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NATO Out-of-the-Box vs. the BRICS-SCO System: the Rising World Order

(An open letter to NATO's Secretary General and Heads of States)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Back in August 1990 Dr. Solomon Passy became probably the first MP in Europe to urge in the National Parliament withdrawal of his country from the Warsaw Pact (along with its dissolution) and joining NATO and the EU. A decade later Dr. Passy, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, negotiated and signed Bulgaria's accessions to NATO (2002-2004) and the EU (2005). He chaired OSCE (2004), the UN Security Council (in 2002 and 2003) and the Parliamentary Committees of Defence and Foreign Affairs (2001, 2005—2009). In 2009 the Bulgarian Government nominated him for NATO Secretary General. He is the founder of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria – a unique pro-Atlantic NGO that ever operated on a then Warsaw Pact territory and the first from New Europe to join ATA, back in 1992.

Solomon holds PhD in Mathematical Logic and Computer Sciences. In 2008 he and his wife Gergana Passy (Bulgarian EU Minister, 2007-2009) launched the project for universal GSM charger on EU territory which was successfully finalized by the EU Parliament in 2014. The Passys' currently invest their international network to campaign for the universal access to Wi-Fi Internet and establishment of e-democracy, as part of their vision that information technologies will overwhelm and optimize political management.

1. Preface

The previous version of this Out-of-the-Box Strategy, **OoB**, contributed to the brainstorming of the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept. The ten or so suggestions for NATO political upgrade and global socialization leading to its adaptation to the next two decades remained, however, a mere academic exercise for various trans-Atlantic conferences.

In 2014, the Ukrainian--Russian crisis overlapped with the emergence of what became known as Islamic State (ISIS) in the Middle East following the wave of Arab Spring revolutions, proving thereby the adequacy of this pre-emptive OoB action plan. The good news today, five years later, is that these ideas are still updatable, applicable and even more topical to enhance and reinforce NATO and the Euro-Atlantic community in general.

NATO enlargement was based on the broader vision to extend – according to the contemporary modalities – the area of Atlantic values and the global security structure. Since WWII, extensive efforts had prepared NATO for its future role in the shockingly fast-evolving world. Today we need

the most forward-looking, ambitious and – above all – OoB framework, united not under the lowest common denominator of the Member States, but under the highest imaginable standards of the most visionary among their leaders.

The 3-5 years electoral cycle presses governments to address urgent, not strategic, issues and thus to follow the events instead of shaping them. The opposite, proactive approach should be pursued, to empower NATO for a response to the challenges that we can reasonably expect to become urgent in a mid-term perspective of 5-20 years, as well as to those, currently beyond our limited imagination. These should not be allowed to catch us unprepared or unarmed, as it had happened more than once since 1989.

9/11 might not have happened if we had expected it, which could have been the case, had we possessed OoB thinking which transforms the unbelievable into imaginable. Twenty-five years ago (let alone in 1949!) it would have been inconceivable to expand the number of NATO 12 founding members to 28, adding an extensive range of wider partnerships; or that NATO would be successfully operating to stabilize and pacify regions even well out-of-area. What surprises await us in the next couple of decades and how to prepare ourselves for meeting them? I hereby offer some provocative yet hopefully exciting and stimulating ideas of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, **ACB**, which continues to influence the debate on the future of NATO, as it has since 1990.

The Alliance unique nature, success and sensational geopolitical evolution prove it is by far the best among all similar in the history of humanity. Yet it is far from being non-upgradable divine creation. Overcoming all the differences within it and the obstacles outside it, NATO has proved it is capable of upgrading, and must upgrade in order to undertake its new leading mission in managing the peace on the globe.

Many would oppose ACB's *bigger is better* philosophy for NATO. The right question is, however, not *whether* but *how* to expand at *any particular moment* NATO network and influence in order to catch up with the modern world, which is being digitalized and globalized with the speed of lightning. Therefore we *must* examine future relationships between a much wider range of geopolitical forces and influences than in the past. We should not shy away from inviting criticism and launching ideas that are too challenging for the *status quo* of today. Assume that today is already yesterday, or – much better – the day before yesterday.

Until 1989 the *dividing line* between East and West was defined primarily by the values represented by the Atlantic Alliance and those that confronted it, or in OSCE terminology – it was between the countries to the East and the West of Vienna. The then so called *Third World*, symbolically represented by the Non-Aligned Movement, NAM, was politically closer to the Eastern orbit and therefore Cold War confrontation was close to a dichotomy: the West vs. the rest. After 1989 Atlantic values became the glue that reunited the West with New Europe.

Those values continue to spread as much and deep as time permitted to the East and the South and gradually lead to a coherent security structure stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, and about to cross the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator to the South. This centrifugal spread of values should go hand in hand with building and strengthening global networks with reliable partners in various endeavours in politics, security, economy, environment or culture.

In 2014 vs. 1989, we observe at least three major transformations of the geometry of the West-East dividing line. **The first** shows that the existing one has moved eastwards from Vienna to the middle of the Black Sea, clearly dividing Europe into countries to the East and the West of it.

The second one is in the new projections of the Russia-China axis, opposing the West, as traditionally manifested on the UN Security Council. Today we have much more than that.

On the one hand we have the rise of the giant BRICS, including also Brazil, India, and South Africa. BRICS today claims about 40% of world's population (the West only has 13%), 30% of world's territory (cf to NATO/EU with 18%) and 20% (yet to grow) of the world's GDP (while 45% belong to the Euro-Atlantic West). BRICS is a unique composition of the Russia—China axes, enlarged with three impressive democracies, each of which is much more than “a leader” on its respective continent. BRICS has the potential of becoming the backbone of the second geopolitical pole missing after 1989. The more so if – as expected – BRICS succeeds in developing and spreading around its own financial architecture and internal economic rules, along with an expected boost of its economic indices and political influence. The global reach of BRICS results partially from the frozen UN reform and the natural expectations of the Brazil, India and South Africa to get a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, but also from the capsulation of the West and its sometimes short-sighted clinging to the post WWII status quo world order.

On the other hand we have the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, SCO, including except Russia and China also Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. SCO is intended to play – with all conditionalities of such comparisons – a sort of a role of non-Western (for the time being, not anti-West) version of NATO. What energizes the BRICS-SCO system as **the** potential new geopolitical pole on the globe is the application of India (as of September 2014) for membership in SCO, which seriously reshapes India's decades-build profile of a non-aligned country. And the fact that the US was rejected in 2006 for observer's status just proves the non-inclusive character of SCO and clearly draws the new dividing line on the globe. Ironically, we may remind the USSR was rejected membership in NATO in 1954, after which she created the Warsaw Pact in 1955.

A founding pillar of BRICS-SCO system is the colossally growing Russia-China neighbourly economic cooperation which benefits, i.a., from any form of Western sanctions to any of the two.

The third big transformation – and rather scaring – of the world's security architecture is the emerging of a third dividing line between pragmatism and irrational fundamentalism. In the second camp we also have religious extremism and ruthless terrorism. Today's terrorism – whose embryonic manifestation was probably the 1972 Munich massacre of the Israeli Olympic team has recently become a well digested political doctrine amalgamated with religious fanaticism which its carriers continuously try to constitutionalize over various territories labelled as “failing states”. There is a good news, too. In the camp of pragmatism we have all five permanent members of the UN Security Council as well as all BRICS countries, despite the differences, gaps even, in their opinions on a variety of other issues of global security or of democracy in general.

This third dividing line makes our world much more complex and nuanced than the black and white picture the Cold War suggested. Therefore, in this new complicated globe the West should be aiming at significant balance the East-South expansion of the Atlantic values and the cooperation with the pragmatic partners against the fundamentalism emerging from the South—East. To put it bluntly, in the vocabulary of real politics, we have to manoeuvre between the support we wish to extend to Ukraine and the support we need from Russia in other spheres, and in other challenges for humanity.

Speaking of the Allies, since its creation NATO has always been in deficiency of public support and of proper understanding of its role and policies. NATO has been publicly condemned when in action and ignored when in inaction. But in order to triumph, the Evil needs nothing more but the good's lack of action. The development of working policies in the next 20 years will rely more than ever

on popular approval, based on innovative approaches to public opinion in the digital era. If we underestimate the importance of NATO image we shall have only ourselves to blame if our reputation turns out to be our worst enemy. Changing the Alliance's image will be *the* game changer!

2. "Classic" enlargement: time for changing rules

NATO enlargement has been quite successful in the relatively benign atmosphere of the twenty or so years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It followed the logic and principles which formed the basis of the Enhanced Dialogue and later the Membership Action Plan. A key assumption was that the Alliance would succeed in convincing all major stakeholders that enlargement does not threaten any decent democracy or non-aggressive country and is a key asset for security and stability projection. It seemed adequate to restrict membership to well prepared, reliable aspirants with no border or other similar disputes.

The central idea was that acceding countries should not bring their existing or potential problems into the organization. This approach was working well until the process reached regions perceived as spheres of influence or "red lines" of forces acting in a Cold War style and, irrespective of well developed partnership mechanisms, continued treating NATO as a threat and even as a potential enemy. They started using the accession criteria as an instrument to torpedo the enlargement process and undermine the fundamental right of nations to choose the alliances they wish to join and the means to seek collective guarantees for their defence and security. A telling example was the military aggression of Russia against Georgia in 2008 which, left without a proper response, paved the way to the current Ukrainian – Russian crisis and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The result is a basically stalled enlargement process which made 2014 the end of the first post-1989 5-years period without a NATO enlargement or a new major outreach project.

It became however obvious that keeping the problems out of our borders does not keep them out of our agenda. In other words, NATO capsulation against new members with problems is a motivation for NATO opponents to provoke these problems. **NATO needs to break this vicious circle** which makes it a victim of its own idealistic vision that unfortunately has proven to be divorced from reality. For that the Alliance has to reassess the accession requirements and adapt them to the strategic purpose of enlargement. NATO should not veto aspirants with frozen territorial problems, exactly as the EU did when it invited Cyprus to join before the expected unification. This should be a working model for Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova and a possibility – albeit distant – for Azerbaijan.

3. NATO and the EU: Reinforcing Europe

NATO-EU relationship continues to fall short of its potential and even provides ground for counterproductive competition. This can now change. The return of France to NATO integrated military structure, the Lisbon Treaty, the sobering effect of the Ukrainian crisis, the refreshed leaderships of EU and NATO in 2014, along with US-EU's TTIP free trade agreement provide a new and welcome environment to re-launch this process and to set it on a new and altogether more positive course.

The setting up of a high level **NATO-EU Synergy Commission** to take the process forward with clear goals and benchmarks and a fixed-target timetable. An integral part of the desired synergy should be the formulation of a genuinely unified EU Security Policy. Its purpose would not be to emulate the appearance of rivalry that has bedevilled the relationship in the past but rather specifically to strengthen Europe's contribution to NATO while simultaneously enhancing the EU's

own potential both politically and military. European defence expenditures and its participation in burden-sharing should increase dramatically, both in quantity and in efficiency. And efficiency saves money, after all! European Allies cannot do that individually, but only within the framework of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy, potentially open to other European states including Turkey. Symbolically, the EU should ask for a *permanent EU seat on the North Atlantic Council*, which sounds natural against the background of similar European aspirations vis-a-vis UN.

The responsibility for NATO-EU relations is almost 100% in the camp of the 22 EU members of NATO, which represent almost 94% of the entire EU population. The six EU non-NATO members (Ireland, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Cyprus and Malta) will for sure benefit from major EU-NATO cohesion which, as a side effect, may catalyze their own relations with NATO. The road to fulfilling the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 vision for the EU's world role goes via strategic EU-NATO arrangements, delayed for so many decades.

The EU leaders should take their responsibility to reform the Euro-Atlantic Community into a global power (the declarations of the Lisbon Treaty are not enough for that) and meaningful co-player of the BRICS-SCO system over the global terrain. NATO-EU has still the advantage to be a community, not just a system, but this advantage will not last for infinitely long.

4. NATO and Russia: Rivalry, Partnership, Membership

Though the determination of the West to interact positively with Russia on global scale has recently been seriously undermined, it did not vanish. We used to have and still have fruitful cooperation with Russia at various points on the globe: in Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, North Korea, against terrorism and even in the cosmic space. Therefore any serious strategic examination of what Russia and NATO stand to gain by working together, and how much they stand to lose by allowing misperceptions and hostile attitudes to poison their future cooperation, clearly shows the direction in which they have to go.

The high hopes for close and increasingly constructive NATO-Russia relations have suffered a heavy blow by the Ukrainian crisis of 2014 and the role of the Russian leadership in the dramatic events there. The interpretation of the enlargement of EU and NATO as a threat not only to the interests of Russia but even to its very existence is wrong and tactically comfortable for the current Kremlin leadership.

NATO and the Russian people have the identical goals, which include democracy in Russia. This explains why NATO is the needed enemy for the Kremlin of today. The Lenin-Stalin-Brezhnev tradition has been proven counterproductive for the Russian people. The Gorbachev-Yeltsin tradition, though of a shorter life, is the one to reintegrate Russia with the West and the one to prevail in Russia, as the post WWII history of Europe proves. The Russian nation is our cultural twin and it should be regarded as population a country which is a future member of NATO. Therefore, Russia needs to be regarded as a future NATO member, and encouraged to reform in order to become one in the long run, hopefully in the first half of the 21st c.

5. De Facto Allies: NATO Extended Family

In trying to confront the challenges of globalization in a 5-20 year projection we should prioritize our relations with countries which have been our *de facto* allies for so long, namely **Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Korea**. Contacts and strategic partnerships between them and NATO (and its leading nations) have been in place for considerable time but have yet to evolve. We have solid ground for offering all four countries the prospect of cementing these alliances through *de jure*

membership of the new NATO. Once this goal is agreed upon, the action plan to materialize it will naturally follow.

6. The Islamic World: Developing a Uniform Dialogue with the West

In Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya and many more Islamic countries in the Middle East and Africa we frequently face identical challenges, which need identical treatment. In many of their cases we make identical mistakes. It is these countries which are transformed into permanent battle ground or launching sites for fundamentalists when attacking the Euro-Atlantic world and values. Therefore if these countries would be approached as a community, the individual dialogue with each of them would benefit a lot.

The specific essence of Islamic tradition requires special sensitivity; a deeper and coherent understanding which the West does not always possess. Moreover, the West is frequently unable to offer a digestible form of its own views and values. This results in failures – past and present – of the West in its endeavours to handle security in the region. The recent emergence of the Islamic State (ISIS), as that of Al Qaeda in the past, has proved that the task is now of some urgency. Something broader and more comprehensive than the existing limited formats is both desirable and achievable. It could take the form of a Structured Dialogue between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and NATO to find joint solutions for those common threats to security and goals of civilization.

7. Global Outreach: China, India and Asia

The evolution of China's global influence is so vast and significant that it seems too much to comprehend. China is getting much closer – sometimes imperceptibly – closer and closer to the Euro-Atlantic community, even physically and on a daily basis. A simple glance at the map shows that the longest geo-political border on Earth is the one between China and the Euro-Atlantic community (i.e. OSCE) – approx. 11 200 km (after Mongolia joined OSCE in 2004—2012.)

China is already *de facto* in touch with NATO in different regions and this indicates a trend and need for establishing a mechanism to steer those unavoidable relationships on the basis of common pragmatic interests.

A **NATO-China Council, NCC**, designed to provide trust, basis for dialogue and mutual understanding – overcoming bitterness from the past – would have both immediate and strategic benefits. NCC will have the beneficial side effect to ease West-Russia's relations which frequently become complicated, because of the Chinese support to Russia, institutionalized via BRICS and SCO. Therefore the entire UN system will benefit a lot from the very existence of NCC which would have the potential to reshape the world order. Chinese leaders plan to transform their country into democracy by 2050 and we must be prepared for this perspective and do our best to support it, starting from now. As a preparatory step for NCC, China should be invited as a privileged partner of OSCE, for which I had some encouraging discussions with the Chinese leaders in the past.

NATO should be inventive in approaching **India** – the world's most populous democracy, one of the first space powers. The growing influence of India in Asia, Africa, BRICS, as expected in future in SCO, in what remained of NAM and in the world in general makes her an attractive, predictable and strategic – if not unavoidable – partner for any alliance of democracies ready to support the peace on global scale.

On India we have at least one more strategic talk. India is a nuclear power. May be time has come for this to be underpinned by NATO—India practical and stability oriented cooperation in the nuclear and general security fields. Of course, universality of the existing international nuclear agreements would be highly desirable. But they are not sacred cows. Pragmatism requires their smart upgrading and adaptation to the realities of the new millennium. A pragmatic NATO-India-Pakistan dialogue may lead to new solutions. If the West is not flexible and visionary enough, this role may well be played by BRICS-SCO system in future.

Mongolia joined in 2004 the Euro-Atlantic community as the newest (and she still is) Asian Partner of OSCE. Since 2012 she has had full membership in OCSE and an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program (IPCP) with NATO. To follow are Partnership for Peace and full NATO membership. The ball is in our court – Mongolia wants it and she desperately expects her third neighbor to emerge, though as geo-politics, not just geography.

On **North Korea** and the unification of the **Korean Peninsula**, both NATO and EU could do a lot. The EU should stop turning away from the Korean conflict. The EU could contribute a lot for the democratization of North Korea, as it did in the 1990s for Eastern Europe. The know-how of importing food and commodities together with information to North Korea will trigger the democratization of that country. At the same time NATO troops could replace part of the US troops in South Korea which will send a strong message to NK, impact fresh dynamics to the Six-Party Talks on North Korea and speed the unification of the Korean Peninsula. Each dictatorship is a pillar for all dictatorships, so one dictatorship less makes a difference, sometimes a big difference.

While our global journey is still in Asia, we cannot help but creating a Joint **NATO-ASEAN Commission** which will be a long-term investment in the political and economic well-being of the two regions and will help bridging the Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific areas, two worlds with common goals and interests.

8. Africa, the South Atlantic and Latin America: Broader Socializing

With its Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and ad-hoc limited support for the African Union, NATO has edged, albeit timidly, towards the African continent. As for Latin America, the results from some limited NATO operations seem negligible having in mind the absence of any structure or mechanism to anchor relations and strengthen them further. Several gateways are possible, to start with, relating to Africa, the South Atlantic and Latin America – each for entirely different reasons and entirely different set of implications.

In the South Atlantic area we have two more BRICS members with whom partnership for NATO so far seems a self-imposed taboo: **Brazil** and **South Africa**. The time has come for the North Atlantic to meet the South. The pattern is there. Let's just do it!

Cape Verde is a stable and remarkably outward-looking democracy which punches above her weight politically and economically in the region. She benefits as crossroad of two strategic routes: Europe—Latin America and North America—Africa. NATO carries out military exercises off her shores and the EU has a Special Partnership Agreement with her. An invitation to Cape Verde to participate gradually in the Mediterranean Dialogue of NATO (and why not, since Mauritania is there!), in Partnership for Peace, and to move towards a suitable MAP process may not be the obvious choice but it makes utmost good sense, particularly as a pivotal project with a possible impact and benefits for the African continent and the Portuguese speaking countries.

An offer for a special Cooperation Agreement to the **African Union** would achieve important

psychological goals as well as practical objectives. The former include the development of a more adequate perception of NATO's role in the modern world. The latter include facilitating a broad spectrum of crisis response and humanitarian operations and missions. Security challenges like terrorist, fundamentalist or piracy groups in Nigeria (including affiliates of ISIS), Mali, Somalia, Yemen and elsewhere, as well as the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa should force NATO to trigger broader and deeper cooperation with the AU on various security matters of concern for the entire humanity.

And what steps of relevance could be undertaken of relevance to **Latin America**, in addition to liaising with Brazil?

A very much needed and expected democratic U-turn can make **Cuba** the Euro-Atlantic gateway for Latin America and – much more – *the* third North-American pillar of the trans-Atlantic link. The reforms in Cuba today remind us of the reforms in Eastern Europe in the 1980's and some friendly help from Europe may catalyze them. We can therefore readily foresee a specific form of MAP designed for Cuba linked to her democratization and providing a tool to boost it up.

In a parallel track, expanding relations with **Chile** and **Argentina** (not excluding Mexico or other Latin American stakeholders) will also be an essential and natural part of the globalization process but in view of their size and continental importance, cooperation agreements as opposed to integration efforts will be the order of the day.

9. Israel, Palestine and the Mediterranean Partners – Helping to address the World's Oldest Conflict

NATO Mediterranean Partners (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) must be drawn closer to the centre of action of the Alliance, both in terms of bilateral initiatives and multilateral measures on the lines indicated above. When Palestine becomes an independent state – as she must and will – she will also have to naturally become part of the Mediterranean Dialogue and in those circumstances developments that have previously been unthinkable become much more realistic. Israeli as well as Palestinian participation in the Partnership for Peace programme is entirely possible. We raise also the prospect of Joint Israeli-Palestinian defense units, trained and assisted by NATO – is that going too far? If we break the taboos for NATO membership for Israel and Morocco (to start with), is that going too far? May be it does today. But in 10-20 year timeframe? I do not think so.

10. Our Greatest Challenge: NATO Image Problem

Part of the solution of the problem of transforming NATO worldwide image is to be found in following the different paths outlined in this OoB strategy. To achieve that we need an in debt program of activities aimed at gradually creating acceptance, enthusiasm and support for the work that the Alliance needs to undertake, in order to fulfill its new mandate. The primary responsibility to address and win the trust of our respective public belongs first of all to our own governments.

Two daring initiatives could be taken promptly. *Firstly*, NATO Parliamentary Assembly and ATA branches – with the strong support of NATO – should take the lead in developing new contacts with new partners both on a regional and global basis, inviting them to explore ways in which NATO could and should develop its OoB relationships.

Secondly, NATO leaders can launch a major initiative aimed at supporting and upgrading NATO PA's and ATA's networks via a broad-based and inter-linked web of energetic non-governmental

bodies – not necessarily uniform in structure or character – with a mandate to address world public on issue of security and unexpected threats and to do so on a new level.

A task-force network of newly energized NGOs and media, along with old Atlantic hands concentrically expanding around NATO could make difference. Of course this will cost some money. However any 1 USD invested in informing the public may save 1 000 USD from a war it would prevent in that way. NATO deserves a Nobel Peace Prize for prevented major wars in Europe. The time has come for NATO to really get this Prize and invest these political dividends into the prevention of other world conflicts through information technologies and activities. In doing that, the world public opinion will be our strongest, most efficient and sustainable Ally.

11. Expect the Unexpected in Order to Prevent It

This OoB approach of NATO does not forecast any specific new threats, currently unexpected or seemingly improbable. There are many of this sort and they require a separate study. For the sake of illustration: space piracy or space terrorism, currently underestimated are the probable source of future bad surprises. The super powers which the ICT and genetic engineering make the mankind a serious threat for itself. And we should not take it for granted that meetings with Extra-Terrestrials would not happen or would be pleasant ones, as two of the Nobel laureates (for physics and peace) have warned us in the 2010's – Stephen Hawking and the Dalai Lama.

Our enemy is carefully studying our tool box. And he thinks out of it, as 9/11 tragically proved it. To deter an OoB enemy, one needs OoB tools. Before the enemy starts studying our new tool box, we need to start thinking out of it. Otherwise we most probably shall regret for not having done so.

The OoB approach suggested here would create an environment capable of counterbalancing a huge variety of new threats (I am cautious and don't say *all threats!*) Even if a small part of what has been suggested here would be launched in the next few years, the Euro-Atlantic community would be elevated to a much higher orbit.

Some may argue – and rightly so! – that so many new formats would require ample time and manpower to be maintained. Here is the solution: NATO leaders and officials, and especially the EU segment of them, could dramatically optimize their colossal working time, presently invested in ministerials, summits and other forms of personalized meetings. Video-conference communications, including summits – taking into account some deficiencies this may create – would save unimaginable amounts of time, money, logistic and security arrangements as well as CO₂ emissions.

Digitalization of NATO political, military and administrative work is currently lagging behind. (This is also the case for the major national security agencies.) The digital capacity of NATO and its members is probably the most urgent of all OoB efforts we need to invest in. Now.

12. Conclusion

This paper – being published simultaneously with the inauguration of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg – has a long pre-history. Its ancestor is the 2009 NATO OoB ACB strategy, which came to upgrade “*NATO's Global Mission in the 21st century*” prepared by ACB under the 1998 Manfred Wörner Fellowship of NATO. And that one was an upgrade of the 1990 vision of the ACB's founders who anticipated and contributed to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the unification of New Europe with NATO and EU.

Some of the ideas expressed above were brainstormed by ACB in 1990-2005, along with our efforts

to achieve accession of Bulgaria and New Europe to NATO and the EU and during my mandates as Bulgarian Foreign Minister, OSCE Chairman-in-Office and on the UN Security Council. After 2005, in my capacity as Chairman of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and once again President of ACB, I tried to share our specific New Europe's experience in other parts of the world.

The visits abroad of me and my wife Gergana after 2005 encouraged us to see how realistic, albeit self-tabooed, the global enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic community is. Visits to China and Tibet, North and South Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Iran, Nepal, Bhutan, the Philippines, Palau, Israel, Cuba, Ecuador, Belize and wider Latin America, Cape Verde, Morocco, Libya and Sub-Saharan and Southern Africa enlightened us that we, in the West, can and must do much more – and do it much faster – to reach out to the rest of the World in order to exchange best practices and to counteract the rapid exchange of world's worst practices.

In their entirety, the ideas expressed in this paper have a common purpose. They take the Euro-Atlantic enlargement process as a stepping stone and a source of inspiration for an effort to go much farther. They are designed to boost up the strive of humanity to discover its potential for moving beyond the world of conflict to a world uniquely focused on securing sustainable growth of human's quality of life – both, on Earth and in Space – irrespective of any regional, cultural, religious, ideological or philosophical differences. These may be difficult to achieve and are undoubtedly ambitious, but they are not unrealistic: Just look Out of the Box!