



CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
INSTITUT CANADIEN DES AFFAIRES MONDIALES

New Perspectives on Shared Security
– NATO's Next 70 Years

by Lindsay Coombs
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CONFERENCE REPORT

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SHARED SECURITY – NATO’S NEXT 70 YEARS

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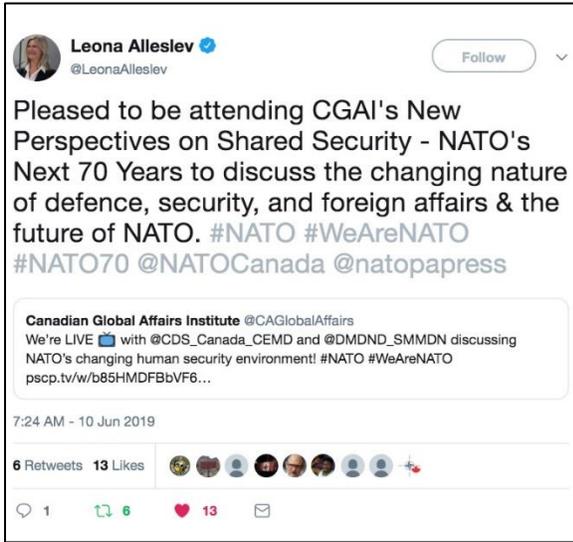


As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) celebrates its 70th anniversary, the Alliance looks toward how it can adapt to meet the challenges posed by an increasingly complex security environment. Contemporary threats to international peace and security may emanate from both state and non-state actors, and the use of tactics associated with hybrid warfare are on the rise. Challenges also develop as a result of natural disasters like fires, earthquakes, and floods, the intensity of which are escalating due to climate change. Further to this, civilians are increasingly affected by conflict; not only do they now constitute the majority of conflict related casualties, they are also often forced to flee their homes to escape violence. It is evident that these and other challenges have complicated the security atmosphere in unprecedented ways, yet the question remains: how should NATO respond?

On 10 June 2019, the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI) held its event “New Perspectives on Shared Security: NATO’s Next 70 Years” to generate innovative responses to this important question. The event was sponsored by NATO Headquarters, following the call for a series of expert workshops and public events that would celebrate NATO’s anniversary and increase public awareness of the Alliance’s work for international security. Part of this call was also the examination of the challenges and opportunities to NATO’s mission for the next seven decades, as well as future trends in the global security environment. Accordingly, this event was designed to explore Canadian perspectives concerning the ongoing evolution of NATO and the international security environment, with an emphasis on the various dimensions of human security.

At the event, it was underscored that effectively contributing to peace and security on the international stage necessitates that NATO prioritize human security in all aspects of its activities. In light of this, event discussions focused on topics that included the effects of nascent technologies on human security, regional variation in conflict, as well as increasing diversity and inclusion at all levels of NATO. Throughout this event, participants engaged in meaningful discussion in order to assess the merits and implications of numerous policy options regarding Canada’s role in NATO operations, and NATO’s function in the contemporary security environment writ large.

The event brought together a number of scholars, practitioners, and policy experts from multidisciplinary fields. Participants came from diverse organizational settings including top-tier academic institutions, think tanks, and research centres. In addition, numerous participants came from well-known consultancy agencies and organizations involved in the security and defence industry. The workshop also benefitted from the engagement of key Canadian government agencies as well as a number of representatives from various embassies. Altogether, 152 individuals attended the event, with 106 individuals having participated in the public segment and 46 individuals having engaged in the closed-door workshop.



Further to this, the event garnered significant social media engagement. The public segment of the event was live-streamed on the CGAI Twitter/Periscope feed (@CAGlobalAffairs). Altogether 831 Twitter users either [watched the live-stream](#), or have viewed the panel discussions since they were made available on 10 June 2019. Additionally, there have been over 7,000 impressions on various tweets about the event from the CGAI account, as well as dozens of affiliated tweets from participants, audience members, live-stream viewers, and other interested organizations. CGAI also released the public panels of the event in audio format on their Podcast Network under the [Defence Deconstructed Series](#), which have attracted thousands of listeners.

This report will first provide an overview of the presentations which took place during the public portion of the event, and will be followed by a general summary of the discussions that took place during the closed-door workshop, which fell under the purview of [Chatham House Rule](#). Finally, some concluding remarks will be offered.

Panel 1 – Towards Inclusion: Considerations of the Human Environment for NATO

General Jonathan Vance, Chief of the Defence Staff

Jody Thomas, Deputy Minister of National Defence

Moderated by Sarah Goldfeder, Principal at the Earncliffe Strategy Group, CGAI Fellow



The full audio file for this panel is available on the CGAI Podcast Network and is titled [“Defence Deconstructed: Envisioning a More Inclusive NATO and CAF.”](#)

Jody Thomas, Deputy Minister of National Defence, kicked off the first panel of the event by speaking to NATO’s longevity as a military alliance. It is evident that NATO’s ability to adapt and collaborate with other nations are key elements of the Alliance’s enduring nature, yet they constitute only the tip of the iceberg. NATO has recognized that diverse forces are more effective; not only do they afford greater access to communities, but employing and engaging



diverse people can also illuminate new solutions to challenges that are faced at an organizational level. Despite the fact that Canada supports NATO’s diversity and inclusion agenda, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) still struggles to recruit and retain women and individuals from diverse backgrounds. While progress has been made over the past few years, occurrences of sexual misconduct contribute to these low rates of recruitment and retention. As a NATO leader, Canada must behave in a way that is exemplary – this includes by actively combatting sexual violence and abuse. A safe and inclusive Department of National Defence (DND) is one where everyone is equal and judged only according to their performance and how they behave. Accordingly, DND and the CAF are working to bring about institutional and cultural change from the inside.

General Johnathan Vance, Chief of the Defence Staff, echoed these remarks in his presentation. He noted that “the things that keep us up at night are people problems,” and that “we cannot think of the human security domain in NATO without thinking of our people, those who we might be fighting, and those we might be trying to protect.” While this sometimes entails the use of violent means, the ultimate goal of engaging in NATO operations is to re-establish social and economic frameworks of the human environment. Achieving this objective necessitates that the CAF not only attract and retain the right people, but also that the latter obtains the appropriate direction, training, education, and tools needed to succeed. This includes ensuring that the people who have volunteered to protect Canada operate in a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace. Consequently, Operation HONOUR – an institution-wide campaign plan to eradicate sexual misconduct in the military – has been the CAF’s top institutional priority since 2015. This mission initially focused on providing a strong administrative and disciplinary framework to address sexual misconduct in the CAF. This response caused the rate of sexual misconduct in the CAF to stagnate, and increased both general awareness of sexual misconduct within the institution and confidence that military leadership will take the issue seriously. In addition, CAF personnel are now more likely to report occurrences of sexual misconduct than any other segment of society.

While the rate of sexual misconduct in the CAF has not increased since the mission began, significant and sustained efforts are required to eliminate sexual misconduct in the CAF. Moving forward, the CAF must do a better job of assisting victims. This includes pursuing an integrated national approach to victim support that is based on the expert advice of the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre, and ensuring that reports of sexual misconduct are handled in an appropriate and professional manner. Furthermore, the CAF must continue to conduct research on effecting positive cultural change within the institution. Achieving cultural change is perhaps the most difficult task that the CAF faces, as it cannot be ordered and immediately executed. Rather, it needs to come out of a comprehensive understanding of the problem and will require deliberate planning and coordination. Nonetheless, the CAF can work to establish the conditions for cultural change now by putting into place the appropriate policies and structures. For example, by applying new evidence-based approaches to both prevent and address harmful behaviours.

Altogether, both panelists spoke to the fact that the nature of warfare – how fights occur, who is involved in fighting, what is important in the battlespace – has changed. Moreover, that NATO and the CAF must be inclusive and diverse in order to adequately conduct operations in these circumstances.



Panel 2 – The Importance of NATO to Canada’s Defence and Security

The Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National Defence

In conversation with Dr. David Perry, CGAI Vice President and Senior Analyst

The full audio file for this discussion is available on the CGAI Podcast Network and is titled [“Defence Deconstructed: Canada’s Future as a Member of NATO.”](#)

During this exchange, Dr. David Perry and the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National Defence, discussed the future of Canadian participation in NATO. The conversation began by noting that the demonstration of consistent engagement in NATO, which involves building strong multilateral relationships with other nations, contributes to the achievement of Canadian interests and security. This enables Canada to deal with security issues and disaster response more effectively, and helps establishing a sense of reliability and stability in Canada’s international presence. In turn, this allows Canada to have greater influence in the regions in which it conducts operations.

Discussion then turned to how Canada can best support NATO’s deterrent posture. In this regard, Dr. Perry pointed to Canadian reengagement in deterrence activities. Not only does *Strong, Secure, Engaged* mention deterrence for the first time in official Canadian defence policy documents since 1987, but the rotation of Canadian troops in Europe is also tied in to such a strategy. Following this, Minister Sajjan noted that proper engagement in deterrence activities requires a certain degree of interoperability with NATO allies, as well as the ability to provide security where it is needed. Moreover, Canada must ensure that decisions made at the strategic level have the desired impacts on the ground.

Subsequently, it was remarked that Canada tends to engage in operations under a NATO umbrella more frequently than through other means. According to Minister Sajjan, deploying Canadian personnel in this way has a number of benefits, due to the longstanding experience that NATO has as an organization. In addition to the fact that NATO has well-established command and control structures, there is also significant interoperability between nations. Ensuring that there is a certain standard of training contributes to this interoperability, and this includes with regards to misconduct. Reaffirming the observations made during the first panel of the event, Minister Sajjan commented on the importance of diversity in armed forces and the need to be able to see things through a different lens.

Looking towards the future of both North American defence and NATO, Minister Sajjan remarked that we must be mindful of our current capabilities and how they will contribute to prospective defence and security challenges. This entails ensuring that research and development is focused on forward-looking capabilities, as well as ensuring that we continue to work through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. Accordingly, remaining on the cutting edge of North American defence through engagement in the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) may involve looking beyond the threats that emanate from missiles, to those which may emerge in the space and maritime environments. With regards to NATO, the conversation again returned to the need for increased interoperability between allies. Minister Sajjan commented that while this is easy to say, it is much more difficult to achieve.



Interoperability is not only about increasing communication, but also ensuring that allies have assets that complement one another's.

Panel 3 – NATO's Next 70 Years

Elinor Sloan, Carleton University, CGAI Fellow

David Bercuson, University of Calgary, CGAI Fellow

Andrea Charron, University of Manitoba, CGAI Fellow

Stephen Saideman, Carleton University, CGAI Fellow

Moderated by Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) Mike Day, CGAI Fellow

The full audio file for this panel is available on the CGAI Podcast Network and is titled [“Defence Deconstructed: NATO's Next 70 Years.”](#)

Dr. Elinor Sloan commenced this panel by noting that the biggest challenge to NATO over the next 70 years will entail operating in a historically unprecedented security atmosphere. Today's security environment can be characterised as a multipolar world under a nuclear umbrella. While we have previously witnessed a multipolar era – followed by periods of nuclear bipolarity and then of brief nuclear unipolarity – the contemporary environment indicates a return to major power competition, but with the added challenge of nuclear weaponry. In operational terms, this raises concerns that a conventional war could escalate to involve nuclear weapons. This has the effect of increasing the use of tactics associated with hybrid warfare, such as cyber attacks and other activities that afford states the convenience of plausible deniability, in order to remain below the threshold of conventional war. Moreover, rising powers like Russia, China, Iran, and non-state actors are taking advantage of the relative decline in American power through asymmetric means. Dr. Sloan further explained that there are two primary ways to respond to these activities: (1) deterrence by punishment, which involves convincing an adversary not to do something because the response to that action would be devastating, or (2) denial, which involves convincing an adversary not to do something because the response would prevent them from achieving their objectives. Moving forward, Dr. Sloan believes that denial will be the most useful form of response and, while NATO is already doing a lot of work in this regard, there is more that can be done.

Next, Dr. Andrea Charron spoke to what she considers to be the primary two challenges facing both NATO and NORAD: these are the problem of “seams” and the tendency towards “dual-hattedness.” Importantly, both these challenges are inextricably connected to the United States Combatant Command system, as well as the desire of NATO and NORAD to have an all-domain awareness and response. She noted that one can “never escape the tyranny of seams between commands.” The United States has tried to rearrange geographic and functional commands on several occasions to limit the damage that could be done by adversaries as a result of these seams. Nevertheless, the current Unified Command Plan has no fewer than six seams that NATO and NORAD must consistently manage, thereby making deterrence increasingly difficult. There is also an ongoing trend to have dual-hatted commanders. The idea is that dual-hatting NATO and NORAD commanders within the Unified Command Plan will maximise the unity of effort with the minimum number of personnel. For example, the Supreme Allied Commander



Europe (SACEUR) is also the Commander of the United States European Command (EUCOM), and the Commander of NORAD is also the Commander of the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). However, these component commanders are usually domain specific, thereby making it difficult for NATO and NORAD to conduct all domain response. Moreover, from a Canadian perspective, this dual-hattedness has both positive and negative aspects. For example, while it does afford Canada a front-row seat to American priorities and provides both extra intelligence and training opportunities, it also means that Canada will constantly need to manage American expectations.

Subsequently, Dr. Stephen Saideman explored how domestic politics feed in to all of this. He noted that Article 5 – which outlines the principle of collective defence and is the cornerstone of NATO – is not invoked automatically when there is an attack. Rather, an attack has to be recognized through the consensus of NATO Members and there is no mechanism that requires Members to intervene militarily, because the language in Article 5 affords each country the flexibility to respond as they deem necessary. This means that recognizing and responding to an attack not only involves attaining consensus at NATO Headquarters, but also necessitates that each NATO member-state achieves some kind of agreement at the national level. All this to say, “things get political quickly.” In short, whenever NATO has to engage operationally, a bargaining process ensues between Members who are in favour of engaging and Members who are reticent to do so. This bargaining process strongly influences the manner in which countries are willing to contribute to NATO, and is of crucial importance to the shape of NATO operations moving forward. Given the turbulence of the current political environment, the next 20 years of NATO ultimately hinge on the actions that we undertake within the next 5 to 10 years. As Dr. Saideman noted, “let’s just focus on tomorrow, and the future after that may take care of itself.”

As the closing panelist, Dr. David Bercuson spoke to problems surrounding burden sharing and the 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) target for defence expenditures. Although Canada’s numbers have recently fallen in this regard, upcoming procurements indicate that defence expenditures will likely rise to approximately 1.4% of the GDP. But the question remains: is it actually reasonable to expect that all NATO Members aspire for a 2% target? Contributions to missions and capabilities are just as important and, moreover, it is simply not feasible for all countries to aim for this goal. Ultimately, NATO needs to find a more realistic formula than the 2% GDP target in order to measure Member contributions to the Alliance. Given that different nations have different capabilities that they can put forward – some of which are more valuable than attaining 2% GDP on defence expenditures – NATO must adapt so as to provide the flexibility to overcome the challenges of tomorrow.

General discussion then turned to the utility of NATO to Canada, during which three contrasting opinions emerged:

- 1) Some participants argued that NATO cannot contribute very much to the defence of Canada, particularly in the Canadian North (i.e., the Arctic). While NATO may be able to bolster Canadian defence through the provision of some naval capabilities, this would simply serve to complicate current defence arrangements with the United States.
- 2) Other participants suggested that it is actually rather difficult to say what NATO can do for Canada; but, because NATO is so thoroughly institutionalized, it would be problematic if it were to dissolve.



- 3) A third group of participants argued that engagement in NATO provides enormous benefits to Canada. For example, the Alliance facilitates communication and resource sharing between nations. This not only supports the strong and stable defence of Europe, but is also beneficial for the development of durable diplomatic and military relationships. In terms of capabilities, engagement in NATO training exercises and operations enhances interoperability and information exchange between militaries in a manner that is only achievable through these joint activities.

Closed-Door Workshop

The afternoon closed-door segment of this event was held under Chatham House Rule and focused on the following four topics: (1) Canadian perspectives on future strategic challenges to the alliance; (2) reinvigorating the northern dimension of NATO; (3) strengthening human security on NATO battlefields by incorporating diverse perspectives in Alliance operations; and (4) strengthening human security of Alliance members off the battlefield.

Canadian perspectives on future strategic challenges to the alliance: While discussing this topic, participants put forward a number of observations regarding the nature of the international security environment – including challenges faced by NATO – from a Canadian perspective. It was noted that we currently live in a time of unprecedented global instability that is, in part, due to the rise of multiple great powers, the return of deterrence, and an increasing reliance on hybrid warfare. For example, the use of ‘grey zone’ tactics often generates a degree of confusion in modern conflict. This is particularly the case when conducting cyber warfare, as it is often unclear when a country is under attack and/or by whom. Furthermore, military and civilian responsibilities in conflict and post-conflict situations have become progressively more blurred, thereby leading to a greater reliance on whole-of-government and other integrated solutions.

In addition, participants discussed how NATO expansion since the Cold War has brought new challenges. While the influx of new members has brought more resources and increased the legitimacy of the Alliance, it has also made political decision-making more complicated. This can strain diplomatic relationships, which can lead to national economic hardships. For instance, approximately 80% of Canada’s GDP stems from trade. Given that people trade with whom they trust, failed diplomatic relations can lead to failed security relations, which can cause failed trade, and could ultimately damage the Canadian economy.

Moving forward, it is evident that there are gaps that NATO must address, most notably in terms of capabilities, funding, and operational planning. Nonetheless, attention must be paid to feasibility (i.e. what can actually get accomplished given the complexities of the current security environment) when assessing and addressing these gaps. In addition, Canada should focus on reengaging with our allies across the ocean and integrating with them at a more personal level. Likewise, NATO should work on nurturing its relationship with the European Union – which have been historically tense – by emphasising areas of common interest. Finally, more discussion is needed regarding how to interact with NATO Members who no longer behave according to the fundamental philosophical principles of law and liberty that unite the Alliance.

Reinvigorating the northern dimension of NATO: During discussions on this subject, participants noted that the Arctic has historically been viewed by Canada as an area of stability



and cooperation. There have traditionally been two primary pillars through which this steadiness has been provided: (1) the physical inaccessibility of the Arctic and (2) the substantial diplomatic efforts that have been extended by the Arctic Five and the Arctic Council to protect the region from global power competition. However, there are a number of changes that are placing stress on these pillars. First, climate change and technological developments have been making it increasingly more feasible for individuals and groups to operate in the Arctic. Second, the Arctic is a highly important geostrategic location and is home to numerous important natural resources, thereby making engagement in the region advantageous for many. Finally, there has been a return to great power competition, making diplomatic engagements shakier than they have previously been.

These changes ultimately mean that there are now more people in the Arctic, including for tourism and shipping purposes. In turn, this implies that there will be more opportunities for mishaps, which necessitates the Canadian Coast Guard to increase its activities. With the rise of great power competition, in conjunction with the increasing use of tactics associated with hybrid warfare, these changes ultimately lead to an increasingly complicated Arctic security environment. Russia has been investing in capabilities across the board, including those designed for use in the Arctic. However, one must ensure to assess this increase in capability with the intentions behind them. Is Russia an aggressive state, or are they simply responding to a security dilemma? As the largest power in the region, the nation that would lose the most from a 'Wild West' Arctic would be Russia. Therefore, much of the upsurge in Russian Arctic capabilities may simply stem from a fear of encirclement, rather than aggressive intent. Given the complexity of the Arctic, NATO engagement in the area should be subject to more discussion. While there is technically a role for NATO in the region with regards to collective defense and the need for sea lines of communication to remain uninterrupted, it will be politically challenging to define a posture for NATO in the Arctic on which all Alliance Members can agree on.

Strengthening human security on NATO battlefields by incorporating diverse perspectives in Alliance operations: Conversations on this topic focused on the recent emphasis that NATO, its member-states, and its partners have placed on recognizing the importance of inclusive and diverse forces. Broadly speaking, inclusive and diverse teams are more innovative, process information more carefully, afford greater access to communities, and tend to be perceived as more legitimate in the eyes of local populations where NATO missions are deployed. In light of these and other benefits, event participants examined how NATO has endeavoured to increase diversity and inclusion by improving policies and services, recruitment strategies, training, education, communication, leadership, as well as monitoring and reporting. This includes: the establishment of initiatives designed to advance UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, such as the creation of the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (NCGP); the development of a Mentoring Programme for women working at NATO headquarters; and the promotion of practical cooperation on gender-related issues through the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme.

Notably, event participants discussed how the concepts of diversity and inclusion encompass more than simply achieving gender balance. While there is a tendency to lean towards "women's issues," establishing a truly diverse and inclusive environment means ensuring equal opportunities and a workplace free from discrimination regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, or other elements of one's identity. Among other things, event participants engaged in dialogue on how NATO has worked to support an inclusive



and diverse workforce by: developing Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans; initiating a merit-based recruitment system that respects the diversity of Alliance partners; and establishing an Internship Programme for young graduate students. Despite these efforts, progress to advance diversity and inclusion has been slow.

Relatedly, event participants noted how NATO must continue to advance its efforts to combat sexual violence both internally and externally to the organization. Due to the destructive nature of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, as well as other harms experienced by civilians in situations of armed conflict, the protection of civilians has been a central element of NATO missions and operations for many years. Efforts in this regard have included: integrating the protection of civilians and related measures in the planning and conduct of NATO-led missions and operation; adopting *Military Guidelines on the Protection of, and Response to, Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence*; establishing the *NATO Policy for the Protection of Civilians*; and, identifying and implementing lessons learned on the protection of civilians.

While it is evident that much work has been undertaken to protect civilians and to combat sexual and gender-based violence, little progress has been made in eradicating misconduct perpetrated by personnel deployed on NATO operations. While NATO has indicated its intent to launch a policy on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in the summer of 2019, its approach to tackling this problem to date has not been robust. Unlike the UN, NATO does not provide any publicly accessible information on allegations of SEA, how to report, or preventative training tools and resources.

Strengthening human security of Alliance members off the battlefield: With regards to the human security of personnel who deploy to NATO operations, event participants discussed the upsurge in recent scholarly literature that examines deployment stressors and related mental health issues. NATO forces are routinely engaged in combat and other military operations across the globe and are frequently exposed to situations that could lead to psychological harm. For example, personnel who encounter child soldiers can face significant moral and psychological dilemmas, in part due to the simultaneous perception of child soldiers as both threats and victims. The dichotomy between these two perceptions can cast doubt over how NATO forces should treat these children. In turn, encounters with child soldiers may have significant and potentially long-lasting psychological effects on personnel who deploy to NATO operations, and can also reduce both mission effectiveness and readiness.

Event participants also noted that, within NATO, the Science and Technology Organization has produced technical reports to assist Alliance partners in identifying training and education resources that can be used to enhance the development of their own personnel. Additionally, various NATO education and training providers, like the NATO Centre of Excellence for Military Medicine, have held conferences on force health protection which have contributed to the sharing of best practices in mental health training and education. Despite this, comparative research on deployment-related mental health support across NATO partners has illustrated that many personnel continue to face similar barriers to accessing mental health care. These difficulties are linked to issues such as insufficient availability of mental health care providers, and a continued stigma around experiencing mental health issues that prevents personnel

Concluding Remarks



Promoting peace and security in such a complex and multifaceted global environment necessitates that NATO adjust its policies and tools to emphasize a more holistic approach in its initiatives. While NATO's primary objective is to defend and deter attacks against Alliance partners, generating a greater focus on human security can be a critical element of this endeavour. In short, the concept of human security stresses the primacy of human rights. This not only enables a broader conceptualization of what constitutes security, but it also allows for the recognition of the interconnections between peace, development, and human rights. By emphasizing the human dimension of conflict in this way, NATO can more adeptly harness the appropriate strategies and instruments to tackle the complexities of the modern security environment. In view of that, the following recommendations are intended to help inform the ways in which NATO can strengthen human security in its operations.

Ultimately, conflict has changed, and therefore the way NATO prepares for and conducts operations must also change. Taken as a whole, emphasizing the human dimension of conflict in these ways can enable NATO to harness the appropriate strategies and instruments to maximise the safety and stability of all people involved in conflict.
from seeking treatment.

► About the Author

Lindsay Coombs is a PhD student in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University and a Graduate Research Fellow at the Centre for International and Defence Policy. Lindsay completed a Master of Arts in Political Studies, also from Queen's University, where she specialized in International Relations. Her Master's thesis focused on innovation in Canadian military doctrine, training, and education on the topic of child soldiers. Lindsay also holds a Bachelor with Honours in Conflict Studies and Human Rights from the University of Ottawa, where she graduated with distinction. Her research interests include the Canadian Armed Forces, child soldiers, women in security and defence, and defence policy. In addition to her studies, Lindsay is the National Chapter Coordinator for Women in International Security (WIIS) Canada, a network dedicated to actively advancing women's leadership in international peace and security. In this role, she coordinates the activities of university and community Chapters across the nation. Lindsay is also the President and Founder of WIIS at Queen's University.

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