

## Comparing Security Strategies

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## Introduction

As a part of the European Global Strategy (EGS) project, this UI Brief will examine what similarities and differences can be found between the European Security Strategy, the U.S. National Security Strategy, the NATO Strategic Concept, and Russia's National Security Strategy. This brief aims to give a short account of the distinctive features of each strategy, as well as input on what to have in mind when outlining a EGS.

## The European Security Strategy (ESS)

The European Security Strategy, *ESS*, was adopted in 2003 and can be characterised as a ‘child of one's time’, constructed under “the political pressure generated by the war in Iraq.”<sup>1</sup> Not only did the invasion proceed without a UN mandate, it also created a “general crisis of confidence in both the EU and NATO.”<sup>2</sup> Other important factors that brought about the development of the ESS were institutional developments, the EU’s first military operation outside of Europe (Operation Artemis), and the leadership of Javier Solana.<sup>3</sup> He was appointed as the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy from 1999 to 2009, and was mandated in 2003 by EU foreign ministers to create a ‘European strategy concept’ to be presented at the next European Council.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after, Solana, with the help of several think tanks in Europe, presented a final draft, which was adopted by the European Council in December 2003 “without difficulty”.<sup>5</sup> However, it is important to note that the EU adopted the ESS at a time when the EU consisted of 15 member states. Now, nearly ten years later, the EU has grown to 27 member states. Accordingly, almost half of the member states have not had a chance to influence the ESS, prompting scholars to question both its legitimacy and its relevancy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Andersson et al., *The European Security Strategy: Reinvigorate, Revise or Reinvent?*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Bailes, *The European Security Strategy: An Evolutionary History*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Andersson et al., *supra* note 1, pp 17-19; *EU-U.S. Security Strategies; Comparative scenarios and recommendations*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>4</sup> Bailes, *supra* note 2, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12; Coelmont, *An EU Security Strategy: An Attractive Narrative*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Drent & Landman, *Why Europe needs a new European Security Strategy*, p. 2; Biscop, *EU Grand Strategy: Optimism is Mandatory*, p. 1.

The ESS has been both praised and criticised for being relatively short, only 16 pages. Indeed, Solana and his team made an effort to keep it short.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have criticized the ESS for only providing a method, while neglecting other important features such as *what* to do.<sup>8</sup> The ESS has also been criticised for being vague on several key points.<sup>9</sup> However, the ESS has also received praise for being able to integrate the views of 15 states into one document.<sup>10</sup>

The ESS is primarily a response to five perceived threats and challenges that the EU faced in 2003, and continue to face; terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, regional conflicts, and state failure. At the time of its formulation, the ESS represented the first “overarching statement on the EU’s external security perspective.”<sup>11</sup> The review of its implementation, conducted in 2008, added several new issues to be addressed. However, it should not be seen as an update.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis on an effective multilateral system, both in form of cooperation between member states, as well as international cooperation, is a key aspect of the strategy. The United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the United States (US), and NATO are mentioned as key players in the international order. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of collaboration with regional organisations such as ASEAN, MERCOSUR, and the African Union.<sup>13</sup> The strategy also states that the EU should “continue to work for closer relations with Russia”.<sup>14</sup> Although the EU sees itself as a ‘global player’<sup>15</sup>, the ESS clearly states that the EU does not wish, nor can it, face global challenges alone.

## **Russia’s National Security Strategy**

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<sup>7</sup> Bailes, *supra* note 2, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Biscop, *A New External Action Service Needs a New European Security Strategy*, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *EU-U.S. Security Strategies* *supra* note 3, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Berenskoetter, *Mapping the Mind Gap: A comparison of US and European security strategies*, p. 73; *EU-U.S. Security Strategies*, *supra* note 3, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> *EU-U.S. Security Strategies*, *supra* note 3, p. 31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> *European Security Strategy from 2003; A secure Europe in a better world [English version]*, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

Russia's strategy for the decade has been described as "an optimistic, confident and assertive document".<sup>16</sup> It was approved in 2009, and the strategy consists of 112 paragraphs dealing with "strategic priorities, goals and measures with regards to domestic and foreign policy, which determine the degree of national security and the level of stable, long-term development of the state."<sup>17</sup> The strategy also includes a number of indicators designed to measure the level of national security.<sup>18</sup> The main national security priorities are "national defense, state and social security."<sup>19</sup>

Russia regards the UN as a "central element of a stable [international] system",<sup>20</sup> and is in favor of strengthening collaboration with the EU.<sup>21</sup> However, Russia remains critical of NATO, and states that "attempts to endow NATO with global functions that go counter to norms of international law, are unacceptable to Russia."<sup>22</sup> According to the strategy, Russia is "prepared to develop relations with NATO", yet the content and depth of the relationship will be depend on whether NATO will "recognise Russia's legal interests when engaging in military-political planning", and if NATO will "respect norms of international law", i.e. sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the strategy also states that "in the interests of strategic stability [...] Russia will undertake all necessary efforts [...] to maintain parity with the United States of America in the area of strategic offensive arms".<sup>24</sup>

Russia's national security strategy is, as previously mentioned, focused on long-term development, and therefore deals with issues such as 'the ecology of living systems and environmental management', 'culture', 'healthcare', 'science, technology and education' and 'economic growth'. In this sense the Russian strategy has a much wider scope compared to the ESS and NATO Strategic Concept, both of which are examples of multinational strategies.

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<sup>16</sup> Giles, Review of Russia's National Security Strategy, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020, paragraph 3.

<sup>18</sup> See Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020, paragraph 112.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, paragraph 23.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, paragraph 13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, paragraph 16.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, paragraph 17.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, paragraph 17.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, paragraph 96.

## NATO Strategic Concept

NATO Strategic Concept was adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Lisbon 19-20 November 2010. While it is common knowledge that the US has considerable influence over NATO, 21 out of 28 members are also members of the EU. It can therefore be argued that NATO's Strategic Concept is affected by both the European Security Strategy and the US National Security Strategy.<sup>25</sup> The NATO Strategic Concepts main focus is the role of NATO, and collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security is outlined as NATO's core tasks.<sup>26</sup> NATO sees itself as an "essential source of stability in an unpredictable world",<sup>27</sup> and although international collaboration is important, a partnership with NATO requires 'shared values and interest'.<sup>28</sup> The UN and the EU are seen as the most important international organisations (IOs) to cooperate with.<sup>29</sup> NATO, however, is slightly more cautious about cooperating with Russia. While the strategy emphasises the strategic importance of a 'NATO-Russia cooperation', and states that "NATO poses no threat to Russia",<sup>30</sup> when compared to Russia's mention of NATO in its national security strategy, it is clear that NATO uses a much less aggressive and critical tone when discussing the possibility of increased collaboration.

NATO is seen as a unique structure of Euro-Atlantic cooperation and the strategy stresses the importance of NATO's financial independence – i.e. not reliant on cooperation with other entities.<sup>31</sup> This desired position of power can easily be compared with the EU's ESS, which is also a "non-legally binding document adopted by consensus within an international framework", and it's similar appeal for a "more effective multilateral order around the world."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See *EU-U.S. Security Strategies*, supra note 3, pp. 37-38 for example of a similar discussion.

<sup>26</sup> NATO Strategic Concept, pp. 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 27-29.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> NATO Strategic Concept, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy; Providing Security in a Changing World, p.

NATO's strategic concept addresses conventional threats such as terrorism, energy security, proliferation of ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons are seen as a guarantor of security for the Allies, and the strategy clearly states that NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.<sup>33</sup> When outlining a new strategic concept, NATO has, unlike the EU or the U.S., "no legal or institutional template which defines [...] the process, [...] [or decides] which actors and bodies [that] must be included in the process."<sup>34</sup> This can be interpreted as NATO has freer rein compared to the others.

## U.S. National Security Strategy

The U.S. National Security Strategy was instituted in 1987, and is, at least in theory, reformulated each year.<sup>35</sup> It was the Roosevelt administration that "initiated a process that strategically assessed how America would meet future international security challenges."<sup>36</sup> However, in the U.S. there are several other important strategic documents, as is demonstrated in the publication "*EU-U.S. Security Strategies; Comparative scenarios and recommendations*".<sup>37</sup> The most recent US National Security Strategy was formulated in May 2010, and is by far the longest strategy, spanning 60 pages. Primarily focusing on America's interests, the strategy covers issues regarding security, prosperity, and values. There are several articles and publications comparing the U.S. National Security Strategy from 2010 with its precursors.<sup>38</sup> According to Hemmer, the most recent strategy places a greater emphasis on the importance of an international order as a means of meeting global challenges than its forerunners.<sup>39</sup> The fact that the U.S. highlights the importance of international collaboration, and an international order, may be a sign of frustration with other states

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<sup>33</sup> NATO Strategic Concept, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> *EU-U.S. Security Strategies*; supra note 3, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 16-19.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> *EU-U.S. Security Strategies*, supra note 3, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> See for example *EU-U.S. Security Strategies*, supra note 3, pp. 21-22; Hemmer, *Continuity and Change in the Obama Administration's National Security Strategy*.

<sup>39</sup> Hemmer, *Continuity and Change in the Obama Administration's National Security Strategy*, p. 269.

perceived to be ‘free riding’,<sup>40</sup> or the need for “Europe’s ability to take care of its own business.”<sup>41</sup> The tone towards Russia, moreover, is fairly optimistic, as the strategy states that the U.S. “seek[s] to build a stable, substantive, multidimensional relationship with Russia, based on mutual interests.”<sup>42</sup>

Threats that are addressed by the strategy are terrorism, pandemics, the economic crisis, climate change, and Arctic interests. The strategy begins by highlighting the importance of facing the world “as it is” and there is a clearly stated order of priorities, with focus on “the safety and security of the American people”. Furthermore, the U.S. National Security Strategy sees weapons of mass destruction as the greatest threat to national and international security.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See for example Fettweis, *Free Riding or Restraint? Examining European Grand Strategy*

<sup>41</sup> Biscop, *supra* note 6, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. National Security Strategy, p. 44.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.



# Comparison

	EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY (ESS)	RUSSIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY	NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT	U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY
<b>Latest draft</b>	2003	2009	2010	2010
<b>Frequency of update</b>	Has not been updated. The implementation was reviewed in 2008	N/A. The former strategy was from year 2000.	No formalized time schedule	Every year ( <i>in theory – not in practice</i> )
<b>Time horizon</b>	N/A	2020	2020	N/A
<b>Included in the strategy's threat assessment (in selection)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorism</li> <li>• Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction</li> <li>• Organized crime</li> <li>• Regional conflicts</li> <li>• State failure</li> <li>• Cyber-security (<i>included in the implementation review of 2008</i>)</li> <li>• Energy security (<i>was mentioned 2003, but given much more space 2008</i>)</li> <li>• Climate change (<i>2008</i>)</li> <li>• Pandemics (<i>2008</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorism</li> <li>• Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction</li> <li>• Organized crime</li> <li>• Regional conflicts</li> <li>• Religious radicalism</li> <li>• Energy security</li> <li>• Epidemics</li> <li>• Regional conflicts</li> <li>• Water scarcity</li> <li>• Physical storage of dangerous materials and objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorism</li> <li>• Proliferation of ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction</li> <li>• Conventional threats/attacks</li> <li>• Transnational illegal activities (<i>trafficking in arms, narcotics and people</i>)</li> <li>• Cyber security</li> <li>• Energy security</li> <li>• Technology-related trends (<i>development of laser weapons, electronic warfare, technologies that impede access to space, etc</i>)</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Health issues</li> <li>• Water scarcity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorism</li> <li>• Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction</li> <li>• Regional conflicts</li> <li>• Securing cyberspace</li> <li>• Global criminal networks</li> <li>• Rogue states and failed states</li> <li>• Pandemics</li> <li>• The global economic crisis</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• The global food supply</li> <li>• America's reliance on space</li> </ul>
<b>Key goal</b>	"European countries are committed to dealing peacefully with disputes and to co-operating through common institutions." <sup>44</sup>	"The main directions of the national security policy [...] are the strategic national priorities, in the form of important social, political and economic transformations intended to create secure conditions for the realisation of Russian citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms, the stable development of the country, and the preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state." <sup>45</sup>	"The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend our territory and our populations against attack, as set out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty." <sup>46</sup>	The U.S. government "has no greater responsibility than the safety and security of the American people. And there is no greater threat to the American people than weapons of mass destruction, particularly the danger posed by the pursuit of nuclear weapons by violent extremists and their proliferation to additional states." <sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *European Security Strategy from 2003; A secure Europe in a better world* [English version], p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020, paragraph 2.

<sup>46</sup> NATO Strategic Concept, *Defence and Deterrence*, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. National Security Strategy, p. 4.

## Analysis

Each of the strategies discussed possesses qualities that may be useful when outlining a European Global Strategy. The analysis will primarily address three focus areas: *values and interests; conceived threats; and the definition of power*. By illuminating these key elements, the similarities and differences between the strategies can easily be discerned.

### **Values and interests**

The values and interest of each strategy is not always stated explicitly. The ESS states that the EU's core values are to be promoted using three different strategic objectives.<sup>48</sup> However, the values that the EU seeks to represent are not stated in the strategy. Biscop has commented on the fact that "it is actually not that clear which values and interests the EU seeks to safeguard, and which kind of international actor it wants to be."<sup>49</sup> Other scholars have noted that Europeans have a better chance to influence the rest of the polities if they develop a common position – preferably before it is actually needed.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, the interests of the EU, are discussed in the strategy, and include the following aspects: addressing threats and building security; building an international order based on multilateralism; reducing climate change; securing vital resources (such as energy supply, but also water supply); securing the autonomy of EU decision-making managing migration, as well as "open lines of communication and trade".<sup>51</sup>

Russia's National Security Strategy for 2020 lacks of a clear definition of Russia's values and interests. The "[f]reedom and independence of the Russian state, humanism, the peaceful coexistence and cultural unity of Russia's multinational population, respect for family traditions, and patriotism"<sup>52</sup> is the closest definition of values included in the strategy. Interests are defined under paragraph 6 as "the aggregate of the internal and external needs of

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<sup>48</sup> *European Security Strategy from 2003; A secure Europe in a better world* [English version], p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Biscop, *The Value of Power, The Power of Values: A Call For An EU Grand Strategy*, p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> See Leonard, *Why Europe Will Run The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 33

<sup>51</sup> Biscop, *supra* note 49, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020, paragraph 1.

the state in ensuring the protection and stable development of the individual, society and the state”.<sup>53</sup>

As a member of NATO, a state is part of “a unique community of values”.<sup>54</sup> However, a definition of these values is not specified in the strategy, despite the recurrence of ‘values’ and ‘shared values’. However, a member-state of NATO is clearly expected to share the values of the Alliance.<sup>55</sup> NATO also regards the protection of the “community of freedom, peace, security and shared values”<sup>56</sup> as it’s core mission. Meanwhile, the concept of ‘interests’ is only mentioned explicitly when describing the interests that NATO shares with Russia: “missile defence, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, counterpiracy and the promotion of wider international security”.<sup>57</sup>

Among those included in this analysis, the U.S. National Security Strategy is the strategy that most clearly highlights the importance of providing clearly stated values and interests. Indeed it is difficult to overlook the value and interests of the U.S. as the strategy outlines each under a separate heading. Values are primarily seen as ‘universal’, and include “an individual’s freedom to speak their mind, assemble without fear, worship as they please, and choose their own leaders [as well as] [...] dignity, tolerance, and equality among all people, and the fair and equitable administration of justice.”<sup>58</sup> The most effective method with which the U.S. promotes their values “is [by living] them”.<sup>59</sup> American interests are defined as: the security of the U.S. (and its allies and partners); prosperity (“a growing U.S. economy and an open international economic system”); values (respect for universal values); and an international order to meet global challenges.<sup>60</sup> The strategy focuses on ‘common interests’ and ‘shared interests’. This could be interpreted to mean that the U.S. are unable or unwilling to act as

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<sup>53</sup> Russia’s National Security Strategy to 2020, paragraph 6.

<sup>54</sup> NATO Strategic Concept, p. 6.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pp. 25-26.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. National Security Strategy, p. 35.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

sole guardians of peace and international order. the U.S. strategy may thereby emphasize shared interest in order to get other actors, such as the EU, to co-shoulder the responsibility.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Conceived threats***

It is clear that the strategies are relatively united on the perception of threats; terrorism, state failure, regional conflicts and organized crime as well as cyber security, energy security and climate change are key elements of all the mentioned strategies. Both the EU and the U.S. recognize that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the greatest security threat.<sup>62</sup>

Russia's strategy differs from the rest since it also includes threats such as the physical storage of dangerous materials and the failure of other states to respect international law. Paragraph 20 states that to prevent threats to national security, "it is essential to guarantee social stability, ethnic and denominational harmony, and increase the mobilisation potential and growth of the national economy".<sup>63</sup>

Both the U.S. National Security Strategy and NATO's Strategic Concept emphasize common threats and joint responsibility, and a recurring theme is the broad definition of what constitutes as a threat.

### ***The definition of power***

The view of power can be considered the key element that differentiates each strategy, as well as the kind of power (hard/soft/normative) each strategy emphasises. This is exemplified by Leonard who, when comparing the approaches of the U.S. and EU, states that, unlike the U.S., the EU "doesn't change countries by threatening to invade them: its biggest threat is having

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<sup>61</sup> See for example Biscop, supra note 6, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing security in a changing world* [English version], p. 3; U.S. National Security Strategy, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020, paragraph 20.

nothing to do with them at all.”<sup>64</sup> Russia however, strives for a transformation, turning Russia “into a world power whose activity is directed at supporting the strategic stability and mutually beneficial partner relationships within the multipolar world.”<sup>65</sup> NATO’s definition of power is hard to analyse by only studying the strategic concept, as, surprisingly, the word ‘power’ is not mentioned once in NATO’s strategic concept. In contrast, the U.S. National Security Strategy focus upon ‘the power of the U.S. example’, and emphasis soft power<sup>66</sup>

### ***Some final remarks...***

In conclusion, the four strategies compared in this paper are at the same time very different and very much the same. While the values and interests of each strategy differ, the perceived threats are very much alike. Another difference between the strategies is the definition of power, whilst the structure of the different strategies varies. In this brief, I have deliberately avoided discussing how a strategy should be designed, mainly due to the fact that it would take much more than a ‘brief’ in order to do the discussion of ‘strategy design’ justice. However, the outline of the similarities and differences of the strategies should be informative regarding the key elements of a strategy.

When shaping a EGS, all of the key elements discussed in this paper (values and interests, conceived threats, and the view of power) will, inevitably, be crucial for the strategy’s success. A new EGS should fill the gaps left by the ESS, such as the fact that the text is mainly procedural, and not prescriptive,<sup>67</sup> as well as the lack of a clear definition of the values that the EU seeks to safeguard.<sup>68</sup> Coelmont refers to the ESS as merely “the first step towards a fully-fledged strategy”.<sup>69</sup> However, rather than being instantly fully-fledged, the development of a EGS will more realistically function as an gradual process

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<sup>64</sup> Leonard, supra note 50, p. 6

<sup>65</sup> Russia’s National Security Strategy to 2020, paragraph 21.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. National Security Strategy, pp. 36-37.

<sup>67</sup> Biscop, A New External Action Service Needs a New European Security Strategy, p. 1 and Coelmont, An EU Security Strategy: An Attractive Narrative, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Biscop, supra note 49, p. 15.

<sup>69</sup> Coelmont, An EU Security Strategy: An Attractive Narrative, p. 3.

that will emphasize relevant theoretical perspectives which can facilitate a long-term transition towards a more value-driven and holistic strategy which more adequately identifies and addresses the future challenges of the EU.

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# UI brief

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*UI briefs are reviewed by senior staff at the Institute.  
They solely reflect the view of the author(s).*