

Norway, Article V and the New Strategic Concept

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1. Cultural-political background

When a Norwegian F16 dropped two bombs over Afghanistan in October 2002 it was the first use of Norwegian military force since the end of World War II. Norway's defence has traditionally been structured as an 'invasion' force, with a focus on national defence, in particular attentive to the key geographical position in immediate vicinity to Russia and a long Atlantic coast. The post-Cold War transformation from a territorially based national defence to an out-of-area strategic culture has been a difficult and sluggish one in Norway. A combination of a relatively underdeveloped strategic culture and a strong tradition of humanitarian and development aid has made difficult the security-development synthesis so characteristic of the new security thinking of our time. The relatively unique combination of historical, geographical, natural and cultural properties proper to Norway's recent cultural, political, and strategic history invite a distinct interpretation and approach to the changes in NATO's strategic identity.

1.1. The EU-NATO-Norway constellation

As a small power, Norway has never had a strong tradition for strategic thinking in foreign policy. Since the turn of the 20th century foreign policy has generally taken the form of a balance of alignment and neutralism. As an expression of autonomy Norway has remained outside of the

European Union, while at the same time engaging in transatlantic alignment through NATO membership.¹

This balance has changed as a consequence of two important developments (disregarding for a moment the changes brought on by 9/11). First, Norway has followed the path of the development of both the European Economic Area and the Schengen arrangements. This has brought with it an increasing institutional inevitability: a one way street toward integration. Secondly, the EU itself has taken institutional and political choices directing it toward a more consolidated military and foreign policy identity. Norway has unavoidably and largely unwillingly been carried along in this development.

Already in the 1980's the geopolitical question of a Norwegian 'choice' between the US (in the form of the transatlantic alliance) and Europe was guiding debates amongst experts. The Cold War assured that security in its conventional understanding took priority over economic interests represented EU membership or association. From the EC referendum of 1972 all of Norway's NATO partners, with the exception of Turkey and Iceland, had become EU members. When in 1994 Norway again voted to not seek EU membership the political stakes grew. The debate was revitalized and expanded.

In the mean time the 1992 NATO resolution that the Alliance could take part in peace operations under the supervision of OSCE represented, particularly in Norwegian eyes, a shift from a defensive, militarized Cold War force to one inclined to value and put into focus the social and cultural determinates of the conflict and post-conflict peace-keeping.

Already in the Cold War environment NATO naturally began to evolve. The institution of the Partnership for Peace in 1994 placed unique pressure on Norway. The notion of including the satellites of the Russian federation created uncertainty for Norway which shares a border to Russia, the arch-enemy of only years earlier. In 1997 NATO stepped into its role in the Balkans. NATO's role changed—from supporting the UN Protection Force to a central implementation force (IFOR) of the Dayton Accords. Norway was also originally engaged in the Balkans in the service of the UN. It might be said that the new Central European EU members have gotten the best of two-worlds: an alliance with the US and thus security in relation to a still somewhat

¹ (Neumann, 2002: 20; Neumann & Heikka, 2005).

unpredictable Russia through NATO, and access to the European markets with their ideology of free movement of goods and services.²

1.2. The peace-nation in a post-national era: The Norwegian embodiment of Article V

Through the entire post-WW II period Norway has cultivated a foreign-policy identity as peace-maker, as a globally-minded, environmentally pacifist.. In the Norwegian geopolitical imagination, avoiding the use of military force is not only desirable, it constitutes the primary aim of foreign policy. The evolution of the threat in the post-Cold War period has thus brought about challenges for the Norwegian way of looking at the world. The blurring of distinctions between war and peace. friend and foe, the post-national nature of threat, the rise of societal and human security as global issues have caused something of a crisis for Norwegian strategic thought, while in the circles of track II diplomacy these have remain strong, even become consolidated.

The 1999 conflict in Kosovo came close to being a direct political crisis in Norway. Though the Norwegian political class had followed closely the evolution in NATO's identity and portfolio of tasks since the Rome meeting in 1991, the drama of Kosovo and the role that the Alliance attempted to play in solving it were closely linked in the Norwegian political imagination. Thus the Foreign Minister in a speech on 3 September 1999 could evoke a 'historical test of an expanded NATO' only 4 months after the adoption of the New Strategic Concept. In that speech the Foreign Minister characterizes the use of force by the North Atlantic Alliance as a failure of the primary task of conflict avoidance. Resorting to force was to be construed as a failure, even if it met its political ends.³ The new NATO shift to a mixing of war-making and peace-making tasks, causes myriad political challenges in the Norwegian ethos. NATO's New Strategic Concept in this sense makes Norway's branding of itself as a peace nation more problematic, both in terms of everyday domestic party politics and in terms of foreign policy.

The challenge of security today has only slight resemblance to 50 years ago. The task related to security have become more related to questions of risk management, crisis management and peace. Thus one obvious question is whether NATO is the proper on the ground tool for these kinds of activities. Given Norway's traditions and, not the least, self-branding, as peace nation as

² (Udgaard, 2005: 19)

³ (Vollebæk, 1999).

an *alternative* to traditional NATO-led military activities there is a more or less important clash of geopolitical identities involved.

On the one hand since Norway is a small and relatively weak member of the NATO alliance, Article V has been of particular importance from the point of view of defence. Norway would clearly be incapable of defending itself from threats coming from any of its immediate or more distant European neighbours. It is thus entirely dependent on the provisions of Article V. The security dependence also affords a dimension of creates policy independence. The distribution of defence resources is naturally co-determined by the freedom to distribute resources in other ways. On the other hand, the post-war pacifism that dominates political debate has given the status of a full-blown engagement of Article V the status of a disconcerting thought. The case in point is the political debate surrounding the Norwegian participation in the present military operation in Afghanistan, to which we return below.

1.3. Official Norwegian responses to the New Strategic Concept

The Norwegian Parliament responded swiftly and comprehensively to the Washing declaration of April 2006 with a full analysis of the meaning and implication for Norwegian foreign policy. A Parliamentary Communication lays The official Norwegian reaction to NATO's New Strategic Concept is most distinctly.⁴

Norway supports initiatives from NATO to shape a role for the evolving security identity of the European Union. This has involved most directly a division of labour which would give the EU responsibility for crisis response and management. In Norway's vision, this mandate should be interpreted and applied broadly, giving considerable room for manoeuvring. Redundancy in military structures should be avoided.⁵

The Norwegian perspective continues to give US participation in crisis areas considerable significance. The Kosovo example is underscored in official documents as primary proof for the need for strong US involvement. If one accepts the pragmatic and general aim of strengthening the Alliance for a new era, then US competence and experience should quite simply be taken on board. In this sense the Norwegian official perspective sees Kosovo as the test and

⁴ (Parliamentary Communication nr 36, 2000).

⁵ (Parliamentary Communication nr 36, 2000: 3).

concretization of the 10 years of the NATO evolution starting with the run-up to the Rome meeting. Kosovo was also a central moment for linking the aims, interests and competencies of NATO, the EU and the UN, through the 1998 Security Council resolution 1199 authorizing airborne operations and Resolution 1244 giving the mandate of the KFOR operation.

Given the historical and political background to Norwegian debate these UN mandates and the legitimacy they provided were of utmost importance for Norway. The reference to international law and to UN resolutions was and remains central in both public debates and in government policies and actions. Norway has been positive to the expansion implicit in the Partnership for Peace. Russia's reaction to the 1999 Kosovo campaign was seen in Norway as regrettable.

In addition, Norway has been active in attempts to increase the overall NATO budget in order to give more flexibility in absorbing new members of the Alliance.

The official Norwegian reaction to the New Strategic Concept has been to seek balance between new tasks and old. Norway does not consider the need for NATO and its capabilities as by any means obsolete. At the same time, Norway has shown openness to change. The one clear condition that the Norwegian government wishes to see reflected in discussions about the New Concept is the centrality of the UN in forming policy on crisis management.⁶

1.4. Legality and legitimacy of out-of-area operations

Clearly, NATO's NSC had immediate repercussions for Norwegian defence.⁷ A secondary yet real political challenge involves the very *legality* of sending or dispatching Norwegian freely conscripted troops to zones of conflict that do not imply the defence of Norwegian national sovereignty. The logic of conscription, in Norway as elsewhere has always been based on defending the nation to which the conscripted soldiers belong. The counter-argument made in conservative Norwegian circles is that the common denominator between now and then, between the friend/foe logic of Cold War geopolitics and the blurring of aid, peacemaking and conflict is distinctively *moral*. In this sense Article 5 of the NATO charter expresses a *moral solidarity* more than a material assistance. (Parliamentary Communication nr 36, 2000) According

⁶ (Parliamentary Communication nr 36, 2000: 11)

⁷ (Børresen, 2000; Forsvarsdepartementet, 2004)

to this point of view, also attributed to Joschka Fischer, the aim of NATO must be to maintain the visibility of the political community originally (and continuously) represented by NATO

The new challenges for NATO arise from new types of conflicts: ethnic, religious, etc., these arise, according to the President of the Norwegian Parliament, Jagland, from the borderlands of Europe.

2. Norwegian responses

2.1. Norway, and the Atlantic Alliance after Iraq

The Iraq crisis has been a challenge for the UN, the EU and NATO. The political and moral capital that the US was capable of gathering in order to serve to consolidate power and marginalize the role played by international law and coordinated military action in and through NATO. The transatlantic alliance was deeply split by divergent positions on whether to engage and, how to engage, in Iraq. In 2003 NATO took over operations in Afghanistan. The latter also manifest deep disagreement about what the role of NATO should be. Norwegian allegiances on the transatlantic axis have followed this fragmentation

2.2. Norway and the NATO Afghanistan action

Norway has 750 troops deployed across the globe. Of these, 532 are in Afghanistan. On the basis of a request from NATO, the Norwegian government recently resolved to send 150 more special forces to the Kabul region. This has caused tension in the present governments since one of the members of the government coalition, the Norwegian Socialist Party, explicitly opposes deployment. Indeed, the resolution is seen as a direct defeat for the Centre-left government, bring some to speculate that the government would collapse.⁸ It has also been met with sceptical reactions from many points of view. Some strong voices go as far as to declare the failure of the NATO-policy in Afghanistan.⁹

2.3. Norway, NATO and energy security

Norway is the second largest gas producer in Europe after Russia. Energy security is thus an anchor point in Norwegian foreign and security policy. This was a central theme when Polish Foreign Minister Anna Fotyga met her homologue Jonas Gahr Større 23 November.

⁸ For example, Dag Seierstad (Horn, 2007a).

⁹ For example, Sverre Lodgaard, Director of the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (Horn, 2007b).

For this reason, the comments by US Senator Richard Lugar, and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee on NATO's role in defending the 'energy security' of the alliance attracted particular attention in Norwegian circles. In related news reports it has often underscored that Poland is particularly interested in an arrangement whereby energy security became a focus of the Alliance. NATO General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, is often evoked as supporting such an approach.¹⁰

Norway, again, has a special relationship to the question of energy security, different from other members of the NATO Alliance. The Norwegian Foreign Minister has been careful to point out the degree to which energy policy is a central focus of the present government and the degree to which need to 'safeguard the interface between foreign policy, energy policy and climate policy' is in focus.¹¹ Negotiations with Russia on access and environmental care for the Barents region are ongoing

¹⁰ For example (Nilsen & Renå, 2007).

¹¹ (Støre, 2007).

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