

**Analysing the role of NATO in the post-Cold War era:  
*An assessment of the evolution of NATO since the 1990s  
and recommendations for the future***



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## Introduction

In 1949, twelve countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty in order to establish a transatlantic alliance that would counter the threat of the Soviet Union that sought to extend its communist sphere of influence in Europe. Over the years, the Alliance expanded to fifteen countries. Following the accession of West Germany to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Soviet Union and its satellite states formed their own counter-alliance in 1955, the Warsaw Pact. By 1991, the Soviet Union had collapsed and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved as the Soviet satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe opened up to democracy and multi-party political systems. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant the removal of the main adversary of NATO, and many believed that NATO had become obsolete given its original purpose of countering the Soviet communist threat. The end of the Cold War caused a debate about the future role and the necessity of the Alliance. It soon became apparent though, that there were new situations in which NATO could become engaged, especially when a number of regional conflicts broke out in Yugoslavia and in parts of the former Soviet Union. The Alliance decided to go 'out-of-area', which meant that it started to get involved in peacekeeping operations and crisis management, in a territory other than its own. NATO's main role shifted from collective defence to collective security. Subsequently, the important choice was made to enlarge NATO in order to enhance security and stability on the European territory. Since then, the focus of NATO has undergone fundamental change and the Alliance has taken a more proactive approach with regard to the maintenance of security. This was the consequence of the growing impact of non-traditional security threats like terrorism and nuclear proliferation that could easily form a threat to NATO members.

NATO has now expanded to 26 members and the recent Bucharest summit heralded again the accession of more Eastern European member states to NATO. The Alliance is going through a continuous process of transformation with regard to its composition, its capabilities and its focus. According to some analysts, NATO is the most powerful regional defence alliance that ever existed. Over time NATO has evolved into a strong military mechanism with vast operational capabilities and established peace agreements and partnerships with third countries and potential member candidates. The importance of the transatlantic alliance might even grow with regard to the security threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and ethnic conflicts that bring the NATO member states in peril.

Nevertheless, NATO faces challenges that could question its success and importance in the future. It is debatable whether the Alliance has acquired the new tools that are necessary for its newly designed missions, and if its military forces can be combined successfully with civilian efforts. There has been much discussion going on about the presence of NATO's force in Afghanistan. Also, disagreements occur within the Alliance, particularly between the Americans and Europeans. Internal divisions, for example over the Iraq invasion in 2003, undermine the efficacy of NATO. As a reflection of this particular rift, the European Union has increased efforts to develop its own military capabilities, perhaps independent of NATO. A common defence policy may soon be implemented through the

Lisbon Treaty and will enhance the EU as a security institution. The question that can be drawn here is what any new defence policy at the EU level will mean for the future of NATO, and if the two security institutions could go hand in hand.

The aim of this research is to assess NATO as a regional security institution. The central research question is: *How did NATO evolve after the Cold War and how can it maintain its importance in the future?*

Through an analysis of NATO's metamorphosis over the past 20 years, it will become possible to examine how NATO can confront its current challenges. The analysis of NATO's post-Cold War development will focus mainly on its renewed objective and its eastward enlargement. Subsequently, it will be explained why NATO is successful and why its existence is essential, as well as what challenges it faces and how those can be overcome. Accordingly, it can be concluded what the prospects of NATO are for the future. Likewise, recommendations will be given as to what the Alliance should improve in order to remain relevant and effective. The purpose of this paper is not to speculate on NATO's future. Rather, it is to examine what NATO has to improve in order to retain its status as the most important military alliance between two crucial global powers, Europe and North America.

This study is important because one should realise that NATO is still at its 'cross-roads' as it was right after the end of the Cold War. NATO as a whole is neither a success nor a failure; it is an organisation that has been transforming itself from the 1990s on and over the years has changed into an entirely different concept with different members and motives. It is essential that NATO keeps questioning itself what it can improve, and how it can best adapt to a changing security environment. It is of major importance to underscore the significance of NATO in the fields where it could play a meaningful role. Furthermore, one should pay attention to the internal political disagreements that undermine the efficacy of the organisation. Only if one understands the differences between individual NATO members and the nature of their mutual conflicts, a conclusion can be drawn as to the problems that exist within the Alliance and only then can one try to solve or manage them.

This study is an addition to other writings that keep the discussion about NATO alive, and is relevant as it strives to assess the institution in an unbiased manner. Finally, this research is of importance for the study of international relations and international organisations, as NATO forms one of the most important partnerships between the transatlantic allies. Their relations with Russia are partly influenced by the activities but also by the mere existence of the Alliance. Moreover, NATO is one of the bodies through which the Western world becomes engaged in the Middle East, in Eastern Europe and in Africa.

The methods chosen to carry out this study were desk research, data collection, use of literature, expert interviews, attendance of informative seminars, and case studies as appropriate. A majority of the work was done through desk research and use of literature. Mostly used were books on the evolution of NATO after the Cold War and on its role in the contemporary world. Additionally,

reports and articles of think-tanks, newspapers and scholars proved useful for the exploration of the topic. A U.S. government official from the Department of State Office of European Security and Political Affairs provided me with important documents that contained inside information on the U.S. stance towards NATO. Likewise, several individual American scholars that I met in Washington DC provided me with their expertise and opinion on the transatlantic alliance; two of them were willing to participate in an interview.

Furthermore, I attended numerous conferences in Washington DC that addressed the NATO topic. I even had the opportunity to be present during a discussion with current NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Brookings Institute, where he spoke about the effectiveness of the ISAF-force in Afghanistan and where he declared what efforts and improvements he considered necessary for NATO to make in the future. Other conferences that I had the chance to attend were a meeting with member of the British Parliament Liam Fox on the future of the transatlantic alliance; a meeting with former Dutch minister of Defence Joris Voorhoeve on the situation in Afghanistan; and a speech of the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek on the value of transatlantic partnership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All of those visits provided me with background information, useful quotes for my work, and the opportunity to ask questions – and as such to get a better understanding of the subject.

In order to evaluate the success and potential of NATO as a peacekeeping and crisis management organisation, it proved useful to look into several case-studies; that is NATO's missions in Bosnia and Afghanistan. Although those two case-studies cannot be representative for all of NATO's missions, they provided a good insight of its performance during two of its newly designed 'out-of-area-missions'. As an extra case-study I considered it valuable to look into NATO's internal crisis with regard to the Iraq invasion in more depth in order to illustrate the problem of internal conflict within NATO.

The structure of this dissertation is as follows. In the first chapter, **"The evolution of NATO after the Cold War"**, the existential debate that NATO faced after the Cold War will be concisely described and it is explained why one decided to continue with NATO after the Cold War. Subsequently, NATO's eastern enlargement - that was also preceded by heated debate - is being discussed in the first chapter. It goes into the arguments of proponents and opponents of enlargement and discusses the special relation with Russia and the West, in the immediate post-Cold War period but also at a current stage. The chapter explains the political meaning of the first post-Cold War enlargements and assesses if those can be considered successful and why. A final sub-chapter deals with NATO's decision to become engaged in missions and areas other than the traditional NATO would have done. Accordingly NATO's transformation in the 1990s is being assessed as a whole.

After having discussed NATO's post-Cold War evolution, its potential to deal with international security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the long term are worked out in chapter 2, **"The importance of NATO"**. It sets out newly emerged security threats and the response they require, and it answers the sub-question why NATO is still vital in this regard. Subsequently, NATO's

capabilities in responding to these new security threats will be reviewed so that it is possible to conclude in which areas NATO can play a significant role. NATO's ability to respond to the threat of terrorism will be discussed to a larger extent, in order to illustrate more concretely what NATO's meaning can be in the contemporary security environment. For the same reason, a sub-chapter is added that gives a summary of NATO's missions in respectively Bosnia and Afghanistan, and that examines the failures and successes of both. This makes it possible to assess NATO in the role of peacekeeping institution. Finally, the chapter will conclude which types of engagement are appropriate for NATO and gives recommendations for improvement.

Despite the important role that NATO can play in the contemporary world, it also faces some significant challenges. Of all of those challenges, especially political difficulties place a considerable burden on NATO. Chapter three, "**Challenges for NATO**" discusses the internal problems that occur on NATO's political level. The first sub-chapter explains the difference between American and European foreign policy and threat perception, and in addition it addresses the issue of the U.S. perceiving NATO differently from the European countries. After that, one of the major internal crises in NATO history is described; that is the feud over the war in Iraq – and the consequences for the Alliance of this legacy are set out. In addition, conclusions are drawn with regard to transatlantic relations in general, the existence of an Atlantic-oriented community within Europe, and the significance of change of leadership in the individual Member States in this respect. Finally, the concept of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) will be highlighted. The development of the ESDP over the years will be described, and a next sub-chapter will go into the consequences of this concept for NATO in greater detail. In this way, two other sub-questions will be answered: how EU-NATO relations are coordinated, and whether the ESDP will form a threat to NATO.

## **Chapter I: The evolution of NATO after the Cold War**

### **1.1 The post-Cold War debate on the future of the Alliance**

In 1991, after the Soviet Union collapsed and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved at the insistence of the newly liberated countries of Eastern Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) found itself confronting an existential dilemma. The disintegration of the Soviet Union meant the removal not only of NATO's main adversary, but of its original and sustaining purpose as well. Without the communist threat of the Soviet Union to counter, some believed that NATO had become obsolete and that the dissolution of the Soviet Union implied –perhaps even necessitated- the dissolution of NATO as well.

The debate over the future role of the Alliance began in 1989, when the Soviet empire unexpectedly fell. It was assumed that this had left NATO without a mission, as there was no need to provide a political and military counterbalance to the Soviet power in Europe anymore. However, this was not the sole reason NATO had been created. The idea of a transatlantic alliance had also been designed with the purpose of establishing peaceful and productive relationships among the Western allies, and to prevent mutual conflict as it had occurred earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This vision was still appropriate at that time and was therefore a motive for continuing with NATO, despite the end of the Cold War. Indeed, some still considered the organisation “the most stable and valuable geopolitical asset on the globe” (Thompson 1996). Nevertheless, if NATO wanted to remain relevant and valid in the long term, least its purpose and focus would have to change. Obviously, “few institutions can expect to remain unchanged for forty years while still fulfilling the tasks for which they were originally designed” (Sloan 1989, p. vii). Therefore NATO now had to anticipate to the strategic, political and military environment that followed the Cold War. After all, NATO still served its general strategic purpose of maintaining the common defence and security of its member countries (Thompson). Hence it was time to identify new strategic missions and alter both NATO's military doctrine and its force structures accordingly (Sandler 1999).

A crucial factor here was that the relationship with the former Soviet satellite states had changed. The countries within the democratic ‘grey zone’ between Western Europe and Russia now aspired to be integrated into the Western world. Their leaders made clear that they did not want to form ‘a buffer zone’ for either Europe or Russia, and most of them strived for closer ties with NATO and the European Union. The NATO allies recognised the need to enhance cooperation with the Central and Eastern European countries, and so at the London summit in July 1990, they declared that “the Atlantic Community must reach out to the countries which were our adversaries in the Cold War, and extend to them the hand of friendship,” which was considered by some as a historically extraordinary gesture (Solomon 1998, p. 10).

Initially, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker sought to make the Alliance less militarised, and more focused on enhancing the political dialogue between the allies instead. On October 2, 1991,

Secretary Baker and German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher took the initiative to establish a 'North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)' (Solomon, p. 13) which was a concrete step towards closer cooperation with non-NATO countries. The NACC would serve as a primary consultation body between NATO and liaison states on security and related issues, and it "could play a role in controlling crises in Europe" (Solomon, p. 14). However, merely diplomatic efforts proved insufficient to deal with post-Cold War international relations. It soon became apparent that although the end of the Cold War had removed the threat of military invasion, instability in some parts of Europe had increased. A number of regional conflicts, often fuelled by ethnic tensions, broke out in Yugoslavia and in parts of the former Soviet Union, threatening to spread. Also, the war in Bosnia demonstrated the emergence of new regional security challenges. NATO found it was inevitable to engage in conflict resolution and peacekeeping missions, as individual allies did not have sufficient resources to confront those challenges on their own. Moreover, at that moment NATO was probably the only organisation in the world that possessed the right package of political-military tools for effective crisis management (Thompson). Therefore, the allies concluded that their commitment to collective defence and the cooperation achieved through NATO continued to provide the best guarantee of their security (NATO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, p. 8).

## **1.2 The choice for Eastern enlargement in the 1990s**

German unification in 1990 and the accession of East Germany to NATO brought forth the first discussions about NATO enlargement. Before it was possible to bring a united Germany under NATO's jurisdiction and collective defence, it was necessary to make the concession to Russia that no NATO forces would be stationed on the territory of the German Democratic Republic (Goldgeier 1999, p. 15). The idea of expanding NATO towards the East was first expressed by the U.S., although initially there was little support for this within the Clinton administration. In Europe, there were only a few supporters of enlargement. German Defence Minister Volker R  he became the leading European proponent of NATO enlargement, arguing that Germany's eastern border would be safer and less vulnerable if it bordered allied territory. Moreover, one desired to prevent a situation in which the countries in Central and Eastern Europe would again form a vacuum in which German and Russian security competition could take place.

In late April 1993, during the opening of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, President Clinton met several influential Central and Eastern European leaders, who all tried to make the case for NATO enlargement and apparently left the President with great impression. After he had talked with the President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel, the Polish President Lech Walesa and Hungarian President Arpad Goncz, Clinton assured that they had given him "the clearest example I know [...] that NATO is not dead" (Asmus 2002, p. 25). NATO enlargement had not been the foreign policy Clinton had in mind at the start of his presidency. Nevertheless, the strategy of enlargement was a reflection on two of his core convictions: "his commitment to expand and consolidate

democracy and his belief in the importance of modernizing America's alliances in a globalized world" (Asmus, p. 25). For the U.S., the enlargement policy was thus part of a broader agenda to further design the U.S.-European strategic partnership.

By 1993, Clinton had carefully opened the policy path towards NATO enlargement. His efforts were complemented by NATO Secretary-General Wörner, who joined him in the proclaiming to transform the Alliance. On September 10, 1993, he urged "to open a more concrete perspective to those countries of Central and Eastern Europe which want to join NATO and which we may consider eligible for future membership" (Solomon, p. 25). The main goal of NATO expansion was to improve stability in the Eastern European countries. In this regard, "Greco-Turkish relations were commonly cited as an example of NATO's [...] stabilizing influence on allies" (Solomon, p. 25). According to Wörner, a stable Europe would be in the interests of all nations, including Russia (Solomon, p. 25). However, as the decision-making process of the NATO members is regulated by the principle of consensus, all member states had to support the idea of enlargement, before concrete steps could be taken. Importantly, Russia's position also had to be taken into account.

It took a considerable amount of time before all NATO members states agreed on expanding the Alliance. Supporters of enlargement claimed that in order to achieve democratic reform and stability in the Central and Eastern European countries, NATO membership was inevitable. In this way an instable zone between Western Europe and Russia would be avoided. They also emphasised that expansion would result in stronger collective defence and that it would enhance the ability to address new security challenges like nuclear non-proliferation. Besides the security benefits, NATO membership would also serve as an incentive for economic reform in Central and Eastern Europe and provide a stable climate for trade and investment. For the U.S. in particular, it would be beneficial to have a more coherent Europe as partner. Moreover, NATO expansion would guarantee a continuing influence for the United States in Europe (Weber, p.3).

But there was also substantial protest to enlargement. The key argument that opponents made was that an extended NATO would deteriorate recently improved relations with Russia. After a period of conflict and tension of almost fifty years between the two major global players, one can imagine how cautious especially the Americans were in defining their foreign policy towards Russia and Eastern Europe. As a matter of fact, some U.S. government officials like Strobe Talbott advocated a 'Russia first' policy; the priority was to keep Russia's relations with the West on the level one had finally achieved with the end of the Cold War. As it became clear how Mikhail Gorbachev and later on Boris Yeltsin reacted on the plans for NATO enlargement, some became seriously worried about staining the relationship with Moscow. Another concern was that NATO expansion would stimulate nationalism in Russia and undermine the vulnerable political balance within Russia at that time.

It was also argued that instead of preventing divisions within Europe, NATO enlargement would create a divided Europe, as only a particular selection of countries would be able to join NATO. Besides, there were concerns about the stability in the Central and Eastern European countries and their relations to other countries. This was worrying mainly with regard to the solidarity clause that was incorporated in the North Atlantic Treaty, Article V. It states that an attack on one of the member

states will be considered as an attack on all NATO members, and in that case the Alliance will react as a whole in the name of self-defence. As some of the new members were considered potential hotspots, the majority of the allies did not feel for absorbing them in their Alliance. This argument was rebutted by NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea, who made the following comment in September 1993: "NATO could either accept as new members the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and thereby take the risk of importing their instabilities, or it can shut them out, with the risk that these instabilities will spread over Alliance territory in any case" (Solomon, p. 22).

Economic instability constituted the main problem in the Central and Eastern European countries, and some in the U.S. deemed it 'bizarre' to try to increase stability by bringing people into a military alliance like NATO. According to them, the European Union (EU) would be better suited to stimulate reforms and to facilitate economic integration with the West. This argument was rejected by defendants who said that the EU and NATO were more likely to complement each other rather than to serve as each other's substitute, since the EU was not focused on security like NATO was. "EU enlargement is a half-measure because it offers economic prosperity without security, and NATO enlargement is the same in reverse, because it offers security without economic prosperity" (Kugler & Kozintseva 1996, p. 3). Accordingly, a proposal was made to enlarge NATO via the "Royal Road", meaning that membership in the EU should precede or coincide more or less with membership in NATO (Solomon, p. 21). Nevertheless, soon this idea was opposed by the non-EU members within NATO, because this approach would mean that the Europeans would have quasi-veto powers on the expansion of NATO; if it were decided that a country would not be invited to join the EU, this would automatically rule out its possibility to become a NATO member.

As a result of these disagreements, an agreement was made that at the moment satisfied all of the parties of the enlargement debate: the Partnership for Peace (PfP). This program was aimed at enhancing bilateral dialogue and cooperation with the individual non-NATO countries. It required that the partner countries made certain commitments, for instance with respect to democracy, human rights and disarmament. As a matter of fact, the PfP-agreement was highly consensual, and vague to the extent that it was subject to a broad range of interpretations. Without a common stance on enlargement, this agreement had enough ambiguity to comfort both opponents and supporters. On the one hand, opponents of enlargement - including the Russians - interpreted the PfP as not only an acceptable alternative for expansion but also as the end of discussion. Supporters, on the other hand, also saw the PfP as a positive sign, considering it the first concrete step towards actual enlargement. The Central and Eastern European leaders were pleased with the agreement for the same reason. The first group was somewhat surprised when it turned out that the latter interpretation had been the right one, and that enlargement was gathering momentum.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1994, the NATO foreign ministers agreed to initiate a process of examination inside the Alliance to determine how NATO would enlarge, the principles to guide this process and the implications of membership (Solomon, p. 71). This resulted in the 'Study on NATO Enlargement', which was published in September 1995. The document explained the purposes of enlargement and set out the basic principles for it. What concerned conditions for the accession of

states, it was decided that there would not be a fixed or rigid list of criteria; invitations would rather be considered case-by-case and decisions would be made accordingly but only by consensus. It was important for the Alliance to maintain military credibility and meet obligations, particularly under Article V, and therefore new member states would have to conform to certain military requirements or be able to make the necessary adjustments in this field (Study on NATO enlargement, 1995). The document elaborates on the more technical components of enlargement, like the decision-making process; the Alliance should maintain its ability to act quickly, decisively and effectively, and also preserve the consensus principle. Moreover, it was stated that accession could be permitted only after careful consideration of the strategic environment of potential new members, possible risks faced by them, the capabilities and interoperability of their forces, their approach and that of the allies to the stationing of foreign forces on their territory, and the relevant reinforcement capabilities of Alliance forces, including strategic mobility (Study on NATO enlargement). The resolution of existing international disputes by the candidate member states would be a factor in determining whether to invite a state to join NATO. The study addressed relations with Russia and made certain once again that the enlargement process was not designed to form a threat to anyone. NATO-Russia relations should reflect Russia's significance in European security based on reciprocity, mutual respect and confidence (Study on NATO enlargement).

Naturally, the Study on NATO Enlargement was deliberately cautious, but nevertheless it pleased the Central and Eastern European diplomats as it was again a real step forward to actual enlargement (Solomon, p. 85). It also addressed some of the concerns of enlargement opponents; for example, their argument that some countries were potential hotspots was answered with the promise to carefully consider a new member's strategic environment and the provision that it should solve international disputes before entering. Despite all this, in order to continue with the enlargement process it was first necessary to reach an agreement with Russia on its role in NATO and to take away some of its concerns with regard to the upcoming enlargement. Negotiation talks finally resulted in the Russia Founding Act of 1997. The NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council that was then established was meant to "facilitate regular consultation and discussion of security measures" (NATO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, p. 13). It was emphasised by NATO, however, that in decision-making it would only give Russia a voice, not a veto. The achievement to reach compromise with Russia significantly weakened the arguments of those who claimed Moscow would never accept enlargement (Goldgeier, p116). This was important because the anxiety to alienate Russia through enlargement constituted the principal argument of opponents.

After the agreement with Russia, NATO proceeded with the Madrid summit in 1997, where it was decided which countries would be invited to join NATO. Eventually, it was announced that the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary would be invited to join NATO in 1999, at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO. At the Washington summit in 1999, one formally declared that this wave of enlargement would not be the last and reaffirmed that "the ongoing enlargement process strengthens the Alliance and enhances the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region" (Washington Summit Communiqué 1999). Therefore, at the same moment the Membership Action Plan (MAP) was introduced "to assist

those countries that wish to join the Alliance in their preparations by providing advice, assistance and practical support on all aspects of NATO membership" (NATO Handbook 2004, Ch.3). At present, MAP is still the well-working mechanism through which candidate countries are prepared for eventual NATO membership. During the last Bucharest summit, Albania and Croatia were invited to join the Alliance, while the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remains at the MAP-stage.

### **1.3 Russia's attitude towards NATO and its Eastern agenda**

In 1999, the Russian-born Sergei Plekhanov, a frequent commentator on Russian affairs in the U.S. and Canada, wrote that:

Russian political leaders, both in the opposition and on the government side, have been vigorously protesting the idea of moving the Atlantic Alliance's border eastward. Since 1994, when the idea of expanding NATO began to be openly discussed in Western circles, Russian political leaders have been steadily – and nearly unanimously – voicing objections against this idea. (Plekhanov 1999, p. 165)

Russia's attitude towards NATO-enlargement has always been negative. As a result, Russia's relations with the West worsened at certain moments after the end of the Cold War. As mentioned above, the Partnership for Peace gave opponents of enlargement like Russia the false idea that NATO would not actually expand further, and that a final compromise had been reached. Due to this miscommunication relations with Russia deteriorated at the end of 1994, when the Russians found out what the real plan with NATO was. The American President Clinton had made visits to several European cities and had explicitly spoken out in favour of enlargement. This angered the Russians, who considered all of this a sudden shift in policy that was not first discussed with them. Subsequently, when Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev came to Brussels in December 1994 to formalise Russia's full PFP-participation through its Individual Partnership for Peace, he rejected to sign at the very last minute. "Kozyrev declared shock and surprise at what he saw as accelerated discussion of NATO expansion in Brussels and elsewhere" (Borawski 1995, p. 91). At the CSCE summit in Budapest a few days later, President Yeltsin gave a dramatic speech in which he criticised the U.S. for moving ahead with NATO enlargement (Asmus, p. 94). He made himself more than clear when he said: "Europe, even before it has managed to shrug off the legacy of the Cold War, is risking encumbering itself with a cold peace" (Goldgeier, p. 88).

Through substantial diplomatic efforts from NATO's side, it was possible to get Russia 'back on track'. Diplomats endeavoured to convince Russia that NATO ought to be no longer considered an anti-Russian alliance, and that any plans for enlargement were not designed to form a threat to Russia. Finally, in 1995 Moscow declared that it might accept "a slow and limited expansion of NATO under certain circumstances", under the provision that "the process would not be rushed, that there would be no nuclear weapons stationed on the territories of new members, that Russia could be a member of NATO eventually, and that the end result would be a forum for East-West cooperation on

security issues and a NATO-Russia non-aggression pact" (Smith & Williams 1995, pp. 93-94). Reaching agreement with Russia on NATO's direction was essential. As NATO Secretary General Willy Claes insisted in the spring of 1995, "the European security architecture is not possible without Russia." One attempted to convince Russia of the fact that it would be a major beneficiary of a more secure and a more integrated Europe.

When signing the Russia Founding Act in 1997, some of Russia's preferences were rejected, such as the demand that new members could not have NATO troops on their territory. NATO made clear that new members were not going to be 'second-class citizens' in the Alliance. However, NATO promised not to place nuclear weapons on the soil of the new members, as long as there was no threat. Also Russia was not allowed to delay enlargement any further, and although the Permanent Joint Council had created room for discussion with the Russians, they would not be given a veto in any decision concerning NATO. Additionally, it was decided that no country would be excluded from joining NATO in the future. These, plus some other concessions - like the amendment of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), the commitment to initiate a START III negotiation on further nuclear arms reductions, and the promise to support Russian interests in the World Trade Organization and G7 – appeased Moscow and ensured its acceptance of enlargement (Kugler 1999, p60).

At the time Vladimir Putin became President of the Russian Federation in 1999, NATO-Russia relations were not in a favourable condition. For example, in first instance the Russians distanced themselves from the NATO intervention in Kosovo. Nevertheless, after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 the U.S. carried out its mission in Afghanistan to remove the Taliban regime. This was later on turned into a NATO-mission with the purpose to stabilise the country – a mission appreciated by Moscow, for it concerned the removal of an international security threat which also threatened Russia. In 2002 a new step forward was taken in NATO-Russian relations: the establishment of the Russia-NATO Council. Since then, the parties have tried to build trust and show they can work together, for example by carrying out exercises in joint responses to terrorism. Fighting terrorism is one of their common interests, like non-proliferation. According to Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, current Secretary-General of NATO, "Russia needs NATO and NATO needs Russia, so there is no alternative in the relationship, but to engage" (de Hoop Scheffer 2008).

Despite some progress in the relations with Russia, there have been many moments of miniature crisis, and the relationship is going up and down. The burden that Russia places on NATO is significant. Currently, Russia's influence on whether NATO is enlarging is once again great, as it was during the 1990s. In particular, they object fiercely to the admission of Georgia and Ukraine to NATO. Although the Russians do not have a direct say in any decision made between the allies, they exert substantial influence on the individual allies that have to make the decision. Countries are still vigilant to upset Russia through NATO's moves as bilateral relations with Moscow are crucial for most of them, particularly due to dependence on its oil and gas. This is the main reason why the European allies refused to offer the MAP to Georgia and Ukraine at the Bucharest summit in 2008. Another look will be taken at this issue in Brussels in 2009, but in the meantime the two countries will experience a

difficult period with Russia. For Russia, this is their last chance to try to expand their sphere of influence in Georgia. At the moment they do this in an enforcing way; by mingling in Georgia's breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia through for instance the support of separatist movements and military build-up.

Another current aspect of a vulnerable NATO-Russia relation is the probable deployment of the elements of a U.S. anti-ballistic missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic. According to the United States, the installation of the missile shield would increase the security of the European territory as it will be able to intercept missiles in case of a nuclear attack from for example Iran. Russia has been fiercely objecting to the plans for the missile defence system, as it perceives the U.S. missile system as a threat to Russia, and is afraid that the radar will also be used to spy on Russia (U.S. missile defence). Also the location where the missile shield is planned – in the former Russian 'backyard' – is a problem for Russia. Not even 20 years ago, Poland and the Czech Republic were part of the Soviet territory. At the time NATO was pushing its enlargement eastwards, it promised not to station any nuclear weapons on the territories of new members<sup>1</sup>. The Russians feel betrayed and threatened by this move of the U.S. and the NATO foreign ministers, who already agreed on the placement of such a system.

NATO has declared that it will leave the door open for new members, also for Russia – although this is somewhat cynical. Obviously, at present Russia is far from meeting the criteria required prerequisites, such as "fully democratic governance, civilian control of the military, peaceful relations with its neighbours, respect for minorities at home, and military forces that can work with the rest of NATO's" (Gordon & Steinberg 2001, p. 6). But more importantly, it is to doubt if Russia would even *want* to join the alliance, and even more if this would ever be accepted by the allies. It is very likely that if Russia were to join the Alliance, the consensus-principle that is valued so much as the official decision-making mechanism of NATO would become unworkable. It is evident that Russia's foreign policy orientation differs significantly from that of the NATO members.

In general, the Western allies keep watching Russia with suspicion. Also the other way around, trust is lacking. Russia still seems to regard NATO as the alien Cold War institution instead of an organic part of the Western community with whom Russia professes a desire for intimate ties (Kugler & Kozintseva, p. 19). This perception also explains the remarkable difference in Russia's reaction to EU enlargement and NATO enlargement. Russia is less apprehensive about the EU enlarging, because the EU is less likely to pose a military threat to Russia.

The relationship with Russia brings problems that one should probably not strive to overcome; rather one should accept that the relationship is likely to remain strained forever and that the best way to handle problems is to manage them as good as possible. Managing the relationship with Russia well is crucial for the success, the efficacy and the influence of the Alliance. What the NATO-Russian

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<sup>1</sup> See page 10, last paragraph, quote from Smith & Williams 1995

relation needs most is careful management to ensure that inherent rivalries are minimised, and that cooperation is maximised wherever possible (Trenin 2007).

#### **1.4 Assessment of NATO's transformation in the 1990s**

After the first round of enlargement, one still had to await if the decision to go East with NATO had been a good one, and if the move would really turn out to be beneficial for the Alliance as well as for the newly admitted countries themselves. Some were very pessimistic, like George Kennan, an influential American politician and Russia-expert, who is a former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union as well as to Yugoslavia. Already in 1997, he wrote in a New York Times op-ed that it was "a terrible mistake" to bring NATO so close to the borders of Russia, and that "expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era" (Weiner 2005).

The main purpose of enlargement had been to help export stability eastward and to prevent the emergence of a security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe. It seems to have been the right policy to pursue. Overall, "the enlargement of NATO has helped to stabilise Central Europe and reduced the prospects that it will again become a major threat to European security" (Larrabee 2003, p. 3). However, the effects of enlargement were not fully as expected. Some new members, like Hungary, have failed to live up to all of their commitments made when entering the Alliance (Larrabee, p. 4). Nevertheless, in general the Eastern enlargement was considered successful, and more countries were on the waiting list to join the Alliance. Eastern European countries made significant progression in complying with the criteria to access NATO, which was a good sign regardless if they would join or not, for it meant that NATO enlargement worked as an incentive for domestic reforms - and this is a valuable achievement. The Prague summit in 2002 heralded the next round of eastern enlargement and transformation of the Alliance. During the summit, seven countries were invited to join NATO: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. It was considered another important step to overcome divisions in Europe and an indispensable progress for the Eastern European countries. By enlarging eastwards a second time, NATO showed optimism in involving Eastern Europe in their security alliance. At present even a third eastern wave of enlargement is to look out for.

The political implications of enlarging NATO have been great, as it meant the involvement of former adversaries into the West. Also, being able to overcome Russia's objections to enlargement and the accomplishment to manage relations with Russia through compromises and sometimes concessions, without allowing them to get involved in NATO's decision-making process, can be seen as a true achievement. Preventing to upset Russia by enlarging NATO became one of the major focuses of attention during the development and implementation of the enlargement policy. After all, Russia will always remain a significant burden on NATO, as can be seen at the moment. Despite NATO has stood its ground not to give Russia a say in its decision-making process, indirectly the Russians manage to influence NATO's individual parties bilaterally. Russia's power in this respect is still extensive, particularly in view of its strategic resources like oil and gas. Although one could claim that

newly emerged threats like terrorism have united Russia with the West, there are and there always will be many more things that will divide the two.

As a result of the end of the Cold War and how this event changed the geopolitical environment, not only the composition but also the missions of NATO have changed. The war in Bosnia formed a challenge for NATO to change directions and get involved in conflict resolution and peacekeeping missions. It was decided that in the future NATO would carry out more "non-article V"-interventions: that is to carry out missions without the provision that one of the members had been directly attacked. Thus, from that moment on, NATO-missions would be more likely to take place outside of the Euro-Atlantic zone. This was necessary in order to deal with international security threats; NATO could either go "out of area or out of business" (Goldgeier, p.33). In 1995, NATO intervened in the conflict in Kosovo. In December 1995, the Dayton accords were signed which paved the way for a peacekeeping mission through the deployment of NATO troops in the region, the Implementation Force (IFOR). The objective of IFOR was to ensure that hostilities would not resume between Bosnian and Serb armed forces. After one year, the IFOR became the Stabilisation Force (SFOR), which remained engaged in the region until December 2004. What is remarkable of the Dayton agreements is that Russian troops took part in the mission under NATO's command. Since the disintegration of Yugoslavia, NATO has intervened in the region two more times: in Kosovo in 1999, and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2001. At the moment it is still deploying the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in the southern Serbian province of Kosovo (NATO in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, pp. 16-17).

In conclusion, if one compares the transatlantic Alliance in 2008 with how it was during the Cold War, one would notice important changes across the board. To start with, the core mission of NATO has changed. While during the Cold War NATO served as a defensive alliance with the purpose of countering the Soviet threat, in the past decade it has been actively involved in crisis management and conflict resolution. Importantly, NATO interventions do not necessarily take place at any members' territory; its forces are now involved in 'out-of-area missions', for example in Kosovo and in Afghanistan. The reason for this is that the provision to take action is no longer the solidarity clause of Article V, as the threats faced by the alliance have changed over the years. Because of globalisation, some security threats like terrorism, now concern the international environment as a whole. Moreover, NATO has undergone major changes in its composition. The decision for the first eastern enlargement was part of a broader mission designed to transform NATO. It coincided with a number of other steps, like the development of partnerships with Russia, closer military co-operation with France, and the development of new military capabilities to deal with threats beyond NATO territory (Asmus, Kugler & Larrabee 1993). With regard to Russia, relations are still tense at certain moments, for example when the U.S. started negotiating with Poland and the Czech Republic about the possible deployment of a missile defence shield on their soil. However, since the Cold War, considerable effort has been made to manage NATO-Russia relations in a satisfying way. This has resulted in valuable consultation

mechanisms like the Permanent Joint Council and the NATO-Russia Council. Nevertheless, the relation will always be one that requires special attention.

Almost two decades after the Cold War, one can conclude that NATO is still a valuable transatlantic alliance that helps to maintain stability in Europe. Former adversaries have become members or close partners, and new strategic missions have kept the organisation vitally important for the international community. The question is whether NATO will be able to deal with international security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the long term, and whether it will keep its number-one position in being the crucial military partnership between the U.S. and Europe.

## **Chapter II: The importance of NATO**

### **2.1 The emergence of new security threats**

Over the years, NATO's security environment has changed significantly. During the Cold War, the global strategic environment was bi-polar and clear-cut. The threat that the NATO allies faced was clearly defined as the Soviet Union and its desire to expand its sphere of influence and communist ideology, so this was where NATO's security measurements were focused on. Since the 1990s however, the security environment has changed. Therefore, NATO's mission had to change – but what the new mission should consist of is still the subject of heated debate. Due to new threats to international security that have arisen or that have become more pressing since the 1990s - like terrorism, nuclear proliferation and cyber threats - it is difficult to determine where NATO's focus should be on. Globalisation has made the world smaller, and this makes countries more vulnerable to distant threats. The nature of conflicts has changed, which means one is not only dealing with state-to-state conflicts anymore. In the contemporary world, trans-state and intra-state conflicts and individual violence all play a greater role. In the age of globalisation, the effects of failing states - regional instability, organised crime, terrorism and trafficking – cross borders easily (Hamilton ed. 2004, p. 27). In order to provide maximum security to its allies, NATO felt it should get involved in places outside of its traditional area.

A threat to NATO members can emerge anywhere in the world, and one reason for this is the rapid advancement in technology during the past decade. The technology of nuclear weapons for instance, is now so sophisticated that more countries are able to obtain ballistic missiles that have the capacity to reach another continent. Those long-range ballistic missiles are typically designed for the delivery of nuclear warheads. The fact that global powers create Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) systems and are in possession of nuclear weapons, urges their enemies to create them too. To keep up with their rival's weapon range, more countries might aspire to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). To take Japan as an example, this country has had to consider a possible nuclear attack from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for years. In 2006, the DPRK resumed testing and launching ballistic missiles. Due to the security threats that countries in the nearby region pose to Japan, its government might now be stimulated to start developing an independent nuclear deterrent. Thus, although countries might have refrained from the option of producing WMD for a long period of time, a changing security environment of their region or further away can make traditional security strategies seem inadequate. This could lead to changes in a government's response. Also, some countries have nuclear ambitions because to own them conveys a certain international status. Possessing nuclear weapons continues to be valuable to 'declining' powers like France and the UK, for whom nuclear weapons are the great 'equalizers' (Dannreuther 2007, p. 201).

Albeit a worrisome phenomenon, the desire of states to acquire nuclear weapons is not necessarily what poses the greatest danger to the Western world. What could bring NATO allies in

peril though, is the fact that non-state actors attempt to obtain nuclear weapons or its elements illicitly. President George W. Bush emphasises the fact that small groups of fanatics or failed states, “armed with a single vial of biological agent or a single nuclear weapon, can gain the power to threaten great nations, and to threaten world peace” (Joseph 2005). If nuclear weapons fall into the wrong hands – those of terrorists or regimes considered dangerous such as Iran – the consequences could be disastrous.

However, it is no longer merely armaments that are at the core of the security problem. Globalisation and advanced technology have given life to a new phenomenon: cyber terror. This phenomenon has grown along with the increasing dependence on information systems (Cordesman 2002, p. 11). In 2007, numerous Estonian governmental websites were attacked. The attacks were allegedly hosted by Russian state computers. The attacks began after Estonia moved a Soviet war memorial in Tallinn; a move that was condemned by Moscow. The cyber attacks affected a range of Estonian government websites, including those of the parliament and governmental institutions (Estonia hit by ‘Moscow cyber war’ 2007). Moreover, cyber attacks on critical infrastructure systems are becoming an option for terrorists as they become more familiar with these targets and with the technologies required to attack them (Verton 2003, p. 110).

Non-traditional threats like acts of terrorism, usually committed by non-state actors, make the contemporary strategic environment significantly more complicated. The definition of ‘the enemy’ is no longer as clear-cut as it was during the Cold War. Non-state actors can now form a direct threat to a country or to the international community as a whole. Terrorism itself is not a new phenomenon. Historical examples of terrorist acts are certain actions of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, the kidnapping and killing of Israeli athletes during the 1976 Olympics in Munich by Palestinians, and numerous aircraft hijackings and suicide attacks committed by different actors with diverse motives. Nevertheless, the reason that terrorism has evolved into such an urgent threat at the moment is the change in nature and scope of the actions. The terrorist attacks at the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, made the Western world – and the United States in particular – realise that terrorist attacks could pose a serious danger to Western society. Non-state agents may resort to unconventional means of violence on a larger scale than in the past. Another difference is that the majority of today’s terrorist actors commit attacks out of anti-Americanism or anti-Western sentiment, and in the name of Islam. The religious component in the justification of major terrorist actions like those of 9/11, has called attention to the fact that extremism and fundamentalism, rooted in the Middle East or elsewhere, can form a threat to the Western world. This has motivated the United States to declare the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), which has brought about various military, political and legal actions. An important element of this GWOT is the military and intelligence campaign against the terrorist organisation Al-Qaeda. This campaign led to the decision to send military forces to Afghanistan in order to overthrow the fundamentalist Taliban regime that had ruled the country since 1996.

Another obviously global, but less obviously urgent threat is the problem of climate change. The food, water, and energy resource constraints that climate change will cause can be managed

initially through economic, political, and diplomatic means. Over time though, conflicts over land and water use are likely to become more severe and induce violence as states become increasingly desperate. Climate change is expected to increase international instability and political extremism in vulnerable regions by causing water and food shortages, bringing about mass migrations, and spreading diseases. In less prosperous regions, where countries lack the resources and capabilities required to adapt quickly to difficult conditions, the problem is the most likely to become worse. Thus, underdeveloped and poor states, many of them situated in Africa, are at greater risk of becoming weak or failed states. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has pointed to climate change as the root cause of the conflict in Darfur (Climate change: one cause among many). Among many other factors, famine and drought in the past few decades led to the crisis in Sudan, which make some experts conclude that the lingering conflict is caused at least in part by climate change. Darfur provides a case study of how existing marginal situations can be exacerbated beyond the tipping point by climate-related factors (Goodman & Kern 2008). It also shows how the lack of essential resources threatens not only individuals and their communities but also the region and the international community at large (Climate change: one cause among many 2007). Another national security potential consequence that climate change could produce is the heightened internal and cross-border tensions caused by large-scale migrations (Climate change will result in societal upheavals 2008). This mass migration could ensue due to desertification, natural disasters, rising sea levels, or as a consequence of resource wars.

The environmental question is partly an economic question; the world's leading economies are its most prolific polluters. One of their first priorities should be to prevent climate change as effectively as possible. Yet it appears that undertaking the far-reaching concrete action that this demands is postponed every time; with the United States and China refusing to sign the Kyoto Protocol, while they are the world's largest emitters of the human-caused release of greenhouse gases. In contrast to this, the EU has been a leading force in strengthening international environmental protection regulations and is one of the major supporters of the Kyoto Protocol. Nevertheless, if the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases like the U.S. and China and rapidly developing countries such as India and Brazil are not bound by multilateral agreements like the Kyoto Protocol, the efficacy of it must be questioned. Although preserving the environment is not where NATO's focus lies, it should play a larger role in this issue as the current environmental problem is not only about saving plants and polar bears anymore, but actually constitutes a threat to international security.

With the world becoming smaller, almost every event at distance can form a threat to our own society one way or another and so the list of international security threats becomes inexhaustible. Therefore it is important for NATO to determine what its priorities are as a security institution. So far, within NATO there is no common threat perception, and therefore it is impossible to design effective strategies. With a consensus on which threats should take priority, it would be easier to determine where NATO should intervene and where not.

## 2.2 NATO's capabilities in responding to new security threats

First of all, it is necessary to examine what kind of response the newly emerged threats mentioned above will require. Only then will it be possible to determine if NATO can play a role in confronting them, and if so, how.

In the case of nuclear non-proliferation, substantial efforts should be made to strengthen the existing non-proliferation treaties. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the most important diplomatic commitment in this regard. It encourages nuclear disarmament and promotes cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The NPT security framework successfully encourages several states to abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions. It has also made it far more difficult for other states to acquire the material and technology needed to build such weapons (Pros and cons of the NPT 2005). The existence of a multilateral treaty like the NPT is definitely effective, since not many states would be willing "to contemplate the costs of cheating on multiple constraint and obstacles to develop nuclear capabilities" (Dannreuther, p. 201). In general, countries will only neglect or refuse participation in treaties like the NPT when they feel they need to develop nuclear weapons in order to secure themselves. That is why the major regional gaps in the global non-proliferation map are those places where regional insecurities are most problematic: in the Middle-East, South Asia and East Asia (Dannreuther, p. 201). At present, there are several states - India, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan - which are known to possess nuclear weapons but that are not a party to the treaty.

NATO is probably not the institution that would get involved in persuading countries to join the NPT. However, to improve the chances that these countries will sign the NPT and that other non-signatories will participate, it is necessary "to undercut the main cause of proliferation; the deep insecurity experienced by these states" (Dannreuther, p. 202). This is something NATO is able to do, and it is something that fits in NATO's post-Cold War goal: to create stability, also outside of its territory - and to get involved in crisis management, conflict resolution and peace keeping. If NATO seeks to complete missions with this purpose, they will certainly contribute indirectly to non-proliferation.

Something else that NATO could do with regard to WMD is to protect its member states against possible attacks. At the Prague summit in 2002, the Alliance dedicated itself to making efforts to improve and develop new military capabilities for modern warfare in a high threat environment (Prague summit Declaration 2002). Individual allies have made firm and specific political commitments to improve their capabilities in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defence with regard to intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and combat effectiveness (Prague summit Declaration). Forces and institutions are being adapted and designed to counter the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Since 2000 there has been a WMD centre at NATO headquarters. NATO has also created a multinational Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Battalion which was "designed to respond to and manage the consequences of the release" of any CBRN agent, and "has since been succeeded by a Combined Jointed CBRN Defence Task Force" (NATO WMD). Besides, this has implemented several other nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons defence initiatives

such as establishing an analytical laboratory and a prototype NBC event response team. Additionally, there is a Civil Emergency Planning action plan for the improvement of civil preparedness against possible attacks against the public with chemical, biological or radiological agents (Yavuzalp, 2003).

In the past few years, NATO has been examining options for addressing the increasing missile threat to its territory, forces and population centres (Missile defence). Currently, the Alliance is conducting three missile defence related programs. To start with, the Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) capability is designed "to protect deployed troops against short- and medium-range ballistic missiles by intercepting them in the boost, mid-course and final phases" (Missile defence). Secondly, there are far-reaching plans for a missile defence system to protect European territory. It was the plan of the U.S. to base an anti-missile defence system on European soil in order to counter possible nuclear attacks from for example Iran. In principle, the elements will be placed in Poland and the Czech Republic, although discussion about the conditions of this arrangement is still ongoing. However, the U.S. system will not be able to cover the protection of all of NATO's European member states. Therefore, plans have been made to also deploy NATO's own missile defence system, which will secure the entire European territory and population and will underscore NATO's belief in the indivisibility of the security of its members.

In regard to cyber terror, NATO sees cyber defence as an integral part of the functions of the Alliance and strives to protect its key information systems. Although NATO is not responsible for the security of national information systems, it can provide assistance to its member states in this field. After the cyber attacks on Estonia in the spring of 2007, the Estonian government turned to NATO for help. This illustrates the need for further attention to this issue. NATO has taken new measures "to enhance the protection of its communication and information systems against attempts at disruption through attacks or illegal access" (Defending against cyber attacks). Recently, the Alliance approved a policy on cyber defence which provides direction to NATO's civil and military bodies as to how to deal with cyber aggression effectively and to ensure a common and coordinated approach. Besides, NATO gives individual member states recommendations on the protection of their national systems, and also considers increasing its cooperation with partner countries in this field.

Finally, the threat of climate change is becoming more pressing. Obviously, NATO is not the type of institution that is able to reduce this threat or that can make efforts to prevent escalation. However, NATO could play a role in the relief of direct or indirect consequences of climate change: natural disasters, the risk of failed states, the rise of resource wars and flows of mass migration. For example, NATO military advisers were sent to Darfur in 2005 and 2006 to help the African Union peacekeeping troops, and NATO has also assisted in airlifting African Union forces to the region. Furthermore, as NATO's Response Force (NRF)<sup>2</sup> is now fully operational it could be used in case of flooding and other natural disasters. It could be deployed for disaster relief, evacuation, and civilian assistance. The NRF has already been used in 2004 for this purpose after Hurricane Katrina in the United States.

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed description of the NRF, see sub-chapter 2.3, p. 24

### 2.3 NATO's way to respond to terrorism

The threat of terrorism is so multifaceted, that it is difficult to determine how to respond to it. First, terrorist acts are mostly committed by non-state actors. This makes it hard to 'define an enemy' and to decide who to address in trying to counter the threat. Second, there is no specific place where terrorism is rooted. Although it is to observe that most terrorist acts these days are committed as part of 'jihad', terrorists do not necessarily come from Islamic countries or from countries where the majority of the population is Muslim. Terrorist networks have expanded globally through the use of the Internet, which makes it possible to recruit young jihadists everywhere in the world - also in Western society. At the Prague summit in 2002, NATO's Heads of State and Government agreed on a military concept for defence against terrorism. They recognised the fact that terrorism "poses a grave and growing threat to Alliance populations, forces and territory, as well as to international security", and they declared to be "determined to combat this scourge for as long as necessary" (NATO and the fight against terrorism).

To counter the threat of terrorism is a difficult task. In the field of anti-terrorism, perhaps the most fruitful action that could be taken is information-sharing and intelligence cooperation. NATO can play a significant role in this, and has started to increase efforts in this regard. After the Prague summit, a Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit was established at NATO Headquarters at the end of 2003, which analyses terrorist threats in general, and threats that are more specifically aimed at members of the organisation. Additionally, a new intelligence liaison cell for NATO Allies and partners to exchange relevant intelligence has been created (NATO and the fight against terrorism), and considerable cooperation between scientists from member states and partner countries takes place. NATO uses computer networks, such as the Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System and the Alliance-managed Battlefield Information, Collection and Exploitation System to share intelligence information (Sprenger 2006). Nevertheless, it seems that countries sometimes remain reluctant to voluntarily share data. Especially the bigger NATO countries - the U.S., the UK, Germany and France - often have little incentive to contribute such data to an Alliance-wide pool, because they worry about receiving little or nothing in return and fear that their sensitive information could be misused (Sprenger). Despite the problem of certain countries "firewalling their intelligence information", data-sharing is also difficult because of "technical differences in the Alliance members' computers and communications equipment" (Sprenger). Therefore, information is mostly shared bilaterally.

The next field that NATO can work on is counter-terrorism, which has been identified as a core element of the Alliance's work. Counter-terrorist acts consist of offensive military action in which NATO either plays a supporting role or is in the lead. In either case, the goal is to reduce terrorists' abilities to carry out attacks. Alliance actions might include back-filling national requirements, deploying forces in support of coalition operations, or providing host nation support and logistics assistance (Deni 2007, p. 98).

At the Prague summit, it was decided to create a NATO Response Force (NRF), which serves as NATO's rapid Response Force. The NRF has become an increasingly important tool for NATO, especially in the Alliance's counterterrorism arsenal (Deni, p. 98). The NRF consists of a highly ready and "technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the Council" (Prague summit Declaration). It can generate up to 25,000 troops and is able to start deploying already after five days' notice, and then it can sustain itself for operations lasting 30 days or longer if resupplied (NATO Response Force). The full operational capability of the NRF was announced at the Riga summit in 2006.

Moreover, in 2004 the Defence Against Terrorism Programme of Work was founded, which focuses on critical areas "where it is believed technology can help prevent or mitigate the effects of terrorist attacks" (NATO and the fight against terrorism). The programme focuses for instance on the protection of harbours, ports and critical infrastructure, and on protection from improvised explosive devices used by suicide bombers. Also, it takes care of more sophisticated technology like the Precision Airdrop (PAD) technology for special operation forces.

In the past eight years, NATO has been involved in a number of operations that are either directly or indirectly related to the fight against terrorism (NATO and the fight against terrorism). To begin with, Operation Active Endeavour has been going on since 2001; a maritime surveillance operation led by NATO's naval forces to undertake anti-terrorist patrol, escort and boarding in the Mediterranean (NATO and the fight against terrorism). Furthermore, after the U.S. operation "Enduring Freedom" during which it removed the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (NATO and the fight against terrorism) NATO has been in command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the country. The force is there to "assist the government of Afghanistan in maintaining security and expanding its authority, helping to remove the conditions in which terrorism could thrive" (NATO and the fight against terrorism).

Other fields in which NATO can improve its efforts and capabilities are consequence management and military cooperation. Although consequence management is considered mainly a task for national authorities, NATO could provide support. NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre possesses an inventory of civilian and military assets that could be "employed after an attack has taken place [in order] to mitigate the destructive effects" (Deni, p. 89). An example of this is including robust force generation in the immediate aftermath of an attack or for disaster relief coordination (Deni, p. 89). Military cooperation would involve efforts to synergise military and civilian operations. This includes working together with police, customs, border security, and other internal security services, as well as international organisations like the United Nations (Deni p. 90). NATO helps secure major public events, like the Summer Olympics in Greece in 2004. NATO's NRF has been deployed to support the Afghan presidential elections in September 2004, but also after the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 for disaster relief (Backgrounder: NATO Response Force).

## 2.4 NATO as a peacekeeping organisation: missions in Bosnia and in Afghanistan

One of NATO's main objectives since the Cold War has been to create peace and stability in its nearby regions and beyond. Three major missions that NATO has carried out since the 1990s took place respectively in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. By looking at NATO's performance during two of those important missions, in Bosnia and Afghanistan, it can be assessed how NATO has worked as a peacekeeping organisation in the past and at present, and what should be improved.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in an unstable political environment in the territory of the former communist republic, and it spurred the rise of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. The disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1992 aggravated ethnic conflict in the region, which led to a war between Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. After Bosnia declared its independence in 1992, the Bosnian War broke out as a consequence of instability in the wider region of the former Yugoslavia and due to the involvement of neighbouring countries like Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. A U.N. peacekeeping force, UNPROFOR, had already been deployed into all regions of the former Yugoslavia in February 1992. However, a restricted mandate prevented its troops from effectively protecting civilians. Eventually, the situation escalated and resulted in the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995. These horrible events led to the internationalisation of the conflict, and gave NATO the opportunity "to give meaning to its crisis management intentions" (Kaplan 2004, p. 116). It was feared that Yugoslavia's instability could directly affect the security of the European allies if the war started to spread to Hungary or Turkey (Kaplan, p. 116). NATO started providing contingency plans to the U.N. for enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina (NATO Handbook, p. 108), and in February 1994 NATO became actively involved in the conflict when it shot down four Serb aircraft over central Bosnia that were in violation of this no-fly zone. NATO also planned the establishment of relief zones and safe havens for civilians in Bosnia, and thought of ways to prevent the spread of the conflict to Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (NATO Handbook 2001, p. 108). "Contingency plans were also made available for the protection of humanitarian assistance, the monitoring of heavy weapons, and the protection of U.N. forces on the ground" (NATO Handbook, p. 108).

After the signature of the Dayton peace agreements in 1995, the Implementation Force (IFOR) was established, which was led by NATO but was under a U.N. mandate. IFOR was meant to serve as the peacekeeping force in Bosnia Herzegovina so that the hostilities between the Bosnians and the Serbs would not resume. After a year, the mandate of IFOR ended, but NATO decided to remain present in the country with the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) to uphold the Dayton agreement. The amount of troops was gradually reduced, and at the Istanbul summit in 2004 the end of SFOR was announced. It was handed over to the forces of the European Union.

Over a decade later, it is still difficult to fully assess NATO's intervention in Bosnia. Overall, the mission appears to have been successful in that the force fulfilled its commitment to implement the Dayton agreements. The initial involvement of NATO was necessary and much more effective than the preceding U.N. mission, which lacked the clear mandate and military assets to stop the fighting. The

Dayton agreements ended the war and the regional situation improved due to the efforts of IFOR. Subsequently, SFOR succeeded in implementing the military components of the Dayton agreement on separation of forces and cantonment, and in providing a secure environment so that the elections of September 1996 could be held (Partos 2004). Furthermore, SFOR has overseen the gradual change-over from what was a highly militarised society divided into three armies, into a peaceful country with a combined armed force (Partos). The NATO troops managed to create a safe environment so that many war refugees were able to return to their homes (Partos). Another important function that SFOR has performed is capturing war crimes suspects indicted by the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague (Partos). Yet, this latter mission has not been fully accomplished as some notorious war criminals like Radovan Karadžić remain fugitive. Nevertheless, at present the situation in the Balkans is still highly tense. Due to remaining strong ethnic nationalism, transnational relations remain strained, especially after the recent declaration of independence by Kosovo.

NATO's current mission in Afghanistan was its first real 'out-of-area mission'. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, NATO decided to invoke Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, something that it had never done before. The North Atlantic Council declared that if the attacks were directed from abroad against the United States, this were to be considered as an attack against all members of NATO as described in Article V of the Treaty (NATO and the fight against terrorism). NATO reacted by commencing its first anti-terror operation, Eagle Assist, to help patrol the skies over the United States. More anti-terrorism actions followed, like Operation Active Endeavour as described in the former section. When the U.S. and the UK invaded Afghanistan in 2002 under Operation Enduring Freedom, this was not a NATO-led mission, even though the mission was supported by most of the NATO allies. The aim was to overthrow the Taliban regime, which had been brutally repressing the Afghan people since 1999, and that had allegedly given Al-Qaeda the ability to train numerous extremists and terrorists using Afghan territory and facilities. After the terrorist attacks in the United States, the UK and Spain, it became clear that what happens in the Middle East affects the Western world (Nuland 2007). The decision to go to Afghanistan ended the debate about whether NATO should supersede its traditional boundaries or not.

NATO took over control of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2006, when the security and development force ISAF was established. The mission in Afghanistan is considered very important to NATO in its fight against terrorism. As NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer announced at the Brookings Institute in Washington DC, "Afghanistan is a mission of necessity rather than one of choice. Just seven years ago Afghanistan was the grand central station of terrorism" (de Hoop Scheffer 2008). He stated that if the mission were to fail, Afghanistan would again pose a danger to itself as well as to the international community. The current U.S. Ambassador to NATO has also emphasised that "failed states and white spots on the map have become breeding grounds for terror, weapons of mass destruction and drugs" (Nuland).

Stability in Afghanistan could have a crucial influence on the region: "Afghanistan has the potential to either become a factor for regional stability and integration, or to become a victim of

larger neighbours and a touchstone for wider instability and conflict” (Why helping Afghanistan matters). Creating stability in Afghanistan could also stimulate a stable environment in neighbouring countries like Pakistan. This is essential given that Pakistan is a nuclear power – and instability, an influential Taliban, and access to nuclear weapons is a dangerous combination. Another issue that NATO addresses with its mission in Afghanistan, is encouraging the practice of moderate Islam and preventing the young generation from turning to Jihad. Also, it tries to decrease the production and illicit trade of drugs given that “Afghanistan is the number one supplier of opium and heroine to Europe” (Why helping Afghanistan matters).

All of the aspects mentioned above have to do with improving stability in Afghanistan. Reconstruction is an important task of ISAF. Together with the Afghan government, NATO has developed a security cooperation programme that provides substantial training and education on defence reform, defence institution-building, and the military aspects of security sector reform. (Deni, p94). The troops in Afghanistan are responsible for supporting and facilitating the extension of the authority of the Afghan central government. A vast amount of areas in Afghanistan have become more peaceful and stable after the invasion and the Afghan economy is growing, while the reform of the Afghan national army also makes considerable progress (Deni, p. 94).

Although Afghanistan has made substantial progress in the past year due to the presence of the ISAF, negative developments have also taken place and one could say that the mission still falls short in several aspects. Since 2006, the Taliban has again been spurring insurgencies in different parts of the country. Suicide attacks with political and civilian targets have increased, some aimed at NATO forces. Still, major problems exist with regard to opium production, drug trade and the involvement of local warlords and the Taliban in these activities. Another challenge for the NATO forces is to make Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan more secure. Finally, NATO faces significant technical challenges in Afghanistan and sometimes fails to fulfil the military statement of requirements developed by NATO as agreed to by member state military representatives (Deni, p. 95). Usually, the elements left unfulfilled include combat support, such as rotary lift assets, logistics support, and reconnaissance forces (Deni, p96). Another problem that needs attention and that impedes NATO in reaching its goals, is the existence of national caveats that limit how and where a country’s forces may be used. National caveats can create chaos for tactical commanders on the ground, when they are unable to move and employ forces if an unforeseen situation arises (Deni, p. 97).

Overall, given the situation in Afghanistan before the ISAF mission started, one could consider the presence of NATO troops in Afghanistan an improvement for its security environment. Nevertheless, many severe problems remain that could be better addressed if the ISAF had the means and the power to do so, if the coordination of the mission would be improved, and if all NATO allies would increase cooperation and support.

## 2.5 The need for focus and improvement

In the earlier sections the international security threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> first century are described. It has also become clear what response these threats require and what NATO's efforts and operational capabilities in these areas are and should be. Subsequently, NATO's missions in Bosnia and in Afghanistan were outlined; as well as the failures and successes of both. Having examined all of this, it is now possible to assess in which areas NATO could play a significant role, and where its focus should lie.

As one sees what is at stake in Afghanistan and understands how this matters to the rest of the world, the need for engagement seems obvious. That is why NATO is focusing more and more on becoming 'a global security provider'. As mentioned by Dr. Mendis in his interview<sup>3</sup>, and as described by NATO-expert Ronald Asmus,

[NATO] now faces the need to re-reinvent itself into a security actor capable of defending its members' values and interests on a more global stage. NATO has taken that strategic leap in principle with Afghanistan, but whether it will succeed is not yet clear. ISAF's success there would open the door to new and more ambitious thinking about partnerships and a possible broader role in South Asian security and beyond. Failure could call into question the future of the Alliance. (Asmus 2008)

The mission in Afghanistan is by some considered crucial in assessing whether the Alliance is still vital or not, and whether it can handle its new out-of-area missions well. Nevertheless, NATO's role does not only take place on a global stage, it also serves important purposes on a local stage. What should not be forgotten is that NATO is also meant to provide security in its home territory. NATO has to be able to face non-traditional threats also at home; to defend itself against terrorism, CBRN and cyber attacks. It should continue preventing ethnic conflicts and making efforts to create a stable and secure Europe, especially in the Balkan region. It is important to find a new balance between addressing traditional, Euro-centric missions and tackling the new global threats (Hamilton ed., p. 28).

There are several specific threat-responses that NATO seems to handle effectively. In other cases, NATO's actions are not yet totally successful, but have the potential to become successful. Four of them stand out.

To begin with, NATO is doing a reasonably good job in counter-terrorism. The development of the NATO Response Force has been a successful improvement in the military capabilities of the alliance and has been a successful asset in counter-terrorism. The NRF has been an improvement in that the forces are highly flexible and are able to undertake missions at very short notice.

Second, to protect forces and civilians against terrorist and WMD attacks and to mitigate their effects seems to be a feasible job for NATO. NATO maintains an inventory that could be made

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<sup>3</sup> Personal interview about NATO with Dr. Patrick Mendis, who is a former U.S. government official as well as an IR-professor and a visiting scholar at John Hopkins University. Interview conducted on April 14, 2008. For transcript see Appendix 3.

available to its member states in case of a terrorist or WMD attack. In this way, NATO can provide assistance to national authorities.

Third, NATO is useful for certain crisis response operations that are military NATO-operations in non-Article V situations and that serve the purpose of providing security and stability in regions where this is necessary. Examples of this are peacekeeping missions and conflict prevention operations. The NATO-led operation in Bosnia set a new template for post-Cold War multilateral intervention (Dannreuther, p. 153).

Finally, NATO can successfully conduct 'natural, technological or humanitarian disaster operations' if members or partners become the victim of a disaster. Besides assisting in disaster relief after Hurricane Katrina in the U.S., it has helped Ukraine after floods and Turkey after an earthquake.

At the present moment, NATO is fairly effective at undertaking the above mentioned actions. Nevertheless, all of these factors need substantial improvement, especially when it comes to the coordination of peacekeeping missions, strategic realignment, the combination of military and civilian efforts, troop contribution and national caveats.

What concerns coordination of peacekeeping missions, the difficulties that NATO faces have to do mainly with governance, logistics and the lack of capabilities. Therefore NATO should further transform its institutions and build up military capabilities for benign uses such as peacekeeping, stabilisation and reconstruction.

Another aspect in improving coordination of missions should be strategic realignment. The Afghanistan war highlighted NATO's need for defence transformation, but the war in Iraq highlighted NATO's need for strategic realignment (Hamilton ed., p. 8). "It will be hard for NATO to use the military forces at its disposal effectively unless there is a greater agreement among NATO's nations on the nature of future threats" (Hamilton ed., p. 8). What will also be important for NATO, is to look beyond its military dimension. Civilian forces are more and more important to its missions. Finally, the Alliance must learn to react quickly and flexibly to new challenges.

When it comes to the combination of military and civilian efforts, there is still much to be improved. The decision to go 'out of area' and to engage in peacekeeping missions led to an evolution in the nature of NATO's activities. Nevertheless, it seems as if NATO did not yet succeed in acquiring the appropriate means to cope with the new missions it has chosen. Today in Afghanistan, the difficulties met by the ISAF arise mainly from the fact that the mission is not purely a military one. When the NATO allies decided that the focus of the organisation should be more on peacekeeping missions, the actual transformation that this has demanded has turned out to be more challenging than expected. NATO forces do not have sufficient access to the particular tools that the new missions require. Most shortcomings derive from problems with logistics, and most importantly from the lack of civilian efforts. Stabilising a country like Afghanistan after a military invasion requires more than soldiers. NATO now needs to adopt a 'comprehensive approach' to its interventions. It is sometimes suggested that NATO could work more closely with NGOs, who have more expertise and influence in reconstruction. Perhaps NATO should concentrate more on enhancing its cooperation with the U.N. as

well (Interview with Kaplan 2008). As a matter of fact, divisions between security providers and those dealing with economic or civilian development have become blurry. Afghanistan provides a perfect example of a case where development should go hand in hand with security. If NATO would be able to manage this combination, they would have a major advantage in peacekeeping missions.

Another problem is the fact that NATO is having such a hard time in generating troops. A major problem is the fact that the Europeans have always been far more reluctant to contribute troops to NATO missions than the United States has. The generation of troops is a lingering obstacle that prevents NATO from carrying out its missions effectively. In fact, NATO's political appetite appears much larger than its capability to commit forces (Deni, p. 92). Finally, a remaining problem is the existence of national caveats that prevent NATO commanders on the ground to effectively use the troops it has been assigned.

Despite these more 'technical' shortcomings within NATO, it faces considerable challenges at the political level that sometimes prevent the organisation from working effectively and that generate internal disputes and controversy. These disagreements occur because individual allies sometimes tend to pursue their national interests, but also because the Alliance is being perceived differently by the North Americans and the Europeans. The next chapter will go into this latter issue in more detail. To illustrate the existence of a certain amount of dissension, it will explain the 'NATO-crisis' with regard to the Iraq War and its implications for the Alliance. In addition, the development of the European Security and Defence Policy will be discussed as well as its possible consequences for NATO.

## **Chapter III: Challenges for NATO**

### **3.1 Different perceptions of NATO on both sides of the Atlantic**

The role NATO should play in the contemporary security environment and the directions and initiatives it ought to take is still subject of discussion. This discussion is taking place between the parties within the Alliance itself – between the United States and the European member states in particular. One of the most important reasons for this is the distinct threat perception that those allies have.

A good illustration of a crucial matter on which their opinions diverge, is the fight against terrorism. First of all, the United States and its European partners differ in their notions of terrorism: where it comes from, whom it targets, and why. Furthermore, the Atlantic is a dividing line not so much regarding the need to address the origins and motives of terrorism, as about how to address this threat. Americans feel that terrorism is a threat that has to be addressed militarily, while Europeans want to address what they see as the political and economic causes of the problem (Lundestad 2005, p. 15). Political scientist Ivan Krastev described this different approach as following: “The Americans feel they are engaged in a war, [while] the Europeans feel they are engaged in preventing one” (cited in Lundestad, p. 15). Americans have a different attitude towards security threats than, in general, their European partners. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11<sup>th</sup> in 2001 remain a central event in American thinking, while the Europeans developed a better sense of resilience after the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid. Americans see security as a zero-sum absolute, so they want to eradicate the threats that many Europeans are prepared to live with. As a consequence, both of them are used to pursuing different strategies.

These different approaches originate partly from the nature of foreign policy as designed in the United States and in European countries. Most disagreements are about which would be the adequate methods and instruments for foreign policy implementation (Möttölä 2006, p. 30). Americans on the one hand do not hesitate to act unilaterally and to strike pre-emptively, pursuing a policy of hard power. The U.S. has made it clear that since 9/11 the strategic context for intervention has been extended to wherever in the world there exists a potential threat of international terrorism, or where there are ‘rogue states’ aiming to acquire weapons of mass destruction (Dannreuther 2007, p. 155). Having said this, it should be noted that American foreign policy has not always taken such a unilateralist and pre-emptive approach as the Bush administration has done. His predecessor President Bill Clinton for example pursued more of a multilateral approach and was rather popular with the Europeans. This was shown when he did decide to intervene in the civil war in Rwanda – but only after UN approval. Clinton had said yes to the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court; while George W. Bush subsequently took an entirely different approach in both cases.

Still there has always been a huge difference in the execution of foreign policy on both sides of the Atlantic, whether the United States had a Democrat or Republican President. Overall, the European countries are more passive than proactive and favour soft power over hard power. It is

important to note that it cannot be said that either Europe or the EU has a coherent common foreign policy. At an EU level, one has already been working on such a concept since 1992 through the installation of the Common Foreign & Security Policy (CFSP). Regardless, this matter is not arranged at a supranational level and most of the EU-members differ significantly from each other in their foreign policy approach. However, one could generalise that the American definition of security is much more absolutist than the European one. The U.S. has always pursued more of a unilateralist approach than any of the European countries. It tends to limit political cooperation to issues of its own agenda (Möttölä, p. 30) and to prioritise objectives over diplomatic relationships. After the WTC attacks, the NATO members invoked Article V of the Washington Treaty for the very first time in NATO-history. This meant that now that the U.S. had been attacked, its allies were prepared to support them in response to the attacks under the principle of collective defence. Nevertheless, the Americans initially chose to fight in Afghanistan without involving the Alliance. Most of the European allies felt very offended when after the 9/11 attacks, U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld and his Under Secretary Paul Wolfowitz declared that in this case "the mission would define the coalition". Actions like this greatly devalued European feelings of solidarity after September 11 (Buckley 2006, p. 5).

In addressing security threats, it also seems though as if the Americans and the Europeans maintain different values. In particular, they value the role of international law and the rules-based international system differently. While the EU considers this central, the U.S. seems to be constrained to a lesser extent by the rule of law and appears to make exceptions more easily. This has caused a rise in anti-Americanism in Europe. A survey conducted in October 2003, after the Iraq War had started, revealed that anti-Americanism among members of the European Union was rising as American policies and power were fuelling resentment for the U.S. throughout the world (Anti-Americanism 2003). The survey found that as many people rated the U.S. as a threat to world peace as they did about Iran and North Korea, while some people even considered the U.S. more dangerous (Anti-Americanism).

Despite this perception gap and the strategy gap, and the difference in values that exist from time to time between the transatlantic partners, the U.S. and Europe also vastly differ in capabilities. Not all of the NATO allies have the same means to deal with particular threats. The military power of the United States is more than colossal. Therefore, as a matter of fact, the unilateralism of the U.S. cannot be balanced effectively by the EU. The U.S. vast military arsenal gives it options the Europeans quite simply do not have. Most Europeans instead emphasise the options they have at their disposal: diplomatic negotiation and economic instruments (Lundestad, p. 16). There is a term for the types of military-oriented missions considered to be appropriate for EU involvement: these are the so-called 'Petersberg tasks' and include humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management (Burwell & Gompert 2006, p. 6). The Petersberg tasks are a core element of the EU's European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), and the original plan was to expand them to more military missions through the European Constitution. Gradually, this idea is making progress. Despite humanitarian and development assistance, crisis management and

peacekeeping missions, the EU is slowly taking on other security tasks (Lundestad, p. 21). The EU now has its own modest military force, which already performed in Bosnia & Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of Congo and now also does its work in Chad. Nevertheless, the transatlantic gap in both military capacity as well as attitudes towards security and defence matters remains wide.

The different way in which parties on both sides of the Atlantic prefer to conduct their foreign policy causes substantial problems in their relationship. It makes it hard to reach agreements on a common and coherent strategy for NATO, and to reach consensus on the security threats that NATO should prioritise in addressing. A good example of the rift that this could cause within the Alliance is the conflict over Iraq. A serious divergence of views emerged between the U.S., Great Britain and the other Atlantic-oriented members of the EU on the one side, and France, Germany and their supporters on the other (Andres, p. 21).

### **3.2 Internal divisions with regard to the Iraq invasion**

The internal divisions that occurred with regard to the U.S. invasion in Iraq are branded by some as the gravest crisis within the history of NATO. "Both the shape and substance of American foreign policy during the run-up to the war alienated many of Washington's traditional allies and helped undermine support for the United States among European governments and publics alike" (Pond 2005, p. 30).

Although Europe had shown solidarity with the U.S. immediately after 9/11 and NATO had even invoked Article V, towards the end of 2001 some of the European allies started to feel alienated from the U.S. when it became clear in what way the U.S. was planning to deal with the threat of terrorism. European leaders were alarmed by Bush's State of the Union address in 2002, wherein he classified Iraq, Iran and North Korea as 'the axis of evil'. In the eyes of the Europeans the American President unjustly lumped several countries together and identified them as the enemy. Shortly after, American Vice-President Dick Cheney called for a regime change in Iraq. The Bush administration focused heavily on the doctrine of pre-emption, which was not appreciated by most of the Europeans. And as mentioned before, the Europeans felt more or less betrayed when Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz repeatedly announced that in this case "the mission determined the coalition".

In 2002, German chancellor Gerhard Schröder and French President Jacques Chirac insisted that the UN had to endorse the Iraq invasion before the country would be attacked. A month later, at the start of the German election campaign, Schröder went even further by saying that Germany would never cooperate in a war against Iraq, even not if the UN blessed the mission. "We didn't shy away from offering international solidarity in the fight against international terrorism. [But] we're not available for adventures," Schröder made clear (Hooper, 2002). U.S. officials called these statements a "German betrayal of the United States" (Pond, p. 37). Together with Chirac, Schröder hardened his opposition to the coming war, and to the second UN resolution that the U.S. hoped would brand Iraq

as being in 'material breach' of the UNSC Resolution 1441<sup>4</sup> (Pond, p. 42). When Bush finally gave Saddam an ultimatum to leave Iraq within 48 hours or face war, he was heavily criticised by the French President. He called this a grave and unilateral decision, saying that "to forego the legitimacy of the United Nations, to favour force over law, would be to take on a heavy responsibility" (Chirac and Schroeder on U.S. ultimatum 2003).

The numerous European opponents of the Iraq war had their doubts about the link between Iraq and terrorists, and if Iraq was truly in the possession of nuclear weapons. Saddam Hussein had been rejecting and impeding U.N. inspections and sanctions, thereby hindering transparency and raising many allegations and suspicions. Yet, the chief United Nations weapons inspector, Hans Blix, still cast doubts "on Saddam Hussein's readiness to shed weapons of mass destruction" (Cowell 2003). Another important argument of opponents was that by invading the country, democracy would probably not be achieved. Similarly, they feared that in the fight against terrorism, invading Iraq would have a counterproductive effect. One worried that the invasion would not undermine, but rather stimulate Al-Qaeda, and increase regional instability (Pond, p. 34).

The UK was one of the main supporters of the U.S. Tony Blair, in his opening statement of the Iraq debate in the British Parliament, explained the reasons for supporting the U.S. in this action. One of those was that to not stand by the U.S. now, would "be the biggest impulse to unilateralism there could ever be" (Blair's opening speech 2003). The decision to support the U.S.-invasion and to provide them with British troops was preceded by heated debate in the British Parliament after which Leader of the House of Commons Robin Cook finally resigned. Cook was convinced that the war against Iraq was not legitimate, particularly because it lacked public support and also because it had the consent of neither NATO, nor the EU or the UNSC; all major international bodies of which Great Britain is "a leading partner" (Cook's resignation speech 2003).

Besides Tony Blair, also the Spanish Prime Minister José Aznar sided with President Bush, saying that "Bush's 'axis of evil'-speech, in which he identified Iraq as a prime supporter of terror, was a hugely significant moment in modern political history" (Hooper). There were more European allies that supported the U.S. In the letter "United we stand" published in the Wall Street Journal at the beginning of 2003, eight European leaders showed public support for the U.S. invading Iraq and disarming the regime of Saddam Hussein. Amongst others, the letter was signed by Tony Blair, José Aznar, José-Manuel Barroso, Silvio Berlusconi and the leaders of Denmark, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. In the article they recognise the threat of terrorism and of WMD, and emphasise the need to disarm dangerous regimes such as Saddam Hussein's since "the Iraqi regime and its weapons of mass destruction represent a clear threat to world security" (United we stand 2003). According to them, in order to deal with the threat of terrorism and WMD successfully, the international community and the transatlantic allies in particular had to support each other to preserve international peace and security. "In adopting SC Resolution 1441, we sent a clear, firm and unequivocal message that we would rid the world of the danger posed by Saddam Hussein's weapons

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<sup>4</sup> UNSC Resolution 1441 had instructed Iraq to disarm and to cooperate with arms inspectors.

of mass destruction. We must remain united in insisting that his regime be disarmed" (United we stand 2003). It was later revealed that the letter had been written without informing France and Germany, while Greece, holder of the EU presidency at that time, had also not been asked to sign the letter. While the letter was couched in the terms of an appeal for unity, its publication also highlighted a new division in both the European Union and the NATO alliance (Cowell).

Subsequently, Rumsfeld angered the leaders of France and Germany by branding them 'Old Europe' and describing the two countries as 'problems' in the crisis over Iraq, while welcoming the "New Europe" of Poland and other enthusiastic American allies in Central Europe. Since then, the divisions between Europe and the U.S. over Iraq began growing more public and the rhetoric became more pointed by the day.

### **3.3 Consequences of the feud over Iraq**

When the Iraq War started on 19 March 2003, apart from the British contributions only very small units were provided by non-American members of the so-called coalition force (Andrews, p. 145). Very soon after the rather successful initial U.S. invasion, during which Saddam's regime was overthrown and Bush branded the mission as 'accomplished', the problems in Iraq started. The first major dispute arose from the failure of finding any WMD in Iraq. Gradually, European allies that had initially been supporting the U.S., started to change their minds. Several changes of leadership also resulted in a significant decrease of support. In Spain for example, Aznar was voted out of office in 2004 and was replaced by José Zapatero. He immediately joined Germany and France in opposing the security role that Washington was seeking for NATO in Iraq (Pond, p. 53). More leadership changes took place in France as Nicolas Sarkozy took office in 2007; a charismatic man who is titled by some as being pro-American. Yet, he too refrained from supporting the U.S. Iraq invasion - instead he praised Chirac for his leadership on matters of foreign policy, including his 'lucidity' in keeping France from entering the war in Iraq, which he called a "historic mistake" (Guitta 2007). Poland also notably diminished its commitment and started to withdraw some of its forces, together with others who had previously been so outspoken in their support with the signature of the 'United we stand' letter. "None of those countries would sign that letter today," commented a western European diplomat (Pond, p. 54). After all, Saddam Hussein had not had WMD and there was still no proof of his links with Al-Qaeda. Israel had become less safe as Palestinian and Iraqi grievances blended and the once stable Iraq threatened to erupt into civil war (Pond, p. 55). The spread of violence by Iraqi insurgents and the rise in popular Iraqi disapproval of the American occupation strengthened the aversion to the war, and the Abu Ghraib scandal increased antipathy towards the Americans and this disrespect of international law (Pond, p. 54). The Americans had told the world they would go to Iraq to topple Saddam's regime and bring democracy to the country, but the entire invasion resulted in a total chaos, where insurgencies increased and violence escalated.

As mentioned before, internal conflicts over Iraq amounted to the most serious crisis within NATO. In contrast to the situation right after 9/11, when all NATO allies showed solidarity with the U.S. and proved this by invoking Article V for the first time in history, dissensions and fractures have been growing since. It is possible to draw some conclusions from the dividing lines that appeared during the run-up to the war. At least half of the European allies disagreed with the way in which the U.S. conducted its foreign policy during this period, and did not appreciate the pre-emptive approach they desired to take. Others however, were still supportive of the U.S. ideas to disarm the Iraq regime. Obviously, one of them was Great Britain, who has always been one of the very Atlantic-oriented European allies. However, Germany usually maintains good relationships with the U.S. as well, while this time the opposite was true. One could say that there exists a more 'Atlantic-oriented' community in Europe, but that this can change with leadership. When it comes to choosing between the U.S. and the EU, some EU member states face difficulties and the issue regularly spurs internal debate. This has its consequences for NATO.

Also remarkable about the feud over Iraq was that all of the three countries that had become NATO members most recently at that time, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, declared their support for the U.S. One can observe the same situation at present, with Poland and the Czech Republic maintaining exceptional relations with the U.S. on most subject matters. The Central and Eastern European countries tend to side with the U.S. at critical moments, perhaps because they consider the U.S. a more valuable partner with regard to their security. They might feel that their security is better protected by the U.S. than by the EU because of its power and influence. Importantly, the whole conflict over the Iraq War also showed that neither Europe nor the EU always act as a single unit.

Furthermore, one could say that the whole run-up to the Iraq War illustrates the American tendency towards unilateralism and the methods it uses to develop a coalition. According to some, in this case the United States broke with the principles of multilateralism by favouring partnerships over taking action together with its NATO allies. This might have longstanding implications for the future of NATO. The way that the U.S. dealt with NATO in deciding to go ahead with the war challenged the NATO valued consensus. The emphasis on "coalitions of the willing" provides further evidence of moves away from the "multilateral principle of the indivisibility of security within NATO" (Dębski 2007, p. 120). Since the start of the Iraq War, attitudes towards the U.S. have been changing and anti-Americanism has been growing within the European Union. The consequences of the feud over Iraq eroded European trust in Washington's judgment and leadership, and diminished American confidence in Europe's solidarity (Pond, p. 55). The most obvious direct consequence of the Iraq conflict for NATO was the fact that some European leaders increased their efforts in developing the ESDP. Reflective of this, just one month after the Iraq War started, Schröder and Chirac, together with Belgian and Luxembourg counterparts, started "a European defence avant-garde that the U.S. understood as a challenge to NATO and American leadership" (Pond, p. 49).

### 3.4 Design and progress of the European Security and Defence Policy

In 1993, the EU member states established the Common and Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) as the second pillar of the European Union through the Maastricht Treaty. At that moment, European defence and military missions took place under NATO. In 1996, it was decided to create a European pillar within NATO, called the European Security and Defence Initiative (ESDI). The ESDI was overseen by the Western European Union (WEU) and was designed so that European countries could act militarily in case NATO decided not to do so. Nevertheless, the Berlin agreement allowed the WEU to use NATO assets for their military missions. In 1999, the Amsterdam treaty was signed, in which the EU incorporated the Petersberg tasks within its domain. The development of the European defence initiative went further when in St. Malô, Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac signed a bilateral declaration which stated that "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises" (Vershbow 1999, p. 55). According to the EU countries, it was time to enhance the defence capacity and military of the European Union further. Subsequently, it was decided that the WEU was to be absorbed within the EU, and the ESDI under NATO was replaced by the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). From that moment on, the ESDP fell under the jurisdiction of the European Union and that also changed the composition of countries being involved in the European defence initiative. In 1999, there were several countries that were not members of NATO, but that were members of the EU<sup>5</sup>. This meant they were participating in the ESDP but not in NATO. On the other hand, there were countries on the European continent that were already NATO members, but not EU members<sup>6</sup>.

The EU created the new post of High Representative for the CFSP. The nominee would have a second title as Secretary General of the European Council, and a third as Secretary General of the WEU (Hunter 2002, p. 66). Javier Solana was appointed to all three positions, which was significant because he had previously been serving as NATO's Secretary General (Hunter, p. 67). Despite the fact that he was therefore more than qualified to take up this new position, it also seems as if this appointment "symbolically indicated that the EU's new ventures in foreign policy and defence would not be diverging from NATO's" (Hunter p. 67). The signature of the Helsinki Headline Goal in 1999 was the first concrete step towards developing the EU's military capabilities. The goal was to create a capacity within the EU to deploy and sustain forces able to pursue the full range of Petersberg tasks by 2003 (Hunter, p. 63). Soon, one realised that this goal had been too ambitious, and in 2004 the EU leaders agreed on a new deadline with additional goals; Headline Goal 2010.

In 2002, the EU and NATO agreed on a strategic partnership based on the principles of cooperation, cohesion, transparency and equality. The two parties agreed that its crisis management

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<sup>5</sup> At that time, European countries that were not members of NATO, but that were members of the EU included *Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Austria*.

<sup>6</sup> At that time, European countries that were already NATO members, but not EU members included *Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Cyprus, Norway and Iceland*.

activities had to be mutually reinforcing, and decisions had to be made with regard to the decision-making autonomy and interests of the European Union and NATO. Moreover, effective consultation and dialogue had to take place between the EU and NATO. The development of the military capability requirements common to the two organisations also had to be coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing. Finally, it was important to work with respect for the interests of the Member States of the European Union and NATO and with respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, based on the commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, and also based on respect for treaty rights and obligations as well as refraining from unilateral actions (EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP 2002). The Berlin Plus agreement was signed, wherein the EU and NATO leaders agreed that the EU could use NATO's military assets for peacekeeping-missions that NATO declined to carry out. The first deployment of EU troops was in 2003 in Macedonia, with the use of NATO assets. Further important autonomous EU missions carried out without any NATO assets have taken place since, for instance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 2004, the draft of a Constitution for the EU was meant to enhance the ESDP further, establishing a common Union defence policy, which would "lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides." The draft Constitution included a mutual defence clause in which the members pledged to act jointly to assist each other should any be struck by terrorism or a natural disaster, although it was not specifically setting out how Member States would be obliged to respond in that case (Burwell & Gompert, p. 6). Although the Constitution was rejected by referendum in France and in the Netherlands, an amended version of the Constitution is expected to enter into force on January 2009, depending on the member states' ratification of the Lisbon treaty. It should be noted that 90% of the Constitutional Treaty can also be found in the Lisbon treaty (Fox's speech at the Heritage Foundation, 2008). Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany, has declared that "the substance of the Constitutional Treaty is preserved" (Fox's speech). It is expected that the aspects of the Lisbon treaty related to the development of the ESDP will have profound implications for NATO.

### **3.5 The consequences of an European Security and Defence Policy for NATO**

As the Europeans make progress with their own common defence policy, some question where NATO will be left if the EU members desire to create a truly autonomous defence policy and capacity. Some Americans, Canadians and Atlanticists in Europe fear that the ESDP will give the EU a capability that will duplicate many of the functions of NATO even more than it has done so already, and that the ESDP will eventually compete with, rather than complement NATO (Fox's speech). Within the United States in particular, concerns are rising as to whether the ESDP will be compatible with NATO, or if it will become its competitor on the long run.

Directly after the launch of the ESDP in 1999, the U.S. -in the person of Madeleine Albright- declared that the U.S. would support the ESDP, but warned the EU for several possible effects that the ESDP

would have: duplication of assets, discrimination against non-EU members, and de-linking the policies. Those three standards for judgment are now famously called the 'three D's.'

A major issue of concern of the U.S. was that in creating an independent defence capacity, the EU would mainly duplicate the assets NATO already has and would spend scarce resources on trying to create a second set of capabilities that they could just as easily obtain from NATO (Hunter, p. 41). This worry had been a major reason to initially create the ESDI *within* NATO, using NATO assets, rather than outside it (Hunter, p. 41). The problem was partly solved by the Berlin agreements, which stated that the EU could use NATO assets in case NATO itself was not involved in a mission. Thus, through some of its missions –for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo- the EU has shown that it can act independently from NATO. Nevertheless, it will take a long time before the full status of autonomy will be reached.

Another point of concern of the ESDP lays in the fact that some EU members are not NATO members. This could cause a split in allied cohesion. However, the reverse could also become a problem; NATO members that are not EU members could be left out of the ESDP. So far, this has been avoided, as for example Turkey has participated in most of the EU's missions, and is in fact one of the major troop contributors. Nevertheless, the EU could always choose to act without the help and consent of non-EU members. For this reason, by the end of the 1990s the U.S. had already emphasised that no discrimination could take place against non-EU members.

The United States also worries that de-linking of the ESDP's policies and decision-making from those of NATO will take place. This is often explained by saying that the ESDP can be "separable but not separate" from NATO. Moreover, the U.S. is worried that the EU might stay behind with modernisation and transformation of its capabilities due to the establishment of its own possibly lower standards under the Headline goals. Also, a separate EU force and NATO force will mean two different places where operational planning will take place. This might undermine the effectiveness of decision-making and of the use of forces and allocation of resources.

Despite the negative consequences of the ESDP for NATO as perceived by the U.S., there were still many reasons for the U.S. to support the development of the ESDP. First of all, if the EU enhances its military capabilities as aimed for with the ESDP, those can also contribute to NATO. Besides, a successful development of the ESDP requires a stimulation of the European defence spending; something that the Americans have encouraged for a long time. Furthermore, the ESDP and CFSP can lead Europe to play a more active role on and beyond the European continent. For the EU, at present most of its opportunities lay in the civilian aspects of peacekeeping, and less in the use of military force. This is beneficial for the U.S. since a European capability for crisis management can be used in occasions where NATO would not need to become engaged.

Thus, the U.S. could eventually find considerable advantage of an enhanced ESDP. Additionally, there are several fundamental reasons why the U.S. has a real and growing interest in the success of the EU and European integration more broadly (Serfaty 2005, p. 26). First of all, it is in the interest of the United States to maintain the current peaceful and stable environment in Europe. The EU remains "a magnet with influence beyond its borders, helping to anchor to the West the

young and still fragile democracies on the continents periphery" (Serfaty, p. 26). The EU also plays a crucial role in helping countries transform in regions that also matter to the U.S. An example of such a case is Georgia, a country where Russia has always tried to tighten its grip on, especially now that Georgia's membership in NATO is not yet sure. However, because it retains the prospect of eventually becoming an EU and NATO member, Georgia looks to the West instead of to the East. The EU is rather critical, yet consistent in selecting its member candidates - which forms a good incentive for countries to initiate domestic reforms. The EU is perhaps "better equipped to help lock in enduring change in these countries" (Serfaty, p. 26) than the U.S. on its own.

Furthermore, at the moment the war on terror plays a major role in American domestic and foreign and security policies. The EU's legitimacy, resources, and support are critical for the U.S. in responding to the threat of terrorism. In addition, the EU can play an important role in tackling the root causes of terrorism and in combating them with new policies on democracy promotion, economic growth and trade, and addressing the root causes of terror (Serfaty, p. 27). Yet, the question remains as to whether the U.S. favours a strong EU over a weak EU. The rise of the EU as a global actor enforces the competitive element in its relations with the United States (Möttölä, p. 30).

However, as has become clear from the above, if the U.S. and Europe want to continue transatlantic cooperation the ESDP has to be compatible with NATO. To see what the possibilities for cooperation are, first one has to take a look at the policy goals of both. If one compares the joint security strategy of the EU to NATO documents, they identify the same key threats, these being terrorism, proliferation of WMD, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime (A secure Europe in a better world, ESS 2003). However, in the European Security Strategy 2003 for instance, it is emphasised that none of these threats can be tackled solely by military means (ESS 2003, p.7), and that the EU strives for an international order based on effective multilateralism (ESS 2003, p. 9). Those important notes illustrate what might become the problem of cooperation between the EU and NATO in the longer term. As described in the earlier section, the Europeans and the Americans have a different idea of conducting their foreign policy. Hence, although they might have the same goals and suffer from the same threats, they differ in their ways of addressing those threats. Thus, the difference lays not so much in their goals, as in their means.

Secondly, the capabilities of both organisations have to be considered. At present, the EU focuses mostly on carrying out the Petersberg tasks. If the EU's capabilities in this regard would be strengthened, they could work together with NATO in this field. However, one has to be careful with assigning the EU to only civilian or non-military tasks, while NATO, or rather the U.S., takes care of the military aspect. This idea is sometimes described as the Americans "making the dinner" while the Europeans "doing the dishes". More than once, it has been spoken out that such a 'division of labour' is not favoured by NATO members, since "it would reduce overall capacity to deter and manage new crises" (Hunter, p. 150). The EU is trying to avoid this with the creation of the ESDP and by developing its own force. The U.S. on the other hand, should also become more willing to engage in peacekeeping and peacemaking operations such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo in recent years,

instead of leaving such tasks to the EU (Hunter, p. 150). NATO as a whole needs to develop means for being linked to a crisis management mechanism, paralleling and coordinating its relationship with the ESDP (Hunter, p. 150).

If NATO and ESDP succeed to coexist, the question is if one of them would have a primacy over the other. To the Americans definitely applies the belief that "NATO comes first". It is to question though, if this attitude applies to the European allies as well or only for some of them. In the Lisbon Treaty, there is no mention of NATO's right of first refusal to all military missions pertaining to European security, and there is also no mentioning of NATO's primacy (Fox's speech). All of this causes dissensions within Europe, between the member states that prefer the ESDP to have a greater role on the one hand, like France, and member states that rather see their security protected by NATO or by the U.S. such as Great Britain.

It is too early to assess if the ESDP will actually form a threat to NATO. This depends on how the ESDP will develop over the coming years and if the concept will succeed. It also depends on the will of the EU member states to increase their efforts and spending with regard to defence and security. One could carefully conclude, however, that the whole idea of the ESDP forms a threat to NATO. The ESDP is designed with the purpose of developing European defence capabilities so that the EU would be able to act autonomously from the U.S., from NATO. At this moment, both parties are trying to find out how the ESDP could complement NATO. But being complementary does not go together with being autonomously. If the EU goes too far in adapting the ESDP to NATO, the result might be that it ends up where it started; as a European pillar under NATO. Therefore, the EU has to decide what it wants with the ESDP and if it really strives to be able to act autonomously. This would inevitably involve duplication because then the EU should not rely on NATO assets; it would involve discrimination because only EU members will be part of the deal; and it would involve de-linking as the ESDP falls under European jurisdiction, and planning and decision-making will therefore be undertaken solely by the EU. Although this scenario seems somewhat radical, this is what a 'pure' autonomous defence capability means. And to a certain extent, part of the scenario has already become reality, now that the EU has been able in some cases to act autonomously from NATO. Yet, what the EU has at present is more of a compromise with NATO – or rather, with the U.S. However, if the leaders of the EU will continue the ongoing process of creating an independent ESDP, and if the EU manages to develop the necessary capabilities, then the ESDP can indeed be regarded as a threat to NATO.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has examined the research question *How did NATO evolve after the Cold War and how can it maintain its importance in the future?*

This first part of this question will now be answered by summing up the outcome of the research into the evolution of NATO after the Cold War. The second part of the question will also be answered through the provision of recommendations.

Compared to what it looked like 20 years ago, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has changed into a very different concept. While NATO is originally a Cold War institution, it now faces an entirely different global situation and geopolitical environment. It performs a role that is *fundamentally* distinct from the one for which it was originally set up, and is still in a process of transformation. Not only NATO's role, but also its composition and its missions have undergone significant changes and reforms during the past 20 years. The Alliance has adapted partially to the post-communist global environment – through expanding eastwards and including former adversary states, and through facing threats that are much more multifaceted and less clear-cut than that of the Soviet Union in the days of the Cold War. However, NATO still confronts all kinds of challenges. The threat perception of the allies is not longer as self-evident as during its first 50 years of existence, and as the EU is becoming stronger and more integrated, it starts looking for its own means of defence. In a few years, a transformed NATO could also mean an institution that is complemented by EU forces. A possible scenario is that NATO will carry out military actions, while the EU will take care of reconstruction, peacekeeping and civilian efforts. However, in a few years, NATO could also find itself in a situation totally different from this, if the EU succeeds in developing as a security institution and decides to do so autonomously from NATO – in that case the EU might become NATO's, or rather the U.S. real competitor.

NATO has been re-inventing itself since the 1990s, and is still doing so. There is not yet a final post-Cold War image of NATO - the process of transformation is still ongoing. Slowly, NATO has taken on new missions, first outside of member state territory but still in the neighbourhood as in Kosovo and Bosnia, but now also outside of its continents as in Afghanistan. Some argue that the mission in Afghanistan will be crucial in determining if the Alliance should continue its work and if it is still a relevant organisation in the contemporary world. However, in order to assess NATO fairly, one should take a look at NATO's *entire* post-Cold War evolution as it is described in this paper. Then one will notice that Afghanistan is just one of the many crossroads NATO has encountered during the past 20 years. At several crucial moments, NATO has managed to overcome scepticism and failures. First, immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO faced the choice between giving up the Alliance and continuing to provide security to its members. It decided to do the latter. Then, it realised that in order to achieve maximum stability and security on the European continent it should incorporate Central and Eastern European countries into the Alliance. It chose to take this important

step. This is the greatest illustration of how NATO has changed its Cold War mindset; inviting former Warsaw Pact members to join the Alliance. In order to do so, NATO leaders had to overcome fierce objections from Russia to this plan. Although anxious to deteriorate the recently improved relations with Russia, NATO stood its ground and accomplished the Russian acceptance of enlargement. In the 1990s, NATO started to carry out its first 'out-of-area missions'. The one in Bosnia led to the Dayton agreement, which ended the war. Through the implementation of a stabilisation force, NATO continued to watch over the vulnerable country and does what it can to keep it safe and secure.

To assess NATO's transformation it is important to take the appropriate timeframe into consideration. In view of NATO's totally different objective ten years before the events mentioned above, it has done a good job in engaging in this -for NATO unconventional- manner. The responsibility to stabilise Afghanistan today, is a great challenge for such a 'fresh' peacekeeping organisation as NATO. It has to cope with many member states that all have their own preferences and interests. The governance of this regional organisation is therefore a tough task. It involves dealing with countries' reluctance to contribute troops, intelligence information or defence spending. It also encounters the disadvantages of coordinating a group of 26 *sovereign* member states – one of the negative consequences of this being national caveats.

A considerable challenge that NATO faces on the ground in Afghanistan is combining military and civilian efforts. Perhaps NATO should consider increasing its cooperation with the U.N., which has more experience with humanitarian missions. Another suggestion is to work together with NGOs, who generally possess more expertise in the civilian field. Their humanitarian workers will also be better accepted by the population than NATO's soldiers. A successful cooperation with NGOs requires even more coordination, and NATO should put more efforts in this.

Furthermore: NATO should do what it is good at. This study concludes that there are four types of engagement that suit NATO the best at the moment:

1. Counter-terrorism, especially through the use of the highly flexible NRF
2. Protecting forces and civilians against terrorist and WMD attacks and mitigating their effects. Although this is in principle a job for the national authorities, NATO maintains an inventory that could be made available to its member states in case of a terrorist or WMD attack
3. Crisis response operations that are military NATO-operations in non-Article V-situations and that serve the purpose of providing security and stability in regions where this is necessary. Examples of this are peacekeeping missions and conflict prevention operations as the ones in Bosnia and Afghanistan
4. Carrying out natural, technological or humanitarian disaster operations in case members or partners become the victim of a disaster. NATO's showed its competence in this area after Hurricane Katrina in the U.S., in Ukraine after floods and in Turkey after an earthquake.

This research has defined those four as the areas wherein NATO has the most potential in becoming stronger. If NATO wants to strengthen its efforts in these fields, it should take the following recommendations for improvement into consideration:

- ❖ Improved coordination of peacekeeping missions: overcoming difficulties in logistics through transformation of its institutions. In some cases, member states are willing to provide military assets, but do not have the financial means to ship them. NATO should put more effort in establishing a common fund so unnecessary logistical problems can be avoided in the future. Furthermore, it should continue to build up its military capabilities for benign uses such as peacekeeping, stabilisation and reconstruction.
- ❖ Strategic realignment: Only if the NATO members define common threats, it will be possible to design a cohesive strategy and to coordinate missions better.
- ❖ Learning to react quickly and flexibly to new challenges: The NRF is a great step forward in this regard.
- ❖ Combining of military and civilian efforts as described above. Afghanistan provides a perfect example of a case where development should go hand in hand with security. If NATO would be able to manage this combination, they would have a major advantage in peacekeeping missions.
- ❖ Encourage troop generation: it is essential to overcome the reluctance in troop generation.

If NATO would accomplish these goals, it will strengthen its peacekeeping and stabilisation abilities, which will help to retain its role as a relevant alliance. What is also important is that NATO should continue to provide security in its home territory. NATO needs to find a balance between addressing traditional, Euro-centric missions and tackling new global threats.

To move to the political difficulties that NATO has to overcome, something that should be mentioned first is that debate, discussion and change in the Alliance should not be considered *only* a negative phenomenon. They are not signs of impending doom – they are also preconditions of NATO's continuing health and relevance. Also, NATO is not the only organisation coping with internal divisions; the EU faces the same challenge. Within the EU there has always been substantial disagreement and a divergence of views on crucial matters. That is why the EU is still not able to define a common foreign policy, although such a concept was already established in 1992. Therefore, people that fear the concept of an emerging ESDP should take this fact into consideration.

Nevertheless, internal divisions within NATO are serious and worth paying attention to. Dividing lines are the most obvious between the Europeans and the Americans. The foreign policy approach of the United States and of the European countries – Atlantic-orientated or not – will always be very different. One could conclude that this changes partly with leadership. In Spain for example, first José Aznar, a 'Bush-supporter' was in charge; however after Zapatero took office, politics towards the United States *and* NATO changed significantly. One should expect such leadership dynamics to have an influence on transatlantic relations after the U.S. presidential elections in November 2008 as

well. But even with the chance of a Democrat president arriving in the White House, the way the United States will conduct its foreign policy will remain very distinct from that of any European country. As Robert Kagan correctly describes at the very start of his extended essay, *Of Paradise and Power*:

It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world. On the all-important question of power – the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power- American and European perspectives are diverging. (Kagan 2003, p. 3)

The perception gap, the strategy gap, the value gap, the capabilities gap – all of those broaden the rift between the transatlantic allies and amount to the problem that within NATO there is no common threat perception. Combating terrorism is not the unifying factor as some people thought it would be. All of this makes it impossible for NATO to design effective strategies. Now that the Europeans are making progress with their own common defence policy, they will probably choose for a different, less military focus than NATO and the United States. The reason for this is that the EU prefers to only use force as a last resort, yet they value peacekeeping but also peacemaking organisations. The vision of Americans “making the dinner” and Europeans “doing the dishes” is mostly rejected. Nonetheless, such an arrangement will be a way to make both Americans and Europeans do what they are good at, and if they are then able to combine the two, this could make NATO very effective and more advanced.

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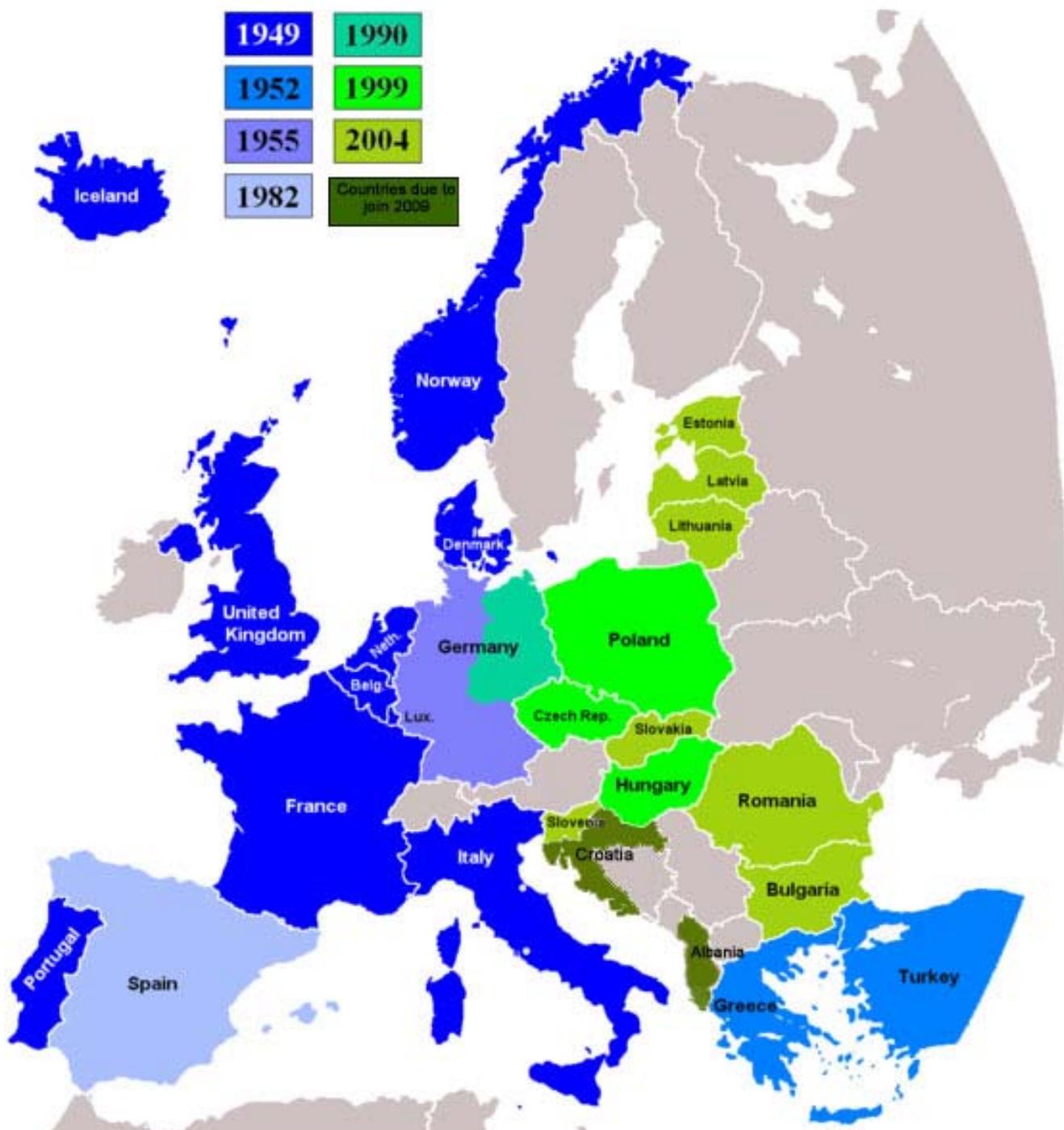
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Appendix 1: *NATO enlargement over the years*



## Appendix 2: *Transcript of interview with Dr. Lawrence S. Kaplan*

### **Interview with Dr. Lawrence S. Kaplan**

*Lawrence Kaplan is the author of several books on isolationism and on the history of NATO. Among other works, he published 'The Long Entanglement' in 1999, and 'NATO divided, NATO united' in 2003. Lawrence S. Kaplan is cofounder of the Lyman Lemnitzer Center for NATO Studies at Kent State University. Considered America's preeminent historian of NATO, since his retirement he has served as an adjunct History professor at Georgetown University in Washington DC, and continues to publish books and articles actively.*

Question: The title of one of your books is NATO divided, NATO united. Can you explain me why you chose this title?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Well, there are so many things dividing NATO, historically. Jealousy, feeling that the US dominates too much... And these divisions run right through the NATO history. Look at the Suez Crisis in 1956. We went one way, and France went the other way. That was not very good. And yet in the long run there is more to link Europe with the Unites States than to separate them. And that is something that explains why I also used 'NATO united'.

Question: Do you think that the US perceives the importance of NATO differently than the Europeans do?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Yes.

Question: Do you think that the US considers it more important?

**Dr.Kaplan:** No, I wouldn't put it that way. We look upon NATO, probably more than we should, as an arm of our own foreign policy, while the Europeans look upon it as many theories in which they have involved.

Question: Do you also think the US and Europe have a different threat perception, for example if talk about threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, like terrorism for example?

**Dr.Kaplan:** The Europeans are a lot more in favor of soft power, when we would talk about hard power. But I think the threat of Islamic terrorism is a unifying one in the long run, because it is as much a threat to them as it is to us. And the question is not to overreact, and not to engage in the kind of racism that is a danger.

Question: So what could NATO do in that regard? For example, should take continue such missions as they have in Afghanistan at the moment?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Absolutely. Holland by the way is one of our strongest allies where the others should do more. No of course that should be the case. That doesn't mean that all our attitudes are the ones Europeans should subscribe to. There should be, as always, more collaboration within NATO among all members, and that is harder and harder as long as it expands so much.

Question: Can you tell me something about how the end of the Cold War was a crucial point in moment for NATO?

**Dr.Kaplan:** It was important, it was a dividing point. What was NATO going to do? What function does it have after the Cold War? And of course, there were many answers to this in the 90s. One of them was that NATO might be incorporated as an arm of the United Nations. In article 53 of the UN Charter they describe the idea of regional organizations taking enforcement action. That was an idea that they talked about, but it never developed.

Question: How about NATO's first missions, in Bosnia and Kosovo, that were carried out under the UN-mandate?

**Dr.Kaplan:** The Bosnian intervention in the late summer of 1995 did involve UN sanctions, it was not quite a mandate I would say. But the friction between the UN and NATO was really very strong. In a sense, Boutros Boutros Ghali who was the Secretary General of the UN at that time, really wanted the Bosnian intervention to remain under the UN and not under NATO. But it was unable to function successfully, so rather reluctantly, very reluctantly, the UN turned over to NATO the responsibility for winning order, taming Milosevic. And it worked, in a sense, Ifor becomes SFOR. It continues into the Kosovo period, with a delicate relationship between NATO and the UN. Actually when Kofi Annan came in, and Boutros Ghali was out, the relationship with the US became much easier. He was a quite more popular figure, and a much more accommodating one, and there was real cooperation. With regard to the UN and NATO relationship, during the Kosovo intervention this was actually different. NATO did this presumably on its own, the UN did not give mandate. Why? Presumably because of the VETO power of Russia and China. Now, and this is the question that I sometimes ask and that I have never gotten and answer to: why couldn't they have used the 1950 Uniting for Peace Resolution, remember the Korean War? Go to the General Assembly. If they would have done this, the UN and NATO still could be in sync... but we didn't do that. NATO therefore felt they had to work independently. The US and our allies really worried about our General Assembly having too much power, and having an anti-American history. And there may be another aspect. Remember the Security Council is the key in the UN. The British and the French as well as the Americans have permanent seats, and I think that might be why they didn't want to give it up to the General Assembly. NATO was back on its own, but it was careful to keep a relationship with Kofi Annan. There was the problem if humanitarian actions could take place within a sovereign state, as we saw in Yugoslavia, where Kosovo is a province of Serbia. And this really raised some questions amongst our allies.

Question: Do you think NATO and the UN attempt to enhance cooperation?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Oh, absolutely, whether they are doing it enough or successfully. But I don't think the United States or NATO is ready to become a regional organization under Article 53, reporting to the Security Council where Russia and China sit... And turning it over to them, and I don't think we should.

Question: How do you think the past influences the relationship between Russia and NATO?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Well, Russia felt humiliated after the Cold War ended. WE promised when Germany joined that NATO forces would not move eastward, that what was East Germany would really not be part of a military build-up... and yet troops are there. We advanced into Poland, we advanced into the near abroad as they call it, look at all those members of NATO today. The Russians have a reason for some of their feelings.

Question: What do you think this reason is?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Well, I think they see it as an extension of American power. And that is something that they resent, because they want to be the paramount power of the era. And I think they are a danger, frankly, right now. Russia is leaning on its oil power, it is doing us damage in certain parts of the world, including Georgia. I can understand why they don't want Ukraine to be part of NATO, I don't think it should be, but I don't think the intrusion of Russian power in that area is particularly helpful in building relationships with the rest of the world. I think we are going to have to deal with Russia, fairly, and we will see what is going to happen. But I think NATO has to survive. For us in the United States, it is our most important relationship to Europe.

Question: Recently, the NATO allies decided that Albania and Croatia would be able to join the alliance in 2009. What do you think of the ongoing enlargement of NATO, do you think it is something positive?

**Dr.Kaplan:** I have never been in favor of it. I feel it just weakens the governance of the organization. As for Croatia, and Albania even, well it completes the Balkans. But should that also include Ukraine and Georgia? I don't think so.

Question: And why do you think President Bush was so strongly in favor of welcoming Georgia and Ukraine to the Membership Action Plan. What do you think were his reasons for this?

**Dr.Kaplan:** I think it is completing a movement that goes back to the 90s, to the Clinton-years. NATO started to get more involved in crisis management in order to create stability in Europe.

Question: Do you think they succeeded in this mission?

**Dr.Kaplan:** It has been successful. I would say yes. Although you look at Kosovo today and you keep your fingers crossed.

Question: That is true. What do you think NATO has learned from its missions and Bosnia and Kosovo?

**Dr.Kaplan:** It is hard to say what it has learned. I like to think they have learned the lesson of collaboration. It is still open, I am not sure what we have learned.

Question: What do you think will happen when the EU continues its plans to establish its own defence community including a military force?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Frankly, I don't think it is going to work very well.

Question: So you don't think it would possibly form a threat to NATO?

**Dr.Kaplan:** No, it makes no sense, to duplicate it as much as they are doing...

Question: ...you consider the whole process a duplication?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Absolutely, it should be far more into the relation between NATO and the EU, where the EU can function in areas where NATO does not want to function. We have this in the Brussels meeting in 1994: The idea of having NATO assets being used by the EU in areas where NATO does not want to get involved. That is a good distribution of the power, and they have not worked that out yet, and I hope they will...

Question: ...they should try to make it complementary.

**Dr.Kaplan:** Exactly, let's hope that will happen.

Question: As we discussed before, NATO has a lot of internal problems. How do you think these problems can be overcome? Is there a way?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Again, it has to be working together, and trying to shape common solutions where possible. And one of them would be Afghanistan. And of course some criticize with good reason our involvement in Iraq. But now that we are there we can't easily get out. But there is that criticism that the Europeans have. Unilateralism that they criticize, that I think that is being overcome now. But the danger we see in Europe, is that they are giving in to the threats alongside. And that is a threat to NATO and a threat to themselves.

Question: Do you consider the consensus-principle within NATO decision-making effective, and why?

**Dr.Kaplan:** It has always been done that way. But when you look at consensus, somebody has to drive that consensus, and can be as informal as it has always been, more than once. Obviously, in the 50s, the United States drove that consensus. And I think it is more a declaration of principle in reality, because behind the scenes you actually press one party to do something, which is followed by the other. And the US has given in sometimes also.

Question: It seems that NATO has been transformed into a peacekeeping organization. Is this a positive thing?

**Dr.Kaplan:** Yes, that is the core of crisis management. They have to go on with those peacekeeping missions; nobody else can really do it.

Question: My last question is: how do you see the future of NATO, and what would be important to change internally if the alliance wants to remain successful?

**Dr.Kaplan:** The future, if there is future, and I think there has to be: NATO is the only military capable entity among the regional organizations and therefore, for that alone, it has to survive. But I'd like to see it working with the UN in a way that hasn't been done in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, if you recall what happened in 2002 and 2003 when the UN was condemning US unilateralism. And that has not yet been worked out. I don't have a clear vision, I never had. I can't give you a blueprint of where NATO is going. I just know that it is important to keep alive. It is important for the alliance to work together, and it is important also for the EU and the UN to be part of that collaboration.

### Appendix 3: *Transcript of interview with Dr. Patrick Mendis*

#### **Interview with Dr. Patrick Mendis**

*Patrick Mendis is a visiting scholar at the John Hopkins University at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, D.C.*

*He has also worked for the U.S. government at the Department of State, where he served under Madeleine Albright and later under Colin Powell. Prior to this, he was a lecturer on International Relations at the University of Maryland and at the University of Minnesota.*

*(Website: [www.patrickmendis.com](http://www.patrickmendis.com))*

Question: Mr. Mendis, I am sure that you are familiar with the so-called international security threats of the 21st century. There is a growing concern for terrorism, drug trafficking, rogue states, nuclear proliferation... What do you think are the three most pressing security threats that the alliance will have to address?

**Dr.Mendis:** The first one is the Global War on Terror. That is the most important one according to me. NATO is already at war, we see that in Afghanistan, and this actually outside its original mandate. I think that NATO will continue to act on the global stage like it started to do since a few years.  
The second thing that is important I think is the issues NATO has with the Russian Federation.

Question: Can you describe those particular issues?

**Dr.Mendis:** Well, the biggest issue at the moment is the one about the deployment of missiles in Europe. The management of relations with Russia is a big challenge for NATO. And the third one that forms a challenge for NATO is to solve conflicts on member's territory, like in the past in Greece and Turkey.

Question: Do you think the relationship between the US and NATO is changing?

**Dr.Mendis:** This depends a lot on bilateral relations, and is also related to issue orientation. When it comes to bilateral relations, we used to have not such a good relationship with France, but now that is improving. On the other hand, we used to have very close ties with the UK under Tony Blair, however, this has changed a bit now. I think changes of leadership have caused changes in relations with the US.

Question: My next question is related to this. In an alliance as large as NATO, it seems likely that individual member states will always attempt to pursue their national interests. Do you think this happens often within NATO, and why (not)? Does it happen more at present than in the past?

**Dr.Mendis:** The EU has evolved so far now, that most national interests have become European interests, which are also different from the US interests. I think that most national interests are overlapping, or alliance with European interest. But what is important, is that the European countries cannot afford to only pursue national interests, they have to realize that it is inevitable to unite themselves in order to achieve maximum cooperation on the security level. For the US it is also really important to have a united Europe as a partner. From time to time there are disagreements between the bigger EU countries, but yet I think that there is growing European mentality.

Question: Do you consider the consensus-principle within NATO decision-making successful, and why?

**Dr.Mendis:** Yes, I think this is the best way to arrange NATO decision making, because it stimulates the focus on common interests. It is a better way to achieve a common stance, and it prevents disagreement like there is in the UN.

Question: What will the creation of a European Security & Defense Policy mean for NATO?

**Dr.Mendis:** America's participation in managing the security environment is essential for Europe. We saw this in history, for example in the Second World War. Europe still benefits a lot from America's efforts to provide security. But, Europe is now in the economic position to create their own military force, and they should not rely anymore on the US.

Question: Don't you think that American policy makers will be anxious that this ESDP will undermine NATO's strength?

**Dr.Mendis:** No, not really. The US needs Europe to become more involved and to increase their military spending. The US has problems with its national budget already because of their engagement in the Middle East. I think that US policy makers would prefer Europe to develop its own defense force.

Question: Do you regard NATO as a successful alliance, and why?

**Dr.Mendis:** Yes. Over the years, the NATO members have never fought each other. Also, NATO has improved security and stability within the region. And finally, because of NATO, the US has maintained its leadership.

Question: How do you see the future of NATO, and what would be important to change internally if the alliance wants to succeed?

**Dr.Mendis:** NATO needs to realize that their mission has changed. Most of their actions do now take place outside of their regions, like for example in Afghanistan. I think that NATO will have to concentrate on this. Last week, a French boat was hijacked at the East Coast of Africa. It is of NATO's concern to coordinate this kind of events.

Question: Thank you for your answers. Do you have anymore comments on the NATO-issue, or is there anything you want to emphasize?

**Dr.Mendis:** Well, I think that NATO is becoming more and more a global institution, which is not limited anymore to the borders their member states. NATO has to act as a global force. NATO is very important for the US, because the US has always had these global interests. The original purpose of NATO from the 1990s on was the develop security in the European countries, but now this is not limited to Europe anymore. NATO should realized they are not longer isolated because new security threats calls for its global presence.