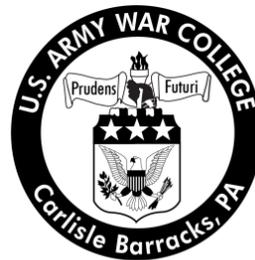


NATO's Future and Relevance

by

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United States Army War College
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ABSTRACT

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The world's most powerful alliance is constantly demonstrating resilience. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will continue to ensure allied partners common defense and security regardless of emerging threats, challenges, and declining resources. Transformation of NATO is not an event-it is a process that must continue to evolve over time. From its creation in 1949 until the end of 1991, the NATO mission was to deter the Soviets and, failing that, to defend Western Europe from a Soviet invasion. NATO was a critical element in a multi-pronged U.S. strategy to maintain peace and security in Europe -- a successful strategy. Now the Cold War is over and Europe is no longer under the clear threat of a Soviet take-over. Yet NATO remains a key player in an everlasting sense, by helping to strengthen transatlantic relations amongst its members. This SRP argues that NATO remains a viable strategic asset in the current volatile global environment. Critics have contended that the end of the Cold War signaled the end of NATO; this SRP challenges such contentions. Indeed, NATO's continued existence is of great importance to an on-going peaceful world order.

NATO'S FUTURE AND RELEVANCE

NATO has been the world's most successful military alliance. But what do we do with it now?¹

—Lt. Gen. (USAF, Ret.) Brent Scowcroft, 2011

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has struggled for many years over particular aspects of their mission and political position in the international community. NATO continues to be a very complex and protested organization. The world's most powerful alliance is a remarkable success story.² From its creation in 1949 until the end of the 1991, the NATO mission was to deter the Soviets and, failing that, to defend Western Europe. NATO was a critical element in a multi-pronged U.S. strategy to maintain peace and security in Europe—a successful strategy. The Cold War is over and Europe no longer faces the threat of absorption into a now-defunct Soviet Union. Yet NATO remains valuable as the touchstone of a transatlantic relationship.³ This project will demonstrate that NATO remains both a strategic and viable entity in today's world. Although some have contended that, the end of the Cold War signaled the end of NATO: this SRP challenges such contentions. Indeed, NATO's continued existence is of great importance to a modern, peaceful world order.

The breakup of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and the rise of the European Union (EU) have contributed to a more complex and volatile strategic environment—especially in Europe and Asia. Their diverse and conflicting effects have created new strategic challenges. NATO maintained the status quo of parity between the post-war super powers; then it suffered from an identity crisis once this situation changed. Following the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989, NATO faced an uncertain

future. The bipolar world of the Cold War may be over, but it has not been replaced with a kinder, gentler place.

In fact, today's world must contend with terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), local wars, poverty, energy concerns, humanitarian crises, cyber-warfare, potential conflicts in space, maritime security, and political and social upheaval. These complex issues create new and unique possibilities for a new NATO. This new NATO can foster an era of cooperation among former adversaries to quell extremism. It can unite members of differing geo-political groups to pursue a common socio-economic goal. It can also possibly lead to a more united, peaceful world bound by cooperation and the need for mutual security.

Historical Overview

“In the 60 some years since it was founded to contain Soviet expansion in Europe, NATO has weathered a series of political and diplomatic crisis,” stated Tomas Valasek, a defense expert at the London-based Center for European Reform.⁴ In its early years, it countered a serious threat of Soviet expansion. Two of the events that led to the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949 were the end of World War II and the subsequent implementation of the Marshall Plan. Western European nations sought to recover from the devastation of war: they wanted to avoid further conflict. Following World War II, a delicate balance of power surfaced between former allies Great Britain, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union.

The year 1948 marked a crucial turning point in Europe's security posture. A communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 was followed by the 12-month Soviet blockade of Berlin that started in June of that same year.⁵ In 1954, West Germany's rearmament also created considerable controversy. Then along came the

renewed Berlin Crisis in 1961, when the Soviets blocked West Berlin's routes to West Germany, arousing fears of a new European war.⁶ During this tense period, the communists erected the Berlin Wall to emphatically separate East and West Germany. Tensions between the Soviet Union and the U.S. intensified during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

In 1966, French President Charles DeGaulle threatened to pull out of NATO, proclaiming his doubts that the U.S. would risk nuclear war to defend NATO allies from a Soviet attack. France developed its own nuclear forces.⁷ In 1967, as France withdrew from certain aspects of the alliance, NATO headquarters moved from Paris, France to Brussels, Belgium. Shortly after, the U.S. had openly differed with its NATO allies on nuclear strategy. As Zbigniew Brzezinski, U.S. National Security Advisor from 1977-1981, stated "By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Soviet Union's officially proclaimed expectations of surpassing the U.S. in both economic and military power had begun to look hollow..."⁸ In following years, members of the alliance deliberated on missile defense, the anti-nuclear movement, human rights, troop reductions, and arms control.

Finally, the Cold War ended in 1989, signaled by the fall of the Berlin Wall. The UN, NATO, the U.S., and more recently the EU had all become engaged in missions that employed armed force in post-conflict environments with the objective of supporting political transformations toward more democratic regimes. Zbigniew Brzezinski provided an eloquent summary of NATO's achievement:

In assessing NATO's evolving role, one has to take into account the historical fact that in the course of its 60 years the alliance has institutionalized three truly monumental transformations in world affairs: first, the end of the centuries-long "civil war" within the West for transoceanic and European supremacy; second, the United States' post-World War II commitment to the defense of Europe against Soviet

domination (resulting from either a political upheaval or even World War III); and third, the peaceful termination of the Cold War, which ended the geopolitical division of Europe and created the preconditions for a larger democratic European Union.⁹

However, all these successes give rise to legitimate questions: What next? What have NATO leaders learned from past experiences? How can NATO adapt to remain viable in an uncertain future? Even in the recent past, NATO countries have dealt with such new tasks as nation-building, peacekeeping, and stabilization operations. In an interview with a reporter from *Le Monde*, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder pointed out, “NATO is not dead because it was never intended as a purely strategic relationship based solely on self-interested security policies.”¹⁰

This project considers whether NATO still has a useful role in addressing the following key issues: preventing unwanted Russian influence and keeping U.S. power attached to both European security and broader American interests in peace and stability on the continent as well as the rest of the world.¹¹ As Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, analysts at the Berlin-based German Institute for International and Security Affairs stated, “NATO has shown a consistent ability to adapt to a changing international order.”¹²

Many new threats have been emerging in our own backyard. The U.S. now has immediate concerns about security not only in other parts of the world, but right here in our own country. The current security environment poses complex and unpredictable challenges and diverse threats to security. In this world, the local has gone global. We face threats of cyber-attacks across multiple time zones; we have growing concerns about unstable countries developing or acquiring WMD. We know that transnational terrorist groups can find safe havens and launch attacks close to home. This threat

became a reality on 11 September 2001 when terrorists commandeered large commercial aircraft to take the lives of innocent civilians at the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon, and into a Pennsylvania cornfield.

Crucial Elements Facing NATO in the Future

“The September 11 attacks forced NATO not only to think about its immediate response, but also to consider the long-term challenges posed by terrorism and the alliance’s capability to respond to terrorist threats,” stated Dr. Nora Bensahel, foreign policy and defense expert.¹³ The U.S. and its other NATO allies must continue to create international order, in which core values are protected and encouraged. The alliance must adapt to increasing security challenges that are no longer euro-centric. It must remain functional in a rapidly changing world. U.S. foreign policy and global security exhibit many factors that are changing how people and governments relate to each other. People are best served by pursuing their core values rather than national interests.

New threats emerge daily that were not present in the past. In the globalized environment, something that happens in one part of the planet can have a ripple effect worldwide. As an example of this phenomenon, Dr. Solomon Dersso, Senior Researcher for the Peace and Security Council Report Program at the Institute for Security Studies Africa, stated that “The rise and prevalence of piracy revealed how the failure of the international community to do enough to resolve one of the most protracted and long-drawn out conflicts in the world creates multiple threats to the international peace and security.”¹⁴ Additionally, nations such as North Korea and Iran, pose new threats through the spread of nuclear technology and there is a possibility that extremist groups can acquire this technology. Whether acquired by non-state actors or

not, the proliferation of WMD increases the possibility of their use. There are also concerns about energy security and the rapid growth of the global economy.

Finally, there are the trepidations from deterioration of fragile states—into either state failure or armed conflict or both. Failed or failing states provide safe havens in which al Qaeda and other terrorists can hide undetected. Failed states provide recruits for terrorist groups and facilitate the financing of terrorist activities. They are breeding grounds for radical movements where ideologies could justify their use of WMD. Worst-case scenarios include Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, among others, as sites for such radical movements.¹⁵ Since 9/11, the U.S. and NATO are now re-thinking their strategic assessments of failed states that can no longer be ignored. “Failed states suddenly are not only humanitarian disasters but security threats,” stated Francis Fukuyama, Senior Fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford, in 2004.¹⁶ He further observed “radical Islamist terrorism combined with the availability of WMD added a major security dimension...created by weak governance.”¹⁷ The U.S. and NATO need to carefully consider engaging sooner rather than later when such threats from failed states arise. The most recent situations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Libya all suggest this might be a good time for the alliance to adjust and reconsider their policies on failed states. This of course, is only one of several issues that should be addressed on the new NATO agenda. NATO’s expansion into Eastern Europe and Eurasia has complicated relations between Russia and the U.S. The on-going missile defense dilemma between Russia and U.S. has also increased tensions.

The U.S. and NATO must strive to develop a strong working relationship with Russia. All partners must seek to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons. NATO must

build a partnership with Russia in pursuit of common security interests.¹⁸ However, NATO, the U.S., and Russia are far apart on the issue of missile defense, which has once again landed on their diplomatic agenda. In recent speeches, Russian President Dimitry Medvedev warned, “Moscow might have to take countermeasures if the U.S. proceeds with missile defense deployments in Europe.”¹⁹ The Russians are not placated by U.S. Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council Ambassador Ivo Daalder, who has emphasized that the U.S. wants a stronger missile defense in Europe only to counter the threat from Iran, which is developing a nuclear weapons capacity. Unfortunately, Russian President Medvedev is not convinced that Ambassador Daalder is telling the truth.²⁰ These disagreements between the U.S. and Russia may precipitate in Russian withdrawal from the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty—known as New START—signed just last year.²¹ In the meantime, NATO will continue negotiations with Russia over development of a missile defense system in Europe. The U.S. will continue to maintain its pressure on Iran to discourage development of nuclear weapons there. Thus far, Iran appears disinclined to alter its current policies on its nuclear weapons program. “A key player in securing a diplomatic success in changing Iranian intentions would need to be Russia,” stated authors, Gulnur Aybet and Rebecca Moore, in the book, *NATO in Search of a Vision*²² As long as Russia feels threatened by the U.S. and NATO, there is no chance of this happening.

NATO has not been dealing with these strategic issues on a long-term basis. Our NATO allies have relied excessively on U.S. contributions to the alliance. The U.S. can no longer go it alone, as President George W. Bush decided to do when the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003. “Alliance management, based upon a careful appreciation of

changing European realities and awareness of the cultural specificities of key European partners, will be an ever more important strategic task,” as stated by Dr. R. Craig Nation, Professor of Strategy and Director of Russian and Eurasian Studies at the U.S. Army War College.²³ NATO’s future strategic plan must incorporate a change in the psychology and perception of how the public views NATO’s long-term strategy. In a better-balanced NATO, all partners will contribute their fair share to alliance activities. NATO must prioritize its common goals and resource them accordingly. All parties should contribute equitably to paying their equal share of maintaining global security. Of course, NATO partners do not all share the same national interests and commitments. Despite such differences, NATO must move forward with its strategic mission. In this vein, academics Gulnur Aybet and Rebecca Moore have noted:

NATO today provides collective security while extending democracies to nations, which not too long ago could not even be imagined. Although NATO’s organizational structure may continue to exist, in the future it is likely to serve more as a pool of states from which temporary coalitions can be created to deal with specific security issues. Differences among its members on policy toward Russia and on its further expansion simply contribute to the likelihood of such a development.²⁴

“In order to achieve these goals and address the challenges that face NATO, we’ll need to ensure that the evolution of NATO’s political capabilities keep pace with its operational capabilities,” stated Secretary Hillary Clinton to the NATO Strategic Concept Seminar.²⁵ NATO was never intended to be a purely military alliance.²⁶ It has always been sufficiently diverse to adapt to current and future challenges. NATO’s members that are also in the EU have focused considerably on Eastern Europe and Eurasia, areas that U.S. foreign policy has largely overlooked. These EU NATO partners have advocated shifting NATO-affiliated personnel from Western European countries like Germany to places closer to Eurasia, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. As

NATO has expanded into Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Malta, the alliance has looked eastward into trouble spots that NATO would have previously ignored. Several current trends could have major implications for the broader European security order that emerged at the end of the Cold War.

There are constant reminders that Russia will continue to try to shift the strategic balance in Europe, seeking to restore its hegemony in the post-Soviet space. Therefore, Russian ambitions may further delay admission of Georgia, and other Eastern European states into the alliance. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was extremely weak and did not project much power or influence from Moscow. However, as F. Stephen Larrabee, senior staff member at the RAND Corporation has written in the *Journal of International Affairs*, “Russia today has become, in effect, a revisionist power; it seeks to reestablish its influence in the post-Soviet space and wants to change the post-Cold War security order in Europe, taking into account its changed status and interests.”²⁷ For many years, Russia resented that while they were struggling economically, they felt the U.S. was pressuring them into certain decisions, taking advantage of their weakness. Now Russia has come back with a vengeance. Concerns about Russia are heightened by what many Eastern Europeans see as NATO’s weakness. To address this regional issue, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have formed this Visegrad Group (V4). V4 is focusing on uncertainties about European institutions and NATO. The current V4 strategy focuses on building security against any future Russian exploitation.²⁸ The only other effective security coalition is the Nordic Battle Group, consisting of Sweden, Finland, and Norway. The start-up of these separate alliances is sending a clear message to NATO: It must make certain that

these countries see NATO as a credible institution and an international partnership for peace that provides a safe and secure environment. As Russia regains its strength in the global arena, NATO needs to re-strategize its message to the international community.

In the last few years, Russian leaders have embarked on a systematic effort to restore Russian influence in Eastern Europe. Instead of relying on military power, it has sought to use economic instruments, particularly energy exports, to expand Russian power and influence. There is much concern between Central and Eastern Europeans that Moscow's intimidation tactics and use of energy as a political weapon could result in a gradual erosion of their independence. "Uncertainty about European institutions and NATO, coupled with uncertainty about Germany's intentions, has caused a strategic reconsideration—not to abandon NATO or the EU, of course, nor to confront the Russians, but to prepare for all eventualities," stated STRATFOR's CEO, Dr. George Friedman, in May 2011.²⁹ Other European countries question the degree of NATO and U.S. protection against any future Russian aggression. The Nordic countries share the same concerns as the Visegrad countries—the future course of Russian power, the cohesiveness of Europe, and the U.S. commitment to protect their interests and sovereignty.

Some observers foresee a merger of the Nordic and Baltic states—a Nordic-Baltic alliance. The Baltic States want to see concrete NATO actions that affirm the alliance's commitment to their security in the event Russia tries to bully them in the near future.³⁰ However, Nordic resolve to resist Russian incursions is uncertain. Although there is deliberation about the Baltic States, and even post-Soviet NATO members

forming separate coalitions, it is unlikely they could deter Russia without NATO assistance. As stated in STRATFOR in February 2011:

For Russia, it will be a welcome reminder that NATO's own members are highly skeptical of the Cold War alliance's guarantees and are swiftly cracking into a number of far less threatening sub-alliances. Certainly, enthusiastic involvement by Sweden -- or the United Kingdom -- in the Baltic region militarily would be a problem for Russia. However, the image of NATO as a thawing ice float in the Arctic, falling apart into a number of regional subgroupings, is not necessarily threatening to Moscow.³¹

All of these discussions about separate alliances further the argument that NATO needs to create and maintain a credible defense budget and to re-evaluate how its current funds are allocated. A completely new direction may be needed, such as NATO agreement of direct-pooled procurement of major weapon systems. NATO also needs to consider partnership opportunities that could enhance its capabilities to secure national interests. In the meantime, NATO should continue to strengthen relations with Russia. According to Russia's then-permanent envoy to NATO, Ambassador Dmitriy Rogozin, "a new strategic security doctrine, which NATO is currently working on, is an important document which will define NATO's relations with Russia for the next 10-15 years."³² This controversial document could provide a foundation for peaceful relations in future years. Without significant adaptations, NATO may not remain a viable instrument of European stability. One of the findings from a group of experts, communicated to the North Atlantic Council, was to the point:

NATO must also cope with hazards of a more volatile and less predictable nature -- including acts of terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear and other advanced weapons technologies, cyber-attacks directed against modern communications systems, the sabotage of energy pipelines, and the disruption of critical maritime supply routes. Often, an effective defense against these unconventional security threats must begin well beyond the territory of the alliance.³³

A strategic solution to this array of new threats would entail various partnerships pursuing the same national security goals. The ideal solution would be implementation of a clear NATO strategic vision of a world without nuclear weapons. Such a vision must begin with the U.S., NATO, and Russia as cooperative partners working toward a safer twenty-first century.³⁴ Likewise, NATO enlargement must strengthen Euro-Atlantic security by supporting objectives: out-of-area missions. Such support would require NATO to provide political, economic, and military support for certain missions. In the meantime, NATO leaders must resolve tensions with Moscow and renewed hostility from Putin's Russia. Russia sees NATO enlargement into the post-Soviet space as a threat to their security and an obstruction to restoration of Russian hegemony.

NATO enlargement after the Cold War has contributed too many controversial issues with Russia as former Warsaw Pact countries have been admitted into the alliance. As Dr. Frederic Bozo observed, "The break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991 was, in itself, a defining moment for NATO's post-Cold War fate."³⁵ According to Dr. Andrew A. Michta, Professor of National Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies:

NATO post-1989 enlargement was about hedging against uncertainty and bringing strategic depth to the alliance, especially to the Federal Republic of Germany. The revolutions of 1989 briefly reopened the issue of borders, especially for Poland and Germany, and to an extent for Germany and Czechoslovakia and for Romania and Hungary. All were quickly eclipsed by the overriding goal of NATO membership. The difference between the first round of enlargement from the second and third was the grappling of geostrategic consequences of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.³⁶

The new NATO must withstand these security challenges as it expands and transforms to sustain its overall mission. The U.S. must closely monitor the re-emergence of Russian influence and carefully consider future NATO enlargement into

the post-Soviet space, as it becomes more difficult and controversial. Despite all that is happening, NATO relevance is of great importance, stated political scientist Dr. Andrew Michta:

In order to remain viable today, NATO must have a more operational focus than ever before, and if you take the U.S. position, this operational emphasis has to continue to grow. What drives the U.S. agenda is enlargement, but as part of a broader scope that focuses on the future of the mission in Afghanistan, dealing with threats from weapons of mass destruction and a missile defense system linking the United States and Europe. This view must not only be shared by the U.S. and new NATO members, but across Europe.³⁷

The U.S. must convince its NATO partners to carry their fair share of NATO responsibilities. In addition, these new NATO responsibilities must be set forth in NATO policy that clearly defines roles, establishes the scope and strategic rationale of the alliance, specifies the details of burden sharing, and develops the alliance's expeditionary capabilities.

U.S. issues with its NATO partners focus principally on the application of alliance resources. The U.S. insists that NATO sustains its military and technological superiority on a continuous basis. "The U.S. spends close to six times what the EU nations spend on military Research and Development (R&D) and U.S. expenditure on military R&D alone is greater than Germany's entire defense budget," stated Professor Daniel S. Hamilton, of John Hopkins University, in 2004.³⁸ Even today, the U.S. share "is closer to 75% of NATO members' total defense funding", stated Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO's Secretary General.³⁹ Before he retired as the Secretary of Defense in 2011, Robert Gates delivered parting shots at European allies, saying NATO risks "collective military irrelevance" unless they bear more of the burden and boost their military spending.⁴⁰ The U.S. can no longer continue to financially support the transatlantic

alliance; indeed, the U.S. economy is weak and its defense budget will be cut in the near future. A growing number of NATO operational commitments on one hand and limited military means and insufficient political will on the other could lead to failure.⁴¹ NATO needs to carefully examine what the way ahead will require, and NATO leaders must assure that all allies are committed to doing their part, to include allocating the proper resources and providing appropriate military capabilities to support NATO-led operations. The collapse of NATO could leave Europe more vulnerable to threats across the spectrum from terrorism to WMD proliferation. It would surely reduce its members' influence in the regions that produce these threats.⁴²

Opposition to NATO

Some realists argue that today's alliance partners can be tomorrow's enemy.⁴³ They assert that alliances are merely "temporary marriages of convenience" and they fall apart when a threatening state disappears.⁴⁴ Is NATO all about current issues and threats? Can the alliance trust that Germany, France, and some of the former Soviet-bloc states will continue to participate in NATO activities, even if times get tough with Russia or Iran in the near future. U.S. leaders, who are considering to what extent to invest in NATO, if at all, are now entertaining such questions. The U.S. strategy also appears to be focusing more on the Asia-Pacific Region now. President Barack Obama recently announced on 17 November 2011, "A U.S. strategic shift to reassert its role as the dominant military power in the Pacific."⁴⁵ This comes during a time of growing Chinese assertiveness; indeed China has recently claimed sovereignty over the South China Sea.⁴⁶ U.S. leaders are also concerned about the budget deficit; they are inclined to reduce U.S. defense spending in the wake of the financial and economic crisis. It would not be a surprise if the U.S. scales back its participation in future NATO

operations, allowing other allies to take the lead. There is also ongoing dialogue between President Obama and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen about the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan. In a recent press release, General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated, “We’re not moving away from Europe, but my message is that we will establish an effort to become more influential in the Pacific but that doesn’t mean it has to be at the expense of our common interest in Europe.”⁴⁷

The current Obama administration is clearly urging NATO allies to increase their military commitments in key operational theaters. The U.S. is pressing hard on NATO’s European members to assume greater financial responsibility and to commit assets needed to accomplish missions in the wake of Libya—and more likely in Afghanistan beyond 2014. The upcoming NATO Summit, to be held in Chicago in May 2012, could shape the next major phase of transition in Afghanistan.⁴⁸ There is a dire need for NATO to reform its current practices, to carefully consider future engagements, to realistically assess its capabilities, and to formulate an international strategy. These necessary changes are slowly taking place. However, the real question lies in whether or not NATO change is happening fast enough. According to Professor Hamilton:

NATO’s working methods must reflect the requirements imposed by the new strategic environment. Although the alliance has 28 members, the organization’s procedures and practices have remained largely unchanged from those developed in the early 1960s, for an alliance of twelve. As NATO continues to enlarge its membership and its mandate, its working methods cannot be left unaffected. NATO needs to be less bureaucratic, and more flexible. Over time, changes in the NATO structure should lead to a different working culture within the alliance.⁴⁹

New partnerships and networks are needed to strengthen NATO’s expansion of capabilities, to address new geopolitical developments. The network could consist of the

EU, the partner nations, and possibly Russia to deal with terrorism and the many other global challenges and threats.⁵⁰ The NATO alliance may very well be the fabric that keeps it all together. Those in Europe who believe that they must weaken NATO to strengthen the EU's European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) are likely to achieve only an insecure and incapable Europe, unsure of itself and its role in the world.⁵¹ NATO has been undergoing transformation for at least a decade. It will continue to improve its practices and security capabilities both internally and externally.

Alliance Transformation

NATO has survived roughly three phases over the last few years. NATO's first phase began with the containment of Soviet communism. Then it incorporated free-market democracies in Central and Eastern Europe through enlargement. In the third phase, starting with 9/11, NATO contributed to out-of-area missions and exhibited a willingness to counter globalized threats.⁵² NATO has recognized that today's threats are much different from those encountered during the Cold War era. NATO has begun to transform itself from a defensive military organization to one prepared to manage crises anywhere.⁵³ Nevertheless, its transatlantic concept is irreplaceable. The alliance must pursue viable partnerships and enter into enhanced cooperation pacts as fully embraced by its European and North American members. Correspondingly, the EU must build up its capabilities and increase its coherence to make an impact on a global scale. International cooperation is vital to reinforce progress towards a strategic partnership. The U.S. relies heavily on its allies and partners due to the extent of its interests and commitments. The current U.S. national strategies focus on increasing partner capacity to control global extremism. The collaborative approach assumes shared priorities and perspectives. Partnerships based on shared interests contribute

significantly to long-term strategic success, as stated by Dr. David S. Yost, Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School:

The 'partnership' purpose, like that of 'crisis management', can be seen as supportive of the long-term 'security' vision. The allies have developed partnership policies to consolidate democratic progress in post-Cold War Europe. More broadly, they have reached out to former adversaries and other non-NATO countries in the Euro-Atlantic Region and beyond via the Partnership for Peace, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council...and other cooperative frameworks in order to pursue shared political and security objectives.⁵⁴

Initiatives launched in the 1999 Strategic Concept enabled NATO to assure peaceful order in Europe through outreach, partnerships, and enlargement within the alliance. However, the NATO transformation of the early 1990s is quite different from today.

Since this NATO strategic concept, much of the optimism of the early 1990s for the post-Cold War has faded away. The conflict over Kosovo, the conflict between Georgia and Russia in 2008, the cyber-attacks on Estonia and confrontations over energy supplies all indicate that European cooperation with Russia has not worked out as hoped for a decade ago. These situations have strained the European security environment. In this uncertain security environment, NATO should remain a central player in European security. According to Ivo Daalder, Ambassador U.S. Mission to NATO "Today's NATO is an alliance that is busier than ever, an alliance that works with more partners than ever, and an alliance that is more needed by more people than ever."⁵⁵ Ongoing U.S. involvement in European security should be maintained at its current level—not reduced. The larger NATO nations should take measures to improve the alliance's military infrastructure and should strengthen capabilities of the newer member states. NATO must also allocate resources for contingency planning and exercises in the newer NATO member states in order to improve the alliance's

coordination and response capabilities. Measures such as these will enhance NATO's ability to respond to security threats.⁵⁶ As Zbigniew Brzezinski has stated:

NATO's new secretary-general was tasked to "develop a new Strategic Concept and submit proposals for its implementation for approval at NATO's summit in Lisbon in 2010." Given the current and likely future security dilemmas confronting the alliance, that new concept will have to deal with at least four fundamental challenges: first, how to attain a politically acceptable outcome for NATO's deepening engagement in the overlapping Afghan and Pakistani conflicts; second, how to update the meaning and obligations of "collective security" as embodied in Article 5 of the alliance's treaty; third, how to engage Russia in a binding and mutually beneficial relationship with Europe and the wider North Atlantic community; and fourth, how to respond to novel global security dilemmas."⁵⁷

All of these strategic issues will have to be closely scrutinized as NATO moves forward with their mission as a leading contributor and a positive force for change on the international stage. NATO has contributed to an essential source of stability and security; an invigorated NATO could prevent future genocide. NATO's current contribution to the Global War on Terror has been affirmed with the defeat of Gaddafi's regime in Libya and the death of its leader. It will continue to accept new roles in the struggles for human rights, efforts to alleviate poverty, natural disasters, counterterrorism operations, peacekeeping missions, maritime security activities, and suppressing violence from other non-state actors. "The challenge for the allies is to work out through experience the right balance between the core function of collective defense and their many non-Article 5 tasks," stated David Yost.⁵⁸ With the rise of China and increasing focus on the Asia-Pacific Region, NATO leaders should develop an appropriate framework for the next Summit meeting in Chicago this coming May. At this Summit, its leaders should define the geographic scope and priority of NATO operations and establish future security roles of NATO and the EU. According to Yost "As in the

past, the Strategic Concept will be given practical meaning by the actions, investments and political will of the allies.”⁵⁹ The simple reality is that the U.S. cannot handle the global problems of the contemporary era alone, and neither can Europe. If NATO dissolves, much of its security cooperation and intelligence sharing, peacekeeping, stability, expansion of democracy, and reconstruction efforts will be lost. Professor Hamilton of John Hopkins University stated, “A NATO that can project power and purpose outside Europe will greatly enhance the odds of preserving world peace while advancing democratic values.”⁶⁰ In our current austere security environment, change, discussion and debate in the alliance are not signs of impending doom; rather, they are preconditions of NATO’s continuing health and relevance.

NATO’s political objectives should remain the central focus of the strategic concept. Since NATO’s inception, these remain the expansion of free markets and the growth of democracies. According to Captain Christopher R. Davis, U.S. Navy, in a 2010 Strategic Studies Quarterly article, NATO should maintain an expeditionary force that can:

Contain and control threats to international security and stability through limiting crisis expansion and facilitating a return to normality.

Preserve the Western political identity and institutions by maintaining open sea, air, and cyber lines of communication.

Ensure continued economic prosperity through fair and reasonable access to natural resources and global markets.⁶¹

These capabilities are consistent with U.S. strategic interests and they enhance U.S. security. As Army War College professor, Dr. Craig Nation, has stated:

This new NATO is arguably more important than ever in the broader context of U.S. security policy, as a platform for power projection, as a forum for managing relations with key allies, as an instrument for reaching out to the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, as the foundation for

a new European security order, and as a context for engaging the Russian Federation in a cooperative security effort.⁶²

Collective defense, supported by future policies of deterrence, remains the political and military cornerstone of NATO's solidarity and mutual commitment. It will build on the strengths of the coalition to broaden security in the dimensions of air, sea, and land, and the growing areas of space and cyber. "NATO crisis-management operations increasingly require forward presence, rapid response, and expeditionary forces, which the alliance must promote through maritime security," stated Paolo Pezzutti of the U.S. Naval Institute.⁶³ The transformation of NATO is not a finite event, but a process that must continue to grow. Many of the strategic implications and capabilities cited in the new NATO Strategic Concept were released at the previous Lisbon Summit in November 2010. They should be re-visited at the next Chicago Summit meeting in 2012—along with other globalization concerns and national security issues. Much of NATO's resilience can be attributed to its leadership and commitment to do the right thing. On-going coordination and expanded dialogue among NATO alliances and partners has proven to be effective. As stated by Mr. Michael Ruhle, head speechwriter and senior political advisor in the NATO Secretary General's Policy Planning Unit:

In the end, however, the question whether NATO can last another 60 years will not be answered in cleverly drafted documents; rather, NATO's future depends on whether all of the allies understand that the world has changed irreversibly and that many new security challenges require transatlantic responses."⁶⁴

NATO needs to keep up with global challenges and threats, in order to stay ahead of the planning and execution phases of the organization.

Conclusion

NATO's basic challenge comes from historically unprecedented risks to global security. The paradox of our time is that just as the world is experiencing growing accessibility to WMD—not just to states but also potentially to extremist non-state movements—it is also coming closer together through global commerce and instant global communications.⁶⁵ Regardless of its past performances, NATO is developing some capability to secure the global frontier. It will continue to be relevant in building relationships among global security partners, such as Australia or Japan, and setting the stage of decisions on enlargement. With its democratic identity, NATO helps provide the core of our global security community. It will continue to enhance burden sharing with other states to assure the safety and security of our civilian populations, especially by promoting nuclear deterrence and balancing nuclear proliferation. As aptly editorialized in *The Economist* in November 2010 immediately before the NATO Summit to be held in Lisbon: “And whatever its prior failings, most of NATO’s members still see it as the cornerstone of their security and the irreplaceable bond that joins America to Europe. After 61 years, the alliance shows signs of wear and tear, but it endures.”⁶⁶ Today, NATO continues to adapt to the challenges that we are facing in the 21st Century and beyond. Its nurturing of partnership relations is providing new ways of conducting military action and nation building. These initiatives sustain NATO’s commitment to preserve peace and stability in an unpredictable world.

Endnotes

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