New horizons

contents

Analysis
4 A more political NATO
Michael Rühle explains why NATO must become a more effective forum for debate.

7 Growing pains
Peter van Ham examines the challenges NATO is facing as it takes on an increasingly global role.

Combating terrorism
16 NATO's response to terrorism
Dagmar de Mora-Figueroa examines how NATO has responded to the terrorist threat.

20 Combating WMD proliferation
Eric R. Terzuolo considers NATO's role in combating WMD proliferation.

24 NATO-Russia cooperation to counter terrorism
Andrei Kelin describes how NATO and Russia are forging an increasingly effective partnership.

Operations
27 NATO's role in nation-building
James Dobbins examines how NATO should work together with other international institutions in nation-building.

32 Combating terrorism in the Mediterranean
Vice Admiral Roberto Cesaretti examines how NATO has been combating terrorism in the Mediterranean.

Debate
10 Is it time to update NATO's Strategic Concept?
Lionel Ponsard versus David S. Yost

35 Improving linguistic interoperability
Mark Crossey considers the importance of language policy at NATO.

Features
38 Boosting NATO's CBRN capabilities
39 Strengthening NATO's missile defences

Published under the authority of the Secretary General, NATO Review is intended to contribute to a constructive discussion of Atlantic issues. Articles, therefore, do not necessarily represent official opinion or policy of member governments or NATO.

NATO Review is an electronic magazine published four times a year on the NATO web site that can be read in 22 NATO languages as well as Russian and Ukrainian at www.nato.int/review.

Articles may be reproduced, after permission has been obtained from the editor, provided mention is made of NATO Review and signed articles are reproduced with the author's name.

Every mention in this publication of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is marked by an asterisk (*). This refers to the following footnote: Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.
This is a one-off, hardcopy special issue of NATO Review, the Alliance’s online magazine, bringing together much of the best writing to appear in recent electronic editions. Articles cover NATO’s political evolution, the Alliance’s growing involvement in peace operations, NATO’s role in combating terrorism and the Alliance’s growing engagement with the Middle East.

Each theme is indicative of the changes taking place at NATO and the scope of the Alliance’s current agenda. Indeed, it is remarkable to recall that it is only ten years since NATO-led forces were preparing to deploy in Bosnia and Herzegovina in what was to be the Alliance’s first peace operation. In the intervening decade, the pace and scale of change at NATO has accelerated every year in response to developments in the wider security environment, forever expanding the Alliance’s horizons. Hence the title of this special issue.

Articles by Mark Crossey and James Dobbins originally appeared in the summer 2005 issue. Articles by Vice Admiral Roberto Cesaretti, Peter van Ham, Andrei Kelin, Dagmar de Mora-Figueroa, Eric R. Terzuolo, as well as the interview with Gijs de Vries, the European Union’s counter-terrorism coordinator, the features on NATO’s CBRN capabilities and missile defences, and the debate between Lionel Ponsard and David S. Yost originally appeared in the autumn 2005 issue. And articles by Mustafa Alani, Martin van Creveld, Francis Ghilès, Carlo Masala and Michael Rühle appear in the winter 2005 issue.

The online edition, which is published four times a year in 22 NATO languages as well as Russian and Ukrainian at www.nato.int/review, is continuously being improved. In addition to articles, interviews, debates and book reviews, it includes many special features, such as interactive maps, suggested further reading on NATO topics and relevant statistics.

The Editor
A more political NATO

Michael Rühle explains how and why NATO must become a more effective forum for political debate.

For decades, it has been common wisdom that the growing asymmetry in military power between the United States and its NATO Allies constitutes a serious problem in the transatlantic security relationship. After all, Allies who can no longer cooperate militarily risk dividing politically as well. Retaining the ability of the Allies to make meaningful military contributions to common operations thus remains a key priority.

Events of the more recent past, however, have revealed that military transformation in itself is not enough. New threats, the changing character of NATO’s new missions, and the emergence of new security actors require the Allies to approach NATO’s transformation in a more comprehensive way. If the Alliance wants to maintain its role as the key framework for transatlantic coordination and common action, it needs to complement its military transformation with a decisive move towards more frequent and frank political debate. In other words, NATO needs to become more political – an objective that ranks high on the agenda of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

To make the case for a more political NATO is not to deny the Alliance’s numerous political achievements. In the Cold War, NATO’s mere existence not only ruled out any change of the political status quo in Europe by force, it also denied the Soviet Union the political use of its military power. The NATO framework also facilitated the political reconciliation of former adversaries. And the consolidation of Europe after the end of the Cold War through NATO’s enlargement process and its various partnership mechanisms was, above all, a political achievement. Yet even though NATO remains a firm part of the Euro-Atlantic political order, the new security environment compels the Allies to develop a clearer understanding of, and seek a greater influence over, the political context in which NATO operates.

Debating new threats

When previous NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson took office, he quipped that his three priorities were “capabilities, capabilities, capabilities”. The slogan caught on. The Kosovo air campaign revealed significant shortcomings in European military capabilities and increased long-standing concerns that diverging military capabilities could become a major source of political friction. The immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States vindicated this analysis yet again. Washington did not use the Alliance to the degree some had expected – a development that merely seemed to reinforce the case for NATO’s military reform.

However, the Iraq controversy of spring 2003 made clear that Lord Robertson’s formula no longer sufficiently captured transatlantic reality. The serious frictions which this controversy caused within the transatlantic community, including within NATO, were not a result of asymmetries in military power, but of an asymmetry in threat perception. On a general level, the transatlantic partners agreed that terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and failed states called for new approaches. The specific strategy chosen by Washington, however, namely to use force to combat proliferation by changing the political status quo in Iraq, went beyond what some Allies considered legitimate. In short, the most severe breakdown of the transatlantic security consensus, and the deepest crisis in NATO’s recent history, was not caused by a lack of collective military power, but by fundamental political differences over its use.

Even if Iraq may well remain a singular case, it has brought home the need to generate a broader and more solid transatlantic security consensus. The range of today’s security issues, from the pre-emptive use of force to the future of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, no longer allow for the convenient assumption that the Allies will always arrive at similar answers. Controversial debates about the nature of the new threats and about the appropriate responses may well become the rule rather than the exception. Building consensus will become harder.

Against this background, the first dimension of NATO’s political transformation must be to offer its Allies a forum for a broader strategic debate. In its current set-up, political dialogue in NATO is mainly triggered on a case-by-case basis by the need for decisions on specific operations, missions or military transformation issues. This approach tends to limit the scope of political dialogue to NATO’s role as a force provider rather than a forum in which the Allies shape common perspectives and approaches to wider issues. To instil what Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer has called a “culture of debate” will thus require

---

Michael Rühle is head of the Policy Planning and Speechwriting Section in NATO’s Political Affairs and Security Policy Division. He is indebted to Rad van den Akker for comments and suggestions.
changes in NATO’s working methods as well as in Allied attitudes.

For example, providing the North Atlantic Council with more time to debate wider issues requires the delegation of less pressing matters to subordinate committees. How this can be achieved is currently under review. Allies must also resist the tendency to regard certain themes as off-limits. NATO’s decisions to support the African Union’s peacekeeping mission in Darfur and, more recently, to provide humanitarian relief to the victims of the earthquake in Pakistan, both show how quickly a seemingly distant issue can become relevant to the Alliance. Last but not least, Allies need to accept that discussions in NATO need not be confined to subjects of military relevance, but should include issues of common political interest as well. If debate in NATO were regarded only as a precursor to military engagement, a discussion on many pressing issues would be impossible.

Political say in operations

Another reason for a more political NATO stems from the nature of NATO’s current and future military operations. Most of these operations are long-term stabilisation missions, characterised by close interaction between military and civilian actors. These operations require NATO to seek closer cooperation with other international institutions as well as with non-governmental organisations. Above all, they require NATO to have a
voice in the political processes that are aimed at ensuring self-sustaining peace, and not be relegated to the role of a mere troop provider. The riots in Kosovo in spring 2004 were a stark reminder of how quickly NATO troops can become hostage to – and a scapegoat for – unresolved political issues. The riots led to the creation of the Contact Group Plus on the future of Kosovo, in which NATO has a distinct political influence in addition to its military role. The future of Afghanistan requires a similar broad engagement by the Alliance. All this suggests that NATO needs to articulate a political strategy to help shape the context in which it operates militarily. The success of NATO’s various initiatives to promote regional cooperation in Southeastern Europe shows that the Alliance is perfectly capable of playing such a role.

Even where NATO is engaged only as a cooperative security institution, it will be vital to stay attuned to the regional political context. This is relevant with respect to NATO’s relations with its Partner countries, especially those in the Caucasus and Central Asia. But it is relevant, in particular, with a view to the Alliance’s developing relations with countries in the Middle East and the Gulf region, where even seemingly technical military cooperation can have major political implications. Not surprisingly, the Middle East peace process has now become an accepted topic for discussion at NATO foreign ministers’ meetings. NATO’s new geopolitical focus calls for an Alliance with solid regional expertise. In the years to come, NATO will have to acquire this expertise, both by developing the appropriate skills within the organisation and involving outside experts.

Reaching out to new actors

The third reason for a more political role for NATO stems from the changing institutional setting and, in particular, the European Union’s emergence as an independent military actor. A European Union with a distinct military dimension constitutes the most profound institutional change within the transatlantic security community since its creation almost six decades ago. It means that 19 of the 26 current NATO Allies now organise themselves in a framework that also covers security – and conducts its own dialogue with Washington. In order to avoid rivalries and competition in this complex setting, NATO and the European Union need to develop a strategic partnership that extends well beyond their cooperation in the Balkans and covers the entire spectrum of modern security challenges. Eventually this could lead to a relationship that would not only allow the European Union to call on NATO’s military assets, as is already the case with the so-called “Berlin-Plus” arrangements, but that would also allow NATO to draw on the European Union’s unique civilian capabilities.

A more structured relationship with the United Nations is another element of a more political NATO. NATO and the United Nations work together in many areas, but practical cooperation in theatre contrasts with a lack of political consultation at the strategic level. This is about to change, however. As NATO is emerging as a major enabler of the United Nations, a more coherent strategic relationship is also taking shape, including more regular contacts between the Secretaries-General of both institutions and their staffs. In addition to building closer relations with major organisations, NATO will also establish more sustained cooperation with other important national actors, such as Australia and Japan, as well as with the non-governmental community. With its presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, and its involvement in operations in Sudan and Pakistan, NATO has finally overcome its day-to-day operational demands. Moreover, inviting more debate might well result in inviting more division. After all, dialogue will not always facilitate consensus, but might also deepen existing rifts. Some will argue that a more political NATO risks wandering on classical EU turf, thereby increasing rather than diminishing the tensions between the two organisations. Others may argue that truly fundamental issues, such as the war on Iraq, will always remain beyond dialogue.

Nevertheless, there is no real alternative to a more political NATO. If the Alliance is to continue its role of shaping the wider strategic environment, it must aim beyond maintaining its military competence and develop a stronger political identity as well. Such an enhanced political identity will not only allow NATO to calibrate better its contributions to the efforts of the wider international community. It should also help to do away with the double standard that views debates in the European Union and United Nations as a demonstration of these bodies’ vitality, and debates in NATO as a sign of the organisation’s impending demise. As French philosopher Joseph Joubert put it more than 200 years ago: “The end of an argument or discussion should not be victory, but enlightenment.”

The deepest crisis in NATO’s recent history was not caused by a lack of collective military power, but by fundamental political differences over its use

Enlightened debate

A more political NATO is not without risk. It will put additional burdens on an Alliance that is already heavily taxed by its day-to-day operational demands. Moreover, inviting more debate might well result in inviting more division. After all, dialogue will not always facilitate consensus, but might also deepen existing rifts. Some will argue that a more political NATO risks wandering on classical EU turf, thereby increasing rather than diminishing the tensions between the two organisations. Others may argue that truly fundamental issues, such as the war on Iraq, will always remain beyond dialogue.

Nevertheless, there is no real alternative to a more political NATO. If the Alliance is to continue its role of shaping the wider strategic environment, it must aim beyond maintaining its military competence and develop a stronger political identity as well. Such an enhanced political identity will not only allow NATO to calibrate better its contributions to the efforts of the wider international community. It should also help to do away with the double standard that views debates in the European Union and United Nations as a demonstration of these bodies’ vitality, and debates in NATO as a sign of the organisation’s impending demise. As French philosopher Joseph Joubert put it more than 200 years ago: “The end of an argument or discussion should not be victory, but enlightenment.”
NATO’s overflowing policy agenda is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the Alliance is no longer held back by its “out-of-area” debate, where an excessively narrow reading of the Washington Treaty, its founding charter, placed severe limits on activities beyond Europe and North America. On the other, it seems that today no security challenge falls outside NATO’s remit. Since invoking its Article 5 collective-defence clause the day after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, NATO has arguably been evolving into what Christopher Coker of the London School of Economics has called the “West’s Globocop”, an organisation helping make the world safe for democracy and globalisation. Today, NATO is not only boldly going beyond Allied territory, it is increasingly expected to take on everything from fighting international terrorism, through dealing with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), contributing to the democratisation of the Greater Middle East, training Iraqi security forces and supporting the African Union’s peacekeeping operation in Darfur.

The Alliance is also taking on new responsibilities in the field of civil-emergency planning. In the wake of the Asian Tsunami, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer suggested that if something similar occurred within the Euro-Atlantic area, NATO’s Response Force (NRF) would have been deployed to assist. And sure enough, elements of the NRF provided some relief in the wake of the enormous devastation caused by hurricane Katrina and its aftermath in the southern US states of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The many initiatives, activities and operations on the NATO agenda clearly reflect Alliance efforts to meet the challenges of a changing strategic environment. At the same time, however, they are also critical to keeping the Alliance relevant in terms of US foreign-policy priorities. NATO’s “to-do” list is growing rapidly in large part because US policymakers and opinion-leaders increasingly link NATO’s strategic weight to its contribution to US foreign-policy goals and European Allies have realised that NATO can only refuse calls to go out of area and take on challenging new tasks at its peril.

US analysts and policymakers have long argued that unless NATO shifts its strategic focus to the Middle East and redefines its mission to address the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, it risks becoming irrelevant. Countries like France and the United Kingdom may still hold some sway in Washington, but smaller European Allies know all too well that without NATO, their impact on US policy is negligible. Since the United States is the world’s only superpower, influencing Washington is akin to helping shape the course of world history. As a result, Europeans need a NATO that offers a functional political platform to devise a collective and cohesive Western strategy. Hence the rationale behind German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder’s complaint at February’s Munich Security Conference that NATO was “no longer the primary venue where transatlantic partners discuss and coordinate strategies”.

Many in Europe fear that the United States’ often confrontational stance towards the United Nations and other international organisations will also affect NATO. Nobody can forget US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s oft-quoted remark that, in today’s world, “the mission will define the coalition – not the other way around”. For Europeans, the bottom-line is clear: when Washington calls for new NATO activities, they generally feel obliged to say yes. The question now is whether NATO has the political cohesion and the military means to live up to these demands and expectations.

Transforming NATO

In the course of little over a decade, NATO transformed itself from an alliance focused on collective defence into the world’s most experienced peacemaking and peacekeeping force. During the Gulf War of the early 1990s, NATO stood on the sidelines, with France, the United Kingdom and other European Allies contributing to the US-led coalition that expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait. By 1995, however, NATO had moved centre stage, launching an air campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina that helped bring three-and-a-half years of fighting there to an end and then leading a 60 000-strong force to oversee implementation of military aspects of the peace agreement. Subsequently, NATO expanded its role on the ground, moving from peacemaking to peacekeeping and into nation-building.

As the 1990s progressed, NATO became increasingly interventionist in response to ethnic conflict in the former...
Yugoslavia. In the face of a humanitarian catastrophe, NATO launched a "humanitarian intervention" to halt ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in 1999. And in 2001, the Alliance deployed pre-emptively in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* to help defuse a conflict between ethnic Albanian rebels and the Skopje government that threatened to escalate out of control.

At NATO's 1999 Washington Summit, the Allies agreed a new Strategic Concept, reflecting the changes in the security environment since the end of the Cold War. And at both the Washington Summit and at the 2002 Prague Summit, the Allies launched high-profile capabilities initiatives – the Defence Capabilities Initiative and the Prague Capabilities Commitment – to strengthen Europe's military capabilities and ensure that European armed forces are equipped to move faster and further afield.

While the speed of NATO's transformation since the end of the Cold War has been remarkable, every step has been accompanied by intense debate over NATO's core functions. In the 2000 US presidential election campaign, for example, Condoleezza Rice, then an adviser to the Bush campaign, remarked that: "We don't need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten" in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The Kosovo campaign, in particular, provoked mixed feelings among both Americans and Europeans, even though all major decisions were taken by the North Atlantic Council with unanimity.

During the Kosovo campaign, the United States contributed more than 75 per cent of NATO forces, and hence determined both the course and the pace of the battle. As a result, European Allies felt marginalised, realising that their forces had serious shortfalls in areas such as C4 ISR (command, control, communications and computing, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance), smart munitions, and all-weather/day-night assets. For many Americans, Kosovo also revealed the limits of waging "war by committee" and, rightly or wrongly, this experience has coloured US perspectives on NATO. Moreover, Kosovo already offered a glimpse of the future, since Europeans were mainly doing the peacekeeping after US war-fighters had left the scene.

It was during this acrimonious debate about a developing division of labour within NATO, that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 opened a new strategic era. Although NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept only mentioned the threat of international
terrorism in passing, the “global war on terror” rapidly became the leading security paradigm for all NATO Allies. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, with memories of Kosovo still fresh in their minds, European Allies took the initiative to invoke Article 5. Despite this, Washington chose to wage war against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan together with select allies, rather than NATO, arguing that most European militaries lacked the precision-strike capabilities for this kind of campaign. In this way, European forces largely deployed as peacekeepers once most of the war-fighting was over. Subsequently, in August 2003, NATO took command of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, the Alliance’s first mission beyond the Euro-Atlantic area.

The invasion of Afghanistan and subsequent stabilisation operations enjoyed Allied support, since military action in both instances was legitimised by UN mandates. However, this was not the case in Iraq. Worse still, in the months leading to the campaign to oust Saddam Hussein, the question of Iraq, that is the merits of invading the country at that very time, barely featured in the deliberations of the North Atlantic Council. Although possibly understandable given the diametrically opposed views of key Allies on this question, this omission undermined NATO’s role as a political platform on the key security challenges facing the West.

At the June 2004 Istanbul Summit, the Allies agreed to offer the government of Iraq assistance with the training of its security forces. However, in spite of US calls for a greater NATO role on the ground, the Alliance chose not to take on a similar stabilisation role in Iraq to that which it had already taken on in Afghanistan. Clearly, those Allies that opposed the invasion of Iraq had also drawn a line in the sand.

Way ahead

During the Cold War, NATO’s task was straightforward. Despite differences, therefore, it was relatively easy for Allies to remain focused and keep their eyes on the ball. Today, however, NATO is juggling so many balls that there is a risk that one or more may fall, thereby damaging the Alliance’s reputation and with it Allied security interests.

The further and the more often NATO goes “out of area”, the greater the pressure to take on yet more tasks and operations. Indeed, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called upon the Alliance to play a greater role in Africa. And other analysts and policymakers envisage a role for NATO in monitoring a future Middle East peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and even in assisting a normalisation process in Cyprus.

The Kosovo campaign made it clear to European Allies that they had to upgrade their military capabilities if they wished to remain militarily relevant to the United States. Indeed, some analysts warned that if the military-technological and doctrinal gaps between Europe and the United States continued to grow, NATO’s future as a military alliance was bleak. As a result, the Alliance has initiated an ambitious transformation process, including the creation of Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, in the United States. But the spirit of transformation has yet to have any impact on NATO’s Strategic Concept, which remains unchanged since April 1999.

In an ideal world, the Allies would begin formulating a new Strategic Concept to set out clearly NATO’s geo-strategic priorities, its policy stance on issues such as the use of force and the role of nuclear weapons. But arriving at consensus on such contentious issues will likely prove extremely difficult. As a result, the Allies have to date chosen not to open this potential can of worms. While this approach is understandable, it is not clear how long the Alliance can do without a new consensus on key strategic questions. Indeed, European Allies reasonably argue that if they are called upon to do post-war peacekeeping and nation-building, they should also be involved in the decision-making prior to going to war.

Today, it seems that no security challenge falls outside NATO’s remit

To reinvigorate NATO, the Allies must continue their efforts to strengthen the North Atlantic Council as the key forum for transatlantic security dialogue, along the lines of Chancellor Schroeder’s suggestions. Here, the review process set in train by De Hoop Scheffer to make NATO a more political alliance will be especially significant.

In future, the North Atlantic Council will have to set priorities. In practice, this means that it will have to decide not to do certain tasks (however important they may be), and not to embark upon certain operations (however laudable they may be). An alternative may be to introduce the concept of “structured cooperation”, EU jargon for allowing small groups of member states to embark upon certain activities without everyone agreeing, a proposal put forward by Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Bot. This would make it easier for NATO to turn into the flexible organisation with the can-do mentality and structure to tackle the challenges lying ahead. But to assure that this flexibility will not trigger disintegration, all Allies will have to sing from the same song sheet. Irrespective of the difficulties involved, developing a new Strategic Concept may, nevertheless, be the transatlantic catharsis NATO requires.

For more on the Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael”, see www.clingendael.nl

New horizons
Dear David,

NATO today faces strategic challenges that are very different from those it faced in the past. In particular, the Alliance has to deal politically and militarily with asymmetric threats such as that posed by terrorism to remain relevant to the security needs of its members. I welcome this opportunity to make the case for immediately updating NATO’s Strategic Concept to reflect changes in the strategic environment and hope that our discussion will spur fresh thinking in this area.

NATO has had an overarching strategic document setting out the threats it faces and the ways in which it addresses them almost since its creation. The first Strategic Concept, the so-called Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Area, was agreed in 1950. The document has since been revised in 1957, 1968, 1991 and most recently in 1999. NATO’s Strategic Concept serves to set the broad policy framework for the Alliance’s work and periodic revisions to it have reflected the need for NATO to adapt its plans and approaches to meet evolving challenges.

The 1999 version reflected the adaptation of NATO’s strategies to what were then new post-Cold War circumstances. It maintained the Article 5 guarantee, but recognised that effective collective defence required measures that were different from those designed in the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. It took into consideration threats posed by rogue and failed states, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other transnational threats such as ethnic or religious disputes. It did not, however, foresee the magnitude of the terrorist threat.

Is it time to update NATO’s Strategic Concept?

yes
Lionel Ponsard is deputy chief of the Academic Research Branch at the NATO Defense College in Rome.

no
David S. Yost is a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, currently seconded to the NATO Defense College in Rome as a senior research fellow.**
The current Strategic Concept was written before events such as the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States. Although the Allies have since formulated important documents including the Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism, the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism, and the NATO-Russia Action Plan on Terrorism, they still need to update their overall threat assessment and adapt the capabilities and strategies required to meet it.

Another crucial issue for a revised Strategic Concept is that of NATO’s relationship with the United Nations, specifically the issue of UN Security Council authorisation for NATO operations. The 1999 document acknowledges the primacy of the UN Security Council at several points. However, the document does not resolve the issue of the Alliance’s relationship with the United Nations and the need – or otherwise – to seek Security Council blessing before contemplating military action. A revision of the current Strategic Concept should help provide the Alliance with additional legitimacy for future missions, which in the minds of some analysts was lacking at the time of the Kosovo air campaign. In other words, it should clearly define NATO’s relationship with the United Nations and in particular the legal framework for the use of force.

Discussions on a revised Strategic Concept would provide an ideal opportunity to help redefine the transatlantic security debate and encourage greater strategic dialogue with the European Union. At the least, they would eliminate obsolete references to the European Security and Defence Identity and the Western European Union and sharpen the focus on achievements such as the “Berlin-Plus” arrangements, governing EU-NATO cooperation. At most, they could help bring NATO’s Strategic Concept into line with the National Security Strategy of the United States and the Security Strategy of the European Union, both of which were agreed after 9/11.

In 1999, the Alliance’s operational experience was largely limited to the Balkans. In the intervening years, however, NATO has taken on a much more diverse range of missions and is now involved in operations in Africa, Asia and the Mediterranean, as well as in Europe. A new Strategic Concept should reflect this and clarify the scope of the Alliance’s interests and operations. And it should reflect a military strategy incorporating the many initiatives that the Alliance has taken in recent years and in particular the concept of “transformation”.

An astonishing amount has happened to the strategic environment since NATO last revised its Strategic Concept in 1999. In the wake of 9/11, the Afghan campaign and the Iraq War, we have definitively moved beyond the post-Cold War era. To ensure that the Alliance is as prepared as it can be for the challenges of what might be described as the post-post-Cold War era, I believe that now is the time to launch a process leading to the revision of NATO’s Strategic Concept.

Yours,

Lionel

Dear Lionel,

We must not over-estimate what a new Strategic Concept could achieve or disregard the political sensitivity of composing one. Now is not the time for a new Strategic Concept review. The Allies have largely overcome the irritations of 2002-2003 about the Iraq conflict, but a Strategic Concept review at this time could still bring residual bitterness to the surface. Some Allies might use the Iraq case to revisit the controversies over the legal basis for the Alliance’s use of force in the Kosovo conflict in 1999. It is, moreover, doubtful whether the Allies could devise a compromise superior to that in the 1999 Strategic Concept on the subject of UN Security Council authorisation for the use of force in non-Article 5 contingencies.

A Strategic Concept reflects consensus; it does not create it. The Allies are on the road to recovering a more positive transatlantic (and intra-European) consensus on dealing with fundamental challenges, notably terrorism, failed states, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). These major changes in the security environment and resulting new tasks assumed by the Alliance will probably lead, in due time, to a new Strategic Concept. However, it is now more urgent to carry forward the generation of a new consensus on security requirements, the Alliance’s roles, and corresponding capabilities.

To conduct a successful review, the Allies must agree that a new Strategic Concept is necessary and have the requisite “comfort level” about undertaking such an endeavour. Launching a Strategic Concept review at this time, when the political context is premature,
could be counter-productive for the process of building consensus and composing a final product as flexible and useful as the 1999 Strategic Concept.

The Allies have historically undertaken revisions of the Strategic Concept only when convinced of the necessity of such a demanding effort and when persuaded that the political context favours a positive result. Strategic Concepts have in the past summarised the achievement of a working consensus, if necessary employing artfully ambiguous phrases to patch over continuing disagreements.

The Allies agree that the 1999 Strategic Concept still captures the essentials and has in no way impeded effective action or policy definition. Indeed, it is difficult to identify anything that the Alliance is failing to achieve owing to the absence of an updated Strategic Concept. After all, the Alliance’s policies are expressed in all the documents endorsed by the North Atlantic Council, not only the Strategic Concept. That is why, even in the absence of a new Strategic Concept, the Allies have been fully engaged in dealing with changes in the security environment.

The terrorist attacks against the United States in September 2001 led to the first invocation in history of Article 5. The Allies promptly took a number of measures, some of which continue to this day, such as Operation Active Endeavour, the maritime security effort in the Mediterranean. The 1999 Strategic Concept includes several references to terrorist threats and even highlights the dangerous prospect of links between terrorists and WMD proliferation. In various recent documents assessing terrorist threats, the Allies have defined strategies for action and capability requirements.

A new Strategic Concept would be unlikely to break any fresh ground on EU-NATO relations or the Alliance’s military transformation. When the Allies endorsed the current Strategic Concept, the European Union’s formulation of its European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was at an early stage; and it seemed as if the Western European Union might remain relevant. However, in the 1999 Washington Summit Communiqué the Allies simultaneously approved fundamental guidelines for the development of effective EU-NATO cooperation. These guidelines have been incorporated into the EU-NATO “Berlin-Plus” agreements. In other words, despite certain outdated references, the 1999 Strategic Concept has not impeded the pursuit of EU-NATO cooperation in support of the European Union’s ESDP, including NATO support for the EU peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina that replaced SFOR in December 2004.

Despite their focus on the Balkans during the 1990s, the Allies allowed for operations outside Europe when they declared in the 1999 Strategic Concept that: “Alliance security must also take account of the global context.” Since 2002 they have repeatedly reaffirmed their determination “to meet the challenges to the security of our forces, populations and territory, from wherever they may come”. They have established the NATO Response Force and Allied Command Transformation, among other initiatives. Force planning and transformation are the central focus of the Comprehensive Political Guidance exercise set in motion by the Allies at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004.

Since it is unnecessary in terms of substance, the prospect of launching what would probably be at this juncture a divisive process – formulating a new Strategic Concept – understandably repels Allied governments. In sum, there are solid reasons why composing a new Strategic Concept does not rank high among Allied priorities.

Yours,
David

Dear David

You seem to believe that now is not the time for a Strategic Concept review because such a process risks bringing “residual bitterness to the surface”. I understand the risk but believe that historically the timing has almost never been right for so difficult an exercise and that in the future it may never be.

In both 1957 and 1968, NATO’s Strategic Concept was revised at times of Franco-US and UK-US tensions. Events such as the collapse of the European Defence Community in 1954, the Suez debacle in 1956, and France’s 1966
decision to withdraw from NATO’s integrated military structure created an atmosphere that was anything but conducive to reviewing so important a document. Yet despite less than auspicious circumstances and irrespective of any “comfort level”, the Allies both launched a Strategic Concept review and succeeded in developing and agreeing new strategies, namely those of “massive retaliation” in 1957 and “flexible response” in 1968.

The issue that is arguably closest to the heart of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer is that of making the Alliance a more political organisation in such a way that the Alliance’s military transformation is placed within a more dynamic political context. I share this vision and want NATO to be the transatlantic venue for debate in such a way that the Allies discuss matters relating to situations in which NATO is considering an operational deployment. But to create such a forum, the Alliance has to be willing to address the most difficult issues on the transatlantic security agenda, including those involved in developing a new Strategic Concept.

You find it “difficult to identify anything that the Alliance is failing to achieve owing to the absence of an updated Strategic Concept”. There is, however, no way to compare what the Alliance might have achieved if armed with a new Strategic Concept with what the Alliance has achieved in recent years. But let’s not forget that the crises in NATO’s recent past have not been caused by a lack of collective military power, but by political disagreement over the use of that power.

Setting in train a revision of the Strategic Concept may well reopen wounds that have only recently closed and discussions on competing visions of what NATO should or could be will probably last for years. Still, the need to define shared threats and risks, to develop common standards for the use of force and to forge a better EU-NATO relationship is becoming ever more urgent.

Yours,
Lionel

Dear Lionel,

Your judgement that “in the future it may never be” the appropriate time for a new Strategic Concept review seems excessively pessimistic. The Allies have historically found incentives to undertake such reviews when the timing has been right.

Moreover, the historical cases you mention do not support your argument. The profound UK-US discord over Suez in 1956 had no relationship to and no effect on the firm UK-US agreement to pursue the strong reliance on nuclear deterrence articulated in the 1957 “massive retaliation” strategy. This agreement was well-established for financial as well as strategic reasons before the Suez crisis. Disenchantment with “massive retaliation” was, it should be recalled, almost immediate, owing mainly to the Berlin crises and the Soviet Union’s development of intercontinental ballistic missiles. US efforts to persuade the Allies to adopt what became known as “flexible response” began in earnest with the Kennedy administration in 1961. De Gaulle’s France, however, blocked such a revision of NATO strategy for years. As a result, it was only after France’s withdrawal from the integrated military structure that the other Allies could adopt “flexible response”. The facts that France never approved “flexible response” and that the Defence Planning Committee (that is, the North Atlantic Council without France) endorsed this Strategic Concept underscore the need for a minimum “comfort level” to achieve Alliance-wide consensus.

Many Allied officials and experts share the NATO Secretary General’s goal of making the Alliance the central venue for discussing all security and defence questions affecting Allied interests. However, this does not mean that now is the time to undertake a new Strategic Concept review or that undertaking such a review would suddenly convince all the Allies “to address the most difficult issues on the transatlantic security agenda” in the North Atlantic Council. The reluctance of some Allies to discuss issues such as Iran’s nuclear programmes and the future of the European Union’s arms embargo on China in a NATO framework derives from factors other than the absence of an updated Strategic Concept.
Dear David,

I have argued from the outset that NATO needs to revise its Strategic Concept within the context of a broader transatlantic discourse on the changing security environment. New threats, the emergence of new security actors, and changing operational requirements bolster the case for a new document. While it is unrealistic to expect total consensus on current and future international security priorities, the Allies need to find ways to arrive at a clearer understanding of the political context in which NATO is likely to operate.

My point is that until NATO’s political leadership articulates a more coherent strategic role for the Alliance, the benefits of transformation will remain unclear. In other words, the current military transformation must be guided by a parallel political transformation. The Allies need to update their threat assessments and adapt the capabilities and strategies required to meet them.

In my view, a revised Strategic Concept would help persuade member states to do more. It would define NATO’s relationship with both the European Union and the United Nations, based on an equitable share of burdens and responsibilities. And it would determine the scope of NATO’s interests and operations and establish more clearly the legal framework for the use of force. A new Strategic Concept would not create any new obligations nor change NATO’s historic purpose, but it would help make NATO yet more effective in addressing new challenges.

Inviting more debate might well result in more division. Nevertheless, there is no real alternative, if the Alliance wants to continue to shape the wider strategic environment. As the novelist Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa wrote of Italy: “If we want things to remain as they are, things will have to change.” This is the challenge for NATO and for those who wish to ensure that it remains the most successful politico-military alliance in contemporary history.

Yours,
Lionel

Dear Lionel,

In the context of Lampedusa’s novel The Leopard, the famous maxim you have quoted is a counsel of cynicism and a rationale for accommodation with the irresistible social and political forces of the Risorgimento. The advice is offered by one Sicilian aristocrat to another. These aristocrats hope that they will be able to retain their status and privileges if they make timely and astute compromises with the rising new rulers of Italy.

As you point out, however, the Allies have greater ambitions than simply reaching modus vivendi agreements with increasingly powerful social and political-military forces. Indeed, they have a dynamic and positive conception of their purposes. The Alliance’s many activities reflect, as noted in the 1999 Strategic Concept, “its determination to shape its security environment and enhance the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area”. To this end, the Allies have continued to engage in precisely what you prescribe: updating their threat assessments and adapting their strategies and capabilities to meet new challenges.

The proposition that “a revised Strategic Concept would help persuade member states to do more” overlooks the fact that such a document is an artifact of their collective will, not an agent of change in itself. If the Allies are not ready to agree on contentious questions such as the legal basis for the use of
force in non-Article 5 contingencies, launching a Strategic Concept review will not magically produce consensus. A prematurely initiated review would invite sharp dissension or lead to a feeble statement of vague generalities, dodging rather than seizing challenges.

The right way forward on the central issues, including the Alliance’s relations with the European Union and the United Nations, is consensus-building through practice. This is the most effective means to provide the Allies “ways to arrive at a clearer understanding of the political context in which NATO is likely to operate”. When the Allies make further progress in overcoming the residual acrimony deriving from the Iraq conflict and gain even greater experience with problem-solving in actual operations, they will eventually conclude that the time is right for a constructive and successful Strategic Concept review.

Yours,
David

** The views expressed are Professor Yost’s alone and do not represent those of the Department of the Navy or any US government agency.


For more on the NATO Defense College, see www.ndc.nato.int

Synopsis

Both debaters recognise that there had been profound changes in the international security environment since the Allies last agreed a Strategic Concept in 1999. For Lionel Ponsard, this means that NATO should immediately begin the process of updating its overall threat assessment and thereby adapt the capabilities and strategies required to meet it. Moreover, he believes that a revised Strategic Concept would also be an opportunity to clarify the Alliance’s relationship with both the United Nations and the European Union, as well as to incorporate the concept of “transformation”. For David S. Yost, the timing is wrong and would risk bringing residual bitterness over the 2002-2003 Iraq conflict to the surface. He believes we should not overestimate what a new Strategic Concept could achieve or disregard the political sensitivity of composing one. Since a Strategic Concept reflects consensus, rather than creates it, he argues that it is more important to carry forward the generation of a new consensus on security requirements, the Alliance’s roles and corresponding capabilities. Lionel Ponsard believes that historically the timing has almost never been right for so difficult an exercise and that in the future it may never be. In addition, he invokes Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer’s vision of a more political NATO, arguing that in order for NATO to be the focal point for transatlantic debate, the Alliance has to be willing to address the most difficult issues on the transatlantic security agenda. David S. Yost acknowledges the importance of the Secretary General’s goal of making NATO the central venue for discussing all security and defence questions affecting Allied interests. However, he argues that this does not mean that now is the time to undertake a Strategic Concept review or that undertaking such a review would suddenly convince all Allies “to address the most difficult issues on the transatlantic security agenda” in the North Atlantic Council. Lionel Ponsard recognises that inviting more debate might result in more division, but believes there is no alternative. Moreover, he argues that until NATO’s political leadership articulates a more coherent strategic role for the Alliance, the benefits of NATO’s military transformation will remain unclear. David S. Yost believes that the way forward is consensus-building through practice, suggesting that once the Allies make progress in overcoming the residual acrimony deriving from the Iraq conflict and gain greater experience with problem-solving in actual operations, they will conclude that the time is right for a constructive and successful Strategic Concept review.
**NATO’s response to terrorism**

Dagmar de Mora-Figueroa examines how NATO has responded to the terrorist threat since the 11 September terrorist attacks against the United States.

Recent terrorist attacks in England, Iraq, Turkey and elsewhere, as well as the anniversaries of 9/11 four years ago and of the Beslan school massacre last year have all been stark reminders that the fight against terrorism must remain high on the Alliance’s agenda.

Terrorism has not always figured so prominently among NATO’s security concerns. Even though the 1999 Strategic Concept, the document setting out the challenges that NATO faces and the ways in which it addresses them, recognised terrorism as a new threat in the post-Cold War era, Allies gave little collective attention to this issue until the events of 11 September 2001. There was little political discussion of the nature and sources of terrorism, or of the implications of terrorism for the Alliance’s concepts, policies, structures and capabilities. Since then, however, nearly every aspect of work at NATO has been reconsidered in the light of the threat terrorism poses to our populations and forces.

NATO’s reaction to the attacks on the United States was immediate and determined. Within 24 hours of the attacks, the Allies invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the collective-defence clause, for the first time in NATO’s history. Shortly afterwards, in response to requests by the United States, a number of initial support measures were agreed. These included enhanced intelligence-sharing on terrorism; assistance to Allies and other states subject to increased terrorist threats as a result of their support for the campaign against terrorism; increased security for facilities on NATO territory; backfilling of selected NATO assets required to support operations against terrorism; blanket overflight clearances for military flights related to operations against terrorism; access to ports and airfields for such operations; deployment of NATO naval forces to the Eastern Mediterranean; and deployment of NATO’s airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) aircraft to the United States.

Since then, on the basis of the political impetus and guidance provided at the NATO Summits in Prague in 2002 and Istanbul in 2004, the Alliance has sought to make an effective and substantial contribution to the international community’s fight against terrorism. To this end, it has factored terrorism into the development of its policies, concepts, capabilities and partnerships.

**Policy**

Since 2001, the Alliance has developed and articulated a consistent policy with respect to terrorism. That policy, set out in summit and ministerial statements and in decisions of the North Atlantic Council, combines forceful condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, a commitment to unity and solidarity in the face of this threat, and a determination to combat it for as long as is necessary. Since terrorists are seeking to destroy the values that are at the core of the Alliance and that these values are shared by Partners, maintaining unity and solidarity is vital to the fight against terrorism.

NATO’s contributions to what is certain to be a long and difficult struggle reflect the Alliance’s comparative advantages and build on its existing expertise. At the same time, given the multifaceted nature of the threat, cooperation with Partner countries and other international organisations has become a key aspect of NATO’s approach to terrorism. Terrorism is now a standing item on the agendas of both the North Atlantic Council and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. Regular consultations on terrorism among Allies and Partners and with other organisations promote common assessments and concerted action, thereby helping to ensure a unified international response in the fight against terrorism.

**Concepts and doctrines**

Nearly all Alliance concepts and doctrines have been reviewed in the light of the threat posed by terrorism. The most important new Alliance document in this connection is NATO’s Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism (see box on page 18) that was agreed at the Prague Summit. With the approval of the Military Concept, defence against terrorism became an integral part of the missions of the Alliance’s forces.

The Military Concept sets out the potential contribution that the Alliance’s military forces can make in this context, and enables them to prepare for their operational roles. Accordingly, defence against terrorism includes activities by military forces, based on decisions by the North Atlantic Council, to help deter, defend, disrupt and protect against...
Combating terrorism

terrorist attacks, or threats of attacks, directed from abroad, against populations, territory, infrastructures and forces, including by acting against terrorists and those who harbour them. If requested, military forces will also provide assistance to national authorities in dealing with the consequences of terrorist attacks, particularly where such attacks involve chemical, biological, radiological and/or nuclear (CBRN) weapons.

In a break with past assumptions that NATO was unlikely to act outside the Euro-Atlantic area, the Military Concept envisages that forces may be deployed whenever and wherever necessary, on the basis of a decision of the North Atlantic Council. It also foresees the possibility of NATO military action, if requested or authorised by the UN Security Council, in support of or as part of the international community’s efforts, including in the framework of crisis-response operations. Other military concepts, doctrines and plans have since been revised or elaborated in line with the Military Concept.

Capabilities

Allies have also taken a series of measures to enhance their military capabilities to tackle terrorism. Several key initiatives, including a deployable nuclear, chemical and biological (NBC) analytical laboratory, an NBC event response team, a virtual centre of excellence for NBC weapons defence, a NATO biological and chemical defence stockpile and a disease surveillance system, are being developed to improve NATO’s defences against NBC weapons. In addition, a NATO CBRN Defence Battalion has been formed to respond to and manage the consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction, especially against deployed forces. (For more details of the CBRN Defence Battalion, see Boosting NATO’s CBRN capabilities on page 38.)

NATO’s Conference of National Armaments Directors also has an ambitious programme of work for defence against terrorism which includes work on the protection of large-bodied aircraft against man-portable air defence systems, so-called MANPADS; the protection of ships and harbours; the protection of helicopters; countering improvised explosive devices; detection, protection against and defeating of CBRN weapons; new technology for intelligence, reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition relevant to terrorism; explosive ordnance disposal and protection of sensitive infrastructure and facilities such as pipelines and nuclear power plants.
More broadly, NATO’s efforts to transform its military capabilities better to carry out the full range of its missions also contribute to strengthening the Alliance’s response to terrorism. This is especially the case in the creation of the NATO Response Force, the new Command Structure and the Prague Capabilities Commitment.

Another important capability for combating terrorism is effective intelligence. This contributes to providing a common understanding of the terrorist threats and the preparation of appropriate responses to them. Enhancing intelligence-sharing among Allies and Partners is, therefore, a high priority within the Alliance.

A Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit has been created to improve intelligence-sharing and analysis on terrorism. This Unit draws on civilian and military intelligence resources, from both NATO and Partner countries, in order to provide assessments to the North Atlantic Council and NATO staff. In addition, a broad review of the Alliance’s intelligence structures is under way. That said, more still needs to be done in this area to ensure the efficient production of intelligence as a basis for policy decisions. In particular, it will be important to define more clearly the kinds of intelligence that could most usefully be shared among all the Allies. Highly sensitive, operational intelligence – the kind that intelligence services are most reluctant to share – is perhaps less relevant for the Alliance’s purposes than assessments and appraisals of a more strategic nature.

Consequence management

Allies and Partners are working together to improve civil preparedness against possible terrorist attacks. Of special concern is the possibility of catastrophic damage from attacks with chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological agents against civilian populations. A set of “minimum standards and non-binding guidelines for first responders regarding planning, training, procedures and equipment for CBRN incidents” is currently being developed and several initiatives are under way to protect critical civil infrastructures. This work is in part of a conceptual nature and in part a matter of identifying and exercising the capabilities Allies and Partners have available for responding to such attacks through, for example, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) and the possible use of Alliance CBRN defence assets.

The implications of the failure of deterrence and of prevention should also be considered carefully. Here, thought needs to be given to contingency planning for responding to severe forms of destruction as a result of terrorist attacks, in particular involving weapons of mass destruction. In this context, enhanced civil-military cooperation in consequence management and preparedness could contribute to a more effective response.

Operations

NATO operations have, directly or indirectly, shown the Alliance’s preparedness and determination to act decisively against the threat of terrorism. Through them, policies, concepts and capabilities are brought into action. NATO’s expertise and key assets – its integrated military structure, highly developed capacity for operational planning, and procedures for calling on a wide range of European and North American military assets and military cooperation.

Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism

NATO’s Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism identifies four categories of possible Allied military activity. These are anti-terrorism; consequence management; counter-terrorism; and military cooperation. In this context, anti-terrorism means defensive measures to reduce vulnerability, including limited response and containment actions by military forces and such activities as assuring threat warnings, maintaining the effectiveness of the integrated air defence system and providing missile defence. Consequence management means post-attack recuperation and involves such elements as contributing planning and force generation, providing capabilities for immediate assistance, providing coordination centres, and establishing training capabilities. Counter-terrorism means the use of offensive measures, including counter-force activities, both with NATO in the lead and with NATO in support of other organisations or coalitions involving Allies. And military cooperation covers among other things cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, Partners, Mediterranean Dialogue countries and other countries, as well as with other organisations, including the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the United Nations.
Continuing terrorist acts are constant reminders that more needs to be done to defeat this scourge.

For more on NATO's role in combating terrorism, see www.nato.int/issues/terrorism/index.html
Combating WMD proliferation

Eric R. Terzuolo considers NATO’s role in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Dealing with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) seems to get harder every day. The difficulties France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have encountered in negotiating with Iran on the future of its nuclear programme are instructive. More generally, the May 2005 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) could not agree on how to deal more effectively with countries that withdraw from the treaty or are suspected of violating crucial provisions. Efforts in the United Nations to hinder terrorist access to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons have yet to yield the desired results. And, as the international organisational context for dealing with proliferation becomes more complex – for example, by the creation of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) – questions of how to promote synergy and avoid duplication remain unanswered.

An important problem facing NATO is how to define its place in international efforts to combat proliferation. Along with the partially related terrorist menace, the threat posed by WMD proliferation tops the international community’s list of post-Cold War security challenges. If it is to remain credible as a security institution, NATO must play a part, and be seen to play a part, in addressing such challenges. Indeed, as early as the January 1994 Brussels Summit, the Allies decided to focus seriously on WMD proliferation and its impact on security. Other NATO initiatives on WMD have followed, and proliferation concerns have come to figure in virtually all aspects of the Alliance’s activity, including outreach to non-NATO countries.

Internal Alliance politics have made it difficult to pose an important question: Where precisely is NATO’s greatest “added value” when it comes to addressing WMD proliferation threats? The Alliance Policy Framework on Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, that was approved by Allied foreign ministers meeting in Istanbul in June 1994 and remains the foundational document of NATO WMD policy, highlighted both the political/diplomatic and the defence dimensions of dealing with proliferation threats. This was no surprise, given the Alliance’s dual nature, plus some concern in other Allied capitals that Washington was perhaps planning to transfer efforts against proliferation from diplomatic to military hands.

A look at subsequent Alliance policy documents, such as the major review of arms control, non-proliferation and confidence and security-building measures completed in December 2000, indicates that the balance between the political/diplomatic and defence dimensions of dealing with proliferation has often been an objective in and of itself. That said, Allies have gradually come to the view that it is in the realm of military capabilities that NATO can provide a unique and, for the moment, irreplaceable component of the international institutional architecture for dealing with proliferation threats.

Comparing committees

It is instructive to compare the work of the two main Alliance bodies specifically focused on WMD issues: the Senior Defence Group on Proliferation (DGP) and the Senior Politico-Military Group on Proliferation (SGP), the former focusing on military capabilities, the latter dealing with political and diplomatic dimensions. The DGP has generated a number of concrete, action-oriented initiatives, with relatively high public visibility. Most notably, between 1994 and 1996, it produced the Alliance’s first comprehensive assessment of WMD proliferation risks, ultimately identifying the shortfalls in the WMD-relevant capabilities of NATO’s member countries and establishing plans to help address those shortfalls. The DGP later took stock of the weaknesses of the 1999 Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI), developing a new approach to building Allied WMD defences, looking to multinational capabilities, based on national pledges of manageable contributions. The November 2002 NATO Summit in Prague endorsed five DGP-inspired multinational initiatives, including creation of an event-response team and a deployable analytical laboratory. The NATO Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion, which contributed to security for the August 2004 Olympics in Athens, was also an outgrowth of Prague Summit initiatives.

For the outside observer, it is more difficult to identify a comparable set of milestones in the Alliance’s political/diplomatic work on WMD proliferation threats. This is because the SGP’s classified deliberations have not translated readily into publicly visible initiatives.

Eric R. Terzuolo was NATO’s Manfred Wörner Fellow for 2003-04 and is the author of the forthcoming “NATO and Weapons of Mass Destruction” (Routledge, 2006). A member of the US Foreign Service from 1982 to 2003, he holds a PhD from Stanford University and has taught international relations and European history in Italy, the Netherlands and the United States.
in contrast to those of its defence counterpart. An early categorisation of the SGP's work as “essentially analytical” retains considerable validity, although it has improved its methods of work by establishing “rolling assessments” of key proliferation-related threats, by developing recommendations for the North Atlantic Council and by preparing common positions for the Secretary General's use in his meetings, positions NATO member countries also can cite in their bilateral diplomacy. The SGP has also increased its focus on outreach to Partner countries and on setting priorities for NATO’s WMD-related efforts, and it has completed studies on WMD-related issues such as missile defence and potential Alliance support for the PSI, the US-led initiative to combat the proliferation of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials. The SGP has launched public seminars on proliferation challenges, involving experts from Asia and the Middle East, as well as from non-governmental organisations.

The DGP’s mission always has been more clearly defined than the SGP’s – in the sense that developing Alliance capabilities or seeking to focus the national efforts of NATO countries on improving defences against WMD go to the heart of NATO’s task of improving defence preparedness to operate in a CBRN environment. Significantly, how to deal with proliferation-related threats has been an important consideration in NATO's ongoing transformation process, which aims to give the Alliance the high-tech “hardware” and improved decision-making “software” for rapid action in the face of new security challenges.

Rapid reaction: NATO is unique among international institutions in its capability for military intervention in high-risk situations
Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has demonstrated that it is unique among established organisations, certainly in the Euro-Atlantic region, in its realistic capability for military intervention in high-risk situations, and in the skills and experience necessary for peacekeeping in conditions of considerable residual risk. This is not something to be dismissed lightly, even though experience demonstrates that organisations, as opposed to supposedly more agile “coalitions of the willing”, may not be the mechanisms of choice for all interventions. Maintaining NATO's unique capabilities for intervention and peacekeeping, however, requires continued and enhanced efforts to ensure that WMD threats will not be able to deter the Alliance from acting.

NATO’s role

Exactly how NATO as NATO can contribute to political and diplomatic efforts against WMD proliferation is a more difficult question. A declaratory approach, via expressions of Alliance support for non-proliferation treaties or export control regimes can only go so far. NATO is not a signatory to any non-proliferation agreement. Though sometimes present as an observer, the Alliance is not in a position to affect the outcome of deliberations such as the NPT Review Conference. Nor is the Alliance the most appropriate mechanism for policy coordination in such settings, where the “Western” groups include many non-NATO countries. Despite collective Alliance support for cooperative threat reduction efforts in Russia and other former Soviet republics, NATO has not played any coordinating role, as the member countries have preferred to keep their assistance in bilateral channels. However, defining NATO’s potential role in the international institutional architecture for addressing WMD proliferation has become even more difficult, due to the increasing role of bodies or programmes, such as the PSI or the G8, involving some but not all Alliance members, and partially overlapping with NATO activities or fields of interest.

The politics of addressing WMD proliferation in NATO's multiple outreach programmes has also been complex. The caution of the Allies in addressing WMD matters with Euro-Atlantic Partners has only changed slowly to more substantive exchanges of views. The political-analytical consultations within the NATO-Russia Council and with Ukraine have become quite substantive. The Alliance has worked with Russia on nuclear weapon confidence and security building measures and collaborated on theatre missile defence. “Educational” remains the adjective of choice in describing WMD-related discussions with Partners, although steps have been taken to develop some CBRN defence doctrine with all Partners. Civil-emergency preparedness and disaster relief, along with scientific cooperation, have served as politically less sensitive

NATO’s WMD Centre

The Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre is the focal point of Alliance expertise to address the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. Opened in 2000, it comprises an interdisciplinary team with expertise in force protection, intelligence, chemical weapons, biological agents, ballistic missiles, and the political aspects of arms control and non-proliferation regimes.

In spite of progress in strengthening international non-proliferation regimes in recent years, the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons and their means of delivery can pose a direct military threat to Allies' populations, territory and forces. The WMD Centre was created in response to these concerns and draws its mandate directly from the Alliance's 1999 Washington Summit and the WMD Initiative.

Specifically, the WMD Centre has six objectives. These are to ensure a vigorous debate at NATO leading to strengthened common understanding among Allies on WMD issues and how to respond to them; to improve the quality and quantity of intelligence and information sharing among Allies on proliferation issues; to support the development of a public-information strategy by Allies to increase awareness of proliferation issues and Allies’ efforts to support non-proliferation efforts; to enhance military readiness to operate in a WMD environment and to counter WMD threats; to exchange information concerning national programmes for bilateral WMD destruction and assistance; and to enhance the possibilities for Allies to assist one another in the protection of their civil populations against WMD risks.
sectors for developing NATO collaboration with Partners on WMD matters, and for building habits of cooperation.

Matters are even more delicate in the Mediterranean Dialogue, where one participating country, Israel, is a de facto nuclear weapon state, and the Arab states would welcome enhanced Western pressure on Israel to give up its nuclear forces. How the Mediterranean countries can contribute to the Alliance's work on WMD threats remains a difficult and largely unresolved agenda item. Initial steps have been taken, including through contributions by NATO officials to international meetings organised by non-governmental organisations in the Gulf Region exploring non-proliferation themes. The SGP envisages further consultations with Mediterranean Dialogue nations.

Collaboration with the European Union against WMD threats has also been problematic and slow to take off. The EU strategy against WMD proliferation, negotiated and approved in the course of 2003, should have facilitated cooperation with NATO. But, in the proliferation sector as in others, EU-NATO relations often revolve less around the concrete issues to be addressed than around modalities for interaction, and a continuing spirit of rivalry can lead to duplication rather than complementarity of effort. That said, mechanisms for consultation and coordination, regarding both political aspects of dealing with proliferation and the development of requisite military capabilities, are now in place.

### Use of force

In other words, the political/diplomatic and outreach activities of NATO with respect to combating proliferation have their limits and challenges. But, even if one agrees that NATO's military capabilities represent the key, distinctive contribution the Alliance can make to dealing with future WMD threats, there is still a problem. An agreed strategic vision of how or whether to use force to pre-empt WMD threats is lacking. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer is right to underline that even the best military capabilities are not useful in the absence of the political will and consensus to use them. Differences among the Allies in their views on whether, when and how to use force in responding to WMD and terrorist threats had surfaced well before the 2003 military intervention in Iraq. The unusually public and divisive debate within NATO in early 2003, however, sharpened the differences, notably over what can constitute legitimacy for military action against a perceived threat.

The Alliance's many important concrete actions since the Iraq campaign have not expunged this problem, and do not obviate the need for a new reflection on basic principles for common action in a complex and changing international situation. Nor should residual acrimony from 2003 make the Allies perpetually shy of vigorous discussion within NATO. The Alliance has a unique body of experience in applying force in post-Cold War conditions. This can serve as a basis for internal debate, and also obliges NATO to participate in the broader international discussion on such matters that is taking shape.

The rise of “new threats” generally, and the Iraq intervention specifically, have raised serious questions about the current meaning and utility of basic concepts, such as prevention, pre-emption, and deterrence. Finding answers will not be simple. Lamenting the passing of the Westphalian system, the system governing international relations since the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia and based on state sovereignty, a death long foretold, will not help us. The same is true for narrow legalism that fails to recognise that international law is dynamic, a product of continuous human action. Actions and policies that seem to break established paradigms, such as what is often stereotyped as US unilaterism, can come as a shock. But a simple, unexamined attachment to continuity is not a viable alternative.

The initiative currently under way in NATO to improve the quality of political dialogue is of vital importance. It must not focus too exclusively on regional issues, and needs to look seriously at what the Secretary General recently termed “the cross-cutting issues, the horizontal issues, like terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”. Indeed, the basic principles for action to help address such threats should be a central element of NATO political dialogue.

For this to work, there is heavy lifting to be done by the heads of state and government and ministers. Bodies like the SGP and DGP, or the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session, can do part of the work, but they need sustained engagement at the senior political levels. Clearly, success in making NATO more strategically effective depends on the political will of individual member states to share information and analysis, but even more importantly to create and sustain an atmosphere where Allies talk to each other, not at each other. The first half of 2005 saw some positive signs in this respect, but also some worrying ones, such as in the debate over the European Constitutional Treaty and what it could mean for transatlantic relations. One must hope for a spirit of constructive dialogue and cooperation. We have important questions to answer regarding the Alliance's scope and relevance in addressing some of the key security challenges of our time.
In the wake of July’s London underground bombings, Russian President Vladimir Putin lamented how little international cooperation in combating terrorism takes place, in spite of the scale of the threat and the extent of the atrocities. Although progress has been made in this area in the years since 9/11, the nature of the challenge is such that we are still only learning how to combat terrorism on a global scale. This is definitely the case as far as Russia is concerned, and most likely the case for NATO as well, since this powerful political-military organisation was not originally designed to fight terrorists.

International cooperation is being fostered in several forums at the same time, since the scourge of terrorism can only be defeated if we demonstrate universal resolve and combine our many efforts. In this way, the international fight against terrorism was, for example, one of the main issues on the agenda of the UN General Assembly’s 60th anniversary session in September of this year. Moreover, it is a priority area of work for the NATO-Russia Council, where we are trying, above all, to maximise the practical dimension of our collaboration.

The issue of combating terrorism was on the agenda of our NATO dialogue even before the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed in 1997. Already in the mid-1990s, NATO began inviting Partner countries to attend relevant committee meetings. At the same time, the Alliance began organising meetings in a “NATO-plus-Russia” format in which representatives of various Russian services were able to participate. Subsequently, “anti-terrorism”, that is defensive measures to reduce vulnerability to terrorism, was singled out as a specific area of consultation and cooperation in the Founding Act. At this time, however, neither NATO nor Russia had a clear understanding of how to develop cooperation in this sphere and on which goals and areas they should focus their attention. Early discussions essentially consisted of exchanges of mutual assurances as to the importance of such cooperation and appeals to develop it.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were a turning point for NATO-Russia relations. The need to combine efforts became acute. Two days after the attacks, on 13 September, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council adopted a joint statement condemning the attacks and expressing willingness to work together to combat the threat. A month later, a first cooperation action plan was agreed stressing the need for greater NATO-Russia collaboration to address new security challenges.

Clearly, Russia has a great deal to offer its partners in the field of anti-terrorism. Assets include intelligence capabilities, political influence in important regions of the world and experience of both preventing terrorist attacks and managing their consequences. NATO, for its part, has an impressive array of potential military-political responses that it is able to bring to crisis situations. In addition, unlike other intergovernmental structures, the Alliance is able to ensure the confidentiality of transmitted information, which is of enormous significance in the fight against terrorism.

**NATO-Russia Council creation**

The political significance of the NATO-Russia Council became apparent for Moscow in the aftermath of the Beslan school tragedy of September 2004 in which 344 civilians, 186 of them children, died. The NATO-Russia Council was the first international body to adopt a statement resolutely and unambiguously condemning what had taken place as both a crime and a direct threat to our common security, shared democratic values and basic human rights and freedoms. It also confirmed its determination to intensify joint efforts to combat terrorism. At the time, we greatly appreciated the solidarity shown by the other NRC members as well as supportive statements from the NATO Secretary General.

Andrei Kelin describes how NATO and Russia are forging an increasingly effective partnership to counter the terrorist threat.

Andrei Kelin is a departmental director at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
One of the NATO-Russia Council’s new mechanisms is an Ad Hoc Working Group on terrorism, which both discusses conceptual approaches to addressing the terrorist threat and seeks to develop practical cooperation. To date, the Group has managed to develop and agree a number of joint papers. These include assessments of the threats and challenges posed by al Qaida; of terrorist threats to the security of peacekeeping forces in the Balkans; of terrorist threats to civil aircraft, including the threat posed by civil aircraft to critical infrastructure; of threats to NRC members posed by Islamist extremism and radicalism in Central Asia; and of current and future terrorist threats to cargo and passenger transport. We are also currently drawing up a document on potential threats to NRC member states’ information systems.

Working together to develop terrorist threat analyses has shown that, despite differences in approaches, NATO and Russia share many common views on both the nature of the terrorist threat and approaches to addressing it. Given the challenge, NATO-Russia work in this field has had to be both diverse and multi-dimensional.

One important area of study is that of military-to-military cooperation. To discuss this and develop practical recommendations for joint action, three high-level conferences on the role of the military in the struggle against terrorism have been held in Norfolk, Virginia, Moscow and Rome. Another area is the use of non-lethal weapons to counteract terrorists. Under the auspices of the Conference of National Armament Directors, exhibitions and presentations of new technologies developed by both Russian and Western companies which may be used in counter-terrorism operations have been organised. Moreover, anti-terrorism issues are also the subject of study within the framework of the Cooperative Airspace Initiative, the ad hoc working groups on theatre missile defence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the nuclear experts’ group.

An international conference on lessons learned from recent terrorist attacks took place under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council in Ljubljana, Slovenia, between 27 June and 1 July this year. It brought together representatives of law-enforcement, rescue and health departments and services of NRC member states who had been involved in terrorist-response operations, enabling them to share their practical experience of preventing terrorist activity, consequence management and dealing with hostage-taking.
While expert-level discussions are important to developing effective anti-terrorist strategies, anti-terrorism collaboration has to go beyond “paper” analysis. In this way, some studies and assessments have been tested in practice through joint exercises. This includes Kaliningrad 2004, which sought to test procedures for the ideal division of responsibilities in dealing with the consequences of a large-scale catastrophe, and Avaria 2004, which involved measures to ensure the secure storage of nuclear weapons.

Cooperation against terrorism in the field of civil-emergency planning is also being taken forward. For example, a Hungarian-Russian initiative to create a NRC capability providing a rapid response to natural disasters, man-made catastrophes and, above all, terrorist acts involving the threat or actual use of weapons of mass destruction, is currently being developed. To this end, Russia has offered to earmark specialised units to detect dangerous substances and deal with the consequences of their use.

The NRC Science Committee has refocused priorities in recent years towards promoting scientific research of relevance to the struggle against terrorism. In this way, an expert group for social and psychological consequences of terror acts has been formed that has analysed recent terrorist attacks in Russia, several other European countries and the United States, and drawn up collective recommendations for action in similar cases. Elsewhere, work is also being conducted to detect explosive substances, handmade explosive devices and suicide bombers’ belts. Moreover, further expert groups are being formed to work on transport infrastructure vulnerability and cyber security, as well as on scientific and technical security problems related to the use of nuclear, biological and chemical devices by terrorists. And there are plans for developing cooperation in the sphere of counteracting “ecological terrorism”. The agreement to draw up an annual action plan on terrorism, which was reached at the NRC meeting at the June 2004 Istanbul Summit marked a milestone in the development of NATO-Russia cooperation against terrorism. Subsequently, NRC foreign ministers approved a comprehensive NATO-Russia Action Plan on Terrorism in December 2004 setting out a coherent strategy for preventing terrorism, combating terrorist activities and managing the consequences of terrorist acts. In this way, we are now proceeding from statements of intent and exercises to exploring the possibilities for joint practical actions, including actions involving the use of military means, to counter the terrorist threat.

At an operational level, Russia will begin participating in Active Endeavour, NATO’s counter-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean early next year. In what will be the first joint NATO-Russia operation since the Russian military contingent withdrew from the NATO-led forces in the Balkans in 2003, Russian ships will join Allied ships monitoring and inspecting merchant shipping suspected of involvement in illegal activities.

Another substantive element of the NRC anti-terror partnership is cooperation in combating the narcotics trade in Afghanistan. This is important because all too often drug money helps finance terrorist groups. Numerous expert meetings on this issue have identified the following areas of cooperation: exchange of information, including classified information; training of specialists for anti-narcotics units; and practical support for anti-narcotics services of Afghanistan and Central Asian transit-route countries. A pilot project aimed at training specialists for counter-narcotics units in these countries, using both mobile on-site training teams and existing training facilities such as Russia’s Domodedovo Centre, is currently under way.

Irrespective of the forum, Russia has consistently sought to develop a global strategy to counter new security threats and challenges. NATO-Russia counter-terrorism cooperation will be much more effective if it complements the efforts of other international organisations working in this sphere. As a result, Russia also supports Alliance efforts to forge closer cooperation with the United Nations, as well as with the European Union and other regional structures. And Russia also believes in developing practical cooperation between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which comprises, among others, the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as Russia. Since CSTO and NATO have much in common, combining the two organisations’ capabilities and experience could help improve effective responses to terrorism and extremism challenges.

NATO and Russia have made considerable progress in developing cooperation in the anti-terrorist field in recent years. This cooperation is still in its early days, however, and its practical dimension in particular needs to be enhanced. In spite of the best international efforts, the threat posed by international terrorism has not diminished. Our aim must, therefore, be to foster genuine anti-terrorism cooperation in the form of a strategic NATO-Russia partnership throughout the Euro-Atlantic region.
National building has been a growth industry since the end of the Cold War. The United Nations, NATO, the United States and more recently the European Union have all become engaged in missions that employ armed force in post-conflict environments with the objective of supporting a political transformation, that is to say democratisation. Not every recent military expedition fits this description, but national building, peace building or stabilisation operations, depending on one’s preferred terminology, have become the dominant paradigm for the use of armed force in the post-Cold War world.

Since 1989, the frequency, scale, scope and duration of these national building missions have steadily risen. During the Cold War the United States mounted a new military intervention, on average, once a decade. The United Nations launched a new peacekeeping operation, on average, once every four years. Since 1989, the frequency of US-led interventions is approaching one every other year. New UN peacekeeping missions are being launched, on average, about once every six months.

The cumulative effect of all this activity has been measurably beneficial. Over the past decade the number of civil conflicts under way around the world has been halved and the annual death toll from such conflicts reduced still further. Contrary to the popular impression, the world has become a less violent place since the end of the Cold War. Armed force has proved an essential component of multinational action to prevent societies emerging from conflict from returning to it. Peacekeeping has proved itself the most cost-effective instrument available to the international community in such circumstances, the only one with high levels of success. Economic assistance can reinforce the effects of peacekeeping in a post-conflict society, but in the absence of externally provided military stabilisation, most countries emerging from conflict will return to it within a few years, no matter how much economic aid, advice and other forms of support they receive.

James Dobbins is a former US Ambassador to the European Community, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, and special envoy for Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, Kosovo and Somalia. He is currently director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation and lead co-author of the two-volume “RAND History of Nation-Building” (2005).
Peace enforcement is much more manpower intensive. The size of forces needed for such missions largely depends upon the size of the population to be stabilised, and its degree of urbanisation. Unfortunately, nearly all developing societies are rapidly becoming more populous and more urbanised at the same time as the size of most Western armed forces continues to shrink. As a result, the demand for nation-building is fast outpacing the supply of nation-builders.

The burden imposed by nation-building is also cumulative. New operations begin before old ones are ended. Each individual stability operation tends to last five to ten years, whereas new operations are being mounted much more frequently. Western armies may still hope to fight one conventional war at a time, but must now plan on manning multiple protracted stability operations simultaneously.

The experience of Iraq has finally led the US Department of Defense to designate stability operations as a core US military mission and to recognise that the overall size and structure of the US defence establishment can no longer be determined solely by the needs of conventional combat or major contingencies. In future, the US Army’s strength and composition will also be driven by the requirement to man multiple stability operations. The result will be a larger number of military police, civil affairs, special operating forces, engineers, intelligence and infantry in the active duty force.

Institutional implications

In addition to NATO, two other organisations, the United Nations and the European Union, offer themselves as instruments for Western collaboration in the conduct of stability operations. Of the three, the United Nations is the most ubiquitous. It leads the largest number of nation-building missions world-wide, and, although it has had its share of nation-building failures, it has also been behind a larger number of successes than is generally recognised. UN-led interventions in Cambodia, Eastern Slavonia, East Timor, El Salvador, Mozambique, Namibia and Sierra Leon were all successful in moving war-torn societies away from renewed conflict and, with the exception of Cambodia, towards sustained democratic governance. The United Nations also plays a significant role in all nation-building
missions that other institutions lead. There are many UN operations with no EU, NATO or US involvement. There are no EU, NATO or US operations without some, often quite important UN involvement.

The European Union, NATO and the United Nations each has particular strengths and weaknesses when it comes to leading nation-building missions. The United Nations has the most diverse experience, the most widely accepted legitimacy and the greatest formal authority. Its actions, by definition, enjoy international sanction. Alone among organisations, the United Nations can legally compel compliance from both member and non-member states. Alone among these organisations, it can legally compel its member governments to fund operations, whether or not they agree to them or believe them a good idea.

The United Nations has the most straightforward decision-making apparatus, and the simplest command and control arrangements. The UN Security Council is smaller than the equivalent EU or NATO bodies. It takes all decisions by qualified majority, only five of its members having the capacity to block decisions unilaterally. Only one, the United States, does so with any regularity.

Once the Security Council determines the purpose of an operation and decides to launch it, further decisions are largely delegated to the Secretary-General and his staff, at least until the next Security Council review, generally six months hence. Security Council members have little influence on operational decision-making. Troop-contributing countries have no formal voice whatsoever. In UN-led operations the civil and military chains of command are unified and integrated, with unequivocal civilian primacy and a clear line of authority from the UN Secretary-General through his local civilian representative to the local force commander. UN specialised agencies possess a broad panoply of civil as well as military capabilities relevant to nation-building endeavours. All UN-led operations, of which more than a dozen are routinely under way at any one time, are planned, controlled and sustained by a few hundred military and civilian staffs at UN headquarters in New York. Most UN troops come from second and third world countries with per man costs many times lower than any Western army. The United Nations currently deploys more than 58 000 soldiers in 17 different countries at a cost of under $4 billion per year. That is less than the United States spends on one month's operations in Iraq.

Despite these advantages, the United Nations has distinct limitations. While the UN Security Council is more compact than its NATO and EU counterparts, it is regionally and ideologically more diverse and consequently subject to blockage in the face of strong East-West or North-South differences. This proved the case with Kosovo.

The obstacle imposed by the permanent member veto in the UN Security Council can be overstated. Since 1989, the UN Security Council has agreed to launch more than 30 military expeditions, while the North Atlantic Council, NATO’s highest decision-making body, has agreed on only three, and the EU Council two. In early 2002, the United Kingdom and the United States calculated, no doubt correctly, that they had a better chance of securing UN support for their invasion of Iraq than they had of gaining either an NATO or an EU endorsement. To this day, therefore, the Kosovo conflict remains the sole instance in which NATO was able to agree upon an intervention in an instance where the UN Security Council could not.

The broad latitude enjoyed by the UN Secretary-General and his local representatives in the operational control of blue-helmeted operations serves to limit the willingness of some nations to contribute. NATO and EU procedures offer troop-contributing members much greater day-to-day control over the use of their troops than does the United Nations. Western governments accordingly favour these institutions for peace-enforcement missions where the level of risk is high. This tendency of Western governments to seek greater control over the day-to-day use of their forces than the UN system affords is also evident in the prevalence of national caveats over particular types of activity that increasingly characterise NATO operations.

The austere nature of UN headquarters staffing for peacekeeping operations limits that organisation’s capacity to plan and support large or highly complex missions. As a practical matter, the UN capacity to mount and sustain expeditionary forces tops out at about 20 000 men, or a reinforced division. UN forces always require permissive entry, which means they can only go where they are invited.

NATO’s role

NATO, by contrast, is capable of deploying powerful forces in large numbers, and of using them to force entry where necessary. In consequence, whereas the United Nations is the most suitable organisation for most peacekeeping and even some low-end peace enforcement, NATO is better suited for more demanding missions on the Balkan model. NATO, on the other hand, has no capacity for civil implementation and must always depend upon the United Nations and/or some ad hoc coalition of willing countries to perform the myriad of non-military functions essential to the success of any nation-building operation. As a result, NATO’s exit strategy always depends upon the performance of other organisations.
NATO decisions require consensus, and all members have a veto. The North Atlantic Council subjects operations under its authority to more continuous scrutiny and direction than does the UN Security Council. Whereas the latter Council normally makes only one decision respecting any particular operation every six months, leaving the UN Secretary-General relatively unconstrained in carrying out that mandate during the intervals, the North Atlantic Council’s decision-making is more incremental. Troop-contributing governments consequently have a much greater voice in operational matters. This level of control makes governments more ready to commit troops to NATO for high-risk operations than to the United Nations.

NATO troops are much better equipped than most of those devoted to UN operations, and correspondingly more expensive. NATO headquarters were originally designed to command million-man Western armies in the event of war with the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. The comparative wealth of staff resources ensures that NATO operations are more professionally planned and sustained, but also result in a heavier tail-to-tooth ratio than those of the United Nations.

Time to ask what the European Union can do for NATO

EU decision-making in the security and defence sector is also by consensus. The European Union has a leaner military and political/military staff, in part because it can call upon NATO, if it chooses, for planning and other staff functions. The European Union, like the United Nations, can draw upon a wide array of civil assets essential in any nation-building operation. EU, like NATO soldiers are vastly more expensive than UN troops on a man-for-man basis. EU mechanisms, like those of NATO and unlike those of the United Nations, offer troop-contributing governments greater possibility of influencing the operational use of their contingents.

For nearly a decade, attention has been focused upon elaborating modalities for NATO to help the European Union plan for and conduct military operations. Yet in the field of nation-building the European Union has at least as much to offer NATO as NATO has to the European Union. The time has come, therefore, to ask not what NATO can do for the European Union, but what the European Union can do for NATO.

It is possible to envisage military contingencies in which the European Union might be involved, but not NATO. It is not possible to conceive of the reverse. In any NATO-led military mission, all essential civil functions will inevitably have to be devolved to the European Union, its member states, Canada and the United States and other international organisations, as has already been the case in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. In theory, NATO might develop its own capabilities for civil implementation. However, in practice, after having poured so much effort into building up the European Union’s capacities in this sphere, the European Allies are unlikely to invest in a similar effort to build up NATO’s.

If, therefore, NATO is not to develop its own capacity to deploy and train police, promote the development of civil society, stimulate economic development and undertake any number of other mission-essential civil tasks, it needs to develop more reliable arrangements with the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United States and the United Nations to ensure that other states and organisations will contribute these assets in support of future NATO-led military operations.

The greatest challenge before Western militaries is prevailing in unconventional conflict

This line of development also offers a framework in which EU-US collaboration in the defence and security field can expand in a manner that does not detract from NATO. Where better for an EU-US defence dialogue to start than on issues of security sector reform, police training, the deployment of gendarmerie, the building of civil society, election support and economic reconstruction, with the objective of working together to render more effective support to both NATO and UN-led military operations of common interest.

Way ahead

For a variety of reasons, the United Nations should remain the West’s nation-builder of first resort. The United Nations is cheaper; it is more experienced; it is more widely acceptable in most circumstances; and the risks and burdens of UN-led operations are shared among a much broader base of countries.

Western governments can strengthen UN capabilities through a variety of means. First, they can support full implementation of the 2001 Brahimi Report, the more recent recommendations of the Secretary-General’s Panel of Eminent Persons and of the Secretary-General himself. Second, they can redirect bureaucratic energies at NATO and EU Headquarters away from the endless refinement of contingency forces for hypothetical operations towards finding practical ways for NATO and the European Union to contribute to ongoing operations being conducted under UN leadership. And third, they can commit
Western national contingents to UN operations with greater frequency.

Western troops form a much smaller share of UN forces today than 40, or even ten years ago. As a result, Western militaries are denying themselves invaluable experience in the conduct of stability operations, reducing the United Nations’ prospects of success and thereby making more costly and more controversial Western-led interventions more likely. The United States has led the way in this form of burden shirking. Many European governments have followed suit. Of the more than 58 000 UN peacekeeping troops currently deployed around the world just eleven are American. Thirteen are German. Seven are Belgian and two are Dutch.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s proposal to form a Peace-Building Commission joining the various UN and Bretton Woods institutions with a role to play in nation-building offers a vehicle for establishing a more regular link between New York and Brussels. Both the European Union and NATO have much to offer in support of UN-led peace-building missions, and both organisations should seek to associate themselves with this proposed Commission.

Even if significantly strengthened, UN peacekeeping can never fully meet the need for collective military action. The United Nations has never deployed more than a reinforced division in any single operation. It has never itself conducted a forced entry, although it has authorised many. There will remain occasions where the North Atlantic Council and/or the EU Council are agreed on the need for action while the UN Security Council is not. There will remain instances where Corps or Army-sized forces are required for such operations. There will also remain circumstances where a NATO or EU force will have more credibility with the local parties and be more welcomed by neighbouring states than one under UN command.

NATO’s slow assumption of responsibility in Afghanistan is evidence of the distance it has yet to travel. The greatest challenge before Western militaries is prevailing in unconventional conflict. The Alliance’s greatest deficiency is in troops that are trained, equipped and prepared to conduct peacekeeping, counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics missions. Fielding, deploying, sustaining and directing such forces should be NATO’s highest priority.

For more on RAND, see www.rand.org
In the course of the past four years, NATO’s first Article-5, collective-defence operation has evolved from a small-scale deployment providing a modest military presence in an important stretch of sea into a comprehensive, continuously adapting counter-terrorism operation throughout the Mediterranean. In the process, the Alliance has contributed to maintaining peace, stability and security in a strategic region, obtained invaluable experience of maritime interdiction operations and developed increasingly effective intelligence-gathering and information-sharing procedures relevant to the wider struggle against international terrorism.

NATO’s Standing Naval Force Mediterranean deployed in the Eastern Mediterranean on 6 October 2001 a day before the launch of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom to oust the Taliban and al Qaida from Afghanistan. This measure, taken at the request of the United States following the 11 September terrorist attacks and NATO’s invocation of Article 5 a day later, aimed to provide a deterrent presence and surveillance in strategic international waters at a key moment.

In the intervening years, the operation, subsequently named Active Endeavour, has become increasingly sophisticated as the Alliance has refined its counter-terrorism role and integrated lessons learned in the course of the operation. In this way, Active Endeavour’s mandate has been regularly reviewed and its mission and force composition adjusted to create an effective counter to terrorism throughout the Mediterranean.

In February 2003, the operation was expanded to include escorting merchant shipping from Allied states through the Straits of Gibraltar. This was a precautionary measure taken on the basis of intelligence indicating that ships passing through this extremely narrow passage were potential terrorist targets. The escorts were subsequently suspended in May 2004 as a result of a decline in the number of requests, but may be reactivated at any time.

In April 2003, NATO extended Active Endeavour’s scope to include compliant boarding operations, that is boarding with the consent of the ships’ masters and flag states in accordance with international law. Then in March 2004, NATO expanded Active Endeavour’s area of operations to include the entire Mediterranean. As of 15 September 2005, some 69 000 ships had been “hailed” and 95 boarded. In addition, 488 non-combatant escorts had been conducted through the Straits of Gibraltar.

New operational pattern

In October 2004, NATO put in place a new operational pattern. Since then, the focus has been on gathering and processing information and intelligence so as to target specific vessels of interest. In this way, it is now possible to deploy surface forces as reaction units to conduct specific tasks such as tracking and boarding of vessels. The new operational pattern maintains a proactive posture. Moreover, resources may be supplemented in periodic surge operations. At these times, augmentation forces, such as one of the Standing Maritime Groups of the NATO Response Force, join Task Force Endeavour to provide an enhanced presence and more intensive surveillance capability.

Specifically, Active Endeavour is now involved in the four following areas. It is helping deter and disrupt any action supporting terrorism at or from sea; controlling “choke” points, that is the most important passages and harbours of the Mediterranean, by deploying mine-hunters from one of the Standing NATO Mine Counter-Measures Groups to carry out preparatory route surveys; providing escorts for designated vessels through the Straits of Gibraltar when necessary; and enhancing the ongoing Mediterranean Dialogue programme and other NATO programmes to promote bilateral and multilateral relations.

At all times, NATO units dedicated to Active Endeavour are patrolling the Mediterranean basin, collecting information and assessing the situation in their vicinity. They provide the visible presence and potential reaction forces that may respond rapidly if required.

Allied Forces Maritime Component Command HQ Naples (CC-MAR Naples) controls the operation through the
Maritime Operations Centre, which works around the clock. This Operations Centre, which has close ties and exchanges information with national agencies of several NATO countries, is located close to the NATO Maritime Intelligence Coordination Centre. Another important source of information is the experimental Joint Information and Analysis Centre (JIAC). This is structured as a fusion centre to collect all available information and effectively collate, analyse and then disseminate data as actionable intelligence to the appropriate command. It is located in NATO’s Joint Force Command Naples and monitors the whole area of functional responsibility. Together, these agencies provide the information and analysis that allow me as commander of Active Endeavour to direct limited resources as efficiently as possible.

Sheer physical presence goes a long way to maintaining security at sea. The Mediterranean is patrolled by frigates and corvettes specifically dedicated to Active Endeavour by Allies on a voluntary basis. They are supported by the Alliance’s two maritime high-readiness forces, if and when needed. In addition to these surface units, submarines provide complementary surveillance by providing discreet monitoring of specific areas to detect suspicious behaviour. Maritime patrol aircraft also provide wide area coverage across large areas, using a variety of sensors to detect and classify vessels and other objects of interest.

Active Endeavour relies heavily on the logistic support of Mediterranean Allies, using two logistic bases – Souda in Greece and Aksaz in Turkey – and other Allied ports in the Mediterranean basin.

Operation in practice

Every day, merchant ships sailing through the Mediterranean are “hailed”, that is contacted and questioned, by patrolling NATO naval units and aircraft. They are asked to identify themselves and their activity. This information is then reported to both CC-MAR Naples and the NATO Shipping Centre in Northwood, England. If anything appears unusual or suspicious, teams of between 15 and 20 specially trained personnel may board the vessel to inspect documentation and cargo. If there is credible intelligence or strong evidence of any terrorist-related activity, Task Force Endeavour is ready to deploy to the area and take any necessary actions as authorised by the North Atlantic Council.

Vessel inspections are conducted with the consent of both the flag state and the ship’s captain. The results are then evaluated by CC-MAR Naples. If irregularities are discovered, not necessarily related to terrorism, this information will be relayed to the appropriate law-enforcement agency in the vessel’s next port of call, provided there is an established protocol with the country involved to do so. The suspect vessel will then be shadowed until action is taken by a responsible agency, or it enters a country’s territorial waters on the way to a port. If a vessel refuses to be boarded, NATO will take all necessary steps to ensure that it is inspected as soon as it enters any NATO country’s territorial waters.

CC-MAR Naples works closely with Allied national authorities and directly with the NATO naval forces operating in the Mediterranean. An example illustrates the potential benefits of such cooperation. In June 2003, a southern-region country reported that a vessel was operating in a suspicious manner. CC-MAR Naples disseminated this information to a wider audience to
increase general awareness and in preparation for any subsequent action on the part of NATO or national authorities. Subsequently, an Ally’s Coast Guard was able to use the information when it spotted the same vessel operating within its territorial waters and the national authorities decided to investigate more thoroughly.

Having a force ready at sea gives NATO the opportunity to react to a broad range of situations and emergencies, in addition to combating terrorism. This includes humanitarian, search-and-rescue and disaster-relief operations. Indeed, in this way, NATO ships and helicopters rescued 84 civilians on a stricken oil rig in high winds and heavy seas in December 2001. And in January 2002, NATO ships and helicopters provided life-saving support to 254 passengers of a sinking ship in the Eastern Mediterranean off Crete. Helicopters evacuated the passengers and the ship’s hull was repaired at sea before being towed into port.

At the June 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul, the Alliance decided to enhance Active Endeavour by inviting the participation of NATO Partners, including Mediterranean Dialogue countries. All offers of support, including those by other interested countries, are now being considered on a case-by-case basis. Offers of contributory support by Russia and Ukraine, for example, were made in 2004 and expert teams on both sides are currently working to integrate Russian and Ukrainian forces into the operation in 2006.

Three Mediterranean Dialogue countries – Algeria, Israel and Morocco – and three Partner countries – Croatia, Georgia and Sweden – have also indicated a desire to participate in the operation. The extent of the contribution will be tailored according to the specifics of the country concerned and optimised on the basis of the offers received and the needs of the operation.

Improving intelligence-sharing

NATO is also developing an experimental networking system to enable all Mediterranean countries to exchange information about the merchant shipping in the basin more effectively. Once approved and implemented, our understanding of the extent of illegal activities and therefore our ability to control them will be improved. The resulting picture of the merchant shipping traffic in the Mediterranean should assist law-enforcement agencies, as well as NATO forces in international waters, to act decisively against these problems.

In the same context, NATO is looking forward to including more national contributions from non-NATO, Mediterranean-rim countries. Such contributions, in addition to increasing Active Endeavour’s effectiveness throughout the area of responsibility by enhancing cooperation and information-sharing, will reduce the need for more dedicated assets.

Over the years, Active Endeavour has increasingly become an information and intelligence-based operation through the sharing of data gathered at sea by Allies and Mediterranean-rim countries. The level of information-sharing achieved to date provides a sound foundation upon which to build in the future. The aim is to develop a much more effective information collection and analysis system and to change the character of the operation from one that is intelligence-supported to one that is intelligence-driven.

The main tool for this concept will be the JIAC, with the aim of promoting a common information collection and reporting strategy, providing analysis and warning, and advising on deployment of assets. Its establishment is meant to encourage the widest sharing of information and ensure that the JIAC output is passed in a timely manner to the countries or agencies most likely to be able to make use of it. The JIAC should help energise efforts of both NATO and individual Allies to provide usable information that contributes to the struggle against the destabilising factors of terrorism, organised crime and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region.

The experience that NATO has acquired in Active Endeavour and other maritime interdiction operations has given the Alliance unparalleled expertise in this field. This expertise is relevant to wider international efforts to combat terrorism and, in particular, the proliferation and smuggling of weapons of mass destruction. As a result, countries involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative, a US-led partnership aiming to help halt flows of dangerous technologies to and from states and non-state actors of concern, are currently seeking to learn the lessons of NATO’s maritime operations.

Active Endeavour has proved to be an effective tool in countering terrorism at and from the sea in the Mediterranean. With continuing cooperation from both military and civilian agencies in all Mediterranean countries, the day will come when NATO is only required to provide the coordination for a more holistic approach to countering terrorism, and more generally illegal activity in the area. When effective links are established and appropriate agreements put in place whereby national authorities can react upon suspicious indicators, Active Endeavour should evolve into a more routine activity involving both NATO Allies and Partners.
Improving linguistic interoperability

Mark Crossey considers the importance of language policy at NATO and its effects on interoperability based on the experience of Central and Eastern European countries.

Since the end of the Cold War, foreign language training – especially the learning of English, the de facto operational language – has become increasingly important within armed forces. This is especially the case at NATO due to an ever-increasing number of peace-support operations, on the one hand, and the Alliance's enlargement and partnership activities, on the other. Language skills – in both Allied and Partner countries – are primarily a national responsibility. However, language training must be of concern to NATO as a whole since linguistic interoperability is as important to ensuring that countries are able to participate effectively in both NATO missions and wider Alliance activities as any other form of interoperability.

While soldiers in all Allied armed forces benefit from language training, the need has been particularly acute in former Warsaw Pact countries where historically people and soldiers had not had the same opportunities to learn and practise English as in Western Europe. As a result, organisations such as the US Defense Language Institute, and my own, the British Council, through its Peacekeeping English Project, have been working to help improve English language skills in prospective member states and Partner countries since the mid-1990s.

The challenges such organisations have encountered in Central and Eastern Europe stem from the low base that many soldiers in these countries are starting from. Moreover, the situation has often been compounded by a “top-heavy” approach to training, inherited from Soviet era military philosophy, whereby investment is focused on senior officers at the expense of their non-commissioned colleagues.

For understandable reasons, it proved difficult for defence ministry training departments to change this way of thinking at the dramatic pace required by NATO. As a result, individuals at an advanced stage of their careers were often expected to acquire a completely new and difficult skill in an unrealistic space of time. Many were sent on lengthy and expensive language courses, some lasting as long as two years, away from their posts. However, due to their age, progress was often slow and disappointing for sponsors. Moreover, the reform of language testing in these countries led to political problems. Whereas in the “old days” language tests, especially for senior officers, were considered little more than a formality, the process became increasingly rigorous. Indeed, in some cases, senior generals were entered into NATO’s English language Standardisation Agreement or so-called “STANAG” examinations only to fail.

To be fair, a number of senior officers also made remarkable progress in English, some of whom have since risen to become chiefs of staff. Nevertheless, in retrospect, the emphasis on providing language training to senior officers proved doubly counter-productive as a result of the large-scale downsizing that was taking place at the same time. Indeed, because the officer corps was usually disproportionately large in Warsaw Pact militaries, many of the same individuals who benefited from language training were subsequently made redundant.

There have also been other problems. In some instances, foreign language requirements for posts have been set without sufficient research. This has led to problems, such as high-profile posts being filled by senior staff with poor language skills, or conversely, difficulties in filling posts with unrealistically high linguistic requirements. Moreover, this has directly contributed to the demoralisation and haemorrhaging of quality personnel in several NATO accession states.

A further problem is that of different understanding of what represents a “professional” level of foreign language knowledge. This is compounded by cultural differences in language testing, leading to great difficulties in agreeing on whose language skills are “good enough” for a particular post, along with some stereotyping of nations seen as presenting candidates with inferior linguistic abilities. In some countries, reliance on certificates issued several years earlier rather than testing immediately prior to departure exacerbates the situation. In a handful of Partner countries, there is also a shortage of competent foreign language teachers, usually the result of insufficient funding to attract better-qualified staff.

Peace-support operations

The need for effective communication is particularly acute in peace-support operations where linguistic misunderstandings risk leading to mistakes, which might,
in a worst-case scenario, result in casualties. To date, it seems that language difficulties have contributed to putting soldiers in embarrassing and even dangerous situations, but have not actually been the cause of any casualties. This should not, however, be viewed as a reason for complacency.

While the language skills of deployed forces in peace-support operations are generally sufficient for the tasks they face, several countries have reported experiencing difficulties in contributing sufficient linguistic expertise to operate to maximum efficiency. The situation appears most serious in those peace-support operations that are staffed by a large proportion of more senior officers who have struggled to get to grips with English. Moreover, in cases where more senior officers are having difficulties operating in English, the situation is usually much worse in the lower ranks where some non-commissioned officers may have had no formal English training.

Another difficulty frequently encountered by non-native speakers of English on peace-support operations is that posed by the strong regional accents of many of the native speakers with whom they work. Indeed, many report experiencing greater problems understanding the English of native speakers than of non-native speakers, complaining that native speakers are never trained to modify their speech when talking with their non-native peers. In other words, native speakers rarely recognise that the common working language in peace-support operations is international English, as opposed to their own version of the language.

As part of its Peacekeeping English Project, the British Council conducted some research among staff posted to various NATO headquarters. Since the number of people involved was comparatively small, the results are by no means definitive and only amount to impressions. Nevertheless, they seem to indicate that delegations made up of non-native speakers may be disadvantaged because of their perceived lack of language skills.

Disadvantages are manifested in a variety of ways. In some instances, when working groups are formed to deal with important assignments or when complex tasks are assigned to individuals, preference may be given to native speakers. In this way, non-native speakers may effectively find themselves cut out of key processes. In other instances, senior non-native speakers may pass on inferior-quality work carried out in English by junior staff within their delegations without fully understanding it, thereby effectively lowering the esteem of non-native speakers in the eyes of native speakers. Native speakers may also for linguistic reasons be the preferred first point of contact in an office, unwittingly creating an impression of “cultural discrimination” and undermining the sense of self-worth of non-native speakers. The political implications of this situation are clear. Perceived weakness in English may directly reduce the influence of national delegations.

One reason for the apparent linguistic shortfall appears to be the lack of relevance of the type of language taught in country prior to posting. For example, while many military English courses emphasise a particular form of English, whether “Standard American English” or “Standard British English”, the reality on many postings is that most business is connected with other non-native speakers of the language. This language does differ and could loosely be described as “International Professional English”.

Back to school: Visitors to the Baltic Defence College in Tartu, Estonia, cannot fail to be impressed
Another example of this gap between classroom and target language use is the persistent tendency in some countries to teach a rather academic form of English. This is especially the case when it comes to writing. British Council research has shown that most writing at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), for example, consists of short texts such as memos, notes and brief emails. However, some language programmes have failed students at the end of courses for being unable to compose detailed and lengthy essays. Perceptions of what should constitute “Military English” sometimes appear problematic. Although the language requirements observed at SHAPE appear very similar to what is traditionally defined as “Business English”, that is writing brief letters, using the telephone and arranging meetings, this reality is still often not sufficiently reflected in course design. Although the situation is currently improving as a result of the introduction of well-researched new Military English course books, a rather stereotyped idea of what constitutes “Military English” prevails in some quarters.

Progress

While language-policy issues have been traumatic for many defence ministries, a huge amount has, nevertheless, been achieved in this field in a short period of time. This is largely because language learning has been viewed as critical to NATO integration in all accession countries and accordingly made a priority. In this way, there has been a steady improvement over the years in the standard of both English teaching and soldiers’ language skills. In some countries, highly effective language-training structures have been created which are now well resourced and leaders in terms of military courses and teaching standards. Visitors to, for example, the Baltic Defence College in Tartu, Estonia, or the Polish Naval Academy at Gdynia cannot fail to be impressed. Moreover, a Military English course run by NATO, together with the British Council’s Peacekeeping English Project, has seen trainers from countries such as Lithuania successfully train personnel from countries such as Sweden and France. Indeed, where problems in the new member states remain, they tend to reflect wider issues related to the transformation from Warsaw Pact to NATO-style militaries.

Most international research into military foreign language learning has been focused on NATO accession and PfP countries. However, there is no clear-cut “East-West divide” in this field and many older Allies report experiencing similar difficulties in identifying, training and retaining soldiers with relevant language skills for international assignments. As a result, more needs to be done if the linguistic basis for interoperability is to become an effective reality, as opposed to a hit-and-miss addition to preparations for peace-support operations and NATO postings.

Despite the importance of linguistic interoperability, little NATO-wide research has been carried out into actual language used on missions and current shortfalls. While there are obvious sensitivities involved, the attitude that this cannot be looked at because it is “political” or “cultural” is not helpful. Countries clearly have differing capabilities to resolve language problems for historical, cultural, financial and even geographical reasons. But the problems have to be addressed because they have a direct impact on a nation’s influence within the Alliance and/or the Partnership-for-Peace programme and therefore the political profile of the organisation.

Much work in the standardisation of language testing has been undertaken by individual countries, with the assistance of agencies such as the Defense Language Institute, the British Council Peacekeeping English Project and the Bureau for International Language Cooperation, NATO’s body for language training policy. Moreover, much can be learned from the experience of new Allies, accession countries and PfP members. For example, the language-testing teams of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the Caucasus have been cooperating on the piloting of tests in each other’s countries, as well as coming to a common understanding of levels of English, based on NATO’s STANAG, and the kind of language that should be taught. These countries have also understood that candidates for international postings must be tested immediately prior to departure, as opposed to relying on certificates issued in some cases several years earlier.

Defence ministries have a vested interest in ensuring that the soldiers they second to represent their countries in Alliance bodies and NATO-led operations have all the necessary skills, including effective language skills, for the task they have been assigned. But to achieve this, they would benefit from additional Alliance-wide guidance concerning requirements and best practices. A thorough and coordinated review of all aspects of language-training policy, with the participation and understanding of all concerned states, is essential for NATO to deal with the problems stemming from this issue. If the Alliance fails to undertake this task, the organisation will face increasing problems of interoperability as it strives to reinvent itself to address the security challenges of the 21st century. It also risks unnecessarily generating frustration and resentment at its core as a result of perceived “cultural discrimination”, which may in reality be simply a question of language.

The need for effective communication is particularly acute in peace-support operations where linguistic misunderstandings risk leading to casualties

For more on the British Council, see www.britishcouncil.org
Boosting NATO’s CBRN capabilities

NATO’s Multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Battalion is both an effective solution to a capabilities shortfall and a model for future NATO transformation.

The high-readiness, multinational unit not only adds to NATO’s credibility in dealing with the growing threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, but also presents a path for improving Allied force-generation and defence-planning processes in the future.

“The Battalion presents a model of how NATO’s transformation can go,” says Lieutenant-Colonel Rainer Bürling from the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) branch of the Plans and Policy Division of NATO’s International Military Staff. “If current progress can be maintained, the Battalion may be used as a prototype of how to develop new joint Allied capabilities, conduct joint training and evaluate lessons learned.”

The essential mission of the Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion is to provide NATO joint forces and commands, wherever deployed, with a rapidly deployable and credible defence against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks. In practice, this means providing the NATO Response Force with the full spectrum of NBC defence, including the capability to conduct consequence-management operations in the event of attacks with weapons of mass destruction. As a secondary assignment, the unit may also be committed to assisting civilian authorities of Allied nations as during the 2004 Olympic and Paralympic Games, where elements of the Battalion were deployed to Halkida, Greece, as part of NATO’s efforts to provide CBRN assistance to the Greek government.

The Battalion comprises a Headquarters Company, a Joint Assessment team as well as a Nuclear-Chemical Reconnaissance Company, a Biological Detection Capability and a deployable NBC Analytical Laboratory. These capabilities enable the Battalion to perform NBC reconnaissance operations and provide mobile collection and analysis facilities needed for on-the-spot confirmatory identification of NBC substances, not least chemical and biological warfare agents. This, in turn, enables the Battalion to provide in-theatre NBC assessments and advice to NATO commanders. The Battalion also includes light and heavy decontamination companies making it capable of performing decontamination operations.

Efforts to improve Allied capabilities in the areas of NBC defence date back to the Prague Summit in November 2002, where the Allies endorsed five nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological weapons defence initiatives as part of the Prague Capabilities Commitment. Specifically, the CBRN Defence Battalion represents an acceleration of the decision taken at Prague to enhance Alliance capabilities to build a prototype NBC response team and a prototype deployable NBC Analytical Laboratory.

The decision to form the Battalion was taken at the June 2003 meeting of NATO defence ministers in Brussels. In December 2003, an initial operational capability was achieved as the Battalion was launched in the Czech Republic. After six months of NATO certification and training the Battalion was declared “fully operational” at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004. At the same time, the CBRN Defence Battalion became part of the six-month rotation of the NATO Response Force.

The operational concept of the Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion is based on the principle of rotating commands. This means that just like the NATO Response Force, the Battalion is not a single standing force. Rather, it is comprised of different units and sub-units from across Allied nations that each serve for a fixed period under the leadership of a lead nation.

The lead nation provides core headquarters staff and is responsible for command and control arrangements, maintaining standard operational procedures, sustaining readiness levels and for planning and conducting collective training. Contributing nations supply functional capabilities. This includes providing requisite troops, equipment and logistical support in accordance with mission requirements.

Germany took over responsibility as lead nation from the Czech Republic on 1 July 2004. On 1 July 2005, Spain became the CBRN Defence Battalion’s third lead nation.
Strengthening NATO’s missile defences

NATO is strengthening the Alliance’s missile defence capabilities in response to the growing threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

In March this year, the Alliance reached a milestone in its efforts to field a theatre missile defence capability as the North Atlantic Council approved the charter of the Programme Management Organisation for the Alliance’s Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence capability.

The decision formally establishes a Programme Office to manage NATO’s Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence Programme, which will be hosted by the NATO Command, Control and Consultation Agency (NC3A) that is based in both Brussels and The Hague. The creation of the Programme Office effectively paves the way for implementation of the Active Layered Ballistic Theatre Missile Defence system, which is scheduled to reach an initial operating capability by 2010.

The Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence system will be used to protect deployed Allied forces against short- and medium-range ballistic missiles and will integrate national theatre missile defence systems into a single, deployable “system of systems” that will comprise low and high altitude defences, capable of detecting and intercepting incoming ballistic missiles in the boost, mid-course and final phases. The system will also have a capability against jet aircraft, cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles.

The US Army’s Patriot Advanced Capability-III (PAC-3), and the joint German-Italian-US Medium Extended Air Defence System (MEADS) will form the “backbone” of low layer defences together with the Franco-Italian Surface Air Moyenne Portée system (SAMP-T) and will be included in the initial operating capability. Upper-layer defences such as the US sea-based Standard Missile-3 and the Theatre High-Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) systems will be added at a later date to achieve the full operating capability, scheduled for 2013.

The interconnecting architecture for these systems will be the common Air Command and Control System (ACCS), the Bi-Strategic Commands Automated Information System (Bi-SCAIS) and a communication segment, which NATO is currently developing to provide a battle management and command, control, communications and intelligence capability (BMC3I). At an estimated cost of €700 million, the system could become one of the Alliance’s largest common funded projects. The costs of the system’s nationally owned elements are expected to be several times higher.

The threat posed by ballistic missiles, such as SCUD missiles, has been apparent since the 1991 Gulf War. More than 20 states are currently believed to possess ballistic missiles. As some of these nations are also developing chemical, nuclear and biological warheads, the need for effective missile defence has increased.

“Wherever NATO operates in the future its forces will be faced with the potential threat of tactical missiles” says Bernd Kreienbaum, deputy head of the Joint Armaments Section in NATO’s Defence Investment Division. “There exists a complete consensus among the Allies on the need to address the threat posed by tactical missiles.”

For this reason, NATO is also cooperating closely with Russia under the aegis of the NATO-Russia Council to support future joint theatre missile defence operations. The NC3A is currently conducting a study aimed at developing NATO-Russia interoperability concepts.

NATO is also taking forward its full-scale missile defence efforts. A transatlantic consortium led by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) has recently delivered study reports on the feasibility of a full-spectrum missile defence architecture to protect Alliance territory, forces and population centres against the full range of missile threats.

This feasibility study, which NATO leaders initiated at the 2002 Prague Summit, is conducted under the authority of the Conference of National Armaments Directors and intended to facilitate consultations among the Allies, which may lead to decisions on an Alliance-wide, full-spectrum missile defence capability. It examines the technical feasibility, time-scale and costs of an Alliance-wide Missile Defence System and addresses critical issues such as the system’s command and control architecture and the appropriate mix of existing and planned systems to meet military operational requirements.
Gijs de Vries: EU counter-terrorism coordinator

Gijs de Vries became the European Union’s first counter-terrorism coordinator in March 2004. As such, he is working under EU High Representative Javier Solana to streamline, organise and coordinate the European Union’s fight against terrorism. A 49-year-old Dutch former politician, De Vries was deputy interior minister of the Netherlands between 1998 and 2002. He represented his country on the convention that drafted the European Union’s proposed constitution and earlier played a leading role in setting up the International Criminal Court (ICC). Before that, De Vries was the head of the Liberal Democratic group in the European parliament, where he was a deputy from 1984 to 1998.

NATO Review: What do you understand by terrorism?

Gijs de Vries: We still lack a global definition of terrorism. We are fortunately moving in the direction of a comprehensive global convention against terrorism, including a definition. However, we’re still stymied by the old stand-off between those who wish to fight terrorism and those who feel that what they describe as “resistance fighters” should not be covered by the definition. Increasingly, countries feel that this is an untenable definition and that indiscriminate attacks on civilians ought, under all circumstances, to be illegal in war as in peacetime.

The absence of a global definition does not mean that we do not have a legal basis for counter-terror work. We have 12 – and now recently with the adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Terrorism – 13 global conventions on aspects of terrorism. They’re all legally binding. Unfortunately, so far only one-third of the world’s countries have ratified all 12. Therefore, the European Union is championing the universal ratification of these 12 instruments, including important conventions such as the Convention against Terrorist Bombings and the Convention against the Financing of Terrorism. Finally, inside the European Union itself, we have a number of legal instruments which define terrorism as far as the European Union’s internal functioning is concerned.

NR: What terrorist threats is the European Union facing? Can we expect a repetition of the events of March 2004 in Madrid and July this year in London?

GdV: Europe has a long and tragic history of mostly domestic terrorism. The IRA, ETA, the Red Army Faction and the Red Brigades are only some examples of organisations that have claimed more than 4000 lives in previous decades, so we are familiar with terrorism. But indiscriminate cross-border religiously motivated terrorism is new. We have both domestically and in the European Union considerably strengthened our defences against terrorism in recent years. But we remain vulnerable. There is no such thing as 100 per cent security against terrorism. The terrorists always have the advantage of surprise. We must therefore remain aware of the fact that vulnerabilities are part of reality. But I think we should also draw some strength from the fact that terrorists have failed in what is arguably al Qaida’s most important objective, namely to trigger revolutions, uprisings against Muslim regimes in countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and elsewhere. Terrorists have also failed to trigger mass conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe. We should draw strength from the fact that ultimately freedom and democracy are stronger than fear and tyranny.

NR: What elements form the basis of the European Union’s counter-terrorism strategy?

GdV: There are three elements. First, in the fight against terrorism national agencies continue to lead, that is to say, national governments keep full control over their police forces, their security and intelligence agencies and their judicial authorities. Second, these national agencies must work across borders to be effective. This means we have
a vast programme of both practical cooperation at the European level and legislative instruments to facilitate that cooperation. Examples include Europol, where police forces cooperate; Eurojust, where investigating judges and prosecutors do likewise; the Situation Centre, where intelligence and security services jointly analyse the terrorist threat both outside the European Union and within; and the European Borders Agency in Warsaw that has just been created to help border forces in Europe to cooperate more and share experience and best practices. On that basis, we have adopted a long programme of legislation, for example to combat terrorist financing and make it more difficult for terrorists to travel across borders.

Our third main line of action is to strengthen cooperation between the European Union, on the one hand, and our partners elsewhere in the world. These are international organisations, first and foremost the United Nations, but also the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague. We also work increasingly closely with the United States, Canada, Norway and Switzerland, as well as with countries in the European Union’s immediate vicinity to our east and to our south, trying to provide counter-terrorism assistance to countries like Morocco, Jordan and others. The more they protect themselves, the better that will be for our security.

NR: The European Union drew up an anti-terrorism action plan in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks that is updated every six months. How has this improved our ability to address the terrorist threat?

GdV: Since January of this year, Europe’s security and intelligence services have been jointly analysing the terrorist threat. Previously, this was done only by the intelligence services, that threat analysis therefore related to threats emanating from the European Union and it was provided to our foreign ministers. Today, expertise from our security services has been added so that now we have an integrated picture of the threat from outside and from within that is provided not only to our foreign ministers but also to our justice and interior ministers. This covers a variety of aspects, including the financing of terrorism. But there are many others that are being assessed on a regular basis.

NR: How able is the European Union to deal specifically with the consequences of a WMD attack?

GdV: We’ve identified the need to improve these defences as one of the priority areas. Several member states have considerable expertise, both civilian and military, in this area. Other member states lack similar facilities. What is also essential is to work with our partners elsewhere in the world. The European Union, for example, has developed assistance to Russia to help it dispense with its surplus chemical and nuclear stocks. We’ve also increased our financial assistance to the OPCW and to the IAEA and, as is well known, the European Union through three of its member states and Javier Solana work tirelessly to convince the Iranian government of the absolute necessity to avoid going nuclear. In terms of CBRN-related terrorist attacks, we have made an inventory of capabilities available within the European Union and member states are considering ways in which to improve their technical capabilities and their international cooperation.

NR: What is currently being done and what might be done in the future to deter the recruitment and radicalisation of European Muslims by extremists?

GdV: We haven’t come to the end of our thinking on that crucial question but it is one of the priorities identified by ministers for the remainder of this year. Before the end of the year, the European Union intends to have a strategy dealing with the external dimension of radicalisation and recruitment, things happening outside our borders and the internal dimension. There are no automatic links between, say, poverty and terrorism. Among millions of poor people in the world, only a few turn to terrorism. What is quite clear is that in situations of military conflict, civil strife, lawlessness, bad governance, and human rights violations, terrorists find it easier to hide, to train and to prepare their attacks and it is more difficult for law enforcement to deal with them.
One element of the strategy already is and will certainly remain, assistance to countries in the world coping with such conditions. We must try to drain the swamp in which terrorism festers. It will be very difficult to stop each and every potential terrorist attack. What must be done is to make it clear that the violent radicals do not legitimately represent the overwhelming majority of the world’s Muslims. That also means that the debate within Muslim communities is of critical importance – both outside the European Union and inside. I’m encouraged by, for example, the fatwa that the Islamic Commission of Spain recently issued against terrorism in general and al Qaeda and bin Laden in particular. It’s important that we work very closely with moderate Muslim forces locally, nationally and internationally. That will certainly be one element of the strategy.

**NR:** A European arrest warrant was introduced in January 2004, how effective has this been in the fight against terrorism?

**GdV:** In intelligence work, as we all appreciate, there are limits to the amount of information one can share. Confidentiality is essential, not only to safeguard the effectiveness of the work of agencies but also to protect the life and limb of the individuals who are the source of much information. If that information ends up in the wrong hands, the lives of these people very often are immediately at risk.

Having said that, there is strong and intensive cooperation both among EU member states and with partners such as the United States. We all recognise that if you combat an international phenomenon, it is indispensable to share information internationally. We have identified, however, a few areas where that information exchange could still be facilitated. One politically sensitive question is the extent to which we give police access to databases we are building at the European level, including the new visa information system, for purposes of terrorist investigations. These questions are difficult because they raise issues of data protection. If you exchange information internationally, you must simultaneously strengthen data protection. Those are two sides of the same coin and member states are strongly committed to keeping a strong level of data protection.

**NR:** How is information shared among EU members and are you satisfied with the current state of affairs?

**GdV:** By and large there is good cooperation, but we have also identified some areas where that cooperation could still be strengthened. We welcome the increase in cooperation between US agencies and Europol. We would like to see a similar increase in cooperation with Eurojust. The first steps have been set but more could be done. We also have to look jointly at the difficult issue of the conditions under which intelligence might be used in court cases. There has been of course the highly publicised case of the latest court ruling on Mounir al Motassadeq in Hamburg where the German judge expressed his view that he could not establish the suspect’s culpability in the 9/11 attacks because he did not get access to what he thought was essential information from US authorities. This is not merely an issue between us and the United States; it is also a difficult issue within EU member states.

**NR:** How is information shared between EU members and the United States and are you satisfied with this state of affairs?

**GdV:** By and large there is good cooperation, but we have also identified some areas where that cooperation could still be strengthened. We welcome the increase in cooperation between US agencies and Europol. We would like to see a similar increase in cooperation with Eurojust. The first steps have been set but more could be done. We also have to look jointly at the difficult issue of the conditions under which intelligence might be used in court cases. There has been of course the highly publicised case of the latest court ruling on Mounir al Motassadeq in Hamburg where the German judge expressed his view that he could not establish the suspect’s culpability in the 9/11 attacks because he did not get access to what he thought was essential information from US authorities. This is not merely an issue between us and the United States; it is also a difficult issue within EU member states.

**NR:** How successful have they been?

**GdV:** By and large there is good cooperation, but we have also identified some areas where that cooperation could still be strengthened. We welcome the increase in cooperation between US agencies and Europol. We would like to see a similar increase in cooperation with Eurojust. The first steps have been set but more could be done. We also have to look jointly at the difficult issue of the conditions under which intelligence might be used in court cases. There has been of course the highly publicised case of the latest court ruling on Mounir al Motassadeq in Hamburg where the German judge expressed his view that he could not establish the suspect’s culpability in the 9/11 attacks because he did not get access to what he thought was essential information from US authorities. This is not merely an issue between us and the United States; it is also a difficult issue within EU member states.

**NR:** What steps has the European Union taken to undermine terrorist financing and how successful have they been?

**GdV:** By and large there is good cooperation, but we have also identified some areas where that cooperation could still be strengthened. We welcome the increase in cooperation between US agencies and Europol. We would like to see a similar increase in cooperation with Eurojust. The first steps have been set but more could be done. We also have to look jointly at the difficult issue of the conditions under which intelligence might be used in court cases. There has been of course the highly publicised case of the latest court ruling on Mounir al Motassadeq in Hamburg where the German judge expressed his view that he could not establish the suspect’s culpability in the 9/11 attacks because he did not get access to what he thought was essential information from US authorities. This is not merely an issue between us and the United States; it is also a difficult issue within EU member states.

**NR:** How is information shared between EU members and the United States and are you satisfied with this state of affairs?

**GdV:** By and large there is good cooperation, but we have also identified some areas where that cooperation could still be strengthened. We welcome the increase in cooperation between US agencies and Europol. We would like to see a similar increase in cooperation with Eurojust. The first steps have been set but more could be done. We also have to look jointly at the difficult issue of the conditions under which intelligence might be used in court cases. There has been of course the highly publicised case of the latest court ruling on Mounir al Motassadeq in Hamburg where the German judge expressed his view that he could not establish the suspect’s culpability in the 9/11 attacks because he did not get access to what he thought was essential information from US authorities. This is not merely an issue between us and the United States; it is also a difficult issue within EU member states.
need to ratify and implement the UN Convention against the Financing of Terrorism. We work very closely with the Americans. I work with the Treasury, as well as with the State Department and others in this respect. And a Commission proposal is to be issued in the next few months to improve the financial transparency of charities. We've seen in the past that Islamic non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been abused for purposes of terrorism financing. We want to make it clear that bona fide money should be flowing through these and other NGOs as people want, but money should not reach the wrong people. Transparency is of the essence and we will consider steps to improve that in the European Union.

NR: What do you hope to achieve as EU counter-terrorism coordinator and how should your work be judged?

GdV: My main ambition is to make myself superfluous. That requires cooperation in the European Union to be intensified even further. Again, the model of the European Union is bottom up. The central role in the fight against terrorism is with national authorities. The more they do to improve internal coordination in national governments, say between police forces, intelligence agencies, the physical authorities, the border authorities and prosecutors, the more they improve their internal coordination, the easier international coordination will become. Of course, each member state is free legally to decide its own domestic structures and is not under the control of Javier Solana, myself or the European Council.

By the end of the year we will more or less have implemented the entire action plan the European Union adopted in June 2004. With the British presidency, I hope to propose a revised medium-term action plan to ministers by the end of the year covering 2006 and beyond. I hope and expect that member states will decide to maintain the momentum we have built up and to make that as ambitious a programme as the previous one. A few areas have already been identified as priorities for next year. One of them is the work to protect Europe's critical infrastructure, mostly economic infrastructure such as transport, telecommunications, energy but also food and water, and medical infrastructure. Indeed, there is a whole series of sectors which could be severely disrupted by well-targeted terrorist attacks particularly if they were to happen in several member states simultaneously.

There is a huge amount of work still to be done that I trust member states will want to continue. It is an area where unanimity continues to apply. Unfortunately, we do not have the new constitutional treaty, which would have made it a lot easier to reach the necessary majority in Council. The new treaty would also have strengthened democratic controls, judicial controls and the protection of civil liberties. We will now have to do this on the basis of the current treaty. It's possible, as history indicates, but it is difficult. I believe that member states will stay the course and will want to work with other agencies from the United Nations to NATO. Ultimately, I remain optimistic because what we've seen in Europe and in the rest of the world is that freedom has a much stronger attraction than radical fundamentalism.

For more on the European Union’s role in combating terrorism, see ue.eu.int/showPage.asp?id=406&lang=en &mode=g

Manfred Wörner essay competition

To honour the memory of Manfred Wörner, the late NATO Secretary General, and in particular the role he played in transforming the Alliance at the end of the Cold War, the NATO Allies agreed in October 2005 to create an annual essay-writing competition with two awards. Starting in 2006, there will be a Junior NATO Manfred Wörner Essay Award and a Senior NATO Manfred Wörner Essay Award.

The Junior NATO Manfred Wörner Essay Award is open to academics, researchers and writers from both NATO and Partner countries, aged between 20 and 35. A prize of €5000 will be awarded to the individual who submits the best essay on a topic of relevance to the Alliance. The essay should not exceed 5000 words and should be suitable for widespread dissemination, including in NATO publications.

The Senior NATO Manfred Wörner Essay Award is open to academics, researchers and writers from both NATO and Partner countries, aged 35 years and older, who are already established in the field of international security policy. A prize of €10 000 will be awarded to the individual who submits the best essay on a topic of relevance to the Alliance. The essay should not exceed 5000 words and should be suitable for widespread dissemination, including in NATO publications.

A brochure providing full details of the NATO Manfred Wörner Awards as well as the application forms will be available electronically (www.nato.int/acad/fellow) by the end of 2005.
In 1603, the Sultan of Morocco, Ahmad al-Mansur, proposed to his English ally Queen Elizabeth I, that England help the Moors colonise America. The Sultan proposed that Moroccan and English troops, using English ships, should together attack the Spanish colonies in America, expel their hated Spanish enemies and then “possesse” the land and keep it “under our (joint) dominion for ever.” There was a catch, however. Might it not be more sensible, suggested the Sultan, that most of the future colonists should be Moroccan rather than English? “Those of your country doe not fynde themselves fitt to endure the extremeties of heat there, where our men endure it very well by reason that heat hurtes them not.”

After due consideration, the Moroccan offer was not taken up. Such a proposal might seem extraordinary today, but at the time it raised few eyebrows. After all, the English were close allies of both the Moroccans and the Ottomans – indeed the Pope regarded Elizabeth as “a confederate of the Turks”. The English might have their reservations about Islam, but these were nothing compared to their fear of “Popery”.

When Charles II sent one Captain Hamilton to ransom some Englishmen enslaved on the Barbary Coast, his mission was unsuccessful because they refused to return: the men had all converted to Islam and were living in a style they could not possibly have aspired to back home. “They are tempted to forsake their God for the love of Turkish women,” he wrote in his report. “Such ladies are,” he added, “generally very beautiful.”

There is a serious point underlying such anecdotes, for they show that throughout history, Muslims and Christians have traded, studied, negotiated and loved across the religious divide. Probe relations between the two civilisations, at any period of history and you will find that the neat civilisational blocks imagined by such writers as Samuel Huntington soon dissolve. It is true that just as there have been some strands of Christian thinking that have always been deeply hostile to Islam, so within Islam there have been schools of thought that have always harboured a deep hostility towards Christians, Jews and other non-Islamic religions and civilisations, notably the Wahabi and Salafi schools dominant in modern Saudi Arabia.

Until a generation or so ago, the Wahabis were a theological movement of only localised significance and were widely regarded by most Muslims as an alien sect bordering on infidelity – kufr. It is the oil wealth of modern Saudi Arabia that has allowed the Wahabis, since the mid-1970s, to spread their narrow-minded and intolerant brand of Islam, notably by the funding of extremist madrasahs (religious schools), printed books and cassettes with the disastrous effects we see today.

The wider Islamic world, not least in southern-rim Mediterranean countries, has never shared such beliefs, nor do the overwhelming majority of those Muslims who have become citizens of European countries. If Europe – and more broadly the West – are to understand these people, they must show greater empathy than has been the case of late. Empathy in no way suggests accepting everything Muslims believe in or every act they carry out. It does, however, require a consistent effort to understand why this religious community feels wounded, why so many of its members feel humiliated and, above all, why so many Arabs and Berbers are desperate to join in the freedom and affluence that characterise America and Europe.

Nevertheless, we should not forget that the ideology of all “progressive” movements of medieval and early modern Europe, including that which created English-speaking America, was expressed in religious terms. From this, it does not follow that the Muslim fundamentalist revival will have similar consequences. What is not in doubt today is that Islam remains closer to a universal system affecting all forms of humanity than Christianity and Judaism have been for many centuries. Enlightened Western man, or, for that matter, Western woman can decide to hold a faith or not, whether to accept or reject his or her religious heritage. Islam does not understand or grant this possibility more than Christendom did in the days when it too put to death heretics, atheists and blasphemers. The Western tradition of scepticism has its own central value, which is to examine and, if necessary, question all existing values. These broad generalisations fail, however, to convey the complexity of the West and the Middle East. In Israel, conservative Jews lead a life similar to that of many devout Muslims. In the Middle East and Europe many

Francis Ghilès is a senior fellow at the European Institute of the Mediterranean in Barcelona. He is a former North Africa Correspondent of The Financial Times (1977-1995) and a regular contributor to the BBC.
New horizons

Muslims – whether they marry Muslims or not – lead lives in no way different from their non-Muslim peers.

Mutual acceptance

That mutual acceptance – most importantly where Jews are concerned – had, until the birth of Israel, been far more in evidence in the lands of Islam than in Christendom. Whatever restrictions Jews might have laboured under in the lands of Islam, never were they treated as cruelly as when they were thrown out of England and France in the 13th century; as abominably as when they were expelled from Spain after the taking of Grenada in 1492 by the Catholic Kings; as harshly as during the anti-Semitism and pogroms that were such a common feature of Imperial Russia and its successor the Soviet Union; with such inhumanity as during the Holocaust. In Islam, they may have been, as their Christian brothers were, second-class citizens, dhimmis, but Jesus – Aïssa – is a prophet in Islam and there is no parallel in that religion to past anti-Semitic teachings of the Catholic Church. Too many observers of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not least among Jews, fail to acknowledge this essential historical fact.

Islam was and is far from always tolerant, but faced with the Israeli refusal, until very recently, even to recognise the existence of the Palestinian people, many Arabs vented their rage at Western countries even more than Israel. Young Arabs today have no experience of living with Jewish neighbours, as their parents did. They thus fall prey to state propaganda and to rulers who hide behind the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to deny their people essential freedoms. The conviction Arabs share that Washington is firmly on the side of Israel explains much of the intense hostility to the United States, which is felt by even the most educated and modern-minded. Europeans are viewed in a different light because, over the past quarter of a century, a growing number has come to appreciate that the existence of the Palestinian people cannot just be denied. Rather, it must be acknowledged
and accommodated if there is to be any hope of a lasting peace.

Another point is worth bearing in mind. One of the main causes of the increasingly radical attitude of a fraction of Palestinian society lies in day-to-day living conditions. The state of Israel dominates it in economic, political, military and symbolic terms. Everything reminds Palestinian society of its inferiority. The subaltern societies of the age of European imperialism recognised the superiority of their colonisers but symbolically neutralised it by strengthening their communitarian ties and keeping a physical distance between themselves and their colonisers. European social cohesion on the one hand, and the strong cultural identity of the colonised meant that the resentment could to some extent be absorbed by communitarian structures.

Those elements that once guaranteed the stability of colonial life no longer exist. Community bonds have lost their strength and the process of individuation has further weakened the collective armature. Spatial segregation has broken down and television enables imagery to roam freely across cultures and geographic boundaries. Modern individualism means that submission to Israeli superiority is no longer possible, as it was when a colonial mentality convinced the colonised that their rulers were their superiors and became the psychological prop that legitimised colonialism.

Both Israelis and Palestinians are fully caught up in modernity and, at that level, their mentality is that of modern egalitarianism, even though racists on both sides claim to be able to prove the superiority of their own group. They live, in short, in a world that is imbued with modern egalitarianism, whereas social relations between the two sides are governed by a neo-colonial model. What is true here is, to a lesser extent, true of many facets of relations between the Arab world and the West.

Colonial legacy

We must, however, come back to the past two centuries to understand why, for many people in southern-rim Mediterranean countries, fear of military domination by American and Europe remains paramount. The fact that ruling and often corrupt elites in Arab countries often play on such fears for their own selfish purposes in no way detracts from the genuine fears that exist among ordinary people. Colonial rule was often a brutal affair. Between the two world wars, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy launched chemical offensives against their enemies in Afghanistan, Iraq, North Africa and Abyssinia. France followed suit in Algeria in the late 1950s. Details of most of these wars have been kept secret for decades and often official documents relating to them have still not been released.

Politicians and military leaders in Europe were well aware of the effects of the deadliest of these chemicals, mustard gas. It had caused deaths and horrific injuries among soldiers in the battlefields of the First World War before they began to wear protective clothing. Yet mustard gas is precisely what European armies used in these areas and their victims were often old men, women and children because they were easier to target and had no means of protection. The new standards that Europeans wished to apply to war were not extended to military action against their colonial enemies. Those natives who rejected the advantages of a superior civilisation needed to be taught a harsh lesson, for their own good. As Colonial Secretary in 1919, Winston Churchill expressed impatience with the Royal Air Force’s reluctance to drop mustard-gas bombs. “I do not understand the squeamishness about the use of gas,” he wrote. “I am strongly in favour of using poison gas against uncivilised tribes.”

To be sure, European armies were not the only militaries to use chemical weapons in this part of the world. When still Crown Prince Hassan, the late King Hassan II of Morocco was no more squeamish than Winston Churchill. He bombed the northern Moroccan tribes into submission with napalm after independence in 1957 as well as Saharawis fleeing the Moroccan Army’s advance into the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara in the winter of 1974-5. The Algerian Army also used napalm to flush out radical Islamic groups from their hideouts in the wilderness in the mid-1990s. Saddam Hussein’s use of napalm against Iranian soldiers and the Kurds is better documented. Of course, none of these atrocities proves anything much about Christianity or Islam, since neither religion would condone such acts.

At the same time, who cares to remember the role played by native Algerian and Moroccan troops in support of the Allies during the two world wars? For the 60th anniversary of the taking of Monte Casino south of Rome, earlier this year, the contribution of the Polish troops was remembered. Algeria and Morocco, by contrast, were not invited to participate in the remembrance ceremonies. Arab autocrats are far from being the only leaders who practise selective memory. Western democratic leaders play the game well. This is also the case where chemical weapons are concerned. Arab leaders may not have protested when Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons first against the Iranians and then against the Kurds, but who among Western leaders did? Any hope of convincing the Arab street that the West is in earnest in its desire to dialogue with it, any hope of persuading ordinary Arabs that NATO will not be turned against them in the future is predicated on our coming clean about past deeds. Deceit may be the daily fare of many Arab rulers. But European leaders do not always score much better. Events surrounding the Iraq campaign have
New horizons

convincing many Europeans – let alone Arabs – that deceit has become intrinsic to government in their own, long-established democracies.

Arab despair

Over the past half century, ever more Arabs have begun to despair for the future in the wake of a lengthy list of perceived setbacks. These include the creation of Israel; successive military defeats suffered at the hands of the new state; the failure of Arab nationalism and more recent economic reforms to deliver high rates of growth and jobs; civil wars in Algerian and Lebanese; and the current situation in Iraq. Many better educated and younger Arabs – those who dare – escape to America and Europe. Those who are left behind feel trapped, all the more as stringent visa requirements make travelling to Europe exceedingly difficult. They live schizophrenic lives, watching Arab and Western satellite channels at night, confronting the sad reality of their cities every morning. They live in cities where sexual freedom, the right to speak out, the chances of a decent job or housing are, at best, relative; cities where state television channels offer the local version of Soviet-style news, where wealth and power too often rest in the hands of a few, where elections are usually aitibis
to please Western leaders and those Western journalists who wish to be fooled.

Nobody in the South is fooled. When Arab governments argue they are locked in an existential struggle with the religiously inspired radical movements within their borders, few people are convinced. What they see is governments using the radicalism of the religious few to de-legitimise religious political opposition as part of a radical fringe. The West all too often underestimates the sophistication, the wit of ordinary people who may be illiterate and poor, but who are not stupid. Freedom – whether economic, sexual or political – is unavailable to most people. Yet all Arabs, particularly younger ones who account for more than half the population, yearn for it. Many Arabs understand that the fight against terrorism has become a mantra, that we are ensnared by a word. This suits some Western leaders. This may also suit Arab leaders. But the pretence of all-out war against terrorism is meaningless – and not just to Arabs.

Contrary to what many in the West may have been led to believe, the overwhelming majority of Muslims who live on the southern shores of the Mediterranean aspire to the same things Americans and Europeans do. They resent being, as they see it, branded as “terrorists”;
they reject the manner in which Islam is presented all too often by Western media as inherently backward and violent; they despise the hypocrisy of those Western leaders who compliment their often autocratic masters for holding fair elections whose outcome is usually a foregone conclusion; they look on in amazement as US diplomats in Baghdad lecture Iraqis about the need to separate mosque from state while the US President invokes Christian values to underpin policies. These factors help to explain why many people, in poll after poll, say Osama Bin Laden is their hero. That does not mean to say they will follow him. They are simply pleased at the humbling of what they see as an arrogant United States, the leader of the Western world, which presumes to be the fount of all civilisation and which cannot avoid lecturing the natives.

Explaining NATO

Given that many in Western Europe today still equate NATO with the United States, particularly in France which has a long-standing tradition of anti-Americanism, the magnitude of countering negative views is enormous. It is also worth bearing in mind that even in North America and Western Europe few people outside the elites have any real understanding of what NATO stands for, what it does and what it has achieved during its 50-odd years of existence. As a result, NATO’s outreach effort to the Middle East that was launched at the 2004 Istanbul Summit is considered to be US-inspired. The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan is viewed, rightly or wrongly, as a US proxy. Whatever NATO might do in Iraq only serves to reinforce this perception. The one exception is in the Balkans: many Arabs recognise that NATO has protected Muslims. More fundamentally, anything military smacks, in the Arab mind, of despotic and corrupt.

Arabs love conspiracy theories, the result of the lack of information or the systemic distortion of facts practised by the official media in most southern-rim countries. Words frighten Arab leaders almost as much as ideas. To listen to the news bulletins on state television is to enter a world of paranoia and distortion which explains how some countries look like incubators of blind rage against the West, even if the West is only in part at fault. Luckily, these same people can also watch Arab and Western satellite channels. But few will have any idea of what a military alliance of democratic nations is about. Some fear that NATO might turn its attention to them now that communism is no longer a threat. The fallout of Iraq is here to stay. If a former foreign minister in the United Kingdom believes that the campaign was the worst mistake since Suez, why should the Arabs argue against such an analysis?

If a former deputy permanent secretary of the Defence Ministry calls the campaign a “criminal folly”, why should Arabs dissent?

In this context, assuming, as many do, that NATO and the United States are one and the same thing presents a challenge to those who wish to explain what NATO really does. The challenge here is one of complexity. Passions are running so high, they are so entangled that goals must perforce remain modest. In such a context, vast propaganda exercises would be counter-productive. The bottom line remains, this is hardly an original thought, that in the absence of any solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is little that can be done.

For the longer term, we in the West will communicate better if we learn more about Arab history, do not forget the wounds we inflicted upon many people in the region and, crucially, if we appreciate that the sine qua non of improved relations dictates that we empathise and dialogue with the citizens of these countries. Investing in dialogue will bear fruit, but not if we limit such contacts to elites which, all too often, are unrepresentative of the complex societies they run. Dialogue must also be conducted with Muslims who live in America and Europe. Few here wish to become martyrs. The martyrdom sought by a few is not the infant malady of Islam, but something that allows Muslims to recover the dignity they feel has been denied them by Western countries whose policies are biased against the Islamic world. Such developments present a challenge to the understanding many Westerners have of the world of Islam. Yet we must rise to the challenge.

Getting the economics right, which is most unlikely in the short term, is a form of crude determinism that will not work. Let us not forget that the Institute of International Economics in Washington published a study a few years ago which found no evidence that countries with large or predominantly Muslim populations grew more slowly, or had lower productivity growth than others. That such a study was ordered in the first place underlines how far the West has to travel to shed its ignorance of Islam. Getting the politics right is well nigh impossible in present circumstances. At least, NATO might try and convince Arabs – including those who have become citizens of France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and other Allies – that the Alliance will not, at some point in the future, inevitably be turned against them. That will be hard enough as it is.

For more on the European Institute of the Mediterranean, see www.iemed.org/aindex.php
Rising expectations

Carlo Masala examines the evolution of NATO's policy towards the Mediterranean and Middle East.

NATO has had a Mediterranean dimension for as long as it has existed. But only in the very recent past has the Alliance begun to devote the attention and resources to turn this aspect of its agenda into a priority area. In the process, NATO has raised expectations concerning its future role in the broader Middle East, including speculation about future roles in stabilising Iraq and even in bringing peace to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that may be difficult to live up to.

NATO’s relationship with the Mediterranean may be divided into three phases. The first began with the ratification of the Washington Treaty, since Article 6 of NATO’s founding charter specifically included the “Algerian Departments of France” in the North Atlantic Treaty area. The second footnote to the Washington Treaty from January 1963 effectively deletes that reference in the wake of Algerian independence. But by that time, two more Mediterranean countries, Greece and Turkey, who had joined NATO in 1952 in the Alliance’s first enlargement, were established Allies.

The second phase extended from the period of decolonisation to the end of the Cold War, during which time the Mediterranean was described as NATO’s “Southern Flank”.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and disintegration of the Soviet Union transformed the geopolitics of the Euro-Atlantic area and heralded the third phase of NATO’s Mediterranean engagement. Whereas Europe had now embarked on the road to unity and integration, the Mediterranean was increasingly an area of potential conflict as a result of the rise of Islamic extremism in North Africa and the Middle East, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and growing demographic pressures. In the intervening decade and a half, this third phase has evolved in such a way that NATO’s broader Mediterranean policy may now be divided into three pillars, that is the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and the Alliance’s involvement in Iraq.

Mediterranean Dialogue

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, France, Italy and Spain sought to foster trans-Mediterranean cooperation in regional frameworks such as the Conference for Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Western Mediterranean Group. These initiatives failed to prosper, however, as a result of civil war in Algeria and the imposition of international sanctions against Libya.

At the same time, a consensus emerged among the Allies that stability and security in Europe were closely linked to stability and security in the Mediterranean. Hence NATO’s decision in February 1995 to “initiate a direct dialogue with Mediterranean non-member countries”. Following consultations with Mediterranean countries, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia accepted invitations to join what became known as the Mediterranean Dialogue.

The method initially applied to the Mediterranean Dialogue may be described as “reactive” and “gradual”. It was “reactive” in the sense that NATO’s primary goal was to dispel mistrust about its objectives and to promote a better understanding of the Alliance in the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. It was “gradual” because the Dialogue was effectively designed as a gateway through which to identify and develop areas of cooperation.

Since its creation, the Mediterranean Dialogue has constantly enlarged its membership, enhanced its activities and deepened its agenda. The number of participating countries has increased from five to seven, after invitations were extended to Jordan in November 1995 and Algeria in February 2000. At NATO’s 1997 Madrid Summit, a Mediterranean Cooperation Group was created, bringing representatives of the NATO Allies together with their peers from Mediterranean Dialogue countries in political discussions in both bilateral – the NATO Allies plus one Mediterranean Dialogue country – and multinational – the NATO Allies plus all Mediterranean Dialogue countries – frameworks.

Also in 1997, an Annual Work Programme was created covering activities ranging from cooperation in military activities, to civil-emergency planning, crisis management and disaster relief. In 2002, NATO foreign ministers decided to upgrade the practical and political dimension of the Dialogue by putting new items on the agenda such as consultations on security matters of common concern, including terrorism-related issues. At its 2004 Istanbul Summit, the Alliance offered to elevate the Mediterranean Dialogue to a genuine partnership. In its wake, a first meeting between NATO and all Mediterranean Dialogue countries at the level of foreign ministers took place in

Carlo Masala is a researcher at the NATO Defense College in Rome.
Brussels in December 2004, underlining the programme’s enduring importance for both Allies and Mediterranean countries.

The evolution of the Mediterranean Dialogue from a modest forum for cooperative security dialogue into a genuine partnership seems to appeal to other Mediterranean countries. The Palestinian Authority, for example, has expressed an interest in joining.

**Istanbul Cooperation Initiative**

The second pillar of NATO’s engagement in the Mediterranean is the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) that was launched at NATO’s 2004 Istanbul Summit. Its aim is to establish cooperative relations with the countries of the broader Middle East and notably with individual members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Broadly speaking, the ICI follows the logic of the enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue, focusing on areas of common interest such as cooperation in the fight against terrorism, defence reform and joint training.

The key principles of this initiative, which has to date been joined by Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, are joint ownership, flexibility and complementarity. Joint ownership means that the ICI is a two-way street and must be supported by both sides. NATO does not wish to impose anything on ICI partners but is instead eager to listen to their ideas and learn about their needs to identify areas for cooperation. The initiative is sufficiently flexible to allow for the different needs and interests of the partners. Moreover, NATO is only engaged in those areas where it can bring added value to the region and has no intention of duplicating or competing with initiatives undertaken by other actors such as the G8 or the European Union.

In practice, the initiative offers tailored menus of cooperation activities for ICI participants covering a wide range of fields, including providing advice on defence reform, defence budgeting, defence planning and civil-military relations. There is a special focus on cooperation in the fight against terrorism, sharing intelligence-related data, cooperating in the field of border security.
and in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery.

Anticipating the future direction of this initiative, three options appear to be currently available to NATO and its partners. The first may be described as a "gentle-collaboration" strategy. This should primarily emphasise "soft" security, that is information networking and the creation of a "dense web of cooperative efforts". This strategy focuses on confidence-building and imposes few, if any, political preconditions, requirements, or desired end-states on ICI members. With this flexible approach, ICI members should be encouraged to combine their activities as frequently as possible (in groups of two or more). This is in effect the current approach.

The second option may be described as a "measured-collaboration" strategy in which NATO seeks to develop institutional links with the GCC and specifically to engage GCC members in targeted areas of cooperation. This is not on the agenda at present.

The third option may be described as a "states-further-afield" strategy. This would involve bringing as many countries in the broader region into the ICI as possible and developing cooperative initiatives and activities with all of them. Such an approach should help ensure early participation in and ownership of the ICI by its member states. Moreover, in the longer term, it might even lead to the creation of a regional security forum along similar lines to the ASEAN Regional Security Forum in Southeast Asia, including both regional and extra-regional actors.

**Iraq and beyond**

The third pillar of NATO’s Mediterranean engagement is the Alliance’s involvement in Iraq. Although disagreements among Allies over the Iraq War were so great that the then US Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns, described them as a “near-death experience”, realism and pragmatism rapidly returned once the dust had settled. Indeed, irrespective of their positions in the run up to the US-led campaign, today all Allies have an interest in the creation of a stable and democratic Iraq and in ensuring that the Iraqi security forces can assume greater responsibility for their own security. In this way, the Allies agreed at the Istanbul Summit to assist Iraq with the training of its security forces.

In response to a request from the Iraqi government, NATO established a Training Mission in Iraq and is now running a training centre for senior security and defence officials on the outskirts of Baghdad. The Alliance also helps coordinate offers of equipment and training from individual NATO and Partner countries. Moreover, in addition to in-country training, NATO is hosting mid and senior-level Iraqi officers at the Alliance’s various educational establishments, including the NATO Defense College in Rome.

Elsewhere in Iraq, NATO has no stabilisation role, but is providing support to Poland in terms of intelligence, logistics expertise, movement coordination, force generation and secure communications. In this way, Poland has, since September 2003, been able to command a sector – Multinational Division Central South – in which troops from both Allied and Partner countries are operating.

To date, all NATO’s activities in the wider Mediterranean region have been modest and, above all, cautious. The Alliance has sought to handle regional sensitivities with care and not to put the progress that has been achieved at risk. At the same time, however, NATO has been building the regional expertise and investing in the necessary relationships that may, in time, enable the Alliance to become a more influential actor. Moreover, while the caution NATO has displayed so far may have reflected conditions on the ground, many of the region’s greatest security challenges, such as stabilising Iraq and resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, demand a more proactive approach.

Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not currently on NATO’s agenda and the Alliance is not a party to the Middle East peace process, a possible NATO role in resolving this long-running dispute has been discussed in political and academic circles. Indeed, commentators and analysts have proposed both extending a NATO security guarantee to Israel and a peacekeeping role for the Alliance between a sovereign Palestinian state and Israel.

While strengthening the ties between Israel and NATO is feasible in the framework of the Mediterranean Dialogue, Alliance officials have repeatedly made clear that three pre-conditions need to be met before NATO could consider playing a more active role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These are a stable and lasting peace accord between the two parties to the conflict; agreement between Israel and Palestine about a role for NATO; and a UN mandate for NATO’s operation. That said, in the event that these pre-conditions are met, the weight of expectation will be so great that the Allies may have little choice but to take on the challenge, thereby opening another chapter in NATO’s history.

**Stability and security in Europe are closely linked to stability and security in the Mediterranean**

For more on the NATO Defense College, see www.ndc.nato.int.
In politics, perceptions of reality are often more important—and more dangerous—than reality itself. This is probably the case in all cultures and civilisations, but nowhere more so than in the Arab world. No matter how benign a particular policy or how good the intentions of its promoter, it will not be taken at face value. Rather, rightly or wrongly, it will be viewed from a perspective that is heavily laden with historical baggage. Until NATO is able to address this state of affairs and overcome the negative image it has in the Middle East, the Alliance has little prospect of ever playing a constructive role in the region.

Even though NATO is a newcomer to what is in any case an overcrowded Arab and Middle Eastern political arena, its image is already poor. This is not the result of anything that the Alliance per se has done in the region, since it has hardly done anything. Rather, it is a reflection of prevailing attitudes in the Arab world that are themselves rooted in Arab historical experience and, above all, Arab historical grievance. As a result, the policies and objectives of the Alliance in the Middle East have effectively been pre-judged, and the possibility of NATO playing a constructive role in the region all but written off by the Arab public.

NATO’s outreach efforts towards the broader Middle East, like any other project in the Arab world, cannot be successful or credible unless the Alliance devotes time and resources both to assessing its existing image and building a better one. Understanding the difficulties that NATO is likely to face in its public-diplomacy efforts in the coming years requires some understanding of the Arab mentality, of deep-held convictions among Arabs and of the legacy of a series of historical events.

Negative image

Today’s elite in the Arab world, whether in state service, business or politics, is for the most part like me, that is male, Muslim and born in the early 1950s. Our perceptions of NATO were formed by the political environment in which we grew up and the events which we ourselves experienced. Without doubt, the image of NATO with which we grew up was negative. At best, our attitude was one of indifference. At worst, it was one of concern. This reflected a number of regional factors as well as the accepted wisdom of the time about the nature and objectives of the Alliance.

For the Arab public, NATO has no separate identity from those of the Western powers and states that created the Alliance and constitute its members. In this way, the Alliance's image has been formed by attitudes towards events in the Arab world involving major NATO members. These include France’s colonial rule and especially the Algerian War; Italy’s involvement in Arab North Africa; the United Kingdom’s occupation of and controlling influence in the Gulf region; and the seemingly unlimited and unswerving support provided to Israel by the United States. Indeed, rightly or wrongly, NATO’s direct or indirect “support” is still today perceived as the main reason behind Israel’s swift victory and Arab humiliation in the 1967 war.

Another factor contributing to NATO’s negative image in the Middle East is Turkish membership of the Alliance. Although Turkey is both a predominantly Muslim country and geographically stretches from Europe to the Middle East, Turkish membership does not necessarily help improve NATO’s image among Arabs. This is for two reasons. Firstly, in spite of its predominantly Muslim population, Turkey is an avowedly secular state. Secondly, as the successor to the Ottoman Empire, Turkey has its own imperial legacy in the Middle East to live down.

During the Cold War, the various political movements and ideologies that dominated the Arab political scene played an especially important role in undermining NATO’s image among Arabs. The Arab nationalist movement, the Arab socialist movement, leftist and communist groups, as well as Islamist groups, all these political forces were and still are naturally hostile to the West and by extension to NATO. Moreover, most of these groups sympathised with NATO’s Eastern Bloc counterpart and rival, the Warsaw Pact. Although NATO has always been both a political and a military organisation, its Cold-War stereotypical image—whether in the West or the East—was very much that of the military alliance. Even though the Alliance traditionally only operated in the Euro-Atlantic area within clearly defined borders, Arabs tended to view NATO as a powerful, aggressive alliance committed to promoting the security and political interests of the West. In effect, whether justified or not,
NATO was widely perceived, in the not so distant past, as an imperialist, colonialist club.

Since the Alliance had no need to counter its negative image during the Cold War, NATO took no steps to present itself in a different light and the image stuck. Today, as NATO seeks to engage the Middle East and carve out a constructive role for itself, it has to address the deep-rooted attitudes and entrenched prejudices of the wider Arab public. Indeed, in recognition of this situation, the Alliance identified public diplomacy as a priority area in its dealings with the Arab world. In this way, NATO is formally seeking to provide a better understanding of its transformation and current policies, to promote mutual understanding and to dispel any misconceptions about the Alliance. To have any chance of bearing fruit, such a strategy must take into consideration a number of factors and requirements, including those outlined below.

Overcoming stereotypes

To begin with, NATO needs to present itself as a security actor in its own right, that is as an organisation where policy and strategy is developed and decided by the collective efforts and participation of all Allies, as opposed to an alliance dominated by its most powerful members. This is important, above all, so that the Alliance can differentiate itself in Arab minds from those Allies that have historically played important roles in the Middle East and, in particular, from the United States. This is a major challenge since the Arab public is naturally suspicious and a strong believer in conspiracy theories. That said, it is not only Arabs who tend to view NATO as US-dominated and a vehicle for promoting and implementing US strategic objectives. Indeed, such views are even prevalent in various NATO member states.
The best way for NATO to overcome prejudice is, of course, to demonstrate that there is something in its newfound desire to engage the Middle East and Arab world for the target countries and populations. This is possible if the Alliance presents its bridge-building strategy in terms of a need for common policies and a genuine partnership between Western and Arab worlds to address the changes in the global security environment since the end of the Cold War and, in particular, the security threats confronting the international community since 9/11. In this way, NATO must offer, and be seen to be offering, two-way dialogue and cooperation, rather than simply pursuing its own interests and security agenda. To achieve this, NATO will have to make clear that membership in Alliance partnership initiatives is based on the free will of the states involved and to illustrate the benefits of partnership.

Illustrating the benefits of partnership is easier said than done. Although ten members of the Arab League have already joined either the Mediterranean Dialogue or the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, the two NATO cooperative programmes focused on this part of the world, the ultimate aims and objectives of NATO’s albeit still modest engagement with the region are not understood. Both Arab elites and the wider public are largely confused by terms such as “dialogue”, “initiative” and “partnership” and wonder what they are actually going to produce in practical or policy terms. Is NATO able and willing to play an effective role in solving regional problems? Will NATO seek to become a neutral arbitrator in regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Or will NATO seek to take on a diplomatic role akin to that of the European Union in regard to the alleged Iranian nuclear programme? Many suspect that NATO has yet to think through its policies towards the region and to work out where precisely the region fits in the Alliance’s overall strategy.

Another area of confusion is that of the nature of the relationship between NATO’s initiatives and strategies towards the Middle East, on the one hand, and the US Greater Middle East Initiative and bilateral US security and defence commitments with individual states, on the other. The four members of the Gulf Cooperation Council that have joined the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative since its June 2004 launch – Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates – all already have wide-ranging institutionalised security-military cooperation agreements with the United States. Moreover, these agreements cover many of the same areas that are highlighted in NATO’s partnership initiatives, including the fight against terrorism; combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; assistance in the fields of defence planning, military training and exercises; border security; and civil-emergency planning.

Although NATO needs to develop and project its own identity in the Arab world, countries with relationships with the United States also need to be reassured that there are no contradictions or conflicts of interest between their future commitments to NATO and their existing commitments to the United States. Here, Washington has to take the lead and make it unequivocally clear both that it supports the NATO initiatives and that participation in NATO programmes is complementary to participation in US programmes, whether bilateral or multilateral.

Developing policies

In developing policies towards what the Alliance has loosely termed the “broader Middle East”, NATO can and should become far more discerning. In reality, there is no such region. Rather, the Middle East is a series of sub-regions, each of which has its own specific security needs, political concerns and social and economic characteristics. NATO’s engagement with the countries of Arab North Africa, for example, does not necessarily have any bearing on countries in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula or on the rest of the Arab world. Each sub-region requires a different approach that is tailored to the specific conditions prevailing there. NATO would therefore do well to develop a series of sub-regional approaches based on a more nuanced understanding of the situation on the ground to promote practical cooperation in line with the prevailing needs.

For the Arab public, NATO has no separate identity from those of the Western powers that created the Alliance

Even though NATO’s image is generally negative, it is not irreversibly so. This is, on the one hand, because the level of knowledge of the Alliance is still low and, on the other, because NATO is able to present itself as an organisation that has a history of supporting Muslim communities. While the Alliance took far too long to become involved and end the bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia, it has, since 1995, played an important role in defending the lives and protecting the interests of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.* Moreover, the Alliance has been playing an increasingly significant role in stabilisation operations in Afghanistan since 2003, which is clearly of great benefit to that country’s Muslim population.

Interestingly, Arab media frequently allude to the possibility that one day NATO may take on a similar stabilisation role in Iraq to that which it has in Afghanistan. Whether NATO might eventually be able to play a similarly constructive role in Iraq is, however, unclear. Any decision to expand
the NATO role beyond simply providing military training to the Iraqi armed forces would undoubtedly be extremely controversial. Moreover, it would be difficult to predict at this stage the kind of impact, whether positive or negative, NATO might have if the Alliance were to become more directly engaged in helping bring peace and stability to Iraq.

Given limited resources, NATO cannot hope to communicate with and promote its new regional initiatives among all sectors of Arab opinion and will therefore have to target its public-diplomacy efforts. In this way, the Allies will, for example, have to choose whether to focus attention on elites or to seek to influence and inform wider public opinion. While the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, they do require different tactics. Targeting the former is clearly easier and will likely generate more immediate results. But ultimately, NATO must also address its image among the wider public.

The best starting point for any communication strategy would probably be to establish an Arabic language NATO website, including an Arabic edition of NATO Review. The Alliance already publishes NATO Review in 24 languages, that is 22 Allied languages and Russian and Ukrainian, and might be pleasantly surprised at the number of new readers the magazine is able to acquire in the Arab world, were it to translate NATO Review into Arabic. The internet is an extremely powerful tool and provides an easy and highly effective way to communicate with vast numbers of people. Indeed, increasing numbers of young Arabs, especially journalists, researchers and students, are already turning to it as their primary source of information. Establishing an Arabic NATO website would therefore be an encouraging and bold first step towards bridging the current cultural and political divide. In time, it might also help pave the way for a more positive image of NATO to emerge in the region.

For more on the Gulf Research Center, see www.grc.ae

---

New horizons
NATO, Israel and peace in the Middle East

Martin van Creveld presents an Israeli’s view of Israeli-NATO relations and prospects for peace in the Middle East from a historical perspective.

How do Israelis see NATO, and what role may the latter play in helping resolve the Middle East conflict? To answer these questions, one must start from the fact that Israel's foreign policy and defence establishment has no great liking for international organisations. The reasons are obvious. For much of its history Israel has been a semi-pariah state. The number of Arab states, of which there are 14, and Muslim ones, of which there are dozens, means that every time an international gathering takes place, Jerusalem is liable to find itself in a minority of one.

Israel’s relations with the United Nations, as the most important international organisation, illustrate this situation well. The Jewish state’s right to exist was confirmed by the General Assembly in November 1947 when it approved the partition of Palestine by a two-thirds majority. Later, as UN membership expanded and the Cold War caused both superpowers to compete for the loyalty of new members, things changed. No country has been censured more often either by the General Assembly or by the Security Council. Indeed, frequently the only thing that stood between Israel and still more condemnation was the United States. Nor has Jerusalem ever been able to secure a seat on the Security Council for itself.

On the face of it, Israeli relations with NATO ought to be better. Founded only a year after Israel, NATO was made up of Christian states, with, from 1952, one exception – Turkey. No NATO member had a fundamental quarrel with the existence of the Jewish state, and most had voted in favour of its creation. Furthermore, Israel’s own values have always been liberal – albeit, initially with a strong socialist twist – and democratic. Partly for this reason, partly because Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion feared his country would find itself isolated in the event of another World War, Jerusalem took a pro-Western stance in the Cold War. For this, of course, there was a price to pay. The more pro-Western Jerusalem’s position, the more problematic its relations with the Eastern Bloc.

During the 1950s, many Israelis believed themselves in mortal danger from the surrounding Arab world. Looking for allies, they would have loved their country to join NATO or at least become an affiliate member. A cartoon of that time, published in Israel’s leading newspaper Ma’ariv, illustrated that desire very well. It showed an arm, marked “NATO”, reaching across the Mediterranean and drawing a tooth, in the form of Israel, from the Middle East, which the draftsman had twisted into the form of a human face. It was not to be.

Relations with individual Allies

Throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s NATO’s leading member, the United States, feared that by supporting Israel it would drive Arab states into Soviet arms. Hence it not only rejected any idea of permitting Israel to join the organisation but adopted a rather anti-Israeli policy. First, it refused to sell Israel arms, a policy it maintained even after the so-called “Czech arms deal” of 1955 upset the military balance in the Middle East and which lasted well into the Kennedy Administration. Next, by sending an ultimatum to Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, President Dwight D. Eisenhower joined with Soviet Head of State Nikita Khrushchev to force Israel to give up the Sinai Peninsula shortly after overrunning it in 1956. Moreover, Washington did what it could to obstruct Israel’s nascent nuclear programme by allowing pictures taken by U-2 spy planes revealing its existence to be published in The New York Times. Subsequently, President John F. Kennedy sent several threatening messages to Ben-Gurion, contributing to the latter’s decision to resign in July of that year.

Jerusalem was, nevertheless, able to maintain normal diplomatic relations with most NATO members, including even the Federal Republic of Germany from 1965. With France it developed a special relationship that started in 1955 and, before coming to an end in the mid-1960s, enabled Israel to purchase the arms it needed to survive. However, the ties in question were established between Israel and individual NATO members rather than between it and the organisation as such. Seen from Paris and later from Brussels, Israel was geographically remote from

Martin van Creveld is a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and author of many classic books on military history and strategy, including “Command in War” (1985), Supplying War” (1977) and “The Sword and the Olive” (1998).
the part of the world NATO had been created to defend. The country lacked a strong military, important mineral resources and a vital geographical position. Hence it did not matter much. Seen from Israel, NATO did not matter much either. This came to light in the summer of 1956. In preparation for the coming Sinai campaign, Shimon Peres, then 33 and director general of the Defence Ministry, provided the General Staff with a thorough briefing on the way European policy-making circles perceived Israel. In the records of the meeting, NATO is not even mentioned.

As Franco-Israeli relations deteriorated in the 1960s, the United States, now under President Lyndon B. Johnson, stepped in. It started selling Jerusalem arms – first anti-aircraft missiles, then tanks and finally attack aircraft as well. After the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War the ties with Washington grew much stronger with Israel effectively becoming a US protégé. Again, however, NATO was only involved, if at all, on the margins. In fact, things may have worked the other way around. Israel's existence now appeared guaranteed by US support. With that in mind, many other NATO members may have felt that moral obligations towards the Jewish state, which they had incurred during the Holocaust, no longer applied. They left it to Washington to carry the Israeli ball into the Arab court. Having done so, they felt free to develop their own ties with that court, selling Arab states arms and recycling petrodollars.
In this way, in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the United States sent its aircraft to re-supply Israel in what was a life or death struggle. By contrast, all other NATO countries except Portugal refused the United States bases to refuel its aircraft. In 1982, the United States signed a "memorandum of strategic agreement" with Israel and set up some depots there. NATO did nothing. In 1991, the United States and Germany, but not NATO as such, did something to help Israel when the latter was attacked by Iraqi missiles. Until this year, Israeli forces were only allowed to participate in the military exercises of some NATO members, such as Turkey and the United States, but not in those of the organisation as a whole. Responding in kind, Israel has often treated the Alliance with a mixture of pique and contempt, exemplified by its refusal to send students to the NATO Defense College in Rome, despite repeated invitations.

Developments since the Cold War

Until the end of the Cold War NATO's mission was to defend the "West" against a possible Soviet onslaught, even though it always refused to include Israel in the "West". The collapse of the Soviet Union brought that mission to an end, causing Israelis to take even less interest in whatever the organisation may have had to offer. Another reason for this was because Israel's own armed forces, having started from modest beginnings, were now as powerful as those of any NATO country except the United States. Comparing military hardware and stockpiles as recorded by the Military Balance for example, Israeli planners did not see much that most NATO countries could do to aid them in the event of another 1973-style emergency.

While Israeli relations with long-standing NATO members remained as ambiguous as ever, Jerusalem was able to develop good ones with some of the Eastern European countries aspiring to join the organisation in the 1990s. Many of those countries had a long anti-Semitic tradition, one which the last two decades of the Cold War (when all but Romania broke diplomatic ties with Israel) had done nothing to dissipate. Now, however, several Eastern European governments convinced themselves that the road to Washington led through Jerusalem – an idea which, while itself based on anti-Semitic stereotypes, served to enhance the latter's status in Budapest, Prague, Warsaw and other capitals. Moreover, during the 1970s and 1980s Israel itself had built a large and modern arms industry that had much to offer NATO's new members. The more so because the arms it provided, unlike those originating in many other countries, came without political strings attached.

To the extent that NATO still had a mission, many Israelis regarded it with scepticism. This fact was evident in the spring of 1999 when the Alliance launched an air campaign against Belgrade because of the latter's crackdown in Kosovo. This is hardly the place to argue the rights and wrongs of Operation Allied Force. Suffice it to say that the views of many Israelis, including then Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon who published an article on the matter, were coloured by their perceptions of events in the former Yugoslavia during the Second World War. As a result, far from backing NATO's intervention, many Israelis sympathised with the Serbs. When the second Palestinian Uprising started in the fall of 2000 and led to many casualties, a few went further still. They wondered what might happen if one day they too felt compelled to take off the kid gloves and deal with terrorism once and for all. Might not NATO try to do to them what it was doing to Serbia?

To be sure, Israel has participated in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue since its inception in 1994. Indeed, it became in 2001 the first participating country to sign a security agreement with NATO, providing the framework for the protection of classified information. Moreover, in the past year a further improvement in the atmosphere could be discerned. Israel took part in the first Mediterranean Dialogue-NATO meeting at the level of foreign ministers in December 2004. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visited Israel in February of this year. A first joint Israel-NATO naval exercise took place in March in Israeli waters. Israel was admitted as a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in May. And Israeli troops participated in NATO exercises in both the Mediterranean and Ukraine in June.

Despite these developments, however, relations between Israel and NATO, as opposed to those between the former and several important NATO members, have long been characterised by a mixture of disregard and mistrust. On the one hand, Israel, recalling its experience with UN peacekeepers in Lebanon (where they served mainly to shelter Hezbollah), remains as firmly opposed to any stationing of NATO troops in the Occupied West Bank as it has ever been. On the other, Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer took care to tell the whole world during his visit to Israel that Israeli membership in the Alliance was no more on the cards today than it had been when the idea was first floated half a century earlier. Clearly, on both sides, a fundamental change of heart has yet to take place. Until it does, anything else they do will remain largely symbolic.

For more on the Hewbrew University of Jerusalem, see www.huji.ac.il/huji/eng
Our own security is closely linked to Afghanistan and its people, the United Nations and the wider international community.

A new command structure for a transformed Alliance makes it better able to conduct a full range of Alliance missions.

For a transformed Alliance, the new military command structure which is leaner, more efficient, and flexible, was their approval of plans for a robust, rapidly deployable NATO Response Force (NRF). They thus delivered on two major commitments to their annual spring meeting in June 2003, Allied defence ministers agreed on the shape of a new military command: strategic, operational, and tactical or component level. The third tier or component level, where the greatest reductions have been at the tactical or component level. The NATO command: strategic, operational, and tactical or component level. The second tier or operational level, there were only six. Coupled with reductions at the tactical or component level, the NATO command structure which is leaner, more efficient, and flexible, was their approval of plans for a robust, rapidly deployable NATO Response Force (NRF). They thus delivered on two major commitments to their annual spring meeting in June 2003, Allied defence ministers agreed on the shape of a new military command: strategic, operational, and tactical or component level. The third tier or component level, where the greatest reductions have been at the tactical or component level.

Helping secure a third mis- sion, the new NATO command structure is better able to conduct a full range of Alliance missions. This groundbreaking operation, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), was the Alliance's first mis- sion beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. Helping secure a third mission, the new NATO command structure is better able to conduct a full range of Alliance missions. This groundbreaking operation, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), was the Alliance's first mission beyond the Euro-Atlantic area.

Our own security is closely linked to Afghanistan and its people, the United Nations and the wider international community.

Security through Partnership
Publication examining NATO cooperation with Partner countries through the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

Cooperation case studies
Series illustrating NATO’s practical cooperation activities, including building the Virtual Silk Highway, disposing of anti-personnel mines in Albania, flood prevention in Ukraine, limiting the damage from earthquake-induced disasters, AWACS aircraft, tackling challenges of defence reform, the environment and security and Trust Fund projects

Security cooperation with the Mediterranean region and the broader Middle East
This brochure explains NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and Cooperation Initiative, which aims to increase dialogue and cooperation in these strategically important regions

Istanbul Summit Reader's Guide
An overview of the decisions taken at the NATO Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, 28-29 June 2004, and related background information

FOR AND AGAINST: Debating Euro-Atlantic security options
Publication bringing together and reproducing the debates that appeared in the online edition of NATO Review in 2002 and 2003

ALL PUBLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH, MANY ARE AVAILABLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES

All enquiries and orders for print copies should be addressed to:
Public Diplomacy Division
Exhibits and Marketing Unit
NATO, 1110 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 707 5009
Fax: +32 2 707 1252
Email: distribution@hq.nato.int

Electronic versions of these publications and details of further publications are available on NATO's website at www.nato.int. The website also publishes official statements, press releases and speeches, NATO Update, a weekly update on Alliance activities, NATO Review and other information on NATO structures, policies and activities, and offers several online services.