that followed the 9/11 attacks, NATO proved its ability to contribute to the global fight against terror. Mindful of its assets and mandates, NATO has succeeded in identifying its added value to specific aspects of the terrorism challenge. The result has been a series of substantial counterterrorism activities whose impact, however, has been mitigated by the lack of an agreed policy defining NATO's rightful place among international counterterrorism actors.

NATO's Response

At the core of NATO's reticence in codifying its decade-long contribution to the fight against terrorism in an agreed policy lies a definition challenge. The incidence, nature, scope, and, above all, perception of the threat posed by terrorists vary enormously among countries and regions.[24] To provide a common definition of what constitutes a terrorist is an exercise of drafting acrobatics, impossible even for the most skilled and experienced NATO policymaker.

Yet the very nature of NATO—a political-military organization for the collective defense of its members' territories and populations from external attacks—drives its need to identify where an attack is coming from and who the enemy is. In the case of the fight against terrorism, the Alliance instinctively needs to define who and where the terrorists actually are. Terrorism, like war, is ultimately a *means* to an end, not an end per se. For many years, in the collective psyche of NATO's integrated structure, to fight against terrorism without identifying the adversary was like fighting war itself. The lack of a clear opponent denied planners and diplomats a critical element of NATO's defense paradigm. Consistent with this logic, the 1999 Strategic Concept made only indirect reference to acts of terrorism as one of many security challenges and risks together with sabotage, organized crime, and the disruption of the flow of vital resources.[25] On the other hand, the nature of terrorist acts has long been perceived, especially in Europe, as deriving from "internal" motives—from separatism to political extremism and anarchism.

It is therefore not surprising that, beyond its solidarity significance, at the basis of NATO's Article 5 invocation following the 9/11 attacks was the determination that the strikes were directed *from abroad*. Al Qaeda's claim of responsibility and the Taliban regime's refusal to hand over Osama bin Laden to U.S. authorities provided incarnation and direction to the global terrorist threat.

This acted as a potent catalyst for NATO's contribution to the global fight against terrorism. However, NATO has preferred to avoid a potentially loaded political debate on its role in counterterrorism, opting for a more pragmatic approach. Through its operational commitments—first and foremost in Afghanistan but also in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Indian

Ocean and, not to be overlooked, in protecting high-visibility events such as the Greek Olympic Games in 2004 and the NATO summit in Riga in 2006[26]—NATO has accumulated considerable cross-cutting experience in counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, intelligence-sharing, and technology development.

In 2001, NATO launched its first ever antiterror operation—*Eagle Assist*, whereby NATO AWACS (airborne warning and control system) aircraft were sent to help patrol the skies over the United States for 8 months. In 2002, the Alliance launched its second counterterrorism operation, *Active Endeavour*, which is ongoing. In May 2002, NATO foreign ministers decided at their meeting in Reykjavik that the Alliance would operate when and where necessary to fight terrorism, therefore settling the out-of-area debate and paving the way for future engagements with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

Action on the ground was accompanied by capacity initiatives. At the Alliance's 2002 Prague Summit, Heads of State and Government adopted a package aimed at adapting NATO to the challenge of terrorism and including the following: a Military Concept for Defense against Terrorism;[27] a Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism (PAP-T); five nuclear, biological, and chemical defense initiatives; protection of civilian populations including a Civil-Emergency Planning Action Plan; the NATO Response Force; and the Prague Capabilities Commitment. At the 2004 Istanbul Summit, the Allies endorsed the creation of the Defense Against Terrorism (DAT) Program of Work (POW) to improve the response to new security challenges posed by asymmetric threats. Intelligence-sharing was enhanced including through the establishment of a Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit, which became part of the new intelligence structure that was set up as part of NATO's ongoing intelligence reform efforts.

Meanwhile, the increasing complexity and inevitable realization that the fight against global terror was a long-term struggle pushed NATO policymakers to look at terrorism from a different perspective.

In endorsing the Comprehensive Political Guidance at the Riga Summit in November 2006, NATO recognized that "terrorism . . . and the spread of weapons of mass destruction are likely to be the principal threats to the Alliance over the next 10 to 15 years."[28] With the 2010 Strategic Concept agreed at Lisbon in November 2010, NATO has completed its intellectual and political evolution vis-à-vis the terrorist threat. Terrorism is no longer an operational or tactical dimension of asymmetric warfare; it has become a "direct threat to the citizens of NATO countries and to international stability and prosperity, more broadly."[29] Collective defense blends with the broader concept of collective security, opening new perspectives for NATO in the fight against terrorism and placing new emphasis on the need to define the Alliance's role and contribution.