NATO’s past, present and future
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ALL PUBLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH, MANY ARE AVAILABLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES
NATO's past, present and future

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. It is also the last issue that I will be editing. By the time it is in print, I will be on a leave of absence in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, working as communications director of the Office of the High Representative. The move to Sarajevo effectively brings my career full circle since I spent much of the 1990s either in the former Yugoslavia or writing about events there. Indeed, I decided to join NATO because I believed in the Alliance as a result of what it had achieved in the former Yugoslavia and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

NATO Review is a unique institution and it has been a pleasure and a privilege to edit it. It is unique because, although published by NATO, its raison d’être is to be a forum for debate. Hence the wide range of views represented in its pages. When former NATO Secretary General Paul-Henri Spaak created NATO Review in 1959, he did so because he believed in the power of ideas, the importance of debate in decision-making, and the benefits of critical analysis. Nearly half a century later, the Euro-Atlantic security environment has changed beyond recognition. But the need for fresh ideas, for open discussion and quality research is greater than ever. Hence the enduring relevance of NATO Review and its importance to the Alliance.

My six years at NATO Review have coincided with a remarkable period in Alliance history. Events that stand out include the trials and tribulations of peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia; preventive intervention in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;* the invocation of Article 5; the Alliance’s post-9/11 transformation; the second post-Cold War round of enlargement; discord over Iraq; and NATO’s subsequent engagement beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. Moreover, the pace of change is ever increasing. In addressing these and other issues, the publishing team and I have sought at all times to live up to NATO Review’s mission statement, namely to contribute to constructive discussion of Atlantic issues.

In 2000, NATO Review was a print publication. Today the magazine is primarily internet-based. The online edition has proved popular beyond our wildest expectations and is continuously being improved with new features added in almost every edition. Indeed, in response to demand, NATO Review has appeared in Arabic and Hebrew since the beginning of the year, in addition to 22 NATO languages, Russian and Ukrainian.

Christopher Bennett

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An important milestone, noted perhaps only by Cold-War aficionados, was the recent passing of three men central to the waging of that war all of whom died within the span of six months: George F. Kennan, Paul H. Nitze and Andrew J. Goodpaster.

Kennan is the best known of the three. During the Cold War, Kennan received most of the credit for fathering the “containment” policy that arguably won it. His death in March 2005 at 101 was second only to that of Pope John Paul II in the number of obituaries it inspired during the past year.

Nitze, who died in October 2004, aged 97, was less well known than Kennan but hardly an obscure figure. His funeral at Washington National Cathedral was attended by more than 1000 people. His career in and out of government extended from the Truman to the Reagan administrations. Kennan’s by contrast ended in the mid-1950s, apart from a brief stint as John F. Kennedy’s ambassador to Yugoslavia. If Kennan gave us the outline of a Cold-War strategy, Nitze, in drafting much of what has become known as the most famous policy document of the era after Kennan’s “Long Telegram” – National Security Memorandum No. 68 (NSC-68) of 1950 on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security – invented the mission for it. That was nothing less than saving civilisation from Soviet tyranny.

Kennan and Nitze were colleagues who did not always see eye to eye. Kennan hated NSC-68, for example, claiming he never intended his plan of containment to be militarised to such an extent, or to be extended beyond Europe. The document called for a three to four-fold increase in defence expenditure. But they remained cordial if occasionally wary of one another. Already the deaths of both men have been characterised as akin to those of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in 1826: the yin and the yang of Cold-War strategy – or as Nitze liked to put it, partners of a tension between opposites – uniting finally in death, the one following soon after the other.

This romantic picture is, unfortunately, a distortion. There is a third piece to the story, and a third figure, unknown but to a small but highly devoted group of insiders, who also died recently. Unlike Kennan and Nitze, Goodpaster, who passed away in May 2005, was a professional soldier, a four star Army General and former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. He was also a close associate and friend of both men. It is impossible to understand the Cold War without including all three as intellectual poles of the same tent. There was not one policy, or two opposing doctrines, but rather a three-part synthesis which proved greater than the sum of its parts.

The person who deserves the most credit for grasping that synthesis was President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Goodpaster was his Staff Secretary – a position akin to today’s National Security Adviser – and took part in nearly every meeting the President had, in addition to serving as his chief liaison to the foreign policy bureaucracy. It

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George F. Kennan, 1904-2005
was not without justification that Goodpaster was known as “Ike’s alter ego”.

Stalin died soon after Eisenhower took office in 1953. There was much uncertainty over what and who would come next in the Soviet Union. The United States had just fought a costly war in Korea against Chinese and Soviet proxies; the Soviet Union now had its own atomic weapons; the Cold War had been militarised and globalised. NSC-68 was proving accurate indeed.

But Eisenhower would have none of it. Containment was a compelling doctrine but Kennan’s preferred tools – almost exclusively political and propagandistic – were no longer adequate. NSC-68 meanwhile provided minimal operational guidance. Full of dire predictions of world catastrophe, it did not offer a realistic blueprint for waging a long-term struggle against Communism apart from urging that the United States and its allies outspend and outman the Soviet Union at any given point of contestation around the world. It also offended Eisenhower’s sense of fiscal prudence. He was obsessed with the potential for US defeat through waste and largesse. He understood that the Cold War had to be fought on many fronts, not least of which was economic – hence the “military-industrial complex” against which he warned in his farewell address. Eisenhower was preoccupied with it throughout his two terms as President, not just at the end.

What was he to do? Eisenhower did something more than merely commission another policy blueprint. He decided to “game” it, that is, to set up three contending teams of advisers who would think through the implications of alternate policy approaches during the short, middle and longer term. The effort began in the summer of 1953 and culminated several months later. Because it was conceived and took place partly in the solarium of the White House, it became known as the Solarium Project. The Solarium Project and the principal policy document resulting from it – NSC-162/2 – deserve to be remembered as one of the most significant group efforts in the history of US foreign relations. If one judges historical significance by eloquence or bureaucratic noise, then Kennan’s Long Telegram and NSC-68 should retain their prominent positions. But if one also includes the impact of a given policy on the ground, then the Solarium Project should rank equally high. Solarium’s three teams played out the entire Cold War. In retrospect, they did not do too badly in anticipating – in 1953 – the course it would ultimately follow. Taken together, they were remarkably prescient about the stakes for the United States and sensible about the various tools it would need to prevail.

Each team comprised about ten members from various parts of the foreign policy bureaucracy along with a few academics from outside. Team A – headed conveniently by Kennan – was bound to a mainly political strategy toward the Soviet Union, focused primarily on Europe, and eschewed significant military commitments elsewhere. It also relied heavily on US allies and placed a priority on alliance cohesion. Eisenhower gave Team B a similar mandate but allowed it to take a harder line towards the Soviet Union, and instructed it to contemplate policies that relied less on allies per se and more on the US nuclear arsenal. It was given, therefore, a more unilateral mission but one that nevertheless held to a clear line against taking direct military action within the Soviet sphere of influence. Team C was the “roll-back” team. Nitze was excluded from the project but Team C’s mandate was taken almost verbatim from the prescriptive passages of NSC-68: diminish Soviet power – and Soviet-controlled territory – everywhere and by any means available. Eisenhower assigned Goodpaster to Team C, not because Goodpaster was known to sympathise with the roll-back approach but because he trusted his aide’s integrity and knew Goodpaster would ensure that Team C produced a solid report.

The results were exactly as Eisenhower had intended. Roll-back and NSC-68 were tossed into the dustbin of history, or at least until Ronald Reagan resuscitated...
aspects of them under very different circumstances. Solarium Project participants concluded that the logical result of a roll-back policy – in the context of the 1950s – would be catastrophic. Team A meanwhile proved to be effective at managing a united Western front but found itself too hamstrung by military weakness and shifting European politics, particularly in Germany. Team B came out somewhere in the middle: a growing nuclear arsenal kept the Soviets at bay but the United States found itself carrying the burden of Western defence alone.

Eisenhower then summarised the teams’ findings in a presentation that Kennan said “demonstrated the President’s intellectual ascendancy over every man in the room”. Goodpaster asked: “Does that include you, George?” To which Kennan replied: “Yes it does, because only the President has proven himself able to grasp the full range of political and military aspects of the policies under consideration.”

Debate over whether or how the United States won the Cold War will continue for decades; but it is certain that Eisenhower’s synthesis made survival possible. He transformed an ambivalent doctrine of containment into a workable policy of deterrence. Kennan’s preference for propaganda, covert action and political pressure was insufficient. Nitze’s plan was too risky and inexact. The two approaches required a synthesis that deterred Soviet aggression while maintaining a common front with US allies and limiting the domestic costs of a long and expensive struggle. The strategy – put forth in NSC-162/2 – struck such a balance and proved enduring, not least because the diverse Solarium participants took part in a process designed for “each”, as Eisenhower liked to say from his days at NATO, “in the presence of all”.

The inner thoughts and conversations of the three men at this time are now lost. But the remainder of their lives suggests a pattern consistent with the role each played directly or indirectly in the Solarium Project. Each continued both to provoke debate and contribute to consensus over Cold-War strategy. From his sinecure at Princeton, Kennan worked tirelessly to defend and redefine his understanding and prescription of containment in between writing several award-winning works of diplomatic history. Nitze continued to move in and out of government, serving as Secretary of the Navy and Deputy Secretary of Defense during the Vietnam era (when he became a closet dove), then resumed his earlier role as the leader of the Cold-War hawks while negotiating nearly every major arms control treaty with the Soviet Union. Goodpaster went on to advise eight more Presidents, playing a quiet but critical role in the shadows, helping, for example, to convince Ronald Reagan to embrace Mikhail Gorbachev and his reforms, drafting the initial post-Cold War security arrangements for the states of Central and Eastern Europe, and helping the Pentagon plan for the overhaul of nuclear policy in the past couple of years.

The United States and the world survived the Cold War in part because these three men, and many like them, preserved the intellectual continuity that Eisenhower worried would be lost to political posturing. Each reminded leaders that there was no magic new strategy for meeting the Soviet challenge. US interests required a careful blend: Kennan with the faith in diplomacy and political pressure; Nitze with military preparedness; and Goodpaster with the safeguarding of deterrence. Each man, in his own unique way, was simultaneously soldier, scholar and statesman. The world is a less safe place today without them.

It is impossible to understand the Cold War without including Kennan, Nitze and Goodpaster as intellectual poles of the same tent.

For more on the Atlantic Council of the United States, see www.acus.org
During negotiations over the Washington Treaty, NATO’s founding charter, the wording of Article 5 containing the collective-defence commitment was crafted to reassure European Allies of America’s commitment to their security and ensure US Congressional and public acceptance of its terms. Ever since, the Allies have been forced to adapt Article 5’s implementation to changing conditions within and outside the Alliance. It could be argued, in fact, that the way the commitment has been implemented has been at least as important as the Article’s carefully chosen words.

UK Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin is universally recognised as the father of the Washington Treaty and instigator of what became Article 5. In December 1947, following the failure of the four-party talks between France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States on the future of Germany, Bevin was convinced that the Western powers had to organise themselves to defend against Joseph Stalin’s expansionist ambitions and Soviet military power. US President Harry S. Truman and Secretary of State George C. Marshall were initially unsure whether the United States should join any alliance to defend Europe. The US isolationist legacy and resistance to formal alliances was receding but remained well-represented in the US Congress, where any treaty would have to win two-thirds support in the US Senate.

Bevin nonetheless persisted. His historic speech to the House of Commons in January 1948 called for the creation of a Western European Union as the prelude to a transatlantic pact. On 17 March, the governments of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom signed the Brussels Treaty, a pact including a strong mutual-defence provision. The Treaty was immediately welcomed by President Truman and the action moved back to Washington.

Secret talks

Canadian, UK and US officials began meeting secretly in the Pentagon just five days later. Although the basic argument for a transatlantic pact was provided by Bevin and his colleagues, the US participants served as the intellectual and drafting mid-wives to the treaty, with the Canadians playing an important supporting role.

On 24 March, the US delegation submitted a memorandum endorsing the idea of a security pact for the North Atlantic area in which the “US government would regard an attack upon any of the Brussels Treaty Powers as an attack against the US, to be dealt with by the US in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter [which preserved the right of UN members to ‘individual or collective self-defence’].” Once the Truman administration had agreed to include this concept in the “Pentagon proposals”, the next step was to bring Congress, the other US partner in the emerging “transatlantic bargain”, into the deal.

In parallel with the secret tripartite discussions, the administration had begun working with a few key members of Congress to try to learn what kind of agreement might pass muster in the Senate. Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a reformed isolationist and Republican Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, decided to incorporate the essence of the Pentagon proposals in a Senate resolution. Vandenberg not only agreed with the direction in which the talks had moved, but also wanted the Congress (and himself personally) to get some credit for the concept. The “Vandenberg Resolution” passed the Senate on 11 June, helping grease the skids for continued work on the Treaty.

In July 1948, the secret tripartite negotiations were succeeded by seven-power talks, as France and the Benelux countries joined the talks which now included all the Brussels Treaty powers, Canada and the United States. The French representative urged that instead of wasting time drafting a transatlantic treaty the United States should immediately associate with the Brussels Treaty powers, send military assistance to France and others, and strengthen its military presence in Europe. Given that France was at this point not aware of the Pentagon proposals, and that the US government was becoming increasingly committed to a transatlantic defence arrangement, the French position was quite logical. With US forces deployed to the east of French borders, any attack by Soviet forces would instantly engage the United States, collective-defence commitment or not.
From the US perspective, however, the most important long-term question was the wording of the collective-defence commitment. Bevin and the other Europeans would have liked the new Treaty to replicate the Brussels Treaty’s strong collective-defence commitment. This would commit Canada and the United States to automatic participation in defence against any attack on another member of the pact. US negotiators knew that such a provision would immediately be seen by the Congress as undercutting its constitutional powers for declaring war and would therefore have no chance of winning Senate consent. The US team preferred language similar to that of the 1947 Rio Treaty that the United States had signed with 21 other American states. The Rio Treaty provided for assistance in the event of an attack on any member but did not specify armed action. However, for the Europeans, leaving out the option of a military response would have voided the Treaty’s value. The eventual wording of Article 5, with its obvious ambiguities and compromises, nonetheless met the dual criteria of European reassurance and US political acceptance. The area covered by the commitment included an attack “in Europe or North America” and, in Article 6, also included the Algerian departments of France. It said any attack in this area “shall be considered an attack against them all...” Referring then to the legitimacy of such actions given by the UN Charter’s Article 51, each Ally pledged to “assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with other Parties, such action as it deems necessary including the use of armed force...”

The Treaty, with this somewhat qualified but still meaningful pledge, was signed in Washington on 4 April 1949. The US Senate gave its consent to ratification on 21 July by a vote of 82-13.

Several Treaty opponents nonetheless had grasped an important reality. Senator Forrest Donnell argued that the “apparent freedom of choice on the part of the United States was illusory”. During consideration of the treaty Donnell asked, if the Soviet Union should invade Norway, “Do you think that we would be complying with our duty under this Article 5 if we should say, ‘All we have to do is to take such action as we deem necessary? We think that just sending over 10 gallons of coal oil would be sufficient.’” NATO historian Lawrence S. Kaplan, writing about the leading Treaty opponent, Senator Robert Taft, notes: “There was no question in his mind that Article 5 entangled the nation in a war, whether or not Congress declared it before American forces actually took part.”
Audacious bluff

In some respects, the Treaty and its collective-defence commitment could be seen as an audacious bluff, given the vulnerable condition of European countries in 1949 and widespread doubts that available military forces could stop a Soviet military campaign from reaching the English Channel. These circumstances underlay the French insistence that they needed military assistance from the United States more urgently than a transatlantic treaty. In any case, the bluff worked, perhaps because it held the promise of substantial US resources being committed to the defence of Europe, or perhaps because Stalin’s strategy was to defeat European democracies from within via Moscow-supported communist parties, before risking any more Russian lives on the battlefield.

If Article 5 were a bluff when the Treaty was signed in 1949, it became more substantial soon after. The Soviet Union provided plenty of incentive for Western action. The blockade of Berlin in 1948 and 1949 gave a sense of urgency to the drafting process. Soviet testing of a nuclear weapon in August 1949 spurred on US military assistance to the European Allies. North Korea’s attack on South Korea in June 1950 solidified the US commitment to Article 5, leading the United States to send an additional four divisions to Europe.

As the United States deployed significant conventional forces and nuclear weapons in Europe, Article 5 became even more credible. Just as France had argued in the early stages of Treaty negotiations, and as Treaty opponents in the US Senate had feared, once the United States was fully engaged at the heart of the defence against a Soviet attack, Article 5 had much more meaning in practice than it had ever had in theory.

Throughout the Cold War, the Allies debated how best to implement Article 5. The initial US preference would have been to provide air power and supplemental ground forces to back up European forces on the ground. Europeans wanted US forces deployed in Europe to ensure that US interests would be engaged in the earliest stages of battle. Europeans, of course, never managed to provide the forces that would have been required to meet US preferences.

Motivated by the perceived need to limit US military spending as well as the failure of the European Allies to deploy sufficient conventional forces, President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s administration insisted the Alliance adopt massive (nuclear) retaliation as the main instrument of collective defence, which it did in December 1954. When massive retaliation was undermined by the Soviet Union’s acquisition of delivery systems capable of striking targets in the continental United States, the United States convinced the Allies to adopt a “flexible response” strategy, in which NATO would plan to respond to a Soviet attack with whatever conventional or nuclear forces were required to defeat the attack.

Flexible response never totally satisfied either the United States or the European Allies, and, as a consequence, the Alliance endured years of burden-sharing battles and debates over deployments of new nuclear weapons systems. However, in spite of all the strategic twists and turns, deterrence based on the Article 5 commitment held together until the Soviet Union fell apart.

At the end of the Cold War, NATO faced an entirely new set of questions, including Article 5’s continued relevance. Without calling the commitment into question, the Allies began removing many of its implements. Most US nuclear weapons were withdrawn from Europe and the process of reducing US troop levels and re-orienting NATO strategy toward “new risks and dangers” was begun.

Many analysts, myself included, suggested in the mid-1990s that Article 5 was being put in NATO’s “back pocket”, available for use should it become necessary, and that non-Article 5 contingencies would increasingly preoccupy the Alliance and dominate its day-to-day political and military activities.

Although Article 5 was invoked in response to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States, NATO’s activities are now largely rooted in the Washington Treaty’s Article 4. This Article, which says that the Allies “will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened”, was included in the Treaty primarily as a result of European concerns over their remaining colonial interests. It promises nothing, as was clear in the Allied debate over the war in Iraq. But it invites the Treaty signatories to work together to defend their interests from threats emanating from any source, anywhere in the world.

That said, Article 5 still constitutes the heart and soul of the Alliance. It represents a solid commitment to cooperate, and it provides a continuing rationale for NATO’s Integrated Military Structure, without which the Alliance would not have the capacity to conduct non-Article-5 missions. Perhaps those prescient European and US officials who composed this seemingly timeless document would be surprised by how effectively it has served as a continuing basis for Euro-Atlantic security cooperation.

For more on the Atlantic Community Initiative, see www.atlanticcommunity.org
Visitors to NATO Headquarters often spend the day in rooms bearing the names Lange, Martino and Pearson. These briefing rooms were named after Halvard Lange, Gaetano Martino and Lester B. Pearson, foreign ministers of Norway, Italy and Canada respectively, in recognition of their work in preparing in 1956 the Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO. Although the Report is generally presented as one of NATO’s seminal documents and many of the ideas contained in it eventually became standard Alliance practice, it had little immediate impact.

The North Atlantic Council appointed a committee of the three statesmen in May 1956 to “advise the Council on ways and means to extend cooperation in non-military fields and to strengthen unity in the Atlantic Community”. The three “Wise Men” delivered their 15-page Report in December, and the Council expressed its appreciation at the May 1957 meeting when it inaugurated new procedures based on the Committee’s recommendations. The ministers concluded that “useful and concrete results had been achieved, and that the Alliance was acquiring both greater maturity and solidarity”.

If the Council genuinely believed that consultation among members would be the pattern of the immediate future, they were either deceiving themselves or soothing the feelings of NATO’s smaller nations. Even a hasty glance at the history of the Alliance after 1956 suggests that the major powers – France, the United Kingdom and the United States – continued to make decisions with little or no consultation with ministers from the countries that delivered the report. There was no consultation with them when President Charles de Gaulle proposed a triumvirate with the United Kingdom and United States in 1960 to manage the Alliance; or when the United States challenged the Soviet navy in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962; or when the United Kingdom withdrew its forces east of Suez in 1968. Moreover, little reference was made in the next few years to the Report that specifically recommended expanded cooperation and consultation “in the early stages of policy formation and before national positions became fixed”.

It is perhaps ironic that the Suez crisis erupted at the very time that the Committee was putting together its Report. Just six weeks before France and the United Kingdom collaborated in the invasion of Egypt to secure the Suez Canal, the Committee had consulted with each member nation individually to clarify positions each government had taken “with respect to cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and information fields”. At the time, Foreign Ministers Christian Pineau and Anthony Nutting of France and the United Kingdom, respectively, presumably provided the answers the Committee was seeking. The disconnect between the Anglo-French action in October, in which the United States as well as the Committee of Three had no advance notification, and the apparently fruitful conversations of September was striking.

Origins

The incentive for improving the conditions for consultation in the Alliance was long in the making. From its beginnings, the smaller Allies had felt that their voice was too seldom heard or heeded. Indeed, the Benelux countries had difficulty pressing France and the United Kingdom to make them more equal partners in the Brussels Pact of 1948. As negotiations for an Atlantic alliance proceeded in 1948, the United States’ positions prevailed in almost all the issues – from overcoming European reluctance to admit such “stepping-stone” nations as Norway and Portugal as charter members to the establishment of a Standing Group composed of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, after the treaty was signed, to make the key decisions for the Military Committee. Not surprisingly, the signing of the Treaty took place in Washington, not in Bermuda as the British had suggested, or in Paris where so many US treaties had been concluded in the past. The Truman administration intervened in Korea without consulting any of its NATO Allies. That the Supreme
Allied Commanders appointed after the Korean War were American, not European, was a logical consequence of US dominance of the Alliance in the 1950s. Europe’s dependence in those years on US economic support and its military ability to inhibit Soviet aggression accounted for the smaller Allies’ reluctant acceptance of a lesser role vis-à-vis the United States. They were less patient with the presumptions of a superior status on the part of the two major European Allies.

It was US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles who opened the way for the Committee of Three in April when he issued a number of statements indicating that the United States was anxious to expand NATO’s functions in the non-military spheres. The Cold War was a major factor in his thinking. His proposed shift in NATO’s emphases was motivated in large part by a need to meet the apparent change in Soviet strategy under Nikita Khrushchev away from military intimidation. Consultation on non-military
areas could be an effective way of countering the growing Soviet economic and social offensives.

The result was the North Atlantic Council’s appointment of a committee “to examine actively further measures which might be taken at this time to advance effectively their common interests”.

A precedent for the Wise Men was the Committee of Three, also dubbed the “Three Wise Men”, appointed in 1951 to recommend means of expanding the members’ military production without damaging the reconstruction of their economies. It is worth noting that the individuals chosen for this delicate assignment were all representatives of the leading powers – W. Averell Harriman, US coordinator of the European Recovery Program, prominent British industrialist Sir Edwin Plowden, and Jean Monnet, France’s most distinguished economist. For the first time, NATO’s military needs, economic capabilities and political limitations were to be examined together to help devise appropriate strategies. The timing of the Committee’s appointment was geared to the Truman administration’s recognition that Europe’s cooperation would have a beneficial effect on Congressional attitudes towards future foreign aid.

In 1956, the issue was the continuing exclusion of the smaller Allies from the decision-making process. Although NATO prided itself on decision-making by consensus, the “NATO method”, consensus was too often reached either after unilateral action by the senior Ally or by restricting consultation to the major powers. The other members of NATO were left on the sidelines. To strengthen the Alliance by conciliating those nations the Council appointed statesmen equal in distinction to those who served on the 1951 Committee of Three, reaching out to three countries with grievances.

**Composition**

Halvard Lange, Gaetano Martino, the chairman, and Lester B. Pearson all had histories of strong affiliation with NATO. Lange had arguably been the most influential figure in Scandinavia arguing for Norway and Denmark to join NATO in 1949, rather than participating in a Nordic alliance with Sweden. Pearson had signed the North Atlantic Treaty for Canada and headed the Canadian delegation to the United Nations from 1948 to 1957. He proposed the UN Emergency Force to control the Suez crisis, and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957. Together with Professor Martino, a leading advocate of European unity (and father of Italy’s last defence minister, Antonio Martino), they were impressive representatives of the smaller nations.

Each of the three nations had separate and compelling reasons to ask for greater appreciation of their roles in the Alliance. From a quantitative perspective it defies logic to identify Italy as a “smaller” member of NATO. In the 1950s, its population was almost 50 million, larger than the United Kingdom’s 46 million and France’s 43 million. The only way it may be considered among the

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**Recommendations of the Committee of Three on political cooperation in NATO**

The Committee of Three recommended the following general guidelines concerning political cooperation:

- Members should inform the North Atlantic Council of any development significantly affecting the Alliance; they should do this not as a formality, but as a preliminary to effective political consultation;
- Both individual member governments and the Secretary General should have the right to raise in the North Atlantic Council any subject which is of common NATO interest and not of a purely domestic character;
- A member government should not, without adequate advance consultation, adopt firm policies or make major political pronouncements on matters which significantly affect the Alliance or any of its members, unless circumstances make such prior consultation obviously and demonstrably impossible;
- In developing their national policies, members should take into consideration the interests and views of other governments, particularly those most directly concerned, as expressed in NATO consultation, even where no community of view or consensus has been reached in the North Atlantic Council;
- Where a consensus has been reached, it should be reflected in the formation of national policies;
- When, for national reasons, the consensus is not followed, the government concerned should offer an explanation to the Council. It is even more important that, when an agreed and formal recommendation has emerged from the North Atlantic Council’s discussions, governments should give it full weight in any national action or policies related to the subject of that recommendation.

The Committee also drew up a number of more specific recommendations to strengthen the procedure, including the following:

- To strengthen the process of consultation, the foreign ministers, at each spring meeting, should take stock of the political progress of the Alliance on the basis of an annual political appraisal to be submitted by the Secretary General;
- To assist the permanent representatives and the Secretary General in discharging their
smaller nations was to apply the term “lesser”, which would fit Italy’s self-description at the time. Although Italy, like Canada and Norway, was a founding member of NATO, no country was the subject of more debate in the Washington exploratory talks in the summer and autumn of 1948. Objections to its membership stemmed in part from the questionable military contribution Italy could make to the Alliance in light of restrictions imposed upon this former Axis country after the Second World War. That Italy was not on or near the Atlantic was another reason for exclusion. When Italy was finally accepted as an equal partner, it was through the efforts of France and of those State Department officials who wanted a hedge against a revived menace of Italian communism. Initially, France had opposed its admission but reversed its opposition when supporting Italy served its own case for including Algeria.

Italian officials for their part recognised the ambivalence if not hostility of the future NATO partners, and speculated about the possibility of a bilateral arrangement for US aid, combined with a security guarantee. They resented the attitude of their new Allies. Moreover, they resented exclusion from the Standing Group of the Military Committee, a preserve of French, UK and US military leaders.

Canada was in a more enviable position. The United States courted it as evidence that the Alliance was truly “Atlantic” and not just a euphemism for an expanded Western Union. With a population of 16 million, Canada was a middle-ranking power in size and certainly even more in resources. It had much to offer the Alliance, just as it had to the Allied cause during the Second World War. Canadian diplomats played an important role in drafting the Washington Treaty in 1948. Yet there was always ambivalence about its relationship to its larger neighbour. The Canadian delegation in 1948 held a position on the non-military aspects of a transatlantic alliance that was not shared by the United States. Whatever form the relationship ultimately took, Canadians felt that NATO should be more than just a military alliance. This was the basis for Canada’s insistence on Article 2 of the Washington Treaty, pledging the signatories to developing peaceful and friendly international relations and eliminating economic conflict, to which US Secretary of State Dean Acheson had given grudging approval. Canadians were not at all assured that NATO under US leadership would emphasise the economic and cultural ties that were needed to bind the Atlantic community.

There was still another dimension to Canada’s interest in NATO. Membership in a transatlantic entity would give it more breathing space in dealing with its sometimes intimidating southern neighbour. Canadian diplomats believed that the Atlantic Alliance could become a countervailing force against the United States. The farther the Atlantic community moved toward political and economic union the more the influence of France and the United Kingdom would restrain the power of the United States. At the same time, Canada was concerned that a United States that was too closely tied to Europe would...
be restrained at the expense of the role it should play in the wider international arena. This schizophrenic view of the United States made Canada a fitting candidate for membership on the Committee of Wise Men, particularly when its stated purpose was to advance the goals that country had sought from the inception of NATO.

Of the three members represented on the committee, only Norway with its population of about 3 million was truly a small nation. Bordering the Soviet Union, Norway had turned to the United Kingdom and the United States for protection, and embraced NATO with more enthusiasm than other Scandinavian countries. Yet its sense of vulnerability accounted for an insistence that no NATO troops or atomic weapons be deployed on its territory. While the United States did not welcome this “footnote”, it accepted Norway’s and Denmark’s conditions in 1949. A US presence in the form of a military assistance advisory group larger than the entire Norwegian foreign office nonetheless inevitably raised questions about the extent of its influence on NATO’s policies.

Norway, like Italy and Canada, wanted to ensure consultation as well as enlargement of NATO’s mission. The Wise Men’s recommendations reflected these concerns.

Outcome

One concrete development resulting from the Report of the Committee of Three was the NATO Science Programme. Launched in 1957, it sought to promote collaborative projects to stimulate international exchange and maximise the return on national resources allocated for research. Another area in which the Committee of Three had an immediate impact was information via the creation of national information officers and targeted national information programmes in its wake. The focus of the Report was, however, political consultation and here the results were mixed.

The ministerial meetings of the North Atlantic Council paid at least lip service to the need for increased consultation on matters outside the military. A Committee of Political Advisers was set up in 1957 in accordance with a recommendation from the Wise Men. But how seriously did the larger powers take account of advice from the smaller members? None of the Wise Men came from a country with colonial possessions, and this may have been a factor in keeping the non-colonial nations out of discussions relating to territories beyond the scope of the Treaty. Yet the “out-of-area” issues, from Korea to Cuba to Indochina, and to Vietnam in the 1960s impacted the Allies, small and large. When the Council approved the recommendations of the Three Wise Men it also recognised “the right and duty of member governments and of the Secretary General to bring to its attention matters which in their opinion may threaten the solidarity or effectiveness of the Alliance”.

The message could not have been clearer. But it took a decade to be heard, and then not because there was a sudden conversion on the part of the major powers. Rather, the changing environment of the Cold War in the 1960s helps to account for a different relationship among the Allies. Soviet failure to win its objectives in Berlin and Cuba in 1961 and 1962 induced many Europeans to believe that the Soviet Union had abandoned its provocative behaviour toward NATO and had adjusted to the role of a normal if adversarial neighbour. A new view of the Soviets permitted non-military issues to become more important in NATO circles and provided an opportunity for greater participation by the smaller nations in the decision-making process.

At the same time, the Vietnam War was not only draining US resources in Europe but also diminishing its stature among the Allies. Dutch and Scandinavian officials in 1965 were the leaders in the Council in criticising US involvement in Southeast Asia while their German and UK counterparts were relatively quiet. The smaller nations also pressed the larger Allies for more emphasis on détente and less on defence with a vigour and confidence they had not had ten years earlier.

At the initiative of Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, the Allies resolved in 1966 to “study the future tasks which face the Alliance...in order to strengthen the Alliance as a factor for durable peace”. While this study shared the spirit of the 1956 Committee, it was broader in scope and more pointed in direction. Like the Report of the Wise Men, it asserted that: “The practice of frank and timely consultations needs to be deepened and improved.” But emboldened by the rising economic strength of Western Europe and by the greater involvement of the smaller Allies in nuclear discussions, the Harmel Report encompassed military as well political issues. Its main message was to urge NATO to move toward détente as well as to maintain its defences against a still dangerous Warsaw Pact. The advice of the Wise Men can be found in the Harmel Report. Although not always followed over the years, political consultation remains as important to the future of NATO in 2006 as it was in 1956.

For the text of the Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO, see www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/b561213a.htm
NATO’s responses to both Hurricane Katrina in the United States and the South Asian earthquake in Pakistan last year propelled the Alliance into the disaster-relief spotlight. Although NATO has been involved in disaster relief since the 1950s, so high-profile a role is unusual. Moreover, some analysts and commentators, including representatives of certain Allies, question whether this is an appropriate activity for the Alliance.

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In the case of the assistance provided to the United States, NATO made a useful practical contribution and demonstrated Alliance solidarity by offering hurricane victims much-needed supplies in their hour of need. It was not, however, critical to the wider relief effort. (See Katrina relief operation box on page 16.) By contrast, NATO’s contribution to the Pakistan relief effort was substantial. Indeed, if the many bilateral contributions of NATO Allies, and especially that of the US military, are added to the NATO operation, the overall Allied effort was critical to the wider relief operation and helped save many lives. (See Pakistan relief operation box on pages 18 and 19.)

Although the NATO operation in Pakistan clearly made a great difference to the overall relief effort, it also raised...
a number of questions. Why, for example, should military capabilities be deployed in international disaster-relief operations? Why should NATO be involved? What added value can NATO bring to relief efforts? And who should lead operations dealing with the consequences of natural or industrial disasters?

Some commentators clearly believe that disaster-relief work can be done better and more economically by civilian actors, whether they be national authorities, international organisations, or non-governmental organisations. While this may be the case for most disasters, there are unfortunately occasions when the scale of the disaster is so great that first responders – local authority and/or interior ministry forces – are simply overwhelmed. It is in these instances that the military can and should become involved. Indeed, helping national authorities in responding to natural or industrial disasters is a fundamental mission of the armed forces in most NATO (and non-NATO) countries.

Katrina relief operation

As the scale of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi on 29 August 2005 became apparent, NATO’s Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) offered its services to the United States. That was on 2 September. A day later, an official US request for assistance was received and forwarded within an hour and a quarter to the capitals of all 46 members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. At Washington’s request, an EADRCC liaison officer was deployed on 4 September to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in Washington DC.

The first two offers of assistance arrived on 4 September and, in total, 39 EAPC members provided assistance through the EADRCC. On 8 September, the North Atlantic Council authorised a NATO transport operation consisting of NATO’s Airborne Early Warning fleet training and cargo aircraft and NATO Response Force (NRF) air and sealift to help move urgently needed items from Europe to the United States. The EADRCC acted as a clearing house, matching requests and offers of assistance. Donations needing transportation were coordinated by the Allied Movement and Coordination Centre, in conjunction with the EADRCC. Additionally, two civil aviation experts were deployed to the EADRCC on 9 September to help coordinate civil transport requirements.

Relief items were consolidated at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Donations were moved there either by road or by NRF-assigned tactical airlift under the command of Joint Command Lisbon. All cargo consolidation in Ramstein from European donors was completed by 19 September 2005. More than 90 flight hours were flown by French, German, Greek and Italian C-130 and C-160 tactical NRF-assigned transport aircraft.

By 2 October, 12 NATO cargo flights had taken relief supplies from Europe to the United States and some 189 tons of relief goods, including food, first-aid kits, medical supplies, generators and water pumps, were delivered via the NATO air-bridge.

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Loading relief aid for Hurricane Katrina victims
Deploying military capabilities

The recent disasters in the United States and Pakistan have highlighted how useful certain military capabilities can be when first responders find themselves overwhelmed. Strategic airlift is crucial to transport urgently needed relief supplies as commercial aircraft are not always available in sufficient numbers. Moreover, helicopters have proven essential in the first phase of a disaster-relief operation when roads are often too badly damaged to be passable and sealift capabilities are critical to sustaining the relief effort in a more cost-effective way in the weeks and months following a disaster. Rapidly deployable military hospitals and medical personnel can also help out overburdened first responders. In addition, military engineers, water purification units and search-and-rescue teams all have the skills that can greatly improve crisis-response capabilities and save lives.

While the military clearly has useful capabilities to bring to disaster-relief operations, such assistance should be provided according to the principle of subsidiarity. Civil responders should always be in the lead and must formally request military support. It is demand-driven assistance, not a supply-driven relief contribution. In principle, local authorities and/or the interior ministry or other competent national body should ask for external, including military, assistance, if and when they decide that the scale of the disaster is too great for them to handle alone.

In the case of both Hurricane Katrina and the South Asian earthquake, the respective national governments formally requested NATO assistance. In addition, in the case of Pakistan, the United Nations publicly and emphatically asked NATO for assistance in putting together its own relief operation. As a result, most of the crucial shelter material provided by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was transported to Pakistan via NATO’s air-bridge before the onset of the harsh Himalayan winter.

NATO recognises that the United Nations, specifically the United Nations’ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), should always be in the lead, together with the authorities of the stricken country, in any international disaster-relief operation. Indeed, NATO’s Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), the Alliance’s principal crisis-response mechanism involving 20 Partner countries in addition to the 26 Allies, hosts a UN OCHA liaison officer, who advises NATO, where necessary. In the case of the Pakistan relief operation, NATO also participated in the overall coordination meetings in Islamabad, jointly led by Pakistani government officials and the UN resident representative, as well as in the relevant UN-led cluster meetings, such as the health and shelter clusters.

NATO’s added value

If one recognises that military capabilities may usefully be deployed in disaster-response operations the next issue to address is that of NATO’s added value. Clearly, military contributions do not have to come via NATO and may indeed be made on a bilateral basis. Moreover, decision-making in response to disasters needs to be rapid and the Alliance’s multilateral approach is in theory slower than that of individual Allies.

Given that no two disaster-relief operations are identical and that innovative and pragmatic solutions are almost invariably required, it is not possible to say definitively that NATO should automatically be involved or that individual Allies should take the lead. However, several factors should be taken into consideration. Firstly, only very few Allies, such as the United States, are capable of transporting significant relief capabilities rapidly over great distances to stricken areas and to sustain the effort. Secondly, NATO’s primary contribution is the coordinating, liaising and facilitating function that the EADRCC and the Alliance’s military structures provide. These enable smaller Allies to contribute capabilities, such as a military hospital or water purification unit, that they would not be able to contribute on their own. In addition, this coordination role that characterises NATO-led operations has proven useful both to the authorities of the receiving country and to the United Nations, who were thereby able to deal with a single actor rather than many.

Can NATO take a decision on disaster relief almost as quickly as a national government? In general, when there is a precedent, the Alliance is able to move rapidly. The decision to set up an air-bridge to Pakistan, for example, could be taken quickly, above all, because there was already a precedent, namely the airlift to the United States in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The decision to send medical personnel and engineers to Pakistan, by contrast, took longer as there was no precedent at the time for sending military personnel to a non-NATO (or Partner) country for a disaster-relief operation.

In the wake of both the Hurricane Katrina and Pakistan relief operations, the Alliance is now carrying out a lessons-learned exercise. Once this has been completed
and issues such as the funding of certain elements of the operation are resolved, it might be possible further to reduce response times. In this way, NATO decision-making could be almost as quick as that of the national authorities of an individual Ally.

Funding reform

Looking ahead, one of the most important issues that needs to be resolved before either NATO as a whole or individual Allies again make military capabilities available for disaster-relief operations is that of appropriate funding mechanisms. If, as at present, the defence ministries of those countries that are asked to provide helicopters for a future disaster-relief operation are also expected to carry the entire financial burden of their engagement, they may decide that they cannot afford to become involved. Unless new funding mechanisms are developed, intervention for disaster relief would eat up a great portion of the defence budget. Meanwhile, the first responders, both nationally and internationally, would essentially be receiving help for free.

Some steps to reform and improve funding mechanisms were already put in place during the Pakistan relief operation by individual countries. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Minister for International Development, Hilary Benn, decided to cover the additional operating costs caused by the deployment of three Chinook helicopters and a regiment of engineers out of the international development budget. By using another budget line, Benn was also able to make a significant financial contribution to the NATO “trust fund” that met the costs of the air-bridge.

The benefits of Benn’s improvised arrangement are clear. In this way, a department for international development does not need to operate and deploy its own fleet of helicopters, thereby avoiding duplication of assets. Moreover, depending on how costs are calculated, this solution is likely to be considerably

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<th>Pakistan relief operation</th>
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<td>Two days after the South Asian earthquake of 8 October that left more than 73 000 people dead, 70 000 injured and some four million homeless, Pakistan requested NATO assistance for the humanitarian relief operation it was mounting. The North Atlantic Council agreed to help and approved a two-stage Alliance response.</td>
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<td>The first stage focused on the air-bridge. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Relief Cooperation Council (EADRCC) established links to its members’ national aid-coordinating bodies and the Pakistani authorities. The EADRCC worked in conjunction with the NATO Military Authorities to coordinate the response of members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) willing to channel their assistance through this mechanism.</td>
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<td>On 13 October 2005, the EADRCC received the first request from the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to airlift 10 000 tents, 104 000 blankets and 2 000 stoves from Turkey to Pakistan. Several other requests from UN agencies followed. The first NATO relief flight to Pakistan arrived on 14 October. At the request of the Pakistani authorities, priority was initially given to moving tents and blankets, with the majority of the relief items being provided by the UNHCR. Eventually, some 160 flights delivered about 3500 tons of relief goods.</td>
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<td>Forty-two out of 46 EAPC members provided assistance to Pakistan, including through the EADRCC. The NATO air-bridge was used by 19 EAPC and two non-EAPC countries – Malta and Bosnia and Herzegovina – as well as by the UNHCR, the World Food Programme and the United Nations’ Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance.</td>
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<td>Military liaison officers were dispatched to the EADRCC and embedded in the Centre’s working structure while civilian experts from the Senior Civil-Emergency Planning Committee’s Transport Planning Boards provided assistance to the EADRCC, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency from their usual places of business when needed. By the end of the operation, all assistance offered to Pakistan through the NATO air-bridge had been delivered.</td>
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<td>The second stage of the operation added elements drawn from the NATO Response Force, including a deployed headquarters command and control structure, engineering units, helicopters and military field hospitals, all with appropriate support. NATO worked closely with both the government of Pakistan and the United Nations on a daily basis and was plugged into the UN cluster system. NATO’s contribution to the relief operation was to maintain the air-bridge, support intra-theatre lift, restore critical road infrastructure and provide makeshift shelter and medical support. The aim of these relief activities was to help earthquake survivors make it through the winter.</td>
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cheaper than any arrangement involving the leasing of commercial helicopters, if, indeed, they are available. To be sure, there may be other consequences of such an approach. A defence ministry might, for example, decide to acquire more helicopters. But even in this case, overheads, training and maintenance can be limited to one organisation instead of two or more.

In order to institutionalise such arrangements, however, it will also be necessary to revise definitions of what constitutes official development assistance (ODA). It seems that the financing of military helicopters for disaster-relief operations does not qualify as official development assistance under current definitions. As a result, there is a disincentive for development ministers to copy the initiative of their UK counterpart in Pakistan. But given that many countries are forging ever stronger working relationships between ministries of international development, defence and foreign relations, it might be time to reassess the ODA criteria.

In the case of the Pakistan relief operation, such a move would be especially appropriate since the United Nations asked NATO to provide an air-bridge and to deploy helicopters. Logic demands that either NATO nations be allowed to book some of the additional costs incurred by their militaries to the international assistance and development budgets or that the United Nations reimburse them directly out of funds collected to pay for the relief operation. Since 1989, many walls – both real and virtual – have been removed. It may now be time to tear down some of the institutional divisions that exist between the worlds of international assistance and development, on the one hand, and the military, on the other.

For more on NATO’s work in disaster relief and the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre, see www.nato.int/eadrcc/home.htm
Dear Bruno,

Independence for Kosovo is the only way to assure security in Kosovo and across the Balkans. Failure to acknowledge Kosovo’s legitimate claim to independence has already led to one war and contributed to at least two other conflicts. If the current negotiations over Kosovo’s final status do not lead quickly to real independence, further conflict – which would almost certainly spread beyond Kosovo – is likely.

The desire for independence among Kosovo Albanians (Kosovars) – over 90 per cent of the province’s population – is clear and the case overwhelming in terms of law, morality and common sense. Since Yugoslavia’s dissolution, Kosovo’s leaders and people have struggled for independence. This struggle began with non-violent resistance to a brutal and illegal occupation, became armed resistance when Serbian oppression became intolerable and international promises proved hollow, and, following NATO’s 1999 air campaign, culminated in liberation. Since then, it has continued under a well-meaning but ultimately ineffectual UN administration. Throughout this period, the Kosovars and their leaders have, with rare exceptions, chosen to work with the international community. Probably no other nation has been asked to jump through so many hoops on the path to independence. The international community should understand that denial of independence, which all Kosovars believe is theirs by right, would eventually provoke a destabilising counter-reaction.

The stabilising effect of independence becomes even clearer when compared to the alternatives. Leaving aside the immorality of the prospect, can anyone imagine the impact on international stability of trying to return Kosovo to Serbian rule? It would be like trying in 1952 to re-impose Nazi rule on France. Or what about the notion of “Three Republics” or some other form of loose association with Belgrade?

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Bruno Coppieters is professor of political science at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Free University of Brussels). He is co-editor of *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (MIT Press, 2005) and of *Contextualizing Secession: Normative Studies in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2003).
Even if Kosovo (and for that matter, Montenegro) could be persuaded to accept association, it is hard to imagine how the two peoples could cooperate effectively or amicably. Nor is continuation of the current international administration realistic. The patience of the Kosovars is exhausted. They tolerate international rule only because they believe they will soon be independent and because they understand that their future as an independent state is linked to international cooperation.

How about the situation after independence? Here again, the arguments are overwhelming. Kosovo Albanians – with international assistance – have laid a solid foundation for democracy. Since 1999, Kosovo has held several elections. The province has a functioning multi-party system, independent media and the foundations of a system of self-government. Moreover, it has successfully negotiated the kind of test which would have shaken more firmly established democracies, the death of Ibrahim Rugova, the “founding father” of Kosovo independence.

The creation of a prosperous and sustainable economy, essential for both Kosovo and regional stability, also depends on independence. Continued international rule and uncertainty about Kosovo’s future are preventing application of a host of basic rules and procedures, without which Kosovo cannot have normal business relations with the rest of the world. Numerous international studies have identified Kosovo’s abundant supplies of coal as the basis for a power generation and export industry. But after seven years of international rule it is clear that only independence can ensure the stable and predictable political environment and the economic and legal regime to attract foreign investment.

An independent Kosovo is also a necessary precondition for ethnic harmony and the return of refugees. As long as Kosovo’s future remains uncertain, both Albanians and Serbs will look towards their respective communities to bolster their own position against future change. In an independent Kosovo, Albanians will have more confidence to extend the hand of tolerance and those Serbs who wish to remain will understand that Kosovo is the homeland in which they will build their future.

Although seemingly paradoxical, an independent Kosovo is also the way to ensure a democratic future for Serbia. Ever since Slobodan Milosevic began using Kosovo to fuel his nationalist agenda, Kosovo has been poisoning Serbia. Moreover, this state of affairs did not end with Milosevic’s extradition to The Hague. Although Serbian leaders privately admit that Kosovo is lost, none has had the courage publicly to state this truth. In any case, an independent Kosovo in which Serbs’ legitimate interests were protected is the only realistic foundation on which to build a stable and peaceful relationship between Serbia and Kosovo and for Serbia with the rest of the world.

It is, of course, also possible to imagine an independent outcome in Kosovo which went in the opposite direction. If the international community were to delay independence, or to link it to yet another round of “standards”, or if the independence offered were a charade, lacking, for example, immediate membership of the United Nations, the danger is that the Kosovars would feel betrayed and take matters into their own hands, as the Kosovo Liberation Army did between 1997 and 1999. Partition, either by hiving off the predominantly Serb area in the north or by creating de facto ethnic cantons elsewhere, risks violence within Kosovo and surrounding areas.

Independence is the only realistic way to create a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Kosovo. But this independence needs to be prompt and real, assuring Kosovo’s territorial integrity, establishing genuine self-government in a functional democratic state, and including a continued international security and assistance presence. Such independence, which would provide the basis for ethnic tolerance and good relations among all Kosovo’s neighbours, is the only way to ensure international stability in this troubled part of the world.

Yours, Louis

Dear Louis,

Your position is clear and categorical. Independence for Kosovo would provide the most stable outcome for the region. And it would pave the way for reconciliation with Serbia and facilitate the integration of Kosovo’s Serb minority. You fail to mention any of the problems encountered by the international community in its attempts to turn Kosovo into a democratic and multi-ethnic state. Nor do you appear to see any need for compromise. Indeed, limiting Kosovo’s sovereignty, by for example granting it a form of independence, proves extremely destabilising.

If the primary lesson to draw from Kosovo is that conflict resolution should be based on ad hoc criteria, independence would prove extremely destabilising.

Bruno Coppieters

Louis Sell

The desire for independence among Kosovars is clear and the case overwhelming in terms of law, morality and common sense.

Louis Sell
Louis Sell versus Bruno Coppieters

The international community should understand that denial of independence would eventually provoke a destabilising counter-reaction

Louis Sell

that did not include immediate membership to the United Nations, would – you believe – risk new violence, as Kosovars “take matters into their own hands”.

I don’t deny that independence for Kosovo has become unavoidable. The degeneration in relations between Belgrade and Kosovo’s Albanian majority in the decade between the removal of Kosovo’s autonomy in 1989 and the 1999 NATO air campaign took the conflict beyond the point of no return. But there are still issues to resolve, such as the kind of compromise settlement that would favour the creation of a safe environment for Kosovo’s minorities and minimise the necessarily destabilising consequences of a decision on conditional independence for other secessionist conflicts.

In the coming years, all UN members will probably have to decide whether they are ready to recognise Kosovo’s independence. Many of these states are themselves divided societies and some have seen secessionist conflicts degenerate into violence. For all these countries, recognition of Kosovo is not simply a matter of international diplomacy, but an issue that raises questions about their own statehood.

Both secessionist movements and governments opposing secession are almost invariably convinced that their case is “overwhelming in terms of law, morality and common sense”, to use your formulation in favour of Kosovo independence. Unfortunately, belief in such indisputable truths renders discussion on (necessarily painful) compromise superfluous. Worse still, advocates of such positions then argue that violence is the inevitable and logical consequence of the fact that the demands for (or against) secession of one side were not acknowledged by the other.

Kosovo is already being referred to as a “model” elsewhere in the world and providing ammunition for parties to other conflicts to legitimise their own positions. There are, of course, very different interpretations of the “Kosovo model”, but something they all have in common is that they reinforce the view that a satisfactory outcome to secessionist conflict can only be achieved through force or other unilateral moves.

Some governments involved in the negotiations on Kosovo’s final status deny the existence of a “Kosovo model”. In their view, the principles involved in resolving this conflict will not constitute a precedent for any other. To be sure, the complex constellation of factors leading to NATO’s 1999 air campaign and today’s future-status negotiations are unlikely to be reproduced anywhere else in the same form. However, the issue is not whether the model can be applied universally, but whether the principles behind the eventual decision on Kosovo’s status are universally valid. If the primary lesson to draw from Kosovo is that conflict resolution should be based on ad hoc criteria depending on the particular situation, independence would prove extremely destabilising for international security.

Those who claim to want universal principles to be applied in Kosovo may end up taking ad hoc positions in similar conflicts. Russian President Vladimir Putin favours the use of principles that are transferable to the stalled negotiations in the former Soviet Union. But he has gone on record to say that if Western states decide unilaterally to recognise Kosovo’s independence, Russia would be entitled to behave in the same way in those conflicts in which it has a stake and to recognise breakaway states.

A second lesson from Kosovo, which may prove destabilising, concerns the use of force in secessionist conflicts. Soon after NATO’s 1999 air campaign, then Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze was the first to call for a resolution of secessionist conflicts in his own country according to the Kosovo model. Before that date, Georgian calls to the UN Security Council for international intervention to crush de facto Abkhaz statehood had been in vain, mainly owing to Russian opposition. But the Kosovo War showed that Western states were willing to intervene militarily in a secessionist crisis and even to overrule a Russian veto. The fact that NATO intervened in support of a secessionist movement was secondary for Shevardnadze. More important was the idea that military force remains the most effective instrument for ending the contest of wills in a secessionist conflict – a lesson that has also been drawn by many who favour unilateral secession.

In its mediation efforts, the United Nations has to take into account the worldwide ramifications of any settlement based on unilateral
decisions. At the local level, proposals for compromise must, above all, seek to improve the living conditions of the minorities and to facilitate the engagement of Kosovo Serbs in local institutions. A transitional international authority may have to be created specifically to deal with this issue. Every effort must be made to persuade Belgrade to buy into an independent Kosovo. If, despite strong minority guarantees, Serbia were to refuse to accept a sovereign Kosovo, negotiations on international recognition would have to continue to avoid a split within the UN Security Council. Despite the impatience of the majority of the population, this would likely delay a UN seat for Kosovo. I would be interested to hear your view about how compromise may help avoid further unilateral moves in respect to the final status.

Yours,
Bruno

Dear Bruno,

It appears we agree on the key issue – independence. But you raise two conditions – minorities and impact elsewhere.

Democracy requires respect for all citizens and minority rights are as much in the interest of the Kosovo Albanian majority as they are of the Serb minority. The best way to protect minority rights is to incorporate them into a stable democratic state embraced as its own by the majority population – in other words through an independent Kosovo. But with rights go responsibilities. Serbs must be prepared to live peacefully and responsibly within such an independent and democratic state.

Similarly, it would be both unjust and impractical to hold Kosovo’s future hostage to the behaviour of extremists in other parts of the world. To tell the Kosovars they cannot be independent because of Abkhazia would be about as fair – and as ineffective – as telling Thomas Jefferson to forget independence because it might encourage similar ambitions in other parts of the British Empire.

Raising such issues – important in their own region but extraneous to Kosovo – brings us back to our original question – stability. Despite its apparent calm the current situation in Kosovo is not stable over the long term. Deferring action on final status or producing a phoney independence would quickly bring latent instability to the surface. There is also the issue of simple justice. If the international community intends to deny or obfuscate Kosovo independence it must tell people of Kosovo why. Saying independence cannot happen because of Transdniestr lacks credibility. The people of Kosovo would not accept such an explanation any more than the people of Belgium in 1830 would have accepted an appeal to rein in their desires for independence lest they upset the conservative Congress of Vienna system.

It would be highly desirable to persuade Belgrade to “buy into” an independent Kosovo. No one wants a revanchist, Versailles-type Serbia. But the primary responsibility for creating a democratic Serbia belongs to the Serbs themselves. Kosovo’s contribution cannot be through forcing unjust, destabilising, or unworkable structures but rather by creating an independent, democratic and prosperous state, which will guarantee minority rights, the protection of religious monuments, and meet other legitimate interests of its neighbours.

In politics timing is everything and this holds with compromise as well. In the summer of 1776, one year into the American Revolution, British Admiral Richard Howe – a sincere friend of the American colonists despite his commanding the British fleet in American waters – offered to satisfy virtually all the demands the Americans had been making prior to the outbreak of hostilities. The American team, led by Benjamin Franklin, rejected Howe’s offer because it lacked what by then had become the essential ingredient – full independence.

In the current talks the Kosovars have gone a long way in meeting compromises sought by the international community but they will insist on prompt and real independence, recognised with a UN seat, territorial integrity, and a functional state. This should include a NATO presence and eventual NATO membership and an advisory – though not a governing – international civilian presence, leading toward association with the European Union. Attempts to impose a contrary solution out of concerns such as “avoid(ing) a split within the Security Council” – however important this may seem to diplomats – will not be seen by the people of Kosovo as
meeting their entirely just and reasonable demands and hence would be neither stabilising nor calculated to encourage a situation where minority rights could truly be respected.

Yours,
Louis

Dear Louis,

I was interested to read the kind of compromises you favour to help overcome today’s impasse. Concerning minority rights, you write that Kosovo’s Serbs have to be “incorporated” into the new state institutions. I fully agree. But the question is how such incorporation is structured. The March 2004 riots have raised legitimate fears for the security of the remaining Serb minority. I believe that a transitional international administration in the north of Kosovo would be necessary to safeguard Serb rights there and that throughout Kosovo power needs to be decentralised in such a way that Serb-majority municipalities feel secure. Minority rights have to be backed by wide-ranging institutional reform.

You also argue that rights cannot go without responsibilities and that Serb citizens have to be loyal to the new state. In my view, such loyalty will only emerge through active minority participation in the political institutions of a multi-ethnic state. The loyalty of a minority cannot simply be mandated because the majority fears it may act as a fifth column for neighbouring countries. Such fear has dominated Balkan history and risks undermining the prospects for pluralism in Kosovo in future.

You believe that the Kosovars should not be expected to take the potentially destabilising consequences elsewhere of unconditional independence for their country into consideration. You write that we could not have expected either those fighting for American or Belgian independence to have reined in their aspirations out of respect for the potential international consequences. Yet you have also argued, at least where minorities are concerned, that rights go with responsibilities. If Kosovo has a right to sovereignty, it must share with other sovereign nations the responsibility to maintain international security and stability, safeguarding the principles of international law. Kosovo, too, must seek to contribute to solutions for balancing the principle of territorial integrity and the right to national self-determination. And Kosovo must respect the authority of the UN Security Council when it prescribes a particular course of action to advance stability in the Balkans. This is yet another reason to appeal to both Kosovar and Serb delegations to avoid adopting intransient positions in the Kosovo talks. And it underscores the importance of building a broad international consensus on Kosovo’s future in the UN Security Council in case the parties are unable to reach a compromise.

Your historical references to Belgium and the United States are not helpful. Clearly, Kosovo is not unique if we look at the historical origins of many of today’s states. Uncompromising positions backed by force and/or a favourable geopolitical environment frequently led to the creation of new states. But the world cannot be reorganised according to the moral and legal principles of 18th or 19th century nationalism.

International stability cannot be secured by the disintegration of multi-ethnic states but by state reform and increased self-governance for minority populations. The main justification for granting conditional independence to Kosovo is that Serbia failed to reform the Yugoslav state to take Kosovar rights into consideration and the subsequent attempt to solve the issue through force backfired. But any exception to the general rule that ethnic conflict should be resolved through state reform and not by the break-up of existing states or through force necessarily has destabilising consequences for international order. Kosovo’s secession will make mediation attempts elsewhere and especially in the former Soviet Union more difficult. A division of the world community over recognition of Kosovo’s independence would have even more detrimental consequences on attempts to resolve other secessionist conflicts. We can only hope that both Kosovar and Serb delegations to the Kosovo talks and the other players involved in the process of political recognition will show practical wisdom in their efforts to reach a compromise and shun the uncompromising rhetoric that guided nationalist conflict in centuries past.

Yours,
Bruno
Dear Bruno,

Creating an effective “transitional administration” in the north, as the international community should have done in 1999, would be a positive step. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to happen now, when the international presence is diminishing. A special regime in the north, therefore, would create a Serb quasi-state and de-facto partition, especially since extreme Serb leaders in the north reject any links with Kosovo. Partition in Kosovo would exacerbate problems around the divided city of Mitrovica and likely spill-over into Presevo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,* and possibly Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Albanian revenge on Kosovo Serbs in 1999 and the violent outbreak of March 2004 were shameful, as was international failure to stop the violence. But your legitimate concern for the Kosovo Serbs seems accompanied by historical amnesia. To understand why independence is so important to Albanians simply recall recent history – the forceful and illegal suppression of Kosovo’s autonomy in 1989, the brutal apartheid-style Serb occupation of the 1990s, and the genocidal Serb campaign of 1999. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991 only force could keep Kosovo part of Serbia. “Institutional reform” is irrelevant here and looking at the Albanians’ experience with Belgrade it is easy to understand why. Nor can dubious principles of ethnic conflict change this. The world has so far recognised five new states out of Yugoslavia and 15 out of the Soviet Union. Kosovo independence will not affect conflicts in the former Soviet Union which, like the one in Kosovo, will be resolved on their own realities.

And to get back to the original point of this dialogue, there is only one solution that can work in Kosovo and that is independence, in a democratic state with full respect for the human and minority rights of the entire population. Anything else will be neither just nor stabilising. It’s that simple.

Yours,
Louis

Dear Louis,

We agree that independence for Kosovo is the only feasible option but differ over the normative principles underpinning this position. You argue that past violence in Kosovo was the result of the failure to acknowledge its independence claim and that the oppressive policies of the Milosevic government demonstrated that only force could keep Kosovo within Serbia. I argue, by contrast, that violence was the result of Serbia’s failure to reform its state institutions. In this way, independence for Kosovo only became legitimate on account of both the Serbian refusal to accord democratic forms of self-government to the Kosovar population that would have respected the principle of territorial integrity and of Serbia’s oppressive policies. Our differences are not primarily related to recalling or forgetting particular historical events, the “historical amnesia” you refer to, but to moral principles.

Second, we disagree over the extent of the need for compromise. Both on the domestic and on the international level, far-reaching conditions will have to be placed on the exercise of Kosovar sovereignty. These are necessary to secure both minority rights and agreement within the United Nations. But you stress the potentially destabilising consequences of the compromise solutions I mentioned, such as the risk of partition that could result from strong powers for Serb majority municipalities.

Third, you assume that Kosovar independence will not affect other secessionist conflicts and that they will be resolved on their own merits. I believe, by contrast, that Kosovo is already and will remain an important point of reference in all secessionist conflicts. This does not mean that the formula of “conditional independence” will be used to resolve any other conflict, but that Kosovo will feature in all discussions on related issues. The Kosovo talks are therefore not only about Kosovo. Rather, they also have to address the issue of how a satisfactory solution can be found for an individual case that does not undermine wider international security.

Yours,
Bruno

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*For more on the University of Maine, see www.umaine.edu

*For more on the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, see www.vub.ac.be/english/index.php

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Far-reaching conditions will have to be placed on the exercise of Kosovar sovereignty

Bruno Coppieters
Christian Schwarz-Schilling: Bosnia and Herzegovina’s last High Representative

Christian Schwarz-Schilling became High Representative of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina responsible for overseeing the Bosnian peace process on 1 February. As the last High Representative, Mr Schwarz-Schilling has to oversee the transition from today’s quasi-protectorate to local ownership. To this end, he will close the Office of the High Representative and give up the wide-ranging powers associated with this post. He will then remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina as Special Representative of the European Union. For the decade prior to his appointment as High Representative, Mr Schwarz-Schilling, a former industrialist and politician, worked throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina as an international mediator. In 1992, he resigned from the German government, where he had been Minister for Post and Telecommunications since 1982, in protest at Germany’s and Europe’s collective failure to halt the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Between 1994 and 2002, when he left the Bundestag, Mr Schwarz-Schilling served as either chairman or deputy chairman of its Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid Committee. As an international mediator, he pioneered so-called integrative mediation, innovative techniques for problem-solving in post-conflict situations. These techniques are being used today in Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* under the auspices of the CSSProject, a programme that Mr Schwarz-Schilling created and which bears his initials.

NATO Review: What are the greatest challenges facing Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Christian Schwarz-Schilling: Bosnia and Herzegovina must become a normal state with functioning institutions providing rule of law and efficient government for every citizen of the country. The path to achieving this is long and complex and there will be many obstacles to overcome in the coming years. However, the preparations required for eventual membership of the European Union already provide a way forward. The challenge, therefore, is to keep to this path. Bosnia and Herzegovina is now travelling in convoy with its neighbours towards Europe. It is behind much of the rest of the region, but, with help, may be able to advance more quickly than other countries. In future, competition among countries of the region will hopefully be about the pace of adjustment to European structures and thereby positive and mutually reinforcing.

NR: What are your priorities as High Representative?

CSS: The economy must be a high priority. Agriculture is the base of the economy and it will be important to develop export opportunities both within the region and beyond into the European Union. It will also be important to foster a better climate for foreign direct investment into Bosnia and Herzegovina. A second priority is the negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union. I am hoping that these negotiations can be finalised by the end of this year and that they will not be delayed or derailed by issues such as a lack of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. A third priority is maintaining the reform momentum of recent years with, for example, further constitutional, police and defence reforms. And a fourth priority is education. Only by investing in education will young Bosnians acquire the skills for the modern world...
and choose to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina and build a better life at home rather than to emigrate.

NR: How long do you expect to retain the wide-ranging powers of the High Representative?

CSS: I will retain the powers right up until the moment when the Office of High Representative becomes that of the EU Special Representative. No date has yet been fixed for the transition. However, I intend only to use these powers in two instances: in the event that either there is a threat to peace and security or there is an attempt to undermine the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. If Bosnian authorities attempt to sabotage the peace process in either way, I will not hesitate to use the full powers of the High Representative.

NR: Given how dependent Bosnia and Herzegovina has become on international support, is it realistic now to expect the country to stand on its own two feet?

CSS: International support has been both necessary and helpful to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s post-war recovery. However, Bosnians have contributed most to the reconstruction of their country. Without the effort of ordinary people and good will it would not have been possible to have achieved anywhere near as much. As a result, I believe it is realistic to expect Bosnians to stand on their own two feet and feel that the international community should have greater trust in their abilities. Even if Bosnians don’t always take the right decisions, they are capable of learning from their mistakes and turning that experience into something positive.

My optimism is based on my experience working as a mediator in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The only way to reach agreement is to have a lot of patience – more than the international community usually has – and belief and trust in Bosnians. Given that it is only just over ten years since the end of hostilities, it is remarkable how much good will there is. A decade is not a long time in terms of European history. Indeed, it took a lot longer to rebuild trust among the countries of Western Europe in the wake of the Second World War.

NR: What prospects do you see for the Bosnian economy and how can you promote growth?

CSS: Bosnia and Herzegovina desperately needs better market regulation, dramatic reductions in bureaucracy, greater incentives for investment, better facilities for small and medium-sized companies and an awareness that the state has to serve those institutions and individuals that are creating jobs and wealth. These issues have to be tackled and there is a long way to go. However, as reforms are implemented, the economy grows and Bosnians see the benefits of that growth, it should be possible to create a virtuous circle of development. This, in turn, will reinforce feelings of well-being and security among the wider population and thereby boost the peace process. For this to happen, however, it is important that all Bosnians, not only citizens of one or other entity, buy in to the reform process.

NR: How important for Bosnia and Herzegovina is the arrest and prosecution of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic?

CSS: The arrest of these individuals and all indictees is of the highest importance because unless and until the most notorious war-crimes suspects are in custody, all talk of rule of law is meaningless. Only when these individuals are in The Hague and the cycle of impunity is truly broken will it be possible to demonstrate to ordinary Bosnians that they live in a country in which everyone is equal in front of the law. The arrest and prosecution of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic is perhaps especially important in the wake of the death of Slobodan Milosevic. His demise before a verdict was reached has undermined the potential impact of his trial.
on the healing process in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and throughout the Balkans.

NR: What are the prospects for Bosnia and Herzegovina to join NATO's Partnership-for-Peace Programme?

CSS: I wish to see negotiations on both PfP membership and an EU Stabilisation and Association Agreement taking place in parallel. Unfortunately, the fact that Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic are still at large, if not in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is an obstacle and has delayed the start of these negotiations. It is important that politicians on all sides, including those in Republika Srpska, demonstrate their willingness to do what it takes to put their country on the road to European and Euro-Atlantic integration. I would very much hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina is invited to join the Partnership-for-Peace programme at the Alliance’s Riga Summit at the end of the year.

NR: How do you envisage the evolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s relationship with the European Union?

CSS: The negotiations that are now taking place with the European Commission on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) are an important first step. Agreeing an SAA will be an important milestone, but should only be viewed as the beginning of a long and potentially arduous process. Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot expect to sit back and wait for Europe to do the hard work. Rather, the country will have to adapt its structures and procedures to bring them into line with European standards and norms. The coming years will be crucial. If Bosnia and Herzegovina drags its feet and fails to take necessary reforms, it risks missing a window of opportunity.

The European Union could, however, be more accommodating in several areas. For example, the visa regime between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union should be relaxed. As things stand, even Bosnians with relatives in EU countries find it difficult to obtain visas for travel. Integration must go in both directions and increased contact is of benefit to all sides. I would like to see the lifting of many restrictions on travel to enable Bosnians with family in the European Union, professionals, students and university teachers to make their way easily to and from the European Union. This issue has to be addressed promptly because of the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Croat population. Since Bosnian Croats are also entitled to Croatian passports, they will soon be able to travel freely to and from the European Union, which will be in marked contrast to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Muslim and Serb populations.

As EU Special Representative, I also intend to develop mechanisms to maintain links with the United States and other non-EU member states, such as Canada, Japan, Norway, Russia and Turkey, that have played an important role and therefore have a stake in the Bosnian peace process. This is important because these countries have had considerable say in the peace process to date via their representation in the Peace Implementation Council overseeing implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and in the Office of the High Representative. When the European Union takes charge of the peace process, these countries will no longer have as much influence. I want to make sure that they remain engaged both because of the credibility they have among Bosnians and because of the contribution they can make to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s future.

NR: How do you envisage your future role as EU Special Representative?

CSS: The intrusive role played by the High Representative will come to an end. Instead, Bosnian politicians will have to take ownership of the peace process and with it responsibility for their actions, including both successes and failures. As EU Special Representative, I intend to be a facilitator assisting the process by which Bosnia and Herzegovina is integrated into Europe both internally and externally.

Externally, I see my role as one of promoting Bosnia and Herzegovina abroad, in the European Union and beyond, and ensuring that the country receives the help it requires in the coming years. Ongoing international support is critical not just for Bosnia and Herzegovina but for the whole Balkan region and Europe, since it is in all our interests that the country becomes a beacon of stability in Europe rather than a black hole on Europe’s edge.

For more on the Office of the High Representative, see www.ohr.int
Hikmet Çetin: Our man in Kabul

Hikmet Çetin is NATO’s Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan and as such is the political face of the Alliance on the ground. He was appointed in November 2003 and has been based in Kabul since January 2004. An economist by training, Mr Çetin moved to Afghanistan after a long and distinguished political career in Turkey. In the course of more than quarter of a century in parliament, Mr Çetin held a number of high offices, including those of foreign minister, deputy prime minister and speaker of the parliament.

NATO Review: What role do you play as NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan and how do you interact with the ISAF Commander?

HÇ: I represent NATO in Afghanistan and my task is to carry forward the Alliance’s political and military agenda. My mandate also includes maintaining close links with the other international organisations, notably the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and liaising with the government of Afghanistan, other political actors, and, if needed, with neighbouring countries. To date, I have worked with six different ISAF Commanders and it has been a pleasure to work with every one of them. Our positions are complementary and we meet up regularly to brief and/or consult with one another. Since we work out of the same building, this physical proximity contributes to good communication and coordination.

NATO Review: How important is it for NATO to play a political role in crisis regions in which Alliance forces are deployed?

HÇ: I believe it is extremely important. Success in crisis-management operations cannot be achieved by military means alone. The only way to manage conflict effectively and build lasting solutions is to adopt a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that mobilises all possible tools, including, in particular, a political dimension. This is especially the case in Afghanistan, where one of our goals is to help the government extend its authority to the whole country. Indeed, we are currently working to help re-establish institutions that have not functioned for the past three decades.

Many other political activities also contribute to building lasting solutions. The development of relations with neighbouring countries, for example, requires political intervention and is critical both to the success of the NATO mission and Afghanistan’s future. Moreover, the longer the military operation continues, the more important the political process becomes. As Afghans increasingly take ownership of the process, the Alliance’s political role will grow.

NATO Review: How do the Afghans view the foreign military presence in their country and how welcome do you feel?

HÇ: Historically, Afghans have resented and fought against the various foreign militaries that have sought to occupy their country. They are, however, aware that NATO is in Afghanistan on the invitation of the Afghan government to assist them rebuild their country. We are not here to occupy their country. We have no intention of trying to govern Afghanistan. And we have a mandate from the UN Security Council to be here. NATO/ISAF has worked hard to win the hearts and minds of ordinary Afghans and has, for the most part, been successful in this.

In all my contacts with Afghans, whether ordinary people, political leaders or government officials, I seek to explain why we are here, what we are doing and how we can help. I also ask Afghans to help the military so that the military will in turn be able to assist them. Moreover, I greatly appreciate the support of the Afghan people. They have done everything that the international community has asked of them.

NATO Review: What are the greatest security challenges facing Afghanistan today?

HÇ: In Afghanistan, significant progress has been made in the security field in recent years. However, serious challenges remain. Today we are facing a widening insurgency, especially in southern and eastern parts of the country. Moreover, the insurgents are changing tactics. The Taliban and other opposing military forces are focusing their attacks on “soft” targets to maximise media attention at minimal cost. In addition to attacking the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, they are targeting civilians and civilian objects, such as teachers and schools. The insurgents are also increasingly working with drug traffickers and criminal groups. The Taliban are, for example, forcing farmers to grow poppies to produce opium and taking a cut from the harvest in return for providing protection.

Another key challenge is that of ensuring border security. This is because Afghanistan has extremely long borders, including some 2500 kilometres with Pakistan and another 1000 kilometres or so with Iran. The only way to achieve border security is to ensure that counter-insurgency operations are coordinated on both sides of the border in, say, both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since all countries in the region face similar threats, it will be important for all of them and ISAF/NATO to work together to develop common responses.
NATO’s past, present and future

Interviews

NR: How do you assess the prospects for state-building in Afghanistan after completion of the Bonn process?

HÇ: The four-and-a-half years that have elapsed since Afghanistan’s factions came together in Bonn in December 2001 to launch the Bonn process is a very short period in the life of a country. Nevertheless, there have been great achievements in this time, especially in the field of state-building. Back in 2001, Afghanistan had no president, no government, no parliament and no constitution. Today, Afghans have a president who was for the first time elected in a popular vote. They also have a constitution, an elected parliament and a functioning government.

As the Bonn process came to an end, a conference took place in London to set the agenda for Afghanistan for the next five years. At the London Conference, a document called the Afghanistan Compact was signed between the Afghan government and the international community. The 60-odd countries and international organisations that were present renewed their commitment to Afghanistan and pledged a further $10.5 billion for the country’s reconstruction. This is a large and generous sum. However, because of the scale of Afghanistan’s needs, it is not sufficient. We will have to try and make this aid as effective as possible because it will not be possible to achieve peace, stability and security in the absence of economic and social development. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and will continue to require international financial support for many years.

NR: How can ISAF and NATO best contribute to Afghanistan’s stabilisation?

HÇ: ISAF and NATO are working to bring security and stability to Afghanistan. This policy is based on the gradual expansion of the Afghan government’s authority to the whole country. We need to help convince ordinary Afghans that it is in their long-term interest to support the government instead of the insurgents. To do this, we have to help provide basic security for the population because only when ordinary Afghans feel secure will they have the confidence to demonstrate their allegiance to Kabul.

NATO’s mission in Afghanistan is extremely challenging. We need to focus both our military resources and our financial assistance to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Unless we win the hearts and minds of ordinary Afghans, we will not succeed in stabilising the country. The importance of having the sympathy and support of Afghans is critical to the success of ISAF’s mission and cannot be exaggerated. Moreover, I am proud to see that nations are providing the necessary training to their troops to help them interact effectively with the Afghan people. However, to be truly effective, the military operation needs to be coordinated with the international community’s reconstruction effort.

Looking ahead, the development of Afghan security forces will be crucial to the country’s stability. We have to understand, however, that it is not possible to produce well-trained and effective soldiers and police overnight. To date, efforts to recruit volunteers for the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police have been successful in quantitative terms. However, the issue is quality, not quantity. For this, more time, more training and more equipment are required. Our long-term goal is to build security forces that are able to stand on their own feet and take responsibility for addressing their country’s security needs.

NR: To what extent should NATO support counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan?

HÇ: The counter-narcotics issue is arguably the most important challenge facing Afghanistan. Unless we can find a solution for this, we cannot hope to fix the wider security situation in Afghanistan. At the same time, however, this is an extremely complex issue whose dimensions go beyond security to the heart of the country’s economy. Since poppy cultivation provides many poor Afghan farmers with their livelihood, we have to address this issue very carefully.

As far as international efforts to combat the drug threat are concerned, the United Kingdom is the lead nation. That said, ISAF/NATO and individual NATO Allies will not be conducting eradication operations, since counter-narcotics efforts are the responsibility of the Afghan authorities. As a result, we can only provide assistance. Indeed, support to the Afghan government’s counter-narcotics efforts forms part of ISAF’s mandate. We have been helping develop command and control procedures for effective liaison coordination; we are supporting the counter-narcotics information campaign; and we have been training Afghan security forces in counter-narcotics-related activities. We also provide logistical support to various international counter-narcotics agencies. And we support the Afghan government’s counter-narcotics operations with intelligence and surveillance capabilities. Ultimately, we hope to help build Afghan security forces able to run these programmes without external assistance.

Since the economic dimension of Afghanistan’s drug problem is so important, it is also important to help provide Afghan farmers with an alternative livelihood. For this reason, NATO Allies must be prepared to support Afghanistan financially and to invest in programmes that make this possible.

NR: Some non-governmental organisations have criticised the concept of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) for blurring the distinction between civilian and military activities. To what extent should soldiers become involved in reconstruction?

HÇ: The PRT concept has been designed to include both military and civilian elements in such a way as to maximise the efforts of the international community and address the needs of the provinces in which PRTs are established. Success in Afghanistan will only be achieved if military and civilian actors work effectively together. However, conditions are different in each of Afghanistan’s provinces and the balance between military and civilian elements in PRTs must correspond to local needs.
In some provinces, the security situation is such that PRTs must focus on security, with the result that the military component is greater. In Helmand province in the south of the country, for example, the security situation is comparatively precarious, with the result that the military component is greater than its civilian counterpart.

Although conditions might differ, the ultimate aim in all provinces is the same, namely to ensure stable conditions in which Kabul can extend its authority and reconstruction can take place. Since we are in Afghanistan to help the Afghan people, expectations among ordinary Afghans for reconstruction aid – the work of the civilian component of PRTs – are enormous. The civilian components of PRTs are working together with all tiers of government, including provincial councils, to identify projects to assist Afghan reconstruction.

NR: How is ISAF’s expansion into the south of Afghanistan progressing? What are the main challenges you’re facing?

HÇ: The expansion to southern Afghanistan is probably the most challenging ground operation NATO has undertaken. Preparations are underway and expansion will take place this summer. NATO Allies are already deploying forces to the south of Afghanistan. The countries involved are preparing for the transfer of authority and working together with departing authorities to ensure a smooth transition.

Since the structure and the capabilities are not the same, some adjustments will be needed. NATO is bringing in more troops than the current structures to the south. Therefore, the NATO presence will be more visible in the south. ISAF/NATO will take the command and control in the south by the end of July and the preparations are going on and there is good cooperation with NATO and Operation Enduring Freedom on the ground.

The insurgents have been trying to test NATO’s resolve and to discourage troop-contributing Allies from deploying forces. They seem to believe that they can achieve this with carefully targeted attacks because we are democracies. Indeed, Allies are discussing these very issues in our parliaments and public opinion is very interested. However, NATO is committed to assisting Afghanistan and has made clear that ISAF is the number one priority on the Alliance’s agenda.

Everyone is aware that NATO will be confronted with difficult situations and will, if necessary, have to use force in the south of the country. However, nothing will deter NATO. The Alliance’s resolve is strong and troop-contributing nations are deploying forces in the south without imposing virtually any restrictions or caveats on the way in which they operate. NATO is more determined than ever to do whatever is needed in the south.

NR: Despite ISAF’s expansion and growing synergy between ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom, the two remain distinctive missions. How should this relationship evolve?

HÇ: There is already excellent synergy between ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom and this should get even better as ISAF expands. Once ISAF’s expansion has taken place, both missions will come under a single NATO commander. In this way, there will still be two organisations, with two different and distinct missions, operating in the same theatre of operations. While this may sound strange, it is not unusual in military terms. Although the mandates of the two operations would remain different, there will be a gradual merging of some functions, which should help further improve synergy and make both more effective.

NR: NATO and Afghanistan are currently developing a special cooperation programme. What is the rationale behind it and what is involved in it?

HÇ: In September 2005, Afghan President Hamid Karzai wrote to the NATO Secretary General asking for a “good strategic partnership with NATO”. This is because NATO is important to Afghanistan and Afghanistan is important to NATO. Since the Alliance already has a series of partnership programmes, including the Partnership for Peace, the NATO-Russia Council, the NATO-Ukraine Commission, the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, many tools that have already been developed may be useful for a partnership with Afghanistan.

The content of the programme is still under discussion. However, Afghanistan is clearly looking for a long-term relationship with NATO, to develop interoperability between Afghan and NATO forces and to enable Afghan military personnel to make use of NATO training centres. Afghanistan wishes to ensure that it is not abandoned by the international community. Although all 26 NATO Allies need to agree on the nature of the partnership, I’m confident that we will be able to come to an agreement that is in the interest of both Afghanistan and NATO.
In just over a decade, NATO has evolved from an Alliance focused on contingency planning for a high-intensity war in Central Europe into a highly operational organisation with an eclectic set of missions. Today, NATO Allies and Partners are deployed in diverse Alliance-led operations on three continents – in Africa, Asia and Europe. This surge in commitments demonstrates both the Alliance’s willingness and its ability to respond to security threats wherever they occur.

Instead of being an organisation searching for an identity, as some analysts feared, the problem NATO now faces is choosing the missions it can take on out of a steady stream of operational and other requirements. This dynamic operational climate has been and continues to be an engine for reform throughout the Alliance structure. Indeed, the need to equip NATO for operations is at the heart of the Alliance’s ongoing transformation. In the words of Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: “We need forces that can react quickly, that can be deployed over long distances, and then sustained over extended periods of time.”

In many ways, it is remarkable how operational the Alliance has become in what is a relatively short period of time. To be sure, progress has not always been smooth nor the debate always calm. The shift in focus has required great pragmatism, frequent improvisation and wide-ranging reform. Moreover, it has occurred at a time of expanded membership in which new members brought new perspectives, capabilities and energy to the Alliance. All along, the process has involved a steep learning curve with the pace of change ever increasing.

Initiatives to modify NATO for the missions it will likely have to undertake in the coming years include the development of the NATO Response Force (NRF); moves for the Alliance to take on a more political role especially in regions where NATO forces are deployed; and measures to forge ever closer partnerships with non-member countries and other international organisations.

Balkan violence sparks change

NATO’s intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina in summer 1995 was a turning point for the Alliance. Initially, NATO became involved in the Bosnian War in support of the United Nations to enforce economic sanctions, an arms embargo and a no-fly zone and provide military contingency planning. These measures helped moderate the conflict and save lives, but proved inadequate to end the war. By contrast, NATO’s 12-day air campaign paved the way for the Dayton Agreement, the peace accord ending the Bosnian War that came into force on 20 December 1995. Under the terms of the Agreement, NATO deployed peacekeepers for the first time, leading a 60 000-strong Implementation Force (IFOR).

The deployment of IFOR, which included soldiers from both NATO and non-NATO countries, was the Alliance’s first major operational military engagement on land and has contributed greatly to reshaping its post-Cold War identity. The adaptation and learning process was evident in the way in which peacekeeping in Bosnia and Herzegovina under IFOR and later the successor Stabilisation Force (SFOR) evolved and provided vital lessons learned when NATO deployed the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in June 1999.

As always, military success in Bosnia and Herzegovina was closely linked to the success of the international civil programmes. The overall peace-building effort had to succeed to produce conditions for a stable and lasting peace. This reality helped forge closer links between the international security force and its civilian counterpart, the Office of the High Representative. By the time KFOR deployed, these lessons had been learned and were reflected in the mandate given to the force from the outset and the cooperative relationship that developed between KFOR and the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

After a 78-day air campaign, NATO deployed a force of 50 000 to provide a safe and secure environment for the UN administration in Kosovo. The decision to intervene without a UN mandate – one the most controversial debates in the Alliance’s history – came after more than a year of fighting within Kosovo and after diplomatic efforts failed to resolve the conflict which had created a humanitarian crisis that threatened to develop into the kind of ethnic-cleansing campaigns seen earlier in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

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Military victory was but the first step on a long road to building a durable, multi-ethnic society free from the threat of renewed conflict. In this way, in addition to helping to preserve a secure environment, the NATO-led forces in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo became actively involved in helping refugees and displaced persons return to their homes; seeking out and arresting individuals indicted for war crimes; and helping to reform the domestic military structures in such a way as to prevent a return to violence – all tasks requiring a long-term commitment.

It took close to three-and-a-half years of bloodshed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a year of fighting in Kosovo before NATO intervened to bring these conflicts to an end. In the spring of 2001, however, the Alliance became engaged, at the request of the Skopje authorities, in an effort to defuse an escalating conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.* In this way, NATO appointed for the first time in a conflict area a senior diplomat to represent the Alliance on the ground and act as the Secretary General’s personal envoy.

The ad hoc creation of such senior civilian NATO representation had not been envisioned during the Cold War. Moreover, the role of the senior civilian representative went well beyond that of the political advisers who had been integrated into the military commands of earlier operations.

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,* the NATO senior civilian representative headed a crisis-management team dispatched to negotiate a cease-fire with the National Liberation Army (NLA), an armed group of ethnic Albanian rebels. Working closely with representatives of the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United States, the team succeeded in persuading the NLA to agree a cease-fire and to support the ongoing political negotiation process. These NATO talks complemented the Framework Agreement under which NATO deployed forces initially to oversee the NLA’s disarmament and then to help build confidence.

From this first requirement for a political representative in an operational theatre, NATO has since deployed a senior civilian
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representative to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) and to Pakistan during humanitarian relief operations in 2005.

NATO handed responsibility for its operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* to the European Union in April 2003, while retaining a military headquarters in the country assisting the Skopje authorities with defence reform and preparations for Alliance membership. Likewise, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO handed responsibility for day-to-day security to the European Union in December 2004 but retains a military headquarters in the country focusing on defence reform and preparing the country for membership of the Partnership for Peace. Meanwhile, NATO still has some 17 000 troops in KFOR, which remains the Alliance’s largest operation. (For more on NATO’s operations in the former Yugoslavia, see Deepening relations by Gabriele Cascone and Joaquin Molina on pages 40 to 42.)

Developments since 9/11

Since the terrorist attacks against the United States of 11 September 2001, NATO’s crisis-management and operational capabilities have been in increasing demand. Although the Alliance did not contribute directly to Enduring Freedom, the operation to oust the Taliban and al Qaida from Afghanistan in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, NATO did provide AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft to the United States to free up US assets for that campaign and launched Active Endeavour, its ongoing operation to detect, disrupt and deter terrorist activity in the Mediterranean, at that time. Moreover, subsequently NATO has frequently been called upon to deploy AWACS aircraft during major international gatherings such as the Athens and Turin Olympics and the European and World Cups in football.

NATO’s first three peace-support operations took place in Europe, yet the need for long-term peace-building is global. NATO foreign ministers recognised this at a meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, in May 2002 agreeing that: ”To carry out the full range of its missions, NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed, sustain operations over distance and time, and achieve their objectives.” This decision effectively paved the way for NATO to deploy for the first time outside the Euro-Atlantic area in Afghanistan. Subsequently, the Alliance has become involved in both Iraq and in Darfur, Sudan.

Since August 2003, NATO has led the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a UN-mandated force tasked with helping provide security in and around Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in support of the Afghan Transitional Authority and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. NATO also assists in developing reliable security structures; identifying reconstruction needs; and training and building up future Afghan security forces.

In October 2003, a new UN Security Council Resolution paved the way for ISAF to expand its mission beyond Kabul to help the government of Afghanistan extend its authority to the rest of the country and provide a safe and secure environment conducive to free and fair elections, the spread of the rule of law and the reconstruction of the country. Since then, NATO has been steadily expanding its presence via the creation of so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams, international teams combining both civilian and military personnel.

ISAF currently has some 9 000 troops in Afghanistan providing security assistance to about half of Afghanistan with nine PRTs in the north and west of the country. In the coming months, NATO will be further expanding its presence in the south of the country, deploying an additional 6000 personnel, thereby bringing the total number to around 15 000. (For more on the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan, see Building stability in Afghanistan by Mihai Carp on pages 36 to 39.)

Since shortly after the Alliance’s June 2004 Istanbul Summit, NATO has been training Iraqi personnel in Iraq and supporting the development of security institutions to help the country develop effective armed forces and provide for its own security. The Alliance has also helped establish an Iraqi Joint Staff College near Baghdad focused on leadership training and is coordinating equipment donations to Iraq.

Together with the European Union, NATO has been assisting the African Union expand its peacekeeping mission in Darfur since June 2005. The Alliance has been airlifting AU peacekeepers into the region and providing training to the African Union in running a multinational military headquarters and managing intelligence.

In addition to its peace operations, NATO has been playing an increasingly important role in humanitarian relief since the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre in 1998. This Centre provides the focal point for coordinating the disaster-relief efforts of the 46 NATO Allies and Partners in the event of natural or technological disaster on the territory of a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina at the end of August last year, for example, NATO Allies responded to a US request for help, airlifting relief supplies to the United States. This involved the NRF operationally for the first time.

In response to last year’s devastating earthquake in and around Pakistan, in which some 80 000 people are believed...
Emerging issue

As NATO has become increasingly operational, new issues have come on to the Alliance’s agenda. In this way, NATO is having to become a more political organisation and to forge effective working relations with like-minded Partner countries and relevant international organisations. The Alliance is also having to improve defence-planning and force-generation processes to match capabilities to the commitments it is taking on, as well as examining ways in which operations are financed. And in theatre, NATO has to address the problem of restrictions imposed by Allies on the use of their forces and equipment, on the one hand, and the need for quality intelligence, on the other. Moreover, as demand for the kind of operations NATO specialises in increases, the Allies must decide whether, when and how to become involved, including whether the NRF should be deployed.

Ever since NATO launched its first peace-support operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Allied militaries have worked together with the armed forces of troop-contributing Partner countries and the Alliance has forged working partnerships with international organisations such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations. To date, the Partner countries that have contributed most to Allied operations are themselves from Europe. But as the geographic scope of NATO’s operations expands, it will be increasingly important to forge global partnerships with like-minded countries such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. Indeed, this was a theme of Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer’s speech at the February 2006 Munich Conference on Security Policy. It is equally important to develop and formalise relations with all relevant international actors, including regional organisations such as the African Union.

To provide the resources to ensure its success, improving defence-planning and force-generation processes is vital. To this end, Allied foreign ministers agreed in December 2005 a document, entitled Comprehensive Political Guidance, seeking to harmonise the various “disciplines” involved in designing, developing and fielding capabilities. This document will likely be made public at this year’s Riga Summit in November.

Concerning the financing of operations, NATO is currently examining ways to introduce more common funding, possibly including the procurement of common assets along the lines of the AWACS fleet. This is in contrast to the current approach whereby “costs lie where they fall”. This issue came to the fore in the wake of the NRF’s deployment to Pakistan, since those countries participating in the NRF at the time were obliged to meet the costs of its deployment. In the words of Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer at the Munich Security Conference: “Participation in the NRF is something like a reverse lottery: if your numbers come up, you actually lose money. If the NRF deploys while you happen to be in the rotation, you pay the full costs of the deployment of your forces.”

As NATO broadens its operational experience, nations are moving to eliminate or reduce the restrictions they place on the ways in which their contributions to operations may be used. These include preventing troops and/or equipment from being involved in certain activities, such as crowd control. This is because the effect of these restrictions is to complicate the operational commander’s task and necessitate the deployment of additional forces and capabilities to compensate. Here, the situation is steadily improving and countries are reducing national caveats as they become used to the complexities of operations.

The upsurge in violence in Kosovo in March 2004 highlighted both the problem caused by restrictions on the use of forces and the importance of quality intelligence. The rioting effectively took the Alliance by surprise and national caveats hampered the immediate response. Moreover, the need for good intelligence and rapid responses in the event of unrest is even greater in Afghanistan, where NATO forces in PRTs are deployed to isolated areas.

Looking ahead, the pressure on NATO to take on even more operations is likely to increase. Indeed, the Alliance is in many ways a victim of its own success. There are, however, limits to what NATO can do and a danger that the Alliance may undermine its own standing by taking on more than it can successfully accomplish. NATO is neither a global policeman nor a global humanitarian relief organisation and is certainly not an alternative to the United Nations. It does, nevertheless, have the ability to convert what is usually limited political will and almost invariably scarce resources into effective international action in those situations where the 26 Allies agree on the need to intervene.
Building stability in Afghanistan

Mihai Carp assesses the challenges of and prospects for NATO’s Afghan operation as the Alliance expands its presence in Afghanistan.

When NATO took over strategic coordination of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in the summer of 2003, the Alliance was making a long-term political commitment to assisting the Afghan government and its people. At the same time, NATO’s engagement was a visible sign of how the Alliance was adapting to the security demands of the 21st century – an Alliance ready and willing to contribute to the fight against terrorism and wider international security efforts beyond the Euro-Atlantic area.

Almost three years on, NATO’s mission in Afghanistan remains like no other, with particular challenges for the Alliance. Through ISAF, NATO is both fulfilling a key security assistance role in Afghanistan and conceptually breaking new ground. In carrying out its main mission, namely that of assisting the Afghan authorities, the Alliance has taken on new and complex stabilisation tasks in an environment that is far more demanding than that in the other NATO-led operations. In many ways, therefore, Afghanistan has become a test-case of NATO’s transformation. From operating in remote, often dangerous areas, to generating the necessary forces to meet the military requirements for a far-away mission, ISAF and NATO are being tested on a daily basis. Ensuring the continued success of this mission is as important for NATO as it is for Afghanistan.

Story so far

In the wake of the collapse of the Taliban regime at the end of 2001, the challenges of recreating peace and stability and rebuilding Afghanistan appeared formidable. The country had effectively been at war for more than two decades and was the most heavily mined in the world. According to the UN Development Programme, 70 per cent of the country’s 22 million inhabitants were malnourished and life expectancy was 40. In the intervening period, much progress has been made with the result that NATO, the international community and the Afghans themselves can point to a series of achievements:

• The Bonn process, formally launched in 2001 after the demise of the Taliban, has successfully come to an end with the carrying out of parliamentary elections last September. Despite dire predictions, these elections – like the Presidential vote in 2004 – took place in a relatively secure and peaceful manner, thanks, in part, to the assistance ISAF provided to the Afghan government to maintain a secure environment. In this way, political pluralism is beginning to take root across Afghanistan and an elected parliament has started to work.
• The government of President Hamid Karzai gradually continues to expand its influence throughout the country and has managed to bring many regional power brokers, former warlords, into the political fold.
• Afghan institution-building, while still lagging, is advancing with the help of the international community and individual donor nations.
• ISAF has extended its presence to the west of the country and is seen as an indispensable partner in helping maintain security and stability through its presence in 13 provinces and nine so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). In addition to fulfilling this core function, ISAF troops have assisted in reconstruction; the disarmament of former militias; the cantonment of heavy weapons; and confidence-building measures.
• Finally, a high-level international conference on Afghanistan bringing together more than 60 delegations, including NATO, was held in London in January, formally ushering in a new phase of cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community. In a sign of continued international commitment to Afghanistan, a further US$ 10.5 billion was pledged. The London Conference also set out an ambitious plan called the Afghanistan Compact for the international community and Afghanistan to build on the positive momentum to bring lasting peace and stability to the country.

Clearly, ISAF will have an important role to play in the ongoing stabilisation process, with 2006 crucial for the evolution of the NATO mission. In the words of NATO’s foreign ministers at their meeting in Brussels last December: “We are not only committed to ISAF’s evolving operation but are also in the process of moving NATO’s support to peace and security in Afghanistan to a new level.” Looking ahead, the Alliance will focus on three priority areas: continued ISAF expansion; enhanced assistance to security sector reform efforts such as the training of Afghan security forces; and perfecting the coordination mechanisms between NATO/ISAF and other international organisations and missions operating in Afghanistan.

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Operations
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NATO's commitment will first and foremost come to the fore through the continued expansion of ISAF. Having expanded the mission from Kabul, first to the north and then to the west of the country through PRTs, ISAF is now poised to move to the south and, eventually, the east of Afghanistan. Several NATO Allies, including Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, will take the lead in this regard and, together with other Allies and Partners are expected to bring the number of ISAF-led PRTs up to 14. In total, ISAF forces will soon number more than 15 000 troops from 36 NATO and Partner countries.

The decision gradually to expand ISAF was formally taken more than two years ago on the basis of existing UN Security Council Resolutions. NATO foreign ministers endorsed a revised Operations Plan for ISAF in December 2005 that provides overall strategic guidance for the next expansion phases. According to this plan, ISAF’s mission will essentially remain the same: that of assisting the Afghan government in maintaining security; facilitating the development of government institutions; and assisting with reconstruction and humanitarian efforts. However, it is clear that NATO forces will soon be deployed and operating in areas that are less stable, where the threat is greater and where the security situation remains more tenuous.

This will require a more robust approach to security and stability operations to create the conditions that will allow NATO forces – through the PRTs – to do their job. In other words, Allied forces will have to be properly manned, equipped and directed both to defend themselves and, if necessary, to head off possible threats that endanger the mission. In late January of this year, the North
Atlantic Council approved appropriately robust and flexible rules of engagement to cover all eventualities for NATO forces deployed to Afghanistan.

At the same time, ISAF will also be moving into areas where the other international military force, the US-led Coalition, or Operation Enduring Freedom, conducts operations against remaining Taliban, al Qaeda, and other opposing military forces. While ISAF will not be involved in counter-terrorism operations per se, the prevailing security environment will require intensified coordination to enable both ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom to carry out their respective missions. New command arrangements will be put in place to this end. The mandates of ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom will remain distinct but complementary. While some ISAF forces will continue to do reconstruction work, or work as trainers, others may have to be called upon to deal with a Taliban attack. ISAF’s mission, therefore, also carries new risks for NATO forces that cannot be avoided.

**PRT concept**

Looking ahead, PRTs will remain the main vehicle through which ISAF expansion will take place. While relatively new and subject to some criticism in the early stages of international military deployment to Afghanistan, the PRT concept, in general, has evolved and is seen as a highly effective means of assisting the Afghan government extend its influence to the provinces. As joint military-civilian teams varying in size and led by different lead nations, they are deployed to selected provincial capitals of Afghanistan and provide a viable alternative to a full-fledged international peacekeeping presence, which is not an option for Afghanistan nor part of the ISAF mandate. ISAF’s current PRTs are run by Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United States. Several other NATO Allies and Partners make important contributions with either military or civilian personnel. ISAF-led PRTs have helped with countless reconstruction projects; they have mediated between conflicting parties; contributed to the disarmament process of Afghan militias; assisted with the deployment of national police forces and the Afghan National Army (ANA); and generally helped improve the security environment through contacts with local authorities and population.

PRTs are also proving a novel way of effectively bringing together military and civilian actors in the complex task of external assistance to nation-building. Their composition is driven by the logic that stabilisation and reconstruction are two sides of the same coin. As the Afghanistan Compact highlights: “Security remains a fundamental prerequisite for achieving stability and development in Afghanistan but security cannot be achieved by military means alone.” While PRTs are still run by lead nations and adapted to regional circumstances, there is a growing realisation that closer coordination – not only on the military side – is desirable to pool common efforts and harmonise their respective activities with the Afghan government’s national and regional priorities. It would also be advisable to define more precisely and to the extent possible common guidelines for PRTs.

**Security sector reform**

Another key military task of ISAF will be to support the Afghan government develop further its own national security forces. Mentoring and supporting the ANA is a case in point. According to the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghan government has committed itself to creating a fully professional, well-trained and ethnically balanced ANA of
Experience has demonstrated NATO’s past, present and future must now focus on implementing this ambitious agenda. In accordance with the approved Operations Plan, ISAF forces will complement individual training of lead nations by helping ANA units deploy and operate effectively throughout the country. ISAF, together with lead nations and other organisations, will also support the development of the Afghan National Police, within means and capabilities.

ISAF’s support to the Afghan government will equally extend to counter-narcotics efforts. Helping Afghanistan rid itself of its highly damaging narcotics industry is one of the most pressing challenges facing the Afghan government, the country’s neighbours, and the international community at large. However, the counter-narcotics campaign is not one that the military should, or can solve on its own. Implementing an effective counter-narcotics strategy is closely linked to creating alternative livelihoods; strengthening Afghanistan’s law-enforcement agencies and judicial capacities; and combating corruption. For its part, ISAF will not be involved in poppy eradication. However, we will continue to assist through enhanced intelligence sharing; the provision of logistics support to Afghan counter-narcotics agencies; and help with effective counter-narcotics information campaigns.

Finally, NATO and Afghanistan are developing a special cooperation programme in response to a request by President Karzai to help strengthen Afghanistan’s central security and defence institutions. This programme – drawing in part on selected instruments developed for the Partnership for Peace – will complement ISAF’s activities and be tailored to Afghanistan’s needs.

All of the above is meant to achieve one major aim: to allow the Afghan government to assume increasing ownership of and, eventually, full control and responsibility for the country.

**Afghanistan as a partner**

In moving towards local ownership, NATO/ISAF will continue to work closely with its international partners, including the European Union, G-8 donor nations, Operation Enduring Freedom and the United Nations. While ISAF will fulfil its lead role in security matters, our success will continue to depend on progress made in other areas, such as the rule of law, economic development, creating effective government institutions, and human capacity building. In this way, we will look in particular to the United Nations as it continues to carry out its important civilian coordinating role in Afghanistan. The London Conference displayed a broad international political consensus in this regard. However, we must now focus on implementing this ambitious agenda.

To this end, it is possible to draw on various coordinating mechanisms that already exist on the ground in Afghanistan and include the Afghan government, key military and civilian actors such as ISAF, the European Union and the United Nations. Improving their effectiveness and “reach” to Afghanistan’s provinces, however, is imperative if we are to succeed in our joint efforts of delivering tangible results to the Afghan people. In a positive step, a Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board co-chaired by the United Nations and the Afghan government with the participation of others has been set up to ensure overall strategic coordination of the Afghanistan Compact. Experience has shown that close international cooperation, unity of effort and vision have proved critical in various post-conflict reconstruction scenarios.

**Way forward**

For ISAF and NATO, the next few years will be decisive as a more stable and secure Afghanistan will have far-reaching benefits. By applying a determined and consistent policy in Afghanistan and carrying out our UN-mandated mission, we will not only help defeat terrorism and contribute to regional stability but create a better life for millions of Afghans who continue to depend on the international community’s support. At the same time, the success of NATO’s mission in Afghanistan will have a direct effect on the pace and future of NATO’s ongoing transformation process.

Similar to when NATO first took on peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, reality on the ground as well as the overall operational and political context of ISAF’s mission in Afghanistan continue to drive the Alliance’s agenda. Prior to the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington DC, a NATO deployment to Afghanistan seemed unthinkable. Today, one of the Alliance’s newest members, Lithuania, is leading a PRT in one of Afghanistan’s most remote areas. This evolution is indicative of the profound global changes that we have experienced over the past four years and shows NATO’s transformation in action and the Alliance’s adaptation to new challenges. It is also indicative of what role NATO may play in the future.

While Allies will clearly continue to have to deal with mission-critical issues such as proper force generation and funding, the success of ISAF’s mission in Afghanistan allows us to look towards NATO’s Riga Summit in November with confidence. NATO’s work in Afghanistan is demonstrating on a daily basis how the Alliance’s unique capabilities contribute to the collective efforts of the international community in crisis areas to promote peace, stability, and local ownership. Thanks in part to NATO, the Afghan people have successfully embarked on this path.
Deepening relations

Gabriele Cascone and Joaquin Molina examine the coming year’s prospects for the Western Balkans from a NATO perspective.

Although the security situation in the Western Balkans has greatly improved since the end of the wars of Yugoslavia’s dissolution and media attention has shifted to other conflict areas, the Alliance remains deeply engaged. Indeed, NATO’s commitment to the Western Balkans is, if anything, growing as the Alliance seeks to integrate all countries of the region into Euro-Atlantic structures, thereby extending the zone of stability and security in Europe.

Today, NATO continues to lead what remains – in terms of troops – the largest peace-support operation in the world in Kosovo. The Alliance is also working closely with both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro to prepare these countries for membership of NATO’s Partnership-for-Peace (PfP) programme. And NATO is building ever closer relations with Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,* the three members of the Membership Action Plan (MAP), the Alliance’s tailored programme preparing aspirants for eventual NATO membership.

The contrast between today’s situation in the Western Balkans and that of just over a decade ago when in summer 1995 NATO intervened militarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina could hardly be greater. Whereas war or the threat of war hung over the entire region, today a return to major hostilities is unthinkable and all countries and entities have a genuine prospect of eventual, if not imminent, Euro-Atlantic integration. Moreover, much of the progress that has been made in the intervening period may directly be attributed to the secure environment that NATO has provided.

Challenges, nevertheless, remain and 2006 will be critical for the region. It is the year in which Kosovo’s final status is to be decided, with all the related tension and potential unrest that this decision will likely involve both in Kosovo and in neighbouring countries. It is also the year in which the nature of the relationship between Montenegro and Serbia should be resolved following Montenegro’s independence referendum. And it is the year in which Bosnians elect leaders to chart their country’s future course as the powers of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina are reduced with the winding down of the Office of the High Representative.

Kosovo

Negotiations aimed at resolving Kosovo’s final status began in November last year under the auspices of UN Special Envoy and former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. NATO is supporting President Ahtisaari’s efforts – as well as those of the Contact Group – to move the negotiation process forward and produce a settlement that will strengthen both the security and the stability of the Balkans.

In recent months, NATO has repeatedly called on all sides to approach the final-status talks in a constructive manner. In addition, the Alliance remains engaged in discussions of the so-called Expanded Contact Group that includes representatives of France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Commission, the European Council, the EU Presidency and NATO. This includes the ministerial-level meeting that took place in London on 31 January in which NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer himself participated.

The eventual settlement, expected before the end of the year, will have to respect the ten principles established by the Contact Group immediately after UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s decision – endorsed by the UN Security Council – to open future-status negotiations. These include compatibility with international standards of human rights; democratic values and European standards, including a Euro-Atlantic dimension; multi-ethnicity; mechanisms to ensure the participation of all communities in government; safeguards for the protection of Kosovo’s cultural and religious heritage; measures to strengthen regional security and stability; measures to ensure Kosovo’s security; mechanisms to improve Kosovo’s ability to enforce the rule of law and fight organised crime; measures to promote Kosovo’s economic development; and an ongoing international civil and military presence.

In addition, the settlement should ensure that Kosovo does not return to the situation before NATO’s intervention in March 1999; that there are no changes to Kosovo’s current borders, that is the province should not be partitioned nor joined to any other country; and that the territorial integrity and stability of neighbours are respected. Progress still needs to be made on implementing the standards for Kosovo that were agreed by UNMIK and the Kosovo government in 2003. And any solution that is unilateral or results from the use of force is unacceptable.

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The presence of a NATO-led force in Kosovo is still perceived by all actors as the single most critical factor in ensuring a safe and secure environment and, by extension, stability in the wider region. To this end, NATO will retain a robust military presence in Kosovo throughout the future-status talks and in the post-settlement period. In the wake of the rioting that rocked Kosovo in March 2004, the Alliance has been reconfiguring its forces on the ground, currently numbering some 17,000, to make them more effective. As a result, KFOR has been transformed during the past six months. In place of the previous four Multinational Brigades, there are now five Multinational Task Forces.

Serbia and Montenegro

Developments in Serbia and Montenegro continue to have wide-reaching implications both for Kosovo and for much of the rest of the region. The relationship between Belgrade and NATO has improved greatly since the Alliance’s 1999 Kosovo air campaign and especially since the ouster of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic a year later. Moreover, Serbia and Montenegro formally applied for membership in NATO’s PfP programme in June 2002 and hopes to be invited to join at the Alliance’s Riga Summit in November. However, major obstacles still have to be overcome.

President Milosevic’s arrest and transfer to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague (ICTY) and his subsequent death in March 2006 might one day be viewed symbolically as marking the end of a bloody chapter in the history of both Serbia and Montenegro and the wider region. At present, however, it is not clear whether the final page has been turned. Indeed, extremists have sought to make political capital out of both President Milosevic’s death and fears that Serbia is about to “lose” Kosovo, reviving, in the process, some of the intolerant rhetoric of the 1990s.

The European Union decided in October 2005 to open talks on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia and Montenegro, but suspended them after Belgrade failed to meet a 30 April deadline to surrender Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb wartime commander indicted for genocide, to the ICTY. Moreover, it is the issue of cooperation with the ICTY that is blocking Serbia and Montenegro’s PfP membership.

Since 2003, NATO has been assisting Serbia and Montenegro with a Tailored Cooperation Programme that includes a number of pre-PfP activities focused on defence reform. The programme also allows for participation in selected PfP events. In addition, NATO has agreed to open a Military Liaison Office.
in Belgrade and, together with the Defence Ministry of Serbia and Montenegro, has formed a Defence Reform Group that met for the first time in February to support further defence-reform efforts in the country.

NATO’s existing programmes have contributed to improving relations between the Alliance and Serbia and Montenegro. However, the relationship cannot continue to develop unless and until Belgrade cooperates fully with the ICTY and surrenders remaining indictees, including Mladic. Moreover, following Montenegro’s vote in favour of independence, a new state is likely to emerge in the region, which might also become part of the Alliance’s integration efforts.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

A similar lack of cooperation with the ICTY, in particular on the part of Republika Srpska, has held up PIP membership for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite this, NATO is already working with the country to help it meet future requirements for the PIP programme and eventual NATO membership.

Although NATO handed responsibility for day-to-day security in Bosnia and Herzegovina to a 7000-strong EU Force, or EUFOR, in December 2004, the Alliance retains a physical presence in the country. NATO Headquarters Sarajevo, which has a staff of some 150, works primarily on defence reform in the framework of a Tailored Cooperation Programme, as well as on counter-terrorism, apprehending war-crimes suspects and intelligence-gathering. In this way, NATO is helping construct single armed forces out of the three rival militaries that existed at the end of hostilities in 1995.

In April this year, Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer appealed to Allies to finance a PIP trust fund to help Bosnia and Herzegovina demobilise soldiers and support their reintegration into civilian life. Although the scale of the programme is still being worked out, it is likely to be the largest NATO trust fund to date.

Progress in defence reform should eventually help Bosnia and Herzegovina move from being a consumer of security to a provider. Indeed, the country began contributing to international stabilisation operations last November by deploying a 36-strong team of ordnance experts in Iraq.

The outcome of elections, scheduled for 1 October, will be especially important because the nature of the international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina is changing. The post of High Representative, which has overseen implementation of the peace process and benefited from extraordinary powers, will cease to exist some time in the first half of 2007. In its place, an EU Special Representative will seek to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina’s ongoing transformation with special emphasis on the country’s integration into Europe. Talks on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union got under way in January this year. (For more on the changes, see interview with Christian Schwarz-Schilling, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s last High Representative, on pages 26 to 28.)

MAP trio

All three MAP countries – Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* – have been making steady progress in the field of defence reform, developing and implementing increasingly realistic programmes under NATO auspices. In the case of both Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,* the Alliance has military headquarters in the countries to assist them with their defence reforms.

Although NATO membership is not on the agenda of the Riga Summit, Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* are progressively integrating themselves into NATO structures within the MAP framework. Moreover, they are all contributing troops to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The three countries are also increasingly working together within the US-sponsored Adriatic Charter and are contributing a 12-person combined medical team to ISAF in this framework.

In addition to aspiring to NATO membership, Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* are seeking to join the European Union at the earliest possible opportunity. Albania is about to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union. Croatia began accession talks in October last year and, following the arrest of Ante Gotovina, the highest-ranking Croat officer to be indicted by the ICTY, in December, is now able to take this relationship forward. And the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* was granted EU candidate status in December last year.

The future for Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* is clear and lies in full European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The timelines for both processes are not fixed and depend on how well each country continues to implement a wide range of reforms. However, as long as all three continue to make the kind of progress they have been making in recent years, they will be strong candidates for receiving Alliance membership invitations at NATO’s 2008 Summit. In this way, they will also be blazing a trail for the rest of the region, for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo, whose long-term stability, security and prosperity is in large part dependent on the relationships that they can build with both the European Union and NATO. ■
On 11 September 2001, the international terrorist organisation known as al Qaida achieved something that the Soviet Union never attempted. It killed large numbers of Americans, together with many non-Americans, on US soil. The carnage and death toll inflicted on that day were greater than that inflicted 60 years earlier during the attack on Pearl Harbor, the event that brought the United States into the Second World War. And its impact on both the wider security environment and NATO can hardly be over-estimated.

The very next day, the North Atlantic Council, NATO’s highest decision-making body, decided that: “If it were determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States” then it would be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the most important clause of the Alliance’s founding charter. After briefings by US officials to NATO member states on 2 October, the condition relating to externality of attack was deemed to have been satisfied. In this way, NATO’s so-called “commitment clause” came fully into effect.

The irony of NATO’s decision was immediately obvious. The Berlin Wall had been breached almost 12 years earlier on 9 November 1989 (11/9) and NATO had won the Cold War without needing to invoke Article 5, the political and military “heart” of its founding charter, or even firing a single shot in anger. Moreover, although the clause was clearly envisaged by the Washington Treaty’s signatories as a mechanism by which the United States would come to the assistance of its European Allies, it was the European Allies who were offering Washington their support.

Given the enormity of the events of 9/11, it is no exaggeration to say that they brought NATO’s post-Cold War adaptation to an abrupt end. If, therefore, the period between the 11/9 fall of the Berlin Wall and the 9/11 terrorist attacks forms a distinct second phase of the Alliance’s history after four decades of Cold War, then the symbolic significance of the invocation of Article 5 heralded the beginning of a third post-Cold War phase, the ramifications of which are still emerging five years on.

Though clearly the invocation of Article 5 was a historical milestone, some analysts have sought to downplay its significance and even the importance of Article 5 itself. Citing the careful wording of the original text, they argue that the commitment clause has minimal real value and was little more than a smoke screen.

On the one hand, Article 5 stipulates that an attack on one shall be deemed equivalent to an attack on all, that Allies are obliged to respond, and that military force is an option. On the other hand, it also states that any given Ally “will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith… such action as it deems necessary”. However, to understand the force and significance of the clause and the Alliance itself, the motivations of the original framers must also be taken into account.

Original intent

The Washington Treaty, which is remarkable in comparison to similar documents in its brevity and clarity, was drafted as a political statement as well as a legally binding document. As such, it was a compromise between two existing models for collective defence, namely the Rio Pact of 1947 and the Brussels Treaty of 1948. The former, agreed among American states, pledged signatories to “assist in meeting the attack” against a fellow signatory; the latter, agreed among Western European countries, stated that members must “afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power”.

The framers of NATO’s founding charter understood the first to be too weak a formulation and the second to be too all-encompassing, given that certain founding members, such as Iceland, could not reasonably be expected to provide a military response to an attack, yet by dint of geographic location, or for other reasons, could make their own contribution to collective defence. As a result, the obligation was automatic but not restricted to a military response.

In this way, NATO also sent a political message to the world. As an alliance, it respected the will of its member states and allowed them the freedom to choose the nature of the response best suited to their own situation. This characteristic of NATO would be cast in sharp relief six
years later when its adversary created its own formal alliance, the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, an involuntary alliance in which the will of the members was not a factor and where all interests were superseded by those of Moscow.

In addition to considering the political nuances of the original intent behind Article 5, the perception of the military threat among both the Washington Treaty’s framers and its signatory heads of state and government needs to be taken into account. At the time, Western Europe appeared massively outgunned by the Soviet Union and therefore vulnerable to a blitzkrieg-style invasion. Subsequently, the scenario was one in which a weak Europe would be assisted upon attack militarily by the United States. Should the Soviet Union invade, the world’s only nuclear superpower would come to the rescue.

What the Alliance’s founding fathers could never have predicted was the scenario in which Article 5 would be invoked. On 9/11, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact no longer existed. Moreover, it was not Europe that was conventionally attacked by a nation state and its allies, but the United States by a non-state actor using wholly unconventional means. NATO’s founding charter had been overtaken by events.

Immediate consequences

What, therefore, were the immediate consequences of Article 5’s invocation and how has NATO coped with the fundamental change in its operational responsibilities?

While the Alliance is today extremely active in Afghanistan, where it runs the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Washington chose to operate outside the NATO framework in ousting the Taliban and al Qaida from Afghanistan, despite the invocation of Article 5. Indeed, to make things clear, when Richard Armitage, then US Deputy Secretary of State, came to NATO Headquarters days after...
the 9/11 attacks, he stated bluntly: “I didn’t…come here to ask for anything.”

The US decision effectively to do without NATO support reflected US perceptions of the Alliance’s performance during the 1999 Kosovo campaign, the then limits of NATO’s anti-terrorism capabilities, and a desire to avoid future political problems. Rightly or wrongly, NATO was associated with “targeting by committee”, which was not deemed to be a sufficiently efficient mode of operation. Although the United States recognised that NATO had come a long way since the Cold War, the Alliance was clearly not configured to execute counter-terrorist operations in Central Asia. Moreover, Washington did not wish to have its hands tied by the need for consensus in the North Atlantic Council in the event of future campaigns, such as the invasion of Iraq.

Some analysts have argued that the European members of NATO failed to make a more robust response to the terrorist threat because of the absence of shared threat perception among Allies – a loss of what Phillip Gordon of Washington’s Brookings Institution has called the “glue” that held the transatlantic community together for so long. However, this is not necessarily so.

Despite deep political differences over the Iraq campaign, the US National Security Strategy and the EU Security Strategy are similar documents and security professionals whose job it is to assess the threat to their countries, whether in Berlin, Paris or Washington, are largely agreed that the looming menace is extremist Islamist terrorism. Moreover, following the 2005 attacks in London and Madrid, it is clear that Europe is no longer at peace.

Despite Washington’s decision to go it largely alone in Afghanistan, 14 of the then 19 NATO Allies contributed forces to the campaign to oust the Taliban and al Qaida in 2001. Moreover, the invocation of Article 5 has been fundamental to the Alliance’s retooling in the intervening period to equip it with the capabilities to take on operations such as ISAF. In effect, it set in train NATO’s ongoing post-post-Cold War transformation. In the process, the Alliance has built new command structures, launched various capabilities initiatives, developed some terrorism-related competencies and created the NATO Response Force. It has also moved well beyond the Euro-Atlantic area with operations and missions in Iraq, Pakistan and Sudan, in addition to Afghanistan.

NATO is not and never has been a club of homogeneous states. Rather it has traditionally provided and continues to provide different things to its different members. For many and in particular the new Allies, Article 5 remains a cornerstone of the Alliance. For others, the clause retains a greater political importance. And others see the Alliance’s value in practical terms in its new out-of-area missions and operations, which are not a part of the traditional menu of war-fighting skills.

Finally, there are those who believe that NATO has demonstrated that it can adapt over time to new challenges, and that in time Article 5 may come to be understood as having direct relevance not to scenarios of invasion, but to the ways Allies collectively combat the scourge of international terrorism. As a result, while EU watchers have for years spoken of the possibility of a multi-speed European Union, NATO has already created the reality of a multi-speed alliance, that is one able to serve many purposes to cater to the diverse needs of its many members.

The debate over whether NATO remains a collective-defence organisation or whether it is turning into an alliance for collective security is largely academic. The Alliance satisfies both needs and will continue to do so for some time. Moreover, as such, it possesses capabilities that no other international organisation possesses. As for Article 5’s historic invocation, we may do well to agree with the assessment of former Secretary General Lord Robertson, namely that: “It is still too early to say what the decision on Article 5 will mean in practical terms for the immediate future.”

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I was chairing a meeting of NATO's Policy Coordination Group when news of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center came through. The executive secretary passed me a message to this effect. I read it and then read it out loud to the meeting. The US delegates looked shocked and disbelieving. We all were.

A few minutes later, the news arrived of the second plane hitting the second tower and I was told that the Secretary General was considering evacuating NATO Headquarters in case similar attacks were planned in Europe. I read this information out as well. Ken Huffmam was leading the US team and asked for the floor. He announced that US Ambassador Nick Burns had already decided that US personnel should leave the building. I adjourned the meeting and went to the Secretary General's office.

The scene there was one of confusion. There were reports of unidentified or non-responding aircraft flying towards Brussels, though it was not clear how reliable the information was. The decision had indeed been taken to evacuate all non-essential personnel. Should the North Atlantic Council meet and if so where? It was decided that the Ambassadors would meet informally that evening in the Secretary General's office. There would be a formal Council meeting the next day.

In the Secretary General's outer office, I met Burns and Canadian Ambassador David Wright. Ambassador Burns was talking of the likely casualty figures – many thousands and probably the largest toll in a single day since the battle of Antietam during the American Civil War. Ambassador Wright, who was also dean of the Council, assured him of the support of all the Allies. “Hell, this is an Alliance,” he said. “We’ve got Article 5.”

That was the first reference to Article 5 I heard that day and it struck an immediate chord. As Assistant Secretary General for Defence Planning and Operations, I knew we had a job to do, even though no one had asked us. Particularly in an emergency, the Council looks to the Secretary General to provide leadership and proposals.

In contrast to many other international organisations, responsibility for drafting documents and resolutions in NATO lies with the International Secretariat. We needed to prepare the advice and recommendations which the Secretary General would deliver to the Council in the morning.

My mind turned to a possible decision sheet or statement. The Secretary General, on his own initiative, had already issued a short condemnation of the attacks, but that was not enough. What could the Council itself add?

There was little to guide us. There had been hardly any discussion of terrorism at NATO up to that point. There was no clear policy, as far as I knew, on the use of NATO assets in response to terrorist attacks. There had been no consultation with delegations about what had gone on that day. We had not even discussed the way ahead or options with the Secretary General or his Private Office. There had been no “steer” from any capital.

I first raised the possibility of a statement invoking Article 5 at a meeting in Günter Altenburg’s office in the early evening. As Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, Günter would also be involved in advising the Secretary General and we needed to be united. I took the text of the Washington Treaty with me.

Ted Whiteside, head of NATO’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre, was also present and questioned whether the attack that day had been “armed”: Article 5 contemplated an “armed attack” against any NATO Ally, but was an aircraft a weapon? We also discussed how to distinguish what had happened that day from “normal” terrorism, such as practised by the IRA, ETA or the PKK. The discussion was useful but inconclusive. I went back to my office and called in Holger Pfeiffer, my deputy, and Steve Sturm, head of defence policy.

We went through all the issues on our own. We agreed that there had indeed been an armed attack. The aircraft had been used as missiles. As for distinguishing such an attack from “normal” terrorism, we selected two criteria – the scale and external direction. The scale was important, we felt, because the Washington Treaty had been written to deal with threats to peace and security in the North Atlantic area, which implied a high threshold of the use or impact of force. External direction was important.
because it was clear that the Allies did not regard attacks by internal terrorist organisations – such as in Belfast or Oklahoma City – as falling under the Treaty. There was, of course, another way to distinguish one terrorist attack from another, namely by an *ad hoc* decision of the North Atlantic Council. If the Allies were to determine that an attack met the criteria for a response under Article 5, that would be conclusive.

We quickly satisfied ourselves on these grounds that there was a good case for declaring that the attacks had triggered the Washington Treaty’s collective-defence provisions. The next step was to research what supporting policy statements there might be for such a determination in earlier NATO documents and communiqués, because referring to existing agreed language is an important step in facilitating consensus. I asked Steve Sturm to look at the 1999 Washington Summit declaration and Strategic Concept in particular to see what from those documents could be used to strengthen our approach, and to check what other policy statements had been made about terrorism. I also asked him to produce a first draft based on our discussion.

An hour later, we met again and went through the draft together. We inserted a conditional “if” clause to deal with the uncertainty over who had directed the attacks: “If it is determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States, it shall be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty…” We referred to the condemnation of terrorism by the heads of state and government at the Washington Summit and their statement that they were determined to combat terrorism in accordance with their commitments to one another. We finished our work and had a typed draft ready to present to the Secretary General early the next morning.
I went to the Private Office at around 7:30 in the morning with the draft statement in my hand. Lord Robertson was standing in the doorway to his office. I gave it to him and said we had prepared it in case the Council wanted to make the strongest possible statement of its support. He read it, liked it and passed it to Damon Wilson, the US deputy director of the Private Office, with the instruction that it should be sent immediately to the US authorities for their reaction. The Council was due to meet a few hours later.

The US response was quick. I subsequently learned that after consulting with his deputy, Tora Nuland, Burns had passed the text to Secretary of State Colin Powell with his recommendation to support it. Powell quickly authorised Burns to do so and in parallel consulted President George W. Bush. By the time the Council met, President Bush had signalled his support too.

At the Council, which had a very restricted attendance, all delegations spoke in favour of the strongest possible NATO response and almost all were ready to approve the draft statement, which had been circulated by the Secretary General in advance. A small group of nations asked, however, for legal clarification as to the effect of invoking Article 5. They had two main concerns. First, they wanted to ensure that their sovereign decision-making rights would not be affected as regards the nature, scale and timing of actions deemed necessary to restore peace and security – in other words they wanted it to be clear that each Ally would deem for itself what was “necessary”. Second, they wanted to ensure that any collective action taken by the Alliance, for example military action by NATO forces, would not be launched without specific additional consultation and decision in the Council.

Confident that these points could be quickly dealt with by NATO’s legal adviser, Baldwin De Vidts, the Secretary General adjourned the meeting until later in the day. When the Council reassembled, it did so with De Vidts’ reassuring memorandum in front of them. In effect, he concluded that it was up to each Ally to judge for itself what action needed to be taken, although such action should be appropriate to the scale of the attack, the means of each country and the steps necessary to restore peace and security. On the question of collective response, he said it was obvious that collective consultation would be necessary. With these clarifications, and after a short discussion, the Council unanimously agreed the draft statement as circulated. It was issued that evening and, in accordance with the Washington Treaty, Lord Robertson informed UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in parallel.

There had been no significant change to the wording of the statement from the time it left my office to the time it was issued less than 16 hours later.

How did we feel after the decision was taken? In truth, we were convinced that it was the only right and proper course. We were ready to implement it with the support of all Allies. And we felt just a little elated that the Allies had reacted so promptly.

Politically and publicly, NATO’s action had a dramatic effect. Lying in bed the next weekend, I heard Alistair Cooke in his Letter from America reflecting on the remarkable heroism of the rescue workers and ordinary citizens caught up in the aftermath of the attacks. It was moving stuff. Then, at the end of his broadcast, he turned unexpectedly to NATO. He said that what the Alliance had done immediately after the attacks was the “one small note in this whole monstrous story that can be called heartening”.

In the intervening five years, I have heard frequent criticism of the decision to invoke Article 5. I have, for example, heard people say that we were unwise to commit ourselves to a course of action which was not fully implemented and which turned out to be unwanted by the United States.

I was present in the Council two weeks after NATO invoked Article 5 when then US Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz set out his post-9/11 doctrine to the effect that the mission determines the coalition. This was, in my opinion, a fundamental misjudgement about the nature of the Alliance that devalued the importance of strategic solidarity. As a result, I share the frustration of those who believe that the United States could have done more to engage the Alliance in its efforts against the Taliban and al Qaida.

However, I reject criticism of the decision to invoke Article 5. Following the lifting of the “if” clause on 2 October, the Allies – collectively and individually – did everything that the United States asked of them and were ready to do more. Moreover, in the intervening years Washington has come increasingly to recognise the importance of NATO and alliances in general and is learning lessons from its experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Today, NATO is extremely active in Afghanistan. The United States is more convinced than ever of the need to secure international support for its actions against terrorism. And NATO is transforming its political and military structures and strategies to deal more effectively with the real security threats we face. Such developments would not have been possible had the Allies not stood side by side at the outset of this new security era.
Tomas Valasek examines evolving attitudes to collective defence at NATO from the perspective of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

We may never know if the dignitaries assembled in the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, on 12 March 1999 for ceremonies marking NATO’s enlargement had war on their minds. But war was what came only 12 days later. Though NATO had won the Cold War without firing a shot, the Alliance was about to wage its second air campaign in less than four years. What was remarkable about the Kosovo War that broke out on 24 March was not the fact that it broke out or where it took place, but the contrast between the accession ceremony in Missouri and reality in Kosovo.

The three new Allies – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – welcomed on 12 March had little interest in intervening militarily in the Balkans. Their yearning for NATO membership had far more to do with feelings of historical injustice; concerns about internal insecurity; and fear of Russia to the east. Yet by the spring of 1999, the Alliance’s main area of operations was firmly in Europe’s south, not east, and NATO had human rights on its mind, not collective defence. The Kosovo War was, by any interpretation, a move in a very different direction from that which the new members had expected when they applied to join the Alliance. On the surface, history’s cruel irony seemed to be toying with Central and Eastern Europe again. Instead of providing shelter for the new members, NATO was calling them to arms for a cause about which they were less than enthusiastic.

It would, nevertheless, be wrong to see NATO as a disappointment to its Central and Eastern European members. The post-Cold War history of NATO consists of two phases and, in many ways, two different alliances. The first phase, the “Balkan” years during the 1990s, strained the Alliance along the lines of new and old members, with the former preferring NATO to focus on its collective-defence duties and the latter expanding into new missions. However, the terrorist attacks on the United States of 11 September 2001 prompted so sweeping a rethink of NATO’s purpose that five years later, few of the original dividing lines remain.

NATO’s appeal

Each of the three countries that joined NATO in 1999 had its own reasons for seeking Alliance membership but the basic ingredients were the same. All of Central and Eastern Europe shared a feeling of historical injustice, a sense that through no fault of their own, two post-Second World War generations had been robbed of basic freedoms and opportunities. NATO membership could never return what had been taken away. It would, however, symbolically restore half the continent to its rightful place among free and democratic countries.

NATO was also seen as a buffer from internal strife. In 1999, a relatively short ten years separated the then-candidate countries from communism. The first years of freedom were also turbulent, and stability in the mid-1990s came only slowly. To Budapest, Prague and Warsaw, the fate of Slovakia served as a warning that communism may not necessarily be replaced with democracy. Slovakia’s first post-independence government turned out to be corrupt and bent on persecuting its political opponents. While these are not issues that NATO deals with per se, membership in the Alliance did help curb potential and real anti-democratic excesses. The NATO accession process set the political framework within which the aspiring members were to operate. To the then-candidate countries, the threat of being dropped from NATO’s membership list served as a powerful incentive to remain within bounds.

It was, however, the thinking of the new members that had to come to terms with the new decade. It was not NATO that was changing, but the world around it. The transformation of the former Soviet empire in Central and Eastern Europe was rapid and unforeseen. The issue of security took on a new meaning when the threat from communism was supplanted by the growing possibility of a collapse to totalitarianism. The extent to which the new members could rely on NATO’s Article 5 for collective security was a matter of concern.

And lastly, there was Russia. None of the Central and Eastern European countries had an easy transition from communism, but Russia seemed to have a more difficult time than others. And while none of the former communist states was entirely secure from the possibility of a relapse to totalitarianism, Russia’s political difficulties made it, in the eyes of the NATO candidate countries, a potentially dangerous neighbour. These fears were not in the least quelled by Moscow’s inability or unwillingness to resolve outstanding border issues with the Baltic states. This is where NATO’s original mission came into the enlargement debate. Once in NATO, the candidate countries concluded, Article 5 would deter any potential difficulties from the Russian side.

This, in a nutshell, was the thought process leading up to the 12 March accession ceremony. To the new
NATO’s past, present and future

member states, the Alliance stood as a crowning symbol of new-found freedom, as a calming influence against domestic strife, and as a friendly yet sufficiently high wall against instability in the east. Membership came several years later than originally expected. However, after much waiting and preparation, the accession papers were duly signed and the three new flags were moved from the anteroom to fly alongside those of the 16 existing members.

Air strike: The prospect of intervention in the Balkans was far removed from the candidate countries’ original analysis of what NATO membership involved

Needless to say, the prospect of intervention in the Balkans was far removed from the candidate countries’ original analysis of what NATO membership involved. While there was a logical link between enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe and enforcing and keeping peace in the Balkans – both were meant, in the long run, to produce a stable and peaceful Europe – the demands of the Kosovo campaign and NATO’s focus on Southeastern Europe were harder to appreciate in countries that only recently escaped communism and saw in the Alliance peace of mind for themselves. There was, in the contrast between the events of 12 March and 24 March, the irony of a marathon runner crossing the finish line only to discover that he must help the organisers move their heavy equipment to another race.

If the candidate countries were disappointed by the turn of events, they managed to conceal their emotions. NATO’s “one for all, all for one” approach to security was one from which candidate countries stood to benefit more than others, and as such, they went along with the campaign. But there was also definite tension. Public support for the Kosovo War was at its lowest among the new members. The governments of the three new Allies found themselves on the defensive, explaining to their respective publics why an alliance that was meant to bring peace to them was now bombing Belgrade in their name – a devilishly
difficult concept to defend even if the logic of bringing peace to Europe’s periphery made long-term sense to most in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Impact of 9/11**

By 2001, views in Central and Eastern Europe had evolved. Time and progress made the prospect of domestic instability more distant. Even Slovakia turned from the black sheep of Central and Eastern Europe into an economic tiger, and Russia’s domestic weakness made it less feared among its neighbours. As some of the original risks to Central and Eastern Europe receded, so too did the new members’ and candidate countries’ demand for NATO’s collective-defence role. The gap between new and old members was gradually narrowing.

Most remaining differences vanished in one fell swoop on 11 September 2001. The attacks on New York and Washington were an equally redefining event for both new and old Allies. If until 2001 the two sides were divided by their focus on traditional versus new missions – Article 5 versus "responsibility-to-protect" operations – the potential of a catastrophic terrorist strike was one that they had both underrated.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 brought collective defence back to the forefront and centre of Allies’ minds. The urgency of the threat was clear, as was, for the most part, its definition. Allies agreed that terrorism was not a conventional threat; that it was more often than not driven by groups and individuals, not governments; and that it may not be defeated by traditional means such as deterrence. Moreover, if viewed in conjunction with the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the consequences were potentially catastrophic. But the post-9/11 consensus within NATO had its limits. It covered the diagnosis but not the cure. Exactly how to combat the prospect of cataclysmic terrorism is a question to which different Allies will give different answers.

One of the consequences of 9/11 has been the creation of new dividing lines within NATO. The contours of these lines are very different from the “new” and “old” divisions of the 1990s. The new lines wind and bend on the new and old Alliance’s understanding of the Alliance. The simplicity of the collective-defence versus “responsibility-to-protect” debate is a thing of the past. The Alliance is back in the business of collective defence but divided over what exactly this means in practice. We agree that we are far less secure than we thought we were in the 1990s but disagree on how to protect ourselves or, for that matter, through which organisation. NATO’s pre-eminent position can no longer be taken for granted. Several Allies would probably prefer to limit the Alliance’s role in dealing with new threats and expand that of the European Union.

Divisions may yet narrow as we absorb the lessons of both Iraq concerning the limits of force and Iran concerning the limits of diplomacy. Whether NATO returns to its undisputed position as Europe’s central provider of security will also depend on how well it integrates the European Union in its midst. The progress made by the European Union towards defence integration is real, and will have to be reflected in NATO’s daily life. However this relationship evolves, the Central and Eastern European Allies, either already members of the European Union or just about to join, will be sure to contribute their views to the debate. They will no longer do this as a unified camp but as parts of various and evolving associations within the Alliance. ■

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Big world, big future, big NATO

Julian Lindley-French articulates seven strategic messages for the Euro-Atlantic community.

NATO’s world is changing fast and not for the better. The pace of change is such that much of the security and defence debate, particularly in Europe, resembles the theatre of the absurd, focused on what can be done, rather than what needs to be done. The world needs a strong Europe; transatlantic relations need a strong Europe; and NATO needs a strong Europe. But as the world gets bigger, Europe gets smaller. In short, European defence is becoming disengaged from world security. There are, of course, reasons for this. For the first time in 500 years Europe is neither the centre of conflict, nor of power. As a result, there is a real danger that a little Europe will lead to a little NATO, thereby condemning the West and its system of institutionalised and stable power to decline.

The centre of gravity of power on this planet is moving inexorably eastward. As it does, the nature of power itself is changing. The Asia-Pacific region brings much that is dynamic and positive to this world, but as yet the rapid change therein is neither stable nor

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embedded in stable institutions. Until this is achieved, it is the strategic responsibility of Europeans and North Americans, and the institutions they have built, to lead the way towards strategic stability. However, it is tough for leaders and planners to generate the necessary vision. Not only is the political will to think big lacking, but the operational tempo tirelessly emphasises the here and now, leaving little time and few resources to consider the next and beyond. Despite this, it is the nature and scope of change that the Alliance needs to address now, not only its many symptoms.

Two words dominate the emerging security environment – big picture. It is a picture that is becoming ever more vivid by the day, which raises several big questions about the collective future of the Alliance that must be addressed today, not in five or ten years’ time. In this big picture, challenges and threats, such as strategic terrorism, Afghanistan and Iraq are but parts, albeit important ones. Indeed, the lessons that addressing such issues will be vital to success in NATO’s future strategic mission – strategic stabilisation.

This article presents the Euro-Atlantic community with seven strategic messages and challenges Europeans and North Americans to think big now about their collective role in the world of the 21st century.

Only NATO can re-establish the West at the centre of global security

At no time in recorded history has the kind of rapid, social, economic and military shift that is taking place today not generated profound insecurity. The shift in power is neither controlled, nor institutionalised. Consequently, tension will almost inevitably arise between states, not just between states and non-state actors. Balance-of-power politics is returning, bringing with it a range of security policy implications for Europeans and North Americans that have been absent since the end of the Cold War. The broad array of risks and threats that the new environment is generating call for both a new transatlantic strategic dialogue and a new intra-European strategic dialogue. In short, Europeans must begin aggregating power, not disaggregating leadership, if they are to create a stable Europe, in a better world, to quote loosely the European Union’s Security Strategy. They must do so in the context of the political West that remains a vital security identity in the 21st-century world.

Unfashionable though it may be in some quarters, the Alliance needs to be at the centre of that dialogue. Europe matters and, given the complexity of the security issues confronting the West, so does the emerging role of the European Union as a security actor. It is sad to report, therefore, that so much recent Europeanization has come at the expense of a willingness of Europeans to understand the security implications of globalisation and confront them in a realistic and effective manner. The focus of Europeans on low politics has affected almost every instrument and institution the West has to offer the world. In the wake of the constitutional debacle, the European Union appears unable to confront the high politics of world security. Meanwhile, Afghanistan and Iraq are demonstrating the limits rather than the extent of US power in this world. Both Europeans and North Americans, therefore, need an institution able and willing to confront high politics. For the foreseeable future, that institution has to be NATO because it provides the only mechanism for closing the gap between instability and capability.

Confronting the high politics of world security will not be easy, particularly for Europeans and Canadians. There is unlikely to be much money available for security and defence. Indeed, as Asia booms, Europe is in danger of becoming a strategic backwater, all too vulnerable to the tidal wave of change. Much has been made of the Alliance’s transformation over the past 15 years, but even this process has failed to keep pace with the change in the world beyond. NATO was once an alliance focused on the Euro-Atlantic area. In the 21st century NATO must become an alliance founded on the Euro-Atlantic area, designed to project systemic stability beyond its borders. For the sake of all its members there is no choice because security effectiveness in such a world is impossible without both legitimacy and capability. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has turned away from its grand strategic purpose and played the role of regional political stabiliser, focusing on micro-managing Europe’s security environment. NATO’s destiny, however, is to play the macro-stabilisation role for which the Alliance was created. NATO must always be a mirror of the environment it serves and transform itself again, if it is to address the needs of the big security environment.

In this hyper-electronic age, security and defence are merging to create global interdependence and mutual vulnerability. Indeed, the critical functioning of states or communities of states is now dependent on so many electronically interdependent systems and critical infrastructures that disruption could well be akin to destruction in the future. Article 5 and collective defence will continue to matter. However, like the Alliance itself, the Treaty that created it must be interpreted as the basis for a dynamic defence in a dynamic age in which borders will be virtual as much as physical. To be effective in this world, the Alliance must recall why it was formed – to ensure the political and physical integrity of its members through political solidarity underpinned by credible capability to engender political stability.
The transatlantic relationship must be re-constituted into a new relationship for a new world

In an ideal world, change in Asia would see the emergence of new great powers that become peers and partners without being competitors. However, much of Asia is beset by economic imbalances and other pressures, such as nationalism, which make the region resistant to the kind of institutions the West has built, notwithstanding the existence of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and various Shanghai security groupings. Until power in the Asia-Pacific region is embedded in functioning institutions of the type that the European Union and NATO represent, a power paragon of stability is required. Such a foundation can only be provided by Europeans (and Canadians) capable of partnership with a United States open to the political power of partnership. In other words, a new transatlantic contract is required focused on a new NATO, which will become the cornerstone of global stability.

Given the pace and nature of change in Asia, given the extreme belief systems that seem in many ways a direct corollary of globalisation and the spread of massively destructive technologies, many of which are now over half a century old, the only way to protect the international system the West has built is to re-energise the transatlantic relationship. Never good at small-picture security, the transatlantic relationship is good at big-picture security. The Alliance must therefore be given the mission to look forward, and not be constrained by petty rivalries about hierarchy and prestige within the West.

In time, China may well become a vital Alliance partner in promoting strategic stability. Shared concerns over the North Korean nuclear programme and the scourge of piracy on the high seas point in such a direction. However, three traits of Chinese military modernisation must be of concern to Western planners. First, China is investing in offensive electronic warfare capabilities and electronic counter-measures. Second, China is building...
NATO's past, present and future

The **Strategic Concept needs to find its place in the “big” world**

Given the nature and pace of change in the world, the context of the Strategic Concept is changing at an alarming rate and, in an ideal world, it might be nice to update it. That said, the existing Strategic Concept already has all that is needed to provide guidance to leaders and planners alike as they prepare the Alliance to cope with the emerging big-picture security environment. The issue is how it is interpreted and the problem, as usual, is political and not militarily strategic. Consequently, there is little connection between the Strategic Concept and the strategic vision required to cope with change and manage it thereafter. A huge amount has happened since 1999 when the Strategic Concept was agreed with the centre of gravity of most of the security interests of members now well beyond Europe. At the very least, the Alliance will need to change the Euro-centric focus of the Strategic Concept and re-post it at a global level.

Without a comprehensive and relevant Strategic Concept, defence and force planning becomes unbalanced. There is a danger that limited armed forces will be planned for that reflect only a partial appreciation of the environment in which they must operate and the missions they will need to undertake. By providing an effective interface between grand strategy and military strategy, a Strategic Concept should enable armed forces to retain that all-important ability to re-constitute themselves in the face of escalating change in the security environment. Political realism, therefore, needs to be re-inserted into Alliance planning. Sustained and credible operations at the strategic level require planning to be based on strong analysis and force fundamentals. But as long as Europeans (and Canadians) are only prepared to recognise as much threat as they can afford, such realism will be hard to find.

At present, the Alliance is all too often being asked to use limited militaries to close the gap between the securing of interests – what is vital to the immediate well-being of the Euro-Atlantic community – and the projection of values – the political evolution of others after the West's own image. At the very least, re-visiting the Strategic Concept could and should offer a better understanding of the relationship between political desired end-states in complex, far-away places and the use of militaries to that end. Given the 15-year lag between vision, planning and capacity, and given the pace of systemic change, the planning process should start now.

NATO should also undertake a Strategic Security Horizons project so that force transformation is matched by a transformation of strategic planning. Indeed, for Europeans the only way to empower the Strategic Concept, for that is what will be required, will be regenerative transformation of armed forces through better organisation and spending. In short, not only should strategy and concept be constantly reviewed in light of change, but the linkage between strategy and capability needs to be re-established. Such practice is at the heart of alliance. Indeed, without such a review any alliance, however hallowed, is doomed to subside into irrelevance.

**Transformation must have staying power as well as fighting power**

Alongside the review of strategy, the transformation of NATO's armed forces is perhaps the Alliance's most pressing mission. Indeed, the two processes are intrinsically linked. The political credibility of the transatlantic relationship as the foundation of the international system, and the particular role of Europeans therein, must necessarily be based upon military capability that preserves the military superiority of the democracies. Such an observation might not be politically correct, but it is certainly strategically correct. Unfortunately, NATO's ability to generate security effect in a big world is being undermined by a force-planning dilemma. The need for highly deployable, highly-capable armed forces is entirely correct. However, there is also a need for a critical mass of forces that can operate across the conflict spectrum and over both time and distance.

Ten years after NATO deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Alliance is moving from regional to strategic stabilisation – first through partnership, second through membership and, if necessary, through forced entry and temporary coercion. However, to date no-one has solved the resource dilemma created by such stabilisation – how to balance the capability to enter a non-permissive environment with the capacity needed to make such an environment sustainably permissive.

NATO needs both high-end forces and forces able to stabilise and reconstruct. Like it or not, some countries are better able to forcibly enter, and others are more suited to stabilise and re-construct. Such a basic reality has been lost in a self-defeating and pointless debate over
division of labour. There is, however, a division of labour between those countries that can apply robust force and those that cannot. Those countries that choose not to, be it through low levels of defence spending or a conscious political choice, must recognise that Alliance membership in NATO's post-enlargement age obliges them to take on a stabilisation role. At the same time, stabilisation and reconstruction capabilities must be accorded a higher value within the Alliance's political structure. The benchmark for political influence has become too focused on network-centric warfighting capabilities. Every task has its value in the achievement of complex political end-states in which there are no exit strategies, merely long-term draw-down strategies.

Transformation should, therefore, recognise the value of a division of labour between members. The focusing of transformation on what members tend already to do well, and strengthening that ability, even as the Alliance plans for the big world ahead, would ensure that everyone contributes now towards the political desired end-states to which forces should only ever be deployed. Moreover, a strengthening of strengths would make national defence establishments more comfortable with transformative planning that for many members is both intimidating and imposing. Indeed, when faced with transformation “speak” many Allies become like rabbits hypnotised by the lights of an ongoing truck. The resultant paralysis all too often prevents effective modernisation as transformation collapses under the weight of excuses about pensions, aging populations and shrinking tax bases.

The distinctions between peacekeeping, peacemaking and warfighting are becoming rapidly meaningless in the context of a “three-block” war that involves humanitarian activities, stabilisation and high-intensity warfighting. At the minimum, all NATO forces must be brought up to a level at which they can cope with operational reality, rather than trying to hide their respective weaknesses by imposing national caveats. Consequently, transformation must be more tailored for each state based on what is politically and economically possible on the condition that when deployed such forces undertake the full range of tasks assigned to them.

Allied Command Transformation rightly stresses that transformation is a process, not an event, and that it is as much a question of mind as equipment. If so, there should be several transformations founded on the need to make virtue out of necessity. It is paradoxical, therefore, that while transformation was meant to bolster task-sharing, which remains at the heart of the Alliance’s operational ethos, its focus on developing high-end effect is promoting specialisation and fragmentation, which is only one part of the strategic stabilisation mission. In other words, transformation must take place across the spectrum of effect and not just the intensity of effect.

Partnership today means an active global partnership

The great enlargement mission of the 1990s is over. NATO has by and large fulfilled its promise to make Europe whole and free. In the big new world, in addition to its Article 5 responsibilities, NATO must now become the global security enabler. There are, of course, other states wishing to join and some in time should be welcomed. However, the concept and value of partnership must change. Indeed, in some ways the political importance of partners should become as significant as that of members. Partnership today no longer means preparing others for membership, nor simply offering third countries a political relationship with the Alliance. An active global partnership policy must necessarily place NATO at the centre of a worldwide web of like-minded states that acts as an anchor of stability on the international system, expanding Alliance influence and integrating those willing and able to join NATO on strategic stabilisation missions. An active partnership means cultivating ties with democracies the world over, including Australia, Brazil, India, Japan and South Africa, and introducing them to NATO standards and doctrine so that operations can be undertaken together without having to re-invent the operational wheel every time.

In the first instance, building on the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, friends and neighbours need to be assisted to establish best practice in areas such as security governance and security sector reform. To that end, NATO standards should extend to partnership and security, not just membership and the military. It is in the Middle East and Central Asia where the new NATO will be forged or fail, and it is the nature and effectiveness of partnership that will be the test.

The European Union and NATO are natural security partners

It may not be comfortable for North Americans, nor indeed, some Europeans but the European Union will emerge as an essential partner of the Alliance in the governance of strategic security. Indeed, over the medium- to long-term much of the centre of gravity of both the civil and military effort of Europeans will be focused on the European Union. It is therefore a profound shame that little Europeanization has of late hampered the development of relations between the European Union and NATO. Since legitimacy is as important as
capability in generating effectiveness, the European Union needs NATO and NATO needs the European Union. The European Union can never be strong without a strong NATO and NATO can never be strong without a strong European Union. The security engagement of a pluralistic security community in a complex security environment requiring complex responses needs an array of actors and institutions. Diversity is strength. However, communication and coordination are equally important.

The West today has two security leadership hubs – NATO and the European Union. Depending on the desired political end-state, the location or nature of the crisis to be managed, one or the other will be in the lead. The European Union will continue to emerge as a security actor, not least because it is essential that Europeans take responsibility for their own security not least because the capacity to project power will be undermined without a countervailing ability to protect the home base. Indeed, much of the work to improve the security resilience of Europeans will necessarily take place within the European Union because – unlike NATO – it stretches across the competence of the state. In the big world, therefore, the implicit competition between NATO and the European Union is not only strategically pointless, it is dangerous. There is a desperate need for both institutions, just as there is room enough for both, if only those generating this competition would begin to realise the damage they are doing to their own security and that of the world beyond.

The road to effective cooperation? First, no more pointless grand EU-NATO declarations. A pragmatic relationship between the two organisations needs to be forged on the basis of practical cooperation in the field. EU-NATO Crisis Action Teams would be such a first step. Second, there is only one set of Europeans, and only one set of capabilities. Therefore, a closer working relationship is needed between the Prague Capabilities Commitments and the European Capabilities Action Plan. Some role for the European Defence Agency in the 2006 NATO Summit would be a good start. Third, the relationship between the NATO Response Force (NRF) and the EU Battle Groups needs to be better established, built around a force-planning concept that can cope with the three-block war and in which escalation dominance is the planning paradigm. NATO needs to be more flexible about the relationship between the NRF and the Battle Groups and the European Union more transparent about its own planning and crisis management.

**Fighting and winning the global war on terror requires grand strategy**

Strategic counter-terrorism is mutating from a series of man-hunts into a new strategic doctrine for engagement in a world which will lead the West inexorably back towards big world security. Europeans and North Americans must realise that the series of “one-off” engagements that have defined extra-European engagements over the past 15 years are, in fact, a theme. History is re-starting and it is doing so through the strategic metaphor of the global war on terror. Afghanistan and Iraq sit on the threshold between counter-terrorism, strategic stability and strategic coercion and consequently stretch the civil and military means of all Allies. What is emerging from the counter-offensive is a new 30-years war in which extreme belief systems, old but massively destructive technologies, instable and intolerant societies, strategic crime and the globalisation of commodities and communications combine to create a multi-dimensional threat transcending geography, function and capability. The response of the West and its partners will require a new grand strategy with a big NATO at its core.

There is a continuum between strategic counter-terrorism and the new big world of states because power politics in its many forms is making a comeback. Counter-terrorism must not, therefore, become the be-all and end-all of Alliance planning nor an excuse to focus on tactical terrorism, thereby avoiding the need to think big about the future environment. The re-constitution of Alliance strategic thinking, with NATO and the European Union as the centre of gravity of response, will require the development of armed forces with strategic civil-military capabilities able to manage a broad threat set to achieve desired political end-states.

To achieve this, Europeans and North Americans are going to have to think about a much bigger world than that for which the Alliance has prepared of late. Europeans are going to have to rehabilitate coercion, if their non-coercive means and tools are to work. And the Alliance is going to have to do more with the resources that are available. If the axis of plenty is blocked, only the axis of better organisation, even defence integration, will offer the possibility of a cost-effective, critical mass of effect in the face of a critical mass of insecurity, instability and strategic shift.

A big world will place a premium on credible and effective mechanisms for multiplying security effect, and that means institutions such as NATO and the European Union working in harmony for the greater good. Above all, it places a premium on a big NATO. If the West thinks big now about the big future it must face then the Euro-Atlantic community stands the best possible chance of saving the international system the West itself created. However, a failure of strategic vision now will condemn that system of institutionalised balance, legitimacy and stability and make for an immeasurably more dangerous world.
Farewell to war

Christoph Bertram argues that NATO should focus on stabilisation and give up the pretence of being a war-fighting alliance.

When NATO defined its role and purpose after the Cold War in its 1991 Strategic Concept, the possibility of becoming involved in a new, conventional war could not be ruled out. Since then, however, war-fighting has become NATO's least likely task. The Alliance’s overriding military purpose today is that of promoting stability in parts of the world where instability could affect the well-being rather than the military security of its extended membership. Despite this, NATO has so far refused to recognise this new strategic reality and still pretends that the ability to prevail in conventional war should be the standard by which its doctrine, capabilities, culture and organisation are measured.

To be sure, NATO has demonstrated considerable adaptability over the past 15 years. The Alliance has enlarged its membership, thereby significantly extending the zone of stability in and beyond Europe. And it has recognised that security has become globalised with the result that, as the West's primary security organisation, it has to be prepared to operate beyond the Euro-Atlantic area if it wants to remain credible to its members and the wider world. What the Alliance has yet to accept, however, is that stability promotion is the only task NATO forces are now required to perform. Individual members may still want to maintain capabilities for fighting conventional wars. But NATO is no longer suited to address its original challenge, nor required.

It is no longer required for war-fighting because its lead nation, the United States, has more than enough forces to fight and win conventional wars against any power on the globe. For reasons that according to Andrew J. Bacevich in The New American Militarism (Oxford University Press, 2005) reflect the strategic ambition of the last superpower as well as domestic dynamics, Washington has built and maintains so great a war-fighting capability that there is no need for the Allies to do likewise. Indeed, writing about the 1999 Kosovo campaign and the 2001 Afghan War in Simon Sefarty's edited Visions of the Atlantic Alliance (CSIS Press, 2005), James Dobbins of the Rand Corporation concluded that: “Both military campaigns demonstrated that the United States has more than enough capability for conventional combat and little military need to depend on material help from its allies... Looked at from a transatlantic perspective, improved European conventional capability is largely redundant, except in so far as it also improves Europe's capacity to deploy and sustain larger forces for stabilisation operations at greater distances.” In the Iraq War, the United States again demonstrated that it does not need allies to defeat a military opponent.

Nor is NATO politically suited to fighting conventional wars, which will likely take place beyond Europe, if at all, thereby affecting the Alliance’s ever-growing membership to different degrees of intensity. In such circumstances, Alliance consensus would be elusive. Conventional war-fighting would not unite NATO but rather expose its disunity and undermine its credibility. Conventional campaigns will therefore likely be waged either by the United States alone or by a coalition of the willing, comprising fewer members than the Alliance total as well as non-NATO countries.

Mission possible: stabilisation

What NATO is needed and suited for is what the Alliance has been doing ever since it deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, namely generating forces to help stabilise fragile parts of the world. This began in the Balkans, is expanding today in Afghanistan, and every look into the future suggests that there will be a growing need for such work. Every reading of recent NATO communiqués confirms that this is now NATO’s day-to-day job. The NATO Response Force (NRF), which was originally invented to enable European forces to cooperate with US forces in the higher end of military conflict, has just completed a humanitarian mission in Pakistan. The most salient question for NATO’s future, as Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer never tires of pointing out, is whether it “will stay the course” in Afghanistan, a still open-ended commitment.

Stabilisation is also what NATO is best suited for politically and militarily. Politically, recent experience has demonstrated that members tend to agree quite readily on stabilisation operations. Militarily, while no European...
armed forces can keep up with the United States in expenditure and high-end fighting capability, many are experienced in stabilisation operations. Moreover, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons is uniquely qualified to provide the necessary preparatory work, for members and Partners alike, to deploy forces on crisis-containment and peacemaking operations.

Despite this, the myth maintained in Brussels is that the Alliance’s primary task still lies in being ready to defeat any direct military threat to the territorial integrity of its members. The same NATO communiqués that go on to talk about nothing but peacekeeping assert that the Alliance remains the basis for collective defence. Instead of embracing the obvious changes in the strategic environment, politically correct thinking ties the Alliance to the mantra contained in its latest Strategic Concept from 1999 that “the maintenance of an adequate military capability and clear preparedness to act collectively in the common defence remain central to Alliance security objectives” and that the capabilities for war-fighting are also “the basis of the Alliance’s ability to contribute to conflict prevention and crisis management”. The structure, procedure, language and culture of the organisation continue to convey the message that it must meet the highest dangers of military aggression. Deficiencies in capabilities are still largely defined by this standard, just as the command structures, though considerably adjusted, remain designed for the old model, not the new task. The most recent innovations, the NRF and Allied Command Transformation, were created specifically to deal with NATO’s supposed deficit in high-end military power.
The reasons for this disconnect between reality and ideology do not primarily lie in blindness to the new challenges. After all, stabilisation operations are today widely recognised as NATO’s chief concerns. Yet to admit that they must now be NATO’s organising principle is made difficult both by institutional inertia and the worry that to do so would further weaken the already strained fabric of the Alliance. There is fear that a division of labour between military “stabilisers” and “fighters” would undermine Alliance cohesion and lead to a two-tier organisation in which some countries would only do one, not both. Moreover, in this way, nations would be able to renounce on their commitments to the higher end of military engagements in favour of what are supposedly cheaper stabilisation tasks. Two-tier forces would soon produce a two-tier mindset. The gap between European and US levels of military preparedness would widen still further.

Such fears are, however, unfounded. In practice, a resolute embrace of the stabilisation priority would both strengthen the Alliance and offer the framework in which a number of its current problems can be approached with a greater prospect of success.

Uniting, not dividing

By concentrating on stabilisation, NATO would be doing a job that satisfies the security interests of all its members, on both sides of the Atlantic. There might be a risk of a two-tier Alliance if European forces alone were to be involved in stabilisation. But the US experience in Iraq has not been lost on US politicians and military planners who have belatedly designated stabilisation as a core military mission. Indeed, it has even brought home to the critics of “coalition warfare” the utility of allies that can provide the large number of forces needed for the long haul that serious stabilisation requires. Today and in the future, both US and non-US forces will be increasingly involved in that task.

Stabilisation should not be viewed as a cheaper option. Indeed, such operations are generally more costly than today’s typically short military campaigns; they require well-trained and well-equipped forces; and they often entail greater risks for the individual soldier. NATO’s first war, the Kosovo campaign of 1999, caused no Allied casualties and, though protracted because of a refusal to deploy ground troops, lasted less than three months. Since then, NATO forces have been deployed in Kosovo in large numbers and, although levels are being reduced, some kind of Western military presence in the province is likely to be required for many years to come. The cost of stabilisation and reconstruction has already vastly exceeded that of the original military operation. The 2003 Iraq War was over within weeks. By contrast, post-war stabilisation has already lasted three years, is far from over and has proved extremely costly in terms of both blood and treasure. Instead of worrying about Allies opting to develop stabilisation over war-fighting capabilities, NATO should be concerned by members trying to do both simultaneously but imperfectly. Precious few Allies possess the resources to be convincing in both disciplines.

Would a NATO that specialises in stabilisation widen the gap between European and US capabilities and security mentalities? Given that the most recent transatlantic rift resulted from the war-fighting inclinations of the dominant Ally, it seems at least questionable to ascribe such an effect to a common commitment to stabilisation. The gap between European and US capabilities and mentalities is widening as it is, and all the appeals of repeated NATO summits to close the capabilities gap have failed to produce the desired result. While wars have divided the Alliance because they failed to muster the support of all members and called on the capabilities of only a few; peacekeeping operations like those in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan have united the Alliance because they appealed to common interests as well as capabilities that almost all Allies could contribute.

In Alliance decision-making, the bargaining power of the “stabilisers” should be no less than that of the “fighters”. After all, the forces that clear up the debris are at least as important as those that kick in the door. Any member hoping to look to NATO’s stabilisation capacity once the fighting is over would be well advised to gain the support of as many members as possible early on. Allies whose forces would be critical once the war is over should expect a commensurate degree of influence before it is begun.

Bonus effects

Not only are fears unjustified that Alliance cohesion will suffer if it gives priority to stabilisation operations and capabilities, there are actually benefits. Once the choice is made, it will likely help resolve some of the problems the Alliance is facing today and tomorrow: unity, enlargement, the relationship with Russia, and cooperation with the European Union.
Unity in the Alliance in the post-Cold-War era has usually been strained by traditional military action and restored through the common interest in stabilisation. That is scarcely surprising in current strategic circumstances where the threats are ambiguous and hence the decision of how best to address them controversial. But there tends to be much less controversy over the need to prevent important regions declining into chaos.

Enlargement has successfully extended the zone of stability that NATO membership represents. Yet the Alliance is intrinsically unable to define its outer borders, and enlargement is bound to continue. But with every new member, NATO’s claim to be primarily a collective-defence organisation becomes less plausible and the collective-defence commitment enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty more diluted. Emphasising stability operations as the Alliance’s primary function would remind newcomers that membership is not about demanding NATO’s assistance with whatever difficulties they might have with their neighbours, but implies an active contribution to the joint stabilisation task.

With enlargement sooner or later likely to include Ukraine, NATO has to develop a strategy to make such a step acceptable to Russia. Emphasising its stabilisation mission over collective defence would help NATO both to present the addition of Ukraine to its membership as no threat to Russia and to open avenues for practical cooperation with Russia in this area.

Finally, it would help provide a basis for closer EU-NATO cooperation. Underlying the reluctance of a number of EU countries towards a more structured relationship is the suspicion that this would impede the European Union’s own defence integration, granting NATO and its major member a veto over what Europeans are planning to do. Once NATO opts clearly in favour of stabilisation, such suspicions are likely to be more easily allayed.

Here the case rests. It does not imply that NATO has to give up the commitment to the collective defence of its members. Indeed, the forces it can call upon for stability operations will, given the likely challenges, also be adequate for this. But it does imply that renewing the Alliance can no longer be achieved by highlighting its prowess in war, conventional or unconventional, but only by demonstrating the extraordinary and unique role it can play as the major provider of military forces for crisis management and post-war stabilisation, making this the standard for force planning and force requirements. Since the Cold War ended, NATO has shown a remarkable readiness to adjust to new realities. Making stabilisation its central calling is the next necessary step.

For more on the Bologna Center of Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, see www.jhubc.it

**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.

Essays will be judged on the basis of their originality and contribution to discussion of transatlantic security issues. The NATO Secretary General will announce the winners in December 2006.

A brochure providing full details of the NATO Manfred Wörner Awards as well as application forms is available electronically at www.nato.int/acad/fellow/mw00e.htm.
Future NATOs

Stephan De Spiegeleire and Rem Korteweg consider a variety of scenarios for the Alliance’s future.

What might NATO look like in 2025? Every important aspect of NATO has fluctuated considerably – with many ups and downs – since the signing of the Washington Treaty. The Alliance is continuing to change today, and will certainly be called upon to change even more in the future. In the summer of 2005, the Clingendael Centre for Strategic Studies (CCSS) supported the NATO Consultation, Command and Control Agency (NC3A) by conducting a study on potential future contexts for NATO defence-planning purposes. The study, entitled Future NATOs and summarised in this article, was one input used by the NC3A to support Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in developing a range of alternative “future worlds”, each comprising a future security environment and a future NATO.

The literature about NATO is replete with articles about what the future may bring for the Alliance. Many of these articles are normative in nature – what is right or wrong with NATO and how things could be improved in the eyes of the author. These articles may be useful for policy purposes, but are typically more driven by the author’s policy preferences than by any structured reflections or intuitions about the future. On the other hand, there are a number of articles that attempt to explore the future, but most tend to extrapolate NATO’s future from existing trends as perceived by the author. The strategic community has been surprised so many times in the past two decades – the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of terrorism as the world’s pre-eminent security challenge – that it has become clear that this extrapolation approach is insufficient for long-term, defence-planning purposes.

Given the pitfalls of existing normative and extrapolation approaches, the CCSS organised a scenario workshop to develop a number of “snapshot” scenarios intended to capture NATO’s main dimensions of change. The aim of the scenario workshop was not to predict or state probabilities, but rather to sketch and map the various uncertainties surrounding NATO and to distil “snapshots” of future NATOs within this scenario space. The workshop brought together a high-level group of Dutch analysts representing a diverse mix of professional, academic and ideological backgrounds. Two balanced work groups independently identified the key characteristics of NATO that might be subject to future change and the main drivers that were felt to drive that change.

Since the findings of the workshop were intended to serve as input into Alliance long-term planning, the question whether or not NATO would still exist in 2025 was not systematically addressed. A majority of the participants felt that the disappearance of NATO was conceivable, but not useful for the defence-planning purposes of the exercise.

Key NATO characteristics

The first step of the methodology involved identifying the primary characteristics of NATO that the group felt might change in the next 20 years. For each of those characteristics, a simple scale was developed that allowed to demarcate the bandwidth within which change might occur. The characteristics the group identified and the values of the corresponding scales are listed below:

- **Transatlantic link**: the strength of the link – both political and operational – between American and European Allies;
- **US leadership**: the extent to which the United States remains engaged in NATO and willing to assume a leadership role;
- **Area of operations**: the geographical range within which NATO operations can take place;
- **Decision-making**: the extent to which the Alliance is able to make decisions on contentious issues;
- **Top-down guidance**: the extent to which NATO as an organisation is able to sway the decisions and actions of its members;
- **Mission spectrum**: the range within the conflict spectrum in which NATO will carry out missions;
- **Capabilities**: the scope of capabilities at the Alliance’s disposal and the Alliance’s effectiveness in the joint application of its coercive instruments;
- **Political vs. military nature**: the balance between the Alliance’s political and military dimensions; and
- **Membership**: the extent and geographic spread of NATO membership.

In the next step, the workshop participants discussed the main drivers that they felt might trigger change in the above-mentioned characteristics. The group identified the following three key drivers:

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• US willingness to assume a leadership role in NATO: whether US leadership is strong or absent;
• Impact of the European Union: whether it will be a coherent political actor and thereby have a significant footprint in international politics (including its security realm), or a fragmented – and hence weak – one; and
• Threat perception: independent of what the threat might be, whether the NATO Allies in 2025 hold a common threat perception or whether threat perceptions are increasingly diverse across the Alliance.

Interestingly, both work groups identified drivers that are exclusively internal to NATO. They concluded independently that developments within the Alliance were more important to its future than whatever happens outside NATO in the wider security environment.

These characteristics and drivers, rather than specific trends, frame the contours of the future shape and nature of NATO. Instead of specific scenarios, the result of the group’s deliberations was the delineation of a scenario space. The ensuing scenario space graphically illustrates the primary uncertainties confronting NATO. The contours of this space are the extreme values of the drivers mentioned above. Within this space, the group positioned five “snapshot” NATOs that could be used as a context for defence planning. They should be viewed as illustrations within the scenario space rather than an exhaustive listing of all likely futures for NATO in 2025. Nevertheless, they were selected to be sufficiently diverse and broad to capture NATO’s main dimensions of change and thereby to be useful for defence planning.

Scenarios

“Strong toolbox” NATO

[Strong US leadership in NATO, a strong commonly defined security perception and a relatively weak and fragmented Europe.]

In this scenario, the United States is a dominant political actor in the international arena and fully assumes a leadership role within NATO. Enlargement of the European Union has not resulted in increased political unity, and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) lacks coordination and vigour. Both sides of the Atlantic perceive the threats facing the Alliance in a similar way. Against this context, European states consider NATO the preferred instrument for enhancing global stability. Yet a common political outlook has not translated into a substantial increase in defence capabilities. As a result, the ability to operate alongside the United States in the higher conflict spectrum is reserved to a few of the European Allies. European states are not capable of commanding full spectrum major theatre operations without strong support from the United States. The technological gap between the two continents is still growing. Interoperability standards are maintained and advanced, but most European Allies only offer limited expeditionary capabilities to crisis-management operations. Nevertheless, the United States continues to be interested in European niche capabilities, and continues to see NATO as the preferred forum to nurture actual or potential capable force providers. Likewise, European member states perceive NATO as the privileged instrument through which to use their armed forces. NATO’s scope is global and through the wide range of available capabilities it covers a broad segment of the mission spectrum. The Alliance is a potent, flexible and modular toolbox. It is united in its perception of threats, though the composition of the coalition is shaped by the mission at hand and the ability of individual members to contribute to operations.

“Shared partnership” NATO

[Combination of strong US participation in NATO, a coherent/strong Europe and commonly perceived threats.]

The second scenario reflects a truly shared partnership between the United States and the European Union in crisis management. The European Union has made great strides towards enhanced political unity. Further political integration has resulted in greater coherence in the field of the ESDP. European states have developed methods for using their limited (possibly somewhat higher) defence budgets to make substantial progress

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in transforming their militaries to possess effective expeditionary components. Moreover, the capability gap between the European Union and the United States has been narrowed mainly as a result of efficiency measures – including standardisation of equipment and pooling of various assets (such as airlift). The NATO Response Force (NRF) has played an important role in this transformation. A new transatlantic political bargain is struck in which the United States accepts more of a say for the European Union within NATO in return for beefed up (and complementary) European capabilities. The European Allies still accept a US leadership role as threat perceptions between Americans and Europeans are commonly defined. There is a common understanding on both sides of the Atlantic that true progress can only be achieved by projecting stability and peace through a genuine partnership. European capacity to operate at a distance and in the higher echelons of the conflict spectrum remains more limited than US capacity. Therefore a division of labour has been agreed in which the European Union (even operating without US support) carries out military operations predominantly at closer reach to Europe and in the lower ranges of the conflict spectrum. Selected European military forces can participate alongside the United States on a global scale and in the higher ranges of the conflict spectrum, while making use of established NATO procedures, assets and capabilities. Coalitions of the willing (also from within NATO) remain an important feature of international crisis management, but NATO also increasingly acts as an actor in its own right.

“Dispersed toolbox” NATO

[Combination of lukewarm US leadership in NATO, medium European cohesion and a strongly diverse perceived threat.]

The third NATO represents a less cohesive alliance based on limited US dedication to NATO, a medium-power European...
Union and a drift in transatlantic threat perceptions. This leads to a “toolbox” approach to the remaining NATO capabilities, giving a less cohesive NATO a more limited role as a stable, global crisis-management actor.

European and US perceptions of the security threats surrounding them have drifted apart. Whereas the United States views the world predominantly in traditional “realist” terms and focuses on military threats, its European Allies, nurtured by enhanced – although incomplete – political unity in the European Union, have developed a post-modern view of the world and have emphasised non-military approaches in their security considerations. European capital has been mainly invested in low-spectrum capabilities, such as the capability to perform stabilisation and reconstruction operations. As common political priorities prove increasingly difficult to set, NATO’s position in the international political arena is eroded, while at the same time political dissension increases in the Alliance. The United States’ interest in leading the Alliance is dwindling. The capability gap has not been closed. Instead, a diversification of capabilities has occurred, weakening the Alliance as a military entity. Differences in strategic culture among the Allies are significant. In this way, military pre-emption continues to be a favoured option for US intervention but is not accepted by EU member states. On the positive side, European member states have focused on the development of crisis-response, humanitarian-relief and disaster-aid capabilities and NATO now has a wider range of instruments at its disposal. The willingness to use these assets is global. The NRF is a European force focused on the lower spectrum of crisis-response. As such, in those cases where leaders on both sides of the Atlantic manage to agree on a common policy, NATO can use the capabilities from its diverse toolbox. Managing this implicit division of labour represents a significant obstacle.

“Return to ESDI” NATO

[Combination of fairly coherent Europe, limited US dedication to NATO and modest common perceived threat.]

The fourth NATO represents an Alliance that is primarily driven by the European Union. Increased political unity within the European Union has had a strong impact on NATO. A relatively successful ESDP has led to significant advances in crisis-management by giving shape to a coherent, more “holistic” European component. It can operate within the NRF framework and is also capable of doing so without US support. The capability gap has not been closed and has perhaps even widened. European Allies are mostly incapable of operating alongside the United States in the medium to high ranges of the conflict spectrum. The NRF is mainly used for crisis-response missions in the lower-to-medium segments of the conflict spectrum. The United States is focused on high-end capabilities and does not wish to use its assets for NATO operations in the lower spectrum. As a result, US leadership in the Alliance has been waning. In practice, if NATO acts, it is Europeans who act. Fears of a structural transatlantic rift have persuaded the Allies not to give up on NATO altogether. But political debates continue to impair the Alliance’s effectiveness beyond a relatively low threshold. The United States operates on a unilateral basis and does not participate in NATO operations, yet it has politically supported the operations undertaken by its European Allies. Similarly, the European fear of a rift with the United States has led to operations being undertaken under a NATO flag. Hence, much of the early ideas for a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) have materialised, yet the European pillar of NATO is bearing most of NATO’s weight.

An alternative direction in this scenario is that, as US leadership in NATO diminishes and European cohesion increases, European states prefer to use the European Union as the main crisis-management instrument instead of NATO. Thereby crisis-management operations are performed through the “Berlin-Plus” mechanism, making use of NATO planning assets and capabilities but performing operations under an EU flag. NATO here becomes an enabler for EU operations.

“Old boys’ lounge” NATO

[Combination of total absence of US dedication to NATO, fragmented or cohesive Europe and common or diverse threat perceptions.]

The final NATO is the most pessimistic of the five NATOs in 2025. The United States has lost all interest in the Alliance. The capability gap has increased and even the most Atlanticist Allies have been unable to keep up with US progress in the transformation and further development of their armed forces. The NRF failed to become the glue to keep the Alliance together. Defence budgets in Europe continue to decrease or remain stable at best. The European Allies have turned towards the European Union and ESDP for answers to security issues. Without US leadership they argue there is no reason to invest in the Alliance and one could better focus on a European approach to crisis-management through the European Union. Meanwhile the United States embraces a preference for unilateralism, and is only occasionally
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moved to participate in an ad-hoc coalition of Europe’s willing. NATO is no longer the instrument for developing military capabilities and standardisation. Although issues of global security are discussed, the resolve to act together is absent. NATO has become a political forum, reminiscent of a gentleman’s club at the turn of the 19th century rather than a collective-security organisation. The shape of this NATO within the scenario space illustrates that if the United States loses interest in NATO then the two other drivers are essentially inconsequential. Whether the European Union is weak or strong and irrespective of threat assessments, the Alliance’s future is grim in the absence of US leadership in NATO.

Conclusion

How to deal with the deep uncertainty that has enveloped the international system in the past decades has become the central preoccupation of strategic planners around the globe. In a rapidly changing world, strategic planners can no longer pursue rigid policy choices that are optimised for today’s and tomorrow’s assumed certainties. Instead, they are forced to pursue adaptive policy choices that are robust against a wide range of plausible futures. NATO defence planning is heading in that direction. To NATO’s credit, the Alliance has also started including uncertainty about itself into its long-term defence-planning process – a step that is frequently omitted in scenario-planning even in the business world. The scenario space developed in the CCSS study sketches some key uncertainties about NATO’s own future. What remains to be seen is the extent to which this particular form of uncertainty can now be integrated into the process by which these uncertainties are translated into concrete defence requirements.

The research carried out to develop alternative “future worlds”, which is part of the ACT Long-Term Requirements Study, is described in a draft ACT report that can be found at www.act.nato.int/events/documents/06fsesymp/worldscenarios.pdf

For more on the Clingendael Centre for Strategic Studies, see www.ccss.nl

Comparison of future NATOs

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