

STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC STABILITY IN EUROPE: INTEGRATING FORCE POSTURE AND ARMS CONTROL IN A 21ST CENTURY NATO STRATEGY

Performer: CGST Solutions
Project Lead: Schuyler Foerster
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ABSTRACT:

For the foreseeable future, NATO will need to craft a strategy for security and stability in Europe based on the assumption that Russia does not share the West's worldview and will likely continue to seek to undermine the stability and cohesion achieved in Europe following the end of the Cold War.

This continuing volatility of NATO's strategic environment will require that it maintain its long-established strategy of deterrence and reassurance. NATO will require a clear and purposeful strategy that incorporates both force posture decisions and arms control policies as integral and complementary tools to that end.

In this 13-month project, we propose conducting—through primary and secondary sources and interviews with experts and policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic—research on the requirements for strategic stability in Europe, the changing role of both nuclear and conventional weapons in Europe, and the extent to which arms control regimes established almost three decades ago can still contribute to stability. Although our purpose is not to advocate for specific force posture or arms control policies, we expect to underscore the necessity of viewing these as complementary tools for sustaining strategic stability in the long term and to outline essential elements for such a strategy.

Ultimately, sustaining strategic stability in Europe will depend on a comprehensive political, economic, social, diplomatic, and military approach in the face of fundamental changes in the European strategic environment. Within that context, NATO will need to develop a coherent security strategy that incorporates both force posture and cooperative security measures—including arms control and dialogue—as complementary tools for maintaining stability in its increasingly volatile relationship with Russia.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information please contact INSS@usafa.edu.