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EUROPE'S  
SECURITY  
PILLARS



At the outset, we must define the purpose of Europe's security structures at the beginning of the third millennium. This can be summarized as providing a basis for stability on the European continent and a secure foundation for European integration. In recent years, the mission of NATO, as the sole coherent and capable security organization has evolved from one of mutual defense of NATO members to the mutual security of an expanding Europe. The two mandates, mutual defense and mutual security, are not mutually exclusive and have been outlined in NATO's new Strategic Concept. There are four major pillars to the development of European security that I will outline: American engagement, European responsibility, institutional enlargement, and evolving missions. Weaknesses in any of these pillars will weaken the Alliance as a whole and could undermine Europe's evolution at the start of the next millennium.

## AMERICAN ENGAGEMENT

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With the end of the Cold War, policy makers assumed that the U.S. military presence in Europe would be significantly reduced and this would coincide with the emergence of a more vigorous European foreign and defense policy. Despite initial high hopes, the EU and other sole European institutions failed to play an effective role in the continent's post-Cold War conflicts. NATO, led by the United States, remains the central political and military player in Europe. By contrast, the EU has lacked a clear definition of interests and objectives. It has been handicapped by the unwillingness of national governments to place limits on their individual foreign policies.

The importance of continuing American engagement in Europe has been displayed in a number of recent developments: for example, the ongoing NATO mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the successful air war against Ser-

bia, and the K-FOR operation in Kosovo. The United States were also at the forefront of NATO enlargement into Eastern Europe. Through their enormous weight and influence, the U.S. are able to bridge the gaps between the European states and help facilitate faster decision-making. On the negative side, when Washington is not engaged in a European conflict, the crisis tends to escalate.

The war in Bosnia provides the most pertinent recent example. Between 1992-1995, the U.S. remained largely on the sidelines as the European countries dispatched troops under a United Nations umbrella but failed to impose peace in the country. It was only with the full-scale political engagement of the U.S. as well as the employment of American military muscle and the involvement of American-led NATO forces that the Dayton accords were finally signed and peace was restored. For the past four years, the three contending parties in Bosnia have made it clear that an American military presence remains essential for NATO forces to benefit from popular respect, something that the largely European UNPROFOR mission could not attain.

But Washington remains in a dilemma as to its future role on the European continent. On the one hand, it understands that Europe is still unable to handle the most serious insecurities on the continent without a strong American presence. On the other hand, policy makers and congressional leaders are seeking to limit the U.S. role in the longer term and to encourage more balanced burden sharing with the major European states. This dilemma is unlikely to be resolved in the short-term as so much depends on the reality of the newly emerging European Security Identity.

A useful example of potential trans-Atlantic problems looming ahead is the question of the Southeast Europe Stability Pact. The United States have urged Europe to take the lead in Balkan reconstruction. Having carried the overwhelming military and financial burden during the campaign against Serbia, Washington now expects the EU leadership to assume primary responsibility for regional rebuilding. But the Clinton administration also fears that the EU's slowness or incompetence could unleash a Congressional backlash during the coming presidential election year. This could seriously jeopardize funding for future American initiatives and increase pressure on the administration to cut the U.S. military presence in the Balkans. Such issues will not be easily resolved even while the American commitment to European security remains steadfast.

## EUROPEAN RESPONSIBILITIES

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One major lesson of the Kosovo conflict is the need for Europe to enhance its military assets and capabilities. But it is not clear whether the resources will be raised to pay for major new expenditures or the reorganization conducted to improve the capabilities of European forces. European countries currently spend about two-thirds of what the U.S. does on defense, but without possessing anything like two-thirds of the capability. The Allies will need to boost their defense spending approximately threefold and address the issue of military modernization and adaptation to new crises. European leaders were dismayed by the inadequacy of their armed forces against Serbia and by the extent of dependence on Washington, as U.S. planes provided three-quarters of the air power.

At the Köln summit in June 1999, EU leaders took a series of decisions designed to bring foreign and security issues into the framework of EU institutions. Javier Solana was appointed to the new post of European high representative for foreign and security affairs. Plans were also approved for combined EU military operations in future emergencies that would be independent of NATO while using NATO assets. EU members set the end of 2000 as a target date for the completion of reforms that would enable the Union to initiate its own conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations. Nevertheless, the Köln declaration made clear that the EU is not challenging NATO's role as the main guarantor of European security.

Regardless of whether the Kosovo mission will become the rule of the exception in future NATO strategy, the war has given a boost to proposals for integrating defense policies more closely into EU structures. There are plans to fold the WEU into the EU and so give the Union a more formal defense dimension. Proposals have also been made to create an EU military committee composed of military personnel that would make recommendations to a permanent new political-security body in Brussels. The stated objective of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is to strengthen the security of the EU member states, which may soon include several East Europeans. Ultimately, the success or failure of the European security pillar depends on whether its members are ready to invest in their own defense and security capabilities.

NATO is supposed to assist the European to act by themselves on a case-by-case basis, and to make its assets available for operations in which the Alliance as a whole is

not militarily engaged. According to the Defense Capabilities Initiative at the 1999 Washington Summit, future Alliance operations are likely to be small in scale, long in duration, extend multinational cooperation to lower levels, and take place concurrently with other Alliance operations. The U.S. have welcomed moves to enhance Europe's capacity to respond to crises and thus strengthen NATO's European pillar.

Although some progress has been made in adapting European forces to the new security environment, most Allies have only limited capabilities for rapid deployment of significant forces or for extended operations far from home bases. Command and control and information systems need to be better matched to the requirements of future operations. The effectiveness of multinational operations will also require greater interoperability or common approaches to doctrine, training, operational procedures, standardization, and rapid technological change.

In practice, a viable and independent European security structure does not exist. An effective CFSP supported by a competent military organization, may be a decade away. During this time, the EU will not be in a position to assume full responsibility for continental security. Other European structures have a role to play in promoting stability, but they all contain serious limitations. The WEU is officially the EU's security arm that can implement CFSP decisions. But it does not possess the military capability to respond to international crises. It lacks the structure for any significant troop deployments, is incapable of conducting any major military operations, and has limited operational experience. The notion of a European army is premature.

Given the weakness of alternative institutions and the likely demands of future instabilities, NATO remains the only international political and military organization with an integrated military structure, an absolute condition for any effective military action, whether collective defense or collective peace missions. NATO keeps the U.S. deeply engaged in European affairs. Without such involvement existing security structures would lose much of their impact and credibility, and thereby contribute to undermining European stability at a time when resources for a European pillar are being assembled.

## INSTITUTIONAL ENLARGEMENT

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The process of including new members was viewed both as inevitable and beneficial for the Alliance given the development of democratic governance in several Central European states. Supporters of NATO expansion maintained that it was essential to stabilize countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic by offering them membership in the only credible security structure that could defend their sovereignty and democracy on a permanent basis. Enlargement coupled with adaptation to handle the new European insecurities would also give NATO a new lease on life and eliminate nagging questions about its purpose and lifespan.

The arguments in favor of including three Central European states have revolved around several practical factors. Enlargement would provide a secure environment for consolidating democracy and market reform; it would help promote trade, investment, interdependence, and European integration, it would help project security both eastward and southward as NATO will assume a direct interest in the stability and independence of states initially excluded from the enlargement process; and it would relieve pressures on the EU to develop a security dimension at a time when the Union is engaged in deepening and expanding its economic structures.

The most persistent argument against NATO enlargement is the prospect that it would provoke Russia and create the very security threat that the Alliance is seeking to avoid. However, this position has some serious misunderstandings. At present, Russia is in a weak political, economic, and military position to resist NATO expansion. The next few years may provide an unrepeatable window of opportunity for Alliance enlargement in the event that Moscow's drive for empire is reanimated given the volatility in Russian politics. In such an eventuality, any aggressive acts of the East European countries would be less likely in the future if the potential aggressor understood that NATO is obliged to provide a viable defense. Instead of NATO enlargement being directed against Russia, I would argue that it is directed against potential future Russian enlargement.

Rationally speaking, NATO expansion in itself does not threaten Russia's security interests. On the contrary, it will actually help to stabilize Russia's western borders. NATO is defensive alliance that can help guarantee that Russia's NATO neighbors will pursue friendly relations with Moscow. NATO enlargement will not redivide Europe but will simply expand the Alliance eastwards and leave the door open to other emerging democracies. By

contrast, non-expansion and the avoidance of genuine security guarantees may actually embolden Russian nationalists and imperialists as they could view NATO's hesitation as evidence of their importance, thus stimulating further ambitions. Allied resolve concerning further enlargement could actually help silence Russian revanchism by eliminating any lingering Western ambiguities.

Ultimately, Balkan-Russian relations will contain a built-in contradiction and the potential for renewed conflict. All Balkan states, with the exception of Serbia, are seeking NATO membership, while Russia does not want further NATO expansion. Hence, Moscow is likely to engage in a range of measures either to draw various Balkan states away from NATO or to undermine their ability to meet the criteria for NATO membership. We should be prepared for Russia's ongoing anti-NATO maneuvers.

NATO planners have concentrated primarily on the impact of enlargement on the Central European states. Unfortunately, they have not comprehensively addressed the question of candidates and their long-term reactions to exclusion. The Allies will need to devise a longer-term security strategy that will not only ensure the collective defense of the stable Central European nations but will project security and stability toward the more unpredictable parts of the continent.

One important component of such a strategy would be to offer firmer defense arrangements to countries that were omitted from the first wave of entrants but could be included in NATO early in the next century. Much depends of course on whether NATO, as a result of its experiences in Central Europe, will continue to expand. Limited expansion could have some adverse repercussions for the excluded East European states unless assurances are offered that the enlargement process will continue and will include any European candidates that meet the required criteria. The issue of further enlargement will be decided through a combination of factors, including the performance on new members and the cost and effectiveness of new operations.

## EVOLVING MISSION

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Shortly after the demise of the Warsaw Pact, the Atlantic Alliance formulated a Strategic Concept to identify the variety of security challenges and risks facing member states in the wake of the East European earthquake. This Concept was further elaborated at the April 1999 Summit in Washington. NATO analysts drew attention to the diverse



threats to security that had emerged following the disappearance of the Soviet menace. In particular, the Strategic Concept focused on the threats and challenges facing Europe's southern and southeastern peripheries. It concluded that unlike the challenges emanating from the Cold War, the new risks to European stability were more numerous, unpredictable, and in many cases more intricate and elusive.

Domestic instabilities generating regional conflicts have become the primary challenge to European stability and integration. The diversity of national, ethnic, and territorial disputes, both within and between the East European states, and the possibility for simultaneous occurrence escalation, and duplication, presented costly and potentially destructive challenges for the Alliance. The wars in the former Yugoslavia vividly underscored the dangers: ethnic strife (sponsored by nationalist politicians), mass murder and massive civilian expulsions, the breakdown of law and order, separatism and territorial competition, refugee outflows, terrorism and sabotage arms and drug smuggling, weapons proliferation, international organized crime, and the involvement of hostile outside powers in Europe's unstable regions.

Potential instabilities in Eastern Europe call for novel responses in terms of conflict prevention and peace-enforcement missions - capabilities for which the Alliance and other multi-national bodies had not been properly equipped during the Cold War. Although no major military threat confronts the Alliance, NATO faces a series of risks that could undermine the very fabric and rationale of the existing security structures. But probably the biggest challenge of all remains the threat of redundancy and irrelevance if NATO is unwilling or incapable of resolutely handling the emerging new crises.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo missions indicate that NATO is significantly adapting its mandate to include major peace-enforcement challenges; such efforts may need to be replicated in the future. In the European Theater, only NATO possesses the headquarters, troops, equipment, infrastructure, command and control, airlift, and transportation facilities that provide it with indispensable peacekeeping, and indeed peace-making, potential. Of course, prevention or early involvement in a crisis is preferable to finding a cure once a crisis has assumed tragic and massive proportions. Early warning signals, crisis monitoring and preventive intervention will need to be substantially developed to potential trouble spots. In addition to a purposeful and adaptive military strategy, NATO

must improve its political coordination to deal with scenarios of crisis management and preventive deterrents in unstable regions of the continent.

## CONCLUSIONS

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In the longer term, NATO's effectiveness as peacemaker, peacekeeper, and state builder, as well as its cohesiveness as a growing European security structure, still needs to be determined. Many lessons will be learnt from the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo experience; not least how NATO can operate in tandem with other institutions such as the United Nations, the EU, and the OSCE. If either mission were to end in failure or a prolonged open-ended deployment without the construction of stable democratic states, then the possibility of applying NATO's new Strategic Concept in future crises would be severely questioned and the future growth of the Alliance could be jeopardized.