in the crisis in Ukraine. Europe's hesitance to answer the basic question of whether to be a military power or not has caused them to sleepwalk into the present crisis, but unfortunately it is too late to go back now.

As for whether Europe wants to be a military power or not, **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** agrees that by not answering this question we have sleepwalked into this crisis, rather than deliberately provoking Russia. However, she does not agree that there is nothing we can do about it. NATO has said that they will expand to Georgia and they might expand to Ukraine, and that the economic partnership with Ukraine is preventing them from stepping back. Well, why not? Why not take responsibility and say, actually this has turned out to be a rather bad idea. What prevents NATO

from saying publically that Ukraine will never become a NATO member and should instead remain a neutral buffer between NATO and Russia? Why is Europe so scared of talking geopolitics? All the criteria set up to join NATO has led us to one solution, which is no solution at all. Enhanced cooperation between Europeans within NATO, while in theory a wonderful idea, is always stuck on one fundamental issue: until Europe finds a way of formulating a joint foreign policy, no amount of military cooperation within this framework is ever going to ever get us a truly useful, integrated capability. We are just not going to see a willingness to get there until we can agree on what it is for.

**Olivier De France** largely agrees: it is indeed an issue he has looked at very carefully, and apart from the fact that they are very crude indicator of what capability you can actually deploy and power you can project, the way they are made is a bit strange. If you try to work out what China's defence budget is, you can have anything from 112 Billion to 260 billion, depending on what estimate you are using. If you want to use the same indicators for Europe, the estimates are fine. As long as you use the same methodology to track budgets across time, it does not solve the problem completely, because the perimeters vary, but it is a very good indicator of where countries are going. After the NATO Summit, there have been 13 or 14 NATO countries that have responded positively to the 2% pledge, which does not mean they will ever reach 2%, but it gives them political incentive to raise their budgets — for the moment. Although it is true that the US budget has been going down, it will continue to go down for another 10 years or so.

The Chair asks about the possibility to develop the concept of common defence within NATO. Is this the right time for the Member States to streamline the cuts within the EU framework in a way that what remains becomes more operational? What would that mean to have EU enhanced cooperation within NATO – would it help, or would it make things more difficult?

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** believes this is where you come up against the limitations of European incrementalism. What you are saying is “let us create a joint military first, and then we will come up with a foreign policy”. The analogy to the common market or the single currency does not get us very far here. Once you have a common currency, you are forced to trade in it, but once you have a joint military you are not forced to use it. Look at the Battlegroups — as we cannot agree when and how to use them, we chose not to. **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** does not think this incrementalist approach is easily exportable to the area of military defence.

**Olivier De France** thinks there are any number of imaginable configurations, and there are some pretty entertaining suggestions put forward. One was that the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) should be merged with CSDP to be the planning institution for all European forces; that there should be a merger between Allied Command Transformation (ACT) and the European Defence Agency; and that the North Atlantic Council (NAC) should be reformed so that there is one ambassador for the EU, one for non-European countries, one for the US, and one

for Canada. There are number of interesting ideas that you can throw around, but that is only within the institutional debate. You have to choose if it is worth going into the institutional debate, or if it is just a case of circumventing it.

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** believes that the EU has acted irresponsibly, or failed to act responsibly, in two ways. First, in 2008 by failing to prevent NATO from issuing a membership invitation to Georgia and Ukraine: European powers were opposed, they had concerns, but they nonetheless backed down. This is one of those moments that Europe should have dug in its heels and said “No.” But in light of that, we can say that a free trade agreement is not the same as EU membership, and EU membership is not the same as NATO membership, but once the cat was out of the bag, and once the Ukraine Crisis was fully blown, coming back in June and then issuing the agreement that had been so fatefully rejected just seven months before, was an act of irresponsibly fanning a crisis. So, yes, EU membership does not necessarily equal NATO membership, but then it is their job to stand up and explain this very clearly to Russia, and the way to do this is to stand up and say that Ukraine will never get NATO membership, but no one is willing to do it. We are not clearly differentiated right now, and that is irresponsible diplomacy.

Unless Europe messes it up really badly, **Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** does not think the US will come back to Europe. But this is precisely what the Ukraine Crisis does — it reinforces the message from the US that it is time for Europe to stand up and take care of their own business, because there are good reasons to get their house

in order and the US is not going to be here to sort if for them.

The speakers are asked whether the NATO Wales Summit and the EU CSDP Summit go hand in hand, or whether they have different goals.

**Olivier De France** thinks that the targets of the CSDP Summit of December 2013 are pretty much on track, although they are not ambitious enough. The High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini seems to be having a good think about what Europe’s role in the world should be, so hopefully that will turn out ok. All of these projects in the pipeline are working; this is just another example of incrementalism. But considered in the round, the answer that we are giving to this challenge is basically in no way, shape, or form, proportionate to the challenge. Maybe it is fine to pool and share training capabilities, but what we should be doing is putting the hard questions on the table, with political backing at the highest level. If we actually want to pool front line capabilities, how do we do it? If we want to pool lethal capabilities, how do we do it? There are very workable ways to do this. There is a limit to how much we can do incrementally in these areas, and at some point we need to realise that if we do not do something, we are going to end up with no capabilities at all.

**Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni** agrees that there are some goals that could be met and adds that the Ukraine crisis and the Wales Summit increase the chances that we will meet these goals, because they create an emphasis and they do put burden sharing back on the table.

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