**Session:** NATO

**Date/Time**: April 23, 2019 / 13:00-14:30

**Rapporteur:**Karl Friedhoff, Chicago Council on Global Affairs

**Moderator:**

Choi Jinwoo, Hanyang University

**Speakers:**Ian Anthony, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

Pascal Boniface, French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs

Kestutis Paulauskas, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Brooke A. Smith-Windsor, RAND Europe

Alexander Vershbow, Atlantic Council

**Session Sketch:**

In its 70th year, NATO has long outlived the 15 years that the average military alliance lasts. Opinions across the panel were relatively positive that the alliance would continue in the medium-term with prospects more uncertain for the long-term. Over those 70 years, the alliance has been very successful in bringing prosperity and security to Europe, but there are significant challenges ahead. Those challenges are burden sharing, the Russia problem, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and the decline of US commitment.

The longevity of NATO was attributed to the flexibility of the alliance itself. It is stronger now than it was even during the Cold War, but the relationship with Russia is a serious problem. For example, NATO has fewer contacts with Russia now than it did during the Cold War. This may have contributed more broadly to NATO countries being unprepared for Russian aggression in Georgia and Crimea. But these are acts of limited aggression and Russia remains deterred from larger actions by NATO. Putin may have the willingness, but he lacks the means to pursue those actions. Military spending imbalances between NATO and the United States on the one hand, and Russia on the other, is very unequal.

A bigger challenge is the decrease in American commitment and leadership. President Trump has openly talked of withdrawal from the alliance, and he would be able to do so without the approval of Congress. But the concerns Trump has raised, primarily focused on European military expenditures, are not new. Most NATO countries have responded by raising military expenditures and the panel expected the alliance to benefit as a result.