

## Dual-Track Transformation for NATO

by Hans Binnendijk and Richard L. Kugler

### Overview

Recent strains between the United States and some European allies have raised concerns that NATO is becoming irrelevant or even headed toward extinction. A breakup of NATO would severely damage the United States and Europe as well as prospects for global peace. As an urgent priority, NATO must restore its unity and strengthen its capacity for common action in the Greater Middle East. But how can this goal be achieved in today's climate?

The solution is for NATO to pursue a new dual-track strategy of military and political transformation that could be launched at the Istanbul Summit next spring. The military track should further strengthen efforts to field a NATO Response Force and otherwise prepare European forces for expeditionary missions. The political track should aim to create a common transatlantic vision for the Middle East, while enhancing NATO's capacity to act flexibly and constructively there in peace, crisis, and war.

Such a NATO strategic realignment is not mission impossible. NATO has survived previous trans-Atlantic stresses by adopting dual-track strategies that harmonized American and European interests. For example, almost forty years ago the Harmel Report reconciled detente with deterrence and defense. A new Harmel Report is needed to forge a similar reconciliation of U.S. and European policies toward NATO's role in the Middle East. In addition, the Istanbul Summit can take other practical steps: e.g., a NATO resource commitment to increase defense investments as force structure is reduced, a NATO defense transformation roadmap to guide force improvements, and a new "Partnership for Cooperation" that would pursue ties with friendly Middle Eastern militaries. A bold Istanbul agenda of this sort offers NATO an opportunity to replace recent debates with a common approach for making the alliance more secure and effective in a troubled world.

Most U.S. and European leaders want to heal the rift over Iraq by restoring NATO unity and effectiveness. But how can this worthy goal be accomplished? This urgent question requires a credible answer. Some observers argue that because the United States and Europe cannot agree on security policies outside Europe, they should limit their cooperation to such soft-power issues as economic trade, foreign aid, and combating HIV/AIDS. While common action on soft-power issues is useful, this strategy would leave NATO—the transatlantic community's premier military alliance—with no serious role to play in the ongoing struggle against terrorism, tyrants, WMD proliferation, and radicalism in the Islamic world. Something better is needed: a constructive security strategy for NATO that also employs hard power in sensible ways, and that both Americans and Europeans will agree upon.

### Need for a New Dual-Track Strategy

We believe that such a strategy can be crafted if the United States and Europe recall how they solved similar serious problems during the Cold War. On earlier occasions, the Alliance successfully coped with an assertive American military agenda that troubled many European countries for political reasons by creating dual-track strategies that combined military modernization with new political endeavors. The first case arose in the mid-1960s, when the Alliance used the "Harmel Report" to mate deterrence and defense with détente. The second case occurred in the early 1980s, when NATO agreed to deploy Pershing II and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM) on European soil while also pursuing nuclear arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. After the Cold War ended, NATO successfully pursued a third dual-track strategy by engaging Russia diplomatically while enlarging into Eastern Europe.

A new type of dual-track strategy should be pursued today. NATO already has crafted the first half of this strategy: a visionary defense transformation agenda for enhancing military preparedness. Adopted at the Prague Summit of 2002, this agenda aims at fielding a new NATO Response Force (NRF) and other measures to prepare for new missions outside Europe. This forward looking defense

agenda must now be pursued vigorously by promptly fielding the NRF, creating a NATO transformation roadmap, and designing a new U.S. military presence in Europe. As an urgent priority, NATO now needs to craft the second part of this dual-track strategy: an accompanying political transformation agenda for strategic realignment. The goal of this political agenda should be to achieve NATO consensus behind fresh, well-construed policies and decision processes for applying power in the Middle East and other regions to deal with emerging threats and strengthen relationships with friendly countries. Such an agenda of political transformation should include four measures that, along with military transformation, would produce a major strategic realignment of NATO:

- Writing a new Harmel Report that would help lay out a common strategic vision of threats, goals, priorities, and standards for using military force and other instruments in the Middle East.
- Reforming the NATO decisionmaking process to create greater flexibility and responsiveness in performing missions outside Europe in peace, crisis, and war.
- Finding ways for NATO and the Europeans to play larger roles in post-war situations where stabilization and reconstruction operations must be launched.
- Creating a new "Partnership for Cooperation" (PFC) to help foster cooperative military ties between NATO and friendly Middle Eastern militaries.

This new dual-track strategy of defense transformation for military preparedness and political transformation for strategic realignment can be adopted at the NATO summit in Istanbul in spring, 2004. Prompt and vigorous implementation is vital, so collaboration among leading NATO powers is essential. The United States and Britain must work constructively with Germany and France, and vice-versa. The times are too dangerous to permit internal quarrels that leave the Alliance divided and adrift. If NATO is to be salvaged, the United States and Europe must want to do so. Nothing in this dual-track strategy implies that the United States and its close friends should cede the option to act outside NATO when the situation merits. Yet, both the United States and Europe will benefit if NATO can be consistently employed as a preferred instrument of choice. The new dual-track strategy is meant to make this practice possible.

## Why Save NATO?

To experienced hands, the proposal that NATO pursue transformation will sound familiar. NATO has been undergoing transformation for at least a decade; Europeans began using this term long

before it became popular in the U.S. military. But the NATO transformation of the early 1990s was different from that of today. Then, NATO was trying to shift from being a Cold War defense alliance toward one helping to create a Europe that was stable, whole, and free. NATO was filled with optimism and hopeful visions of a bright future for itself.

Today, transformation involves a quite different type of strategic realignment: preparing NATO to project power and purpose not on the European continent, but into the Middle East and other distant areas. The environment also is different. NATO is filled with misgivings about its future as it tries to recover from a badly damaging debate over Iraq that shook its foundations.

In today's troubled setting, the idea of NATO crafting a bold political-military transformation for strategic realignment runs counter to the instincts of those who are content to see NATO lose relevance or disintegrate. Those Americans who have given up on NATO judge that the United States should act unilaterally, with only Britain and a few "cherry-picked" European allies by its side. Similarly, some Europeans see NATO as an impediment to casting off American domination and becoming independent on the world stage.

Critics on both sides of the Atlantic are right about one thing: letting NATO wither would be easier than keeping it alive and healthy. Why, then, should NATO be saved? The perfunctory answer is that an effective NATO will enable both the United States and Europe to preserve security within and beyond Europe. This truism, however, has been cited so often by NATO advocates that it has become worn and unpersuasive. A more effective way to set out what is at stake is to ask the question, "What would the world be like without NATO?"

Some observers claim that the choice is not between transforming NATO and losing it. They argue that NATO can cling to the status quo while doing little of consequence outside Europe, apart from providing a launch-pad for U.S. forces and preparing a few allies to participate in ad-hoc coalitions led by the United States. This mistaken judgment, however, is a prescription for NATO to slip into irrelevance. The United States and Europe would lose interest in NATO and would not be able to prevent its demise. A big organization without purpose eventually loses its legitimacy and will to live. After that, a slow death is inevitable.

The collapse of the Atlantic Alliance might not bother those in the media and the general public who see little value in NATO. It might please those Europeans who view the United States as an arrogant superpower. It might also please those Americans who dismiss Europe as a decadent civilization. But when the dust settles and realization grows that the world's oldest, most successful democratic alliance has been lost, a different reaction might settle in. The widespread response might not be applause, but instead anger at the short-sighted governments on both sides of the Atlantic that allowed this travesty to occur. Such governments might not stay in office for long. Even if they endured, their reputations for wise stewardship would suffer a grievous blow. Nobody would emerge a winner in the court of public opinion or the verdict of history.

## **the times are too dangerous to permit internal quarrels that leave the Alliance divided and adrift**

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Loss of NATO would damage not only the reputations of ruling governments, but also the enduring interests of the United States and Europe. A first casualty would be the war on terrorism. Although the main event has been the invasion of Afghanistan, this war is mostly being fought in the twilight, behind the scenes, and with many instruments other than military force. Tracking down small, dispersed terrorist cells across the globe requires extensive multilateral collaboration in many areas—diplomacy, intelligence sharing, law enforcement and extraditions, disruption of terrorist finances, homeland security, training and aid to foreign governments, and strikes by special forces. Moreover, the conquest of Afghanistan is now requiring peacekeeping, stabilization, and reconstruction efforts aimed at preventing the Taliban from regaining power. Today NATO is providing this multilateral collaboration or creating a framework for it to occur. If NATO vanishes, much of this cooperation would be lost, and terrorists would be given a new lease on life.

The damaging effects of NATO collapse would extend far beyond the war on terrorism into the strategic realm of traditional security affairs. For the United States, loss of NATO would be a more serious setback than advocates of unilateralism realize. At a minimum, the United States would lose influence over Europe's evolution and would face even greater anti-Americanism. In other regions, the United States might not have its wings clipped to the degree envisioned by some Europeans—a global superpower has many other friends—but it would suffer from the loss of political legitimacy that European and NATO support often gives to its endeavors in the Middle East and elsewhere. Although France, Germany, and a few others criticized the U.S. and British invasion of Iraq, fully 75% of current and prospective NATO members gave vocal political support to it. Such strong support would be less likely in a world without NATO. Militarily, the United States would lose valuable infrastructure in Europe that is helpful in projecting power to distant regions. The United States also would be damaged in crises and wars that require allied force contributions. In theory, the United States could still draw upon friendly European countries to create ad hoc coalitions of the willing. But if NATO no longer exists, fewer countries may be willing to join U.S.-led coalitions. Also important, their military forces might be less able to work closely with U.S. forces because NATO no longer would provide them the necessary interoperability.

The biggest loser would not be the United States, but, Europe. NATO collapse would result in a major U.S. political and military withdrawal from the continent. The United States might retain a foothold through bilateral ties with Britain and other countries, but it no longer would play a multilateral leadership role. Along with this withdrawal would come removal of the many valuable strategic roles that the United States plays behind the scene. The United States continues to provide extended nuclear deterrence coverage over virtually all of Europe, a still-vital protection in this era of nuclear powers and proliferation. As shown in the Kosovo war, U.S. conventional forces provide about three-quarters of NATO military power-projection assets for crises and wars on Europe's periphery. These nuclear

and conventional contributions, moreover, enable Europe to defend itself with annual defense budgets that are \$100–150 billion smaller than otherwise would be the case. In effect, the United States is helping fund the European Union, because these savings equal the EU budget.

Perhaps the Europeans could fund a big defense buildup to compensate for loss of American military guarantees, but the price could be quite high, because a European buildup absent NATO would be costlier than a buildup under its auspices; NATO offers many economies of scale and opportunities to avoid redundancy through integrated planning. In addition, a European military buildup would be controversial. How would Europe erect an umbrella of nuclear deterrence? How would it prepare for crisis operations on its periphery? What would be the European reaction if Germany were compelled to build nuclear forces and a large mobile military?

A European military buildup, however, seems unlikely. Is there any reason to believe that European parliaments would surmount their current anti-military attitudes to fund bigger defense budgets? Their reaction might be to slash budgets further on the premise that the collapse of NATO made defense strength less necessary and that

Europe could avoid war through diplomacy. As a result, Europe might withdraw into a disengaged foreign policy. Even if bigger budgets were forthcoming, European militaries no longer would enjoy U.S. help in developing new-era doctrines, structures, and

technologies. In the military transformation arena, they would be left on the outside looking in. Without U.S. contributions, they could be hard-pressed to muster the wherewithal to deploy missile defenses to shield Europe from WMD attacks. Developing serious forces for power-projection outside Europe also would be difficult, without American help in such critical areas as C<sup>4</sup>ISR, strategic lift, and logistic support. Overall, the collapse of NATO could leave Europe more vulnerable to threats across the spectrum from terrorism to WMD proliferation and less able to exert influence in the regions that produce these threats.

In addition to these adverse military consequences, American political contributions to European unity, peace, and prosperity would decline precipitously. For the past fifty years, America's constant presence has assured small European countries that they will not be dominated by powerful neighbors. It also has helped guarantee that the continent will not slide back into the competitive geopolitical dynamics that produced two world wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The U.S. presence helped Germany find a welcome role in an integrating Europe and permitted leadership by the so-called "Quad" (the United States, Britain, Germany, and France) in a manner that gained the support of other NATO members. Recently, the United States has been a leading advocate of NATO enlargement and European unification. In the absence of NATO, the European Union itself might be weakened, especially if the United States decided to selectively seek allies among EU members. Nor would the EU's influence and positive impact on world affairs be likely to increase. Indeed, the opposite could be the case.

## **a first casualty of the loss of NATO would be the war on terrorism**

A NATO that can project power and purpose outside Europe will greatly enhance the odds of preserving world peace while advancing democratic values. The simple reality is that the United States cannot handle the global problems of the contemporary era alone, and neither can Europe. Together, however, they can succeed. This is a main reason for keeping NATO alive and healthy, and for transforming it in the ways needed to perform new missions. The challenge facing the Atlantic Alliance is to pursue these goals in an effective manner that both the United States and Europe will support.

## The First Track: Carrying Out Prague Defense Transformation Agenda

Pursuit of these goals is the main reason for adopting a new dual-track strategy aimed at defense transformation and strategic realignment. Fortunately, a strong foundation for the military component of this strategy already exists. The Prague defense agenda consisted mainly of three measures: 1) A new NATO Response Force (NRF) to be fielded by 2006; 2) A Prague Capability Commitment (PCC) to replace the stalled Defense Capability Initiative (DCI); and 3) A streamlined integrated military command plus a new Allied Transformation Command (ATC) to guide European military transformation. While the NRF was showcased at Prague, all three initiatives are important. As experience shows, agreeing to these measures is only the first step in a long process. What comes now is the tedious, time-consuming process of pursuing them to completion while making appropriate adjustments. In today's climate, success cannot be taken for granted. The situation calls for NATO political and military leaders to pay sustained attention to these measures to ensure that they unfold as planned. The Prague Summit agenda now needs to be modified in ways that will sharpen its focus and take into account new issues. A revised NATO defense transformation agenda should include the following three elements:

- Vigorous efforts to field the NRF promptly and in ways that overcome hurdles along the way.
- Preparation of a NATO Transformation Roadmap that, along with the PCC, will help provide focus and direction and encourage speedy progress toward transformation.
- Design of a new American military presence in Europe that supports NATO defense transformation and can work closely with the NRF in preparing for expeditionary warfare.

### Strategic Motivations for Defense Transformation

The Prague agenda was the product of four developments: 1) the frustrations of the 1990s, when European forces made little progress toward remedying core deficiencies in power-projection; 2) growing perceptions of a widening transatlantic gap in new-era military capabilities; 3) the disappointments of the war in Afghanistan, when the United States declined offers of European help because most allied forces lacked the necessary capabilities; and 4) the acceleration of U.S. defense transformation in ways that open the door for European forces to acquire capabilities for expeditionary warfare.

The 1990s began with NATO sitting on the sidelines during the Persian Gulf War, but with Britain, France, and other countries contributing to the U.S.-led coalition. The victorious Desert Storm campaign ended with widespread recognition that European and NATO forces needed to improve in many areas to contribute more effectively to future conflicts. Declining defense budgets and waning public support, however, sent European improvement efforts into a prolonged stall. When the Kosovo war was waged in 1999, the United States contributed 75% of NATO forces. In that airpower-dominated campaign, shortfalls in European forces were exposed in such areas as C<sup>4</sup>ISR, smart munitions, defense suppression, and all-weather/day-night assets.

In response, the Washington Summit of 1999 produced a new NATO strategic concept and a Defense Capability Initiative (DCI) aimed at strengthening European capabilities in multiple areas. Several countries, including Britain and France, announced long-range plans to upgrade their forces, but little progress was made. During 1999–2001, knowledgeable observers fretted about a growing transatlantic gap in military capabilities for new-era warfare. While the United States had long been better than Europe at rapidly deploying forces, it was now pulling ahead in capabilities for waging war once forces arrive at the scene.

Indeed, the U.S. military was creating a new form of network-centric warfare anchored in precision fires, fast maneuver, and close integration of air-ground fires. The aim was to replace the old emphasis on massed forces and separate operations by components with integrated joint operations conducted by dispersed, high-tech forces. Most European militaries were not embracing this new form of warfare. Indeed, they were moving toward a growing emphasis on peacekeeping, thus creating a widening gap not only in capabilities and budgets, but in strategic missions and burden-sharing as well.

The invasion of Afghanistan starkly confirmed NATO's need for military transformation. After NATO invoked Article 5 to wage the new war against terrorism, many European governments wanted to participate in Afghanistan. But except for Britain, the U.S. military turned aside these offers with the explanation that European militaries lacked the precision-strike assets for this new form of warfare. Only European SOF forces proved useful in the battles. After the major fighting ended, European forces performed peacekeeping. Later, NATO acquired a formal role in this mission, but this development only reinforced the growing impression that, while NATO might be helpful in cleaning up the mess afterward, it is not an instrument for serious war-fighting.

The U.S. defense transformation effort, accelerated shortly after the Bush Administration took power, opened the door to NATO defense revival for unintended reasons. The original purpose was to prepare U.S. forces for the Information Age by equipping them with advanced information networks, new weapons platforms, ever-smarter munitions, and exotic, futuristic technologies. To fund this effort at enhancing force quality, a big increase in the American

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defense budget was authorized. Initially it seemed that accelerating American military transformation would leave Europeans in the dust and thereby further magnify an already-big gap in transatlantic capabilities. But closer inspection showed that the Europeans did not need to mimic U.S. forces in new technologies and structures. Instead, they merely needed to develop the capacity to “plug and play” into the “system of systems” (integrated information grids) being created by U.S. forces. Moreover, many core operational concepts of transformation could be applied to European forces: e.g., the emphasis on joint expeditionary warfare, networked forces, littoral missions, close integration of air and ground fires, high-speed maneuvers, and simultaneous operations with dispersed forces.

Thus, although the Europeans were unlikely to match high-tech U.S. forces soon, they could embark upon their own form of transformation aimed at facilitating interoperable, complementary operations with U.S. forces on modern battlefields. Moreover, they did not need new, expensive weapon platforms (e.g., tanks and fighter aircraft) to become better at swift power projection and lethal strike operations. Instead, they needed improvements in such areas as joint planning, C<sup>4</sup>ISR, smart munitions, combat support units, mobility, and long-distance logistics for missions in austere areas. Acquiring these assets did not promise to be cheap, but if only a modest number were needed, they were affordable for European budgets. This promised to be the case if NATO and the Europeans focused on transforming only a small portion of their forces rather than their entire posture, which exceeded the size of U.S. forces by more than 50%.

### Bringing the NRF to Life

The idea of fielding the NRF responded to this imperative. This idea was suggested by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in reflection of a proposal from the National Defense University, and it quickly took hold in NATO and European military circles. At the Prague Summit, it was adopted with widespread acclaim as the centerpiece of the new NATO plan for defense transformation. By spring, 2003, it had been equipped with a strategic concept and implementation plan by the NATO Military Committee. SACEUR General James Jones promised quick progress—fielding of initial units by fall, 2003, instead of 2004 as originally envisioned.

Why the NRF for an alliance that already has many formations for many purposes? In the eyes of its American creators, the NRF reflects an effort to plug a serious hole in NATO military posture for new missions. Before the NRF, NATO mainly relied upon the ACE Mobile Force (AMF) and the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) for such missions. Both of these formations suffered from flaws. Originally conceived for limited emergencies, the AMF was too small and lightly equipped for intense combat operations too focused on continental contingencies. Moreover, NATO had already reached a decision to disestablish the AMF because it seemed unsuited to most contemporary missions. By contrast, the ARRC is a huge force of 4 heavy divisions backed by 300 combat aircraft and 100 ships that is

too big and ponderous for swift deployment outside Europe. What NATO needs is an expeditionary force big enough to make a difference in high-tech strike operations alongside U.S. forces, but small and agile enough to be deployed swiftly. The modest-size but potent and deployable NRF is designed to fill this need while also enabling NATO and the Europeans to focus intently on a top-priority force rather than dissipating scarce resources in other directions.

The defense concept behind the NRF is simple but breaks new conceptual ground for NATO. Prior to the NRF, SACEUR defense planning was mainly anchored in large ground formations, with air and naval forces playing supporting roles. While this concept made sense for old-style continental warfare, it makes considerably less sense for new-era expeditionary warfare, which requires heavy doses of air and naval power and relatively fewer ground forces. Accordingly, the NRF concept calls for a truly joint posture of about 21,000 military personnel.

It is to be composed of a single well-armed ground brigade task force, one or two tactical fighter wings, and a naval flotilla of 8–10 combatants with aircraft, cruise missiles, and other strike assets. These forces will be designed to operate jointly in carrying out new-era operational concepts and to be highly interoperable with

U.S. forces owing to plug-and-play C<sup>4</sup>ISR systems as well as similar doctrines, weapons, and smart munitions. Equally important, the NRF is to benefit from advanced training in new-era operational concepts that will not only elevate its own combat capabilities, but also help introduce such skills into other European forces, thereby helping them pursue transformation as well.

The NRF posture is to be capable of being used in multiple different ways, e.g., as a stand-alone NATO force for limited contingencies, as the spearhead of a later-arriving deployment by larger NATO forces, or as a NATO contribution to an ad hoc coalition led by U.S. forces. It would have been ideally suited for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, two very different military operations. It thus promises to greatly enhance NATO capability, flexibility, and adaptability in an era that requires such characteristics for operations across the entire spectrum of conflict. Meanwhile, it promises to be a cutting-edge leader of European force transformation by exposing NRF units to U.S. initiatives and by helping develop new NATO doctrines through training, exercises, and experiments. As the NRF learns the lessons of transformation it can transmit them to other European forces. Over time, successive cohorts of European units will pass through the NRF experience, thereby steadily enlarging the pool of forces that have directly experienced transformation for new missions. While Northern European forces will benefit, the forces of new-member East European countries and the southern region will benefit also. For example, Polish forces will learn how to operate with their European and American allies, and will thereby become better providers of security, not just consumers.

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The NRF should not be merely a NATO force configured to pursue the U.S. military's way of war. Instead, it should embody a synergistic blend of American and European approaches; both sides have something to offer in creating this force and its operational doctrines. Above all, the NRF should be capable of performing a wide spectrum of operations, not merely high-tech strikes with missiles and smart munitions. If such a flexible, multifaceted force is to be fielded, the Europeans will need to take it seriously. The same applies to the United States, which likely will need to loosen export control restrictions on some technologies.

By design, the NRF will not interfere with the EU's European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF). The missions of the NRF and ERRF are different. Whereas the NRF is intended for high-intensity combat and expeditionary strike missions, the ERRF currently is slotted primarily for peacekeeping and other Petersberg tasks. The NRF is also to be smaller than the ERRF and differently structured. Whereas the NRF will have only 21,000 personnel, the slowly evolving ERRF will have 60,000 ground troops and enough air and naval assets to bring the total to 100,000 personnel. The biggest difference is that whereas the NRF always will be assigned to NATO integrated command, the ERRF will not be committed to fulfilling NATO missions. As a result, NATO will still need the NRF even if the ERRF eventually comes to life with better capabilities than now envisioned. Because the NRF will be a small posture, its budget costs will be low, totaling \$3–4 billion per year for investments. Extra spending on manpower and operations will not be needed because the forces to be assigned to the NRF already exist and therefore do not have to be freshly created. While the Europeans will have to set priorities, they possess the manpower and budgets to support both the NRF and the ERRF, and therefore do not have to choose between them. Care, however, will have to be taken to ensure that "dual-hatting" of forces does not result in conflicting assignments for crisis response. As a general rule, European units assigned to NRF duty or preparing to assume this duty should not have additional assignments elsewhere, including to the ERRF. When these forces come off NRF duty, standard practices for dual-hatting can be followed.

The NRF is to be a ready force that can deploy within a week to a month and have 30 days of sustainment in intense combat. It is to be anchored in a rotational readiness scheme. During any six-month period, a full-sized NRF of 21,000 troops is to be on duty, ready to deploy on short notice. Meanwhile, another NRF force will be going through advanced training and exercises to prepare for its upcoming tour of duty. Concurrently, a third NRF that has recently completed its tour will be standing down. Thus, at any moment, three different NRFs will be operating to one degree or another, but for different purposes. Each NRF is to be composed of multinational NATO forces, with the exact mix to be determined by national contributions and operational requirements. For example, one NRF might be manned

largely by British and Dutch forces, and another by French and Italian forces. The NRF is a volunteer posture. It is meant to provide opportunities for participation to all NATO members who are willing and able to meet its operational requirements. The composition of each NRF posture might vary from one duty cycle to the next, thus enabling many European militaries to participate over the course of a few years.

The NRF will draw its combat and support assets mainly from NATO High Readiness Forces: the pool of forces that includes the ARRC, the Eurocorps, the German-Dutch Corps, and other top-tier ground, air, and naval formations. Thus, it will employ only forces that already are strongly committed to NATO integrated command, and it will not interfere with other European military priorities. While the NRF is to be mostly an all-European force, the United States will need to commit assets in such important enabling categories as C<sup>4</sup>ISR, strategic mobility, defense suppression, and logistics until the Europeans become self-sufficient in these areas. The NRF

will be assigned to the new Allied Command Operations (ACO), with operational command rotating among its two new Joint Force Commands (JFC's) and one maritime Joint Force Headquarters. The effect will be to make all three commands skilled at employing the NRF and engaging in expeditionary strike operations.

The NRF is off to a good start. An initial, small version of it will be fielded in 2003 with an emphasis on

SOF assets. Many European countries, including France, have committed to joining the NRF as it is fielded. Whether the NRF will meet its 2006 goal of full operational capability, however, is uncertain. The requisite air and naval forces seem likely to be fielded, but ground forces may be a different matter because of changes that must be made in many areas. The NRF needs to be a properly transformed force with the requisite technologies, networks, and digitization required to perform its missions alongside U.S. forces. As the NRF comes to life, care must be taken to ensure that operational readiness is its first priority. Otherwise, it might fall victim to a dynamic aimed at including too many forces from too many nations under its mantle, thereby weakening its combat power. Likewise, the NRF should take part in transformation, but not at the expense of participating in so many experimental changes that it loses its focus on being ready to fight wars on short notice.

The NRF's command arrangements also bear watching. Each JFC must have a deployable Joint Task Force Headquarters that can command the NRF on distant battlefields. Another issue is the U.S. role. While the United States initially should provide support in critical enabling areas, the Europeans should be encouraged to acquire self-sufficiency in them as soon as possible. In the long run, the NRF should become a mainly European force with the United States contributing on a normal rotating basis. If the NRF becomes dominated by the United States and Britain, its purpose will have been defeated. Likewise, if the NRF is populated by forces from countries that might refuse to participate in its missions at the moment of need, its credibility will be compromised. Whether the NRF needs an

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opt-out clause can be debated, but opting-in by making firm commitments must be the dominating imperative. For these reasons, NRF success cannot be taken for granted. It will need careful management attention from senior NATO political and military leaders for the foreseeable future.

## Preparing a NATO Defense Transformation Roadmap

Prague's decision to create an Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in dual-hat status with the U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) is a major innovation. It offers the promise of bringing U.S. expertise to bear in focusing and accelerating European transformation for expeditionary warfare. If ACT is to succeed, it must be given a major role not only in exploring new ideas, but also in ensuring that, as European forces train and exercise with U.S. forces, they learn new operational concepts. The more fundamental challenge, however, is to ensure that NATO defense transformation is guided by a sound intellectual vision and a powerful program of coordinated measures to ensure that it succeeds on schedule. The PCC can help in this regard, but it needs to be supplemented by a NATO Defense Transformation Roadmap. It also needs to be supplemented by an Istanbul Summit "Transformation Reinvestment Commitment" to apply savings from European force reductions to enhanced investments in readiness and modernization for the forces that remain.

Although fielding the NRF will be NATO's top priority, the PCC's progress deserves support. The original impetus behind the PCC was to slim down and prioritize the DCI, which allegedly was bulging with its five major categories and 54 specific measures. When the PCC emerged, however, it was even bigger than the DCI, with eight major categories and 450 accompanying measures. The eight categories include such measures as C<sup>4</sup>ISR, WMD defense, interoperability, information superiority, combat effectiveness, mobility, sustainment, and logistics. Their main effect is to provide NATO leaders with a useful top-down view of force improvements. Meanwhile, the many accompanying measures provide a bottom-up perspective that NATO members can use to develop specific programs. NATO has created a special committee of two Assistant Secretaries General to monitor the PCC with a view toward focusing it on the NRF. Progress on this goal is being briefed every three weeks to the NAC.

Only a few months after its adoption, the PCC already seems in trouble because, for predictable reasons, it is making slow progress. Critics are dismayed, but the truth is that the PCC is a sensible creation, provided that its limited role is kept in mind and a sense of realism guides expectations. The PCC is another in a long line of NATO efforts that focus on functional categories of military activity rather than forces and missions. It was preceded by the Long-Term Defense Plan (LTDP) of the 1970s, the Conventional Defense Initiative (CDI) of the 1980s, and the DCI of the 1990s, all of which used functional categories to generate a detailed look at European forces

in key areas. By spelling out a host of worthy NATO-wide improvement measures covering all members, the PCC provides a valuable instrument for helping guide NATO force goals, resource guidance, and country plans. Nor is it too large and encompassing as a tool for broad-scale program and budget management. Comparable Pentagon tools, such as the FYDP and Service POMs, are bigger and include even more measures. But because it is so big and wide-ranging, the PCC is not a good tool for focusing on key forces and top strategic priorities and for propelling NATO transformation forward.

What is to be done? The answer is not to junk the PCC or ratchet it downward. Nor is the answer to try to bolster NATO Ministerial Guidance, which is too vague and general to guide the specifics of force development. Nor are better NATO Force Goals the answer because they result in a dissipated appraisal of NATO individual members in ways that often see only parts of the whole, not the whole itself. All of these long-standing instruments of NATO military planning help provide a comprehensive overview of many endeavors by a huge alliance, but they do not provide an intense focus on new force-building efforts or transformation. Indeed, their main effect is to encourage a business-as-usual emphasis on incremental change, not bold leaps into the future.

To solve this problem, NATO should follow the Pentagon's example by writing its own Defense Transformation Roadmap supplemented by a Transformation Reinvestment Commitment. Confronted by ponderous FYDP's and POMs, senior Pentagon leaders instructed each Service to write a focused roadmap spelling out how they propose to pursue transformation and to set their priorities accordingly. The resulting roadmaps helped focus attention on the meaning, essence, and prospects for U.S. military transformation. In particular, they helped highlight not only where the Services are succeeding, but also where they can do more to pursue transformation jointly and where troubles are likely to be encountered. As a result, U.S. defense transformation now has a better sense of direction and purpose, and senior leaders are better-equipped to guide it.

A NATO transformation roadmap can help perform the same function for the Alliance. As the U.S. experience shows, the process of preparing such a roadmap will encourage NATO and the Europeans to review, revise, and integrate their defense plans and programs. Such a roadmap should provide meaningful guidance, not vague abstractions. It should identify key strategy goals and operational concepts for guiding transformation. It should focus on outputs: the forces and capabilities of old and new members that will be needed to perform each major strategic mission. It should show how NATO members can act individually and collectively to field the necessary forces and capabilities. It should portray budget requirements and force development priorities. It should identify the types of transformation initiatives that are needed, including new weapons and technologies, new doctrines, and new structures. It should encourage innovation and experimentation. Without pretending to design a fixed blueprint, it should establish an evolving transformation strategy for the near-term, mid-term, and long-term. A mid-term

## **NATO should write its own Defense Transformation Roadmap supplemented by a Transformation Reinvestment Commitment**

focus is particularly important because it provides a connecting bridge between the tangible near-term and the foggy long-term.

Above all, a NATO transformation roadmap should establish clear strategic goals and priorities. Today, NATO's urgent task is not border defense and peacekeeping in absence of anything else, but instead, as MC 317/1 says, becoming better-prepared to conduct joint expeditionary warfare. An expeditionary war involves a deployment for a specific purpose to a distant place outside Europe. It requires NATO forces that can deploy swiftly, operate jointly, and strike lethally. Because NATO lacks such assets, its transformation roadmap should focus on fielding the NRF as quickly as possible. The transformation roadmap should specify the NRF assets that must be acquired, a NATO program for acquiring them, the coordinated roles to be played by country plans, and tasks for common NATO investments and the integrated command.

Once such an NRF program is established, a NATO transformation roadmap can address how to improve and transform other high-priority forces. Because NATO HRF forces will provide the NRF's assets and otherwise be important for power projection, they should be treated not as static legacy assets, but as candidates for transformation in the mid-term. Gradually modernizing the HRF forces with new weapons and doctrines is necessary, but new organizational structures also should be examined. This especially is the case for ground forces. In the Information Age, ponderous divisions and corps with massive logistic support tails need to give way to smaller, agile, and modular formations with lighter support. The U.S. military needs to change in this area, and so do European forces. Simply stated, expeditionary wars will not need the big sustainment assets needed for the Cold War. Recognition of this new-era reality can help pave the way toward high-leverage innovations at affordable cost.

Likewise, the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq show that U.S. and European militaries will need improved assets for post-war occupation, stabilization, and reconstruction. European forces are a natural for these important missions, but not to the exclusion of remaining well-prepared for combat. Some observers mistakenly judge that continental European forces should focus on peacekeeping missions while relying upon high-tech U.S. and British forces to do the war fighting. This prescription is wrong because it underestimates what European forces can achieve and would perpetuate an unhealthy division of labor. During the Cold War, many European militaries were highly proficient at combat operations. They can be made fully capable of modern-era combat if they merely acquire new assets and doctrines in achievable ways. Similar to the U.S. military, European militaries can be capable of both winning wars and winning the peace afterward. While pursuing sensible role specialization, a transformation roadmap should point European forces in this twin-hat direction.

A NATO transformation roadmap should pay attention to other military forces and capabilities for old and new members, including counterterrorism, missile defense, and establishing a network of

bases, facilities, and schools for helping the new ATC perform its job. But once this goal is accomplished, a transformation roadmap should set stiff priorities by showing how NATO members can economize to extract greater strategic mileage from their defense budgets. Accordingly, it should call for major reductions in European border defense forces that no longer have critical roles in NATO defense strategy or other important national missions. Today, only 10–20% of European ground forces can deploy outside their borders. A transformation roadmap could endorse reductions of 30–40% in existing European force structures, while shifting toward deployable forces. This step would reduce Europe's forces to about 1.6 million military personnel, 35 divisions, 2100 tactical combat aircraft, and 200 naval combatants. Ample forces would remain for performing NATO missions and national missions.

The advantage of such a steep reduction is that it could free large funds—\$20 billion or more annually—for investments. As a result, European spending on research, development, and procurement could increase by 50%, thereby propelling transformation forward at a significantly faster pace. The Europeans would have more funds for spending not only on the NRF and other combat forces, but also on homeland security and missile defense, both of which are

important priorities. Such an intensified transformation will be possible, however, only if the funds freed from force reductions are retained in national defense budgets. A NATO transformation roadmap should endorse this budgetary strategy as the sine qua non for Alliance health. Its goal should be to convince European governments

and parliaments to embrace the prospect of bolstering NATO military preparedness without driving defense budgets through the ceiling, rather than trying to capitalize on a new peace dividend that would not bring peace at all. At the Istanbul summit, NATO leaders could issue a pledge to reinvest for transformation. "Transformation Reinvestment Commitment" would be a logical partner to the "Prague Capability Commitment" provided both are focused on transformation, the NRF, and other top force priorities.

### Designing a New U.S. Military Presence in Europe

With the United States now poised to begin altering its military presence in Europe as part of a global reshuffle, the act of ensuring that a sensible presence emerges is a final priority for NATO defense transformation agenda. For the United States, the goal should not be to punish long-standing allies for their opposition to the Iraq war, but instead to craft a new European presence that supports both U.S. defense strategy and NATO strategic priorities. This goal can be accomplished, but only if care is taken along the way. The United States needs to act wisely after consulting with NATO and its members, and European countries will need to have a proper understanding of the reasons why they should support changes that are forthcoming. The core reason for change is that while the status quo is a

## **a transformation roadmap could endorse reductions of 30–40% in existing European force structures, while shifting toward deployable forces**



recipe for stagnation, a newly designed U.S. presence can be a vehicle for leading NATO toward an era of relevance and performance.

Today's officially declared U.S. military presence in Europe is about 110,000 troops. This number, however, is not always what it seems. It does not include troops on peacekeeping duty in the Balkans or the 10,000–20,000 sailors and marines aboard the CVBGs and ARGs that regularly patrol the Mediterranean. Today's typical presence thus is about 130,000 troops: somewhat higher than the roughly 100,000 troops deployed in Asia. In addition, the U.S. military commitment to NATO and Europe is measured not only by peacetime presence, but also by other forces that would deploy to Europe in a war. In the Kosovo War, for example, large U.S. air and naval forces converged on the scene. Counting forces in both categories—peacetime presence and wartime reinforcement—the total U.S. military commitment to NATO and Europe is about 350,000 troops. This total commitment seems unlikely to change appreciably so long as a legitimate NATO requirement exists for it. What is mutating today is not this total commitment, but merely the portion permanently stationed in Europe.

Designing an effective future U.S. presence in Europe begins with remembering why the current presence was chosen a decade ago. When the Clinton Administration took power in early 1993, it inherited a presence of 150,000 troops—well down from the Cold War posture of 330,000 troops. The Administration decided to reduce this presence to 100,000 troops. Of this number, fully two-thirds were stationed in Germany at old Cold War bases, and the remaining troops were mainly based in Britain and Italy. The reason for retaining 100,000 troops in Europe was not because this figure had special meaning, but because this number was needed to field the forces deemed necessary for political and military reasons.

A posture of this size enabled the United States to deploy a balanced, multi-mission force of sizable headquarters staffs, four heavy Army brigades stationed in Germany, two or three USAF fighter wings, and Navy bases in the Mediterranean supporting 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet operations. These forces enabled the U.S. military to maintain its influence in NATO, to preserve a hedge against reappearance of threats to alliance borders, to prepare for new mobile missions as mandated by NATO then-existing strategic concepts, and to conduct training and exercises with allied forces. Since then, the U.S. force presence has been altered in minor ways, such as deployment of a light Army brigade and more prepositioned equipment in Italy. But for the most part, the U.S. presence has stayed remarkably constant, even though NATO, Europe, and the entire world have changed a great deal. Recognizing the need for fresh thinking, DOD's Quadrennial Defense Review of 2001 called for a new approach to global overseas presence in Europe and elsewhere. But apart from suggesting redeployment of some ships to the Persian Gulf and elsewhere, it left the details of the future European presence to further studies. Such studies are now underway.

Today, new strategic priorities are altering the calculations taking place in the U.S. government. Because threats to Europe's borders no longer exist and the U.S. military has become better at power projection from the United States, there is no longer a need to station large ground combat forces in Germany, which is now one of Europe's safest regions. Many of these forces could be put to better use elsewhere in ways that will benefit not only the United States and Europe, but Germany as well. New strategic requirements for U.S. forces and missions elsewhere in Europe, however, are emerging. A vital new mission will be to ensure that U.S. forces in Europe can work closely with the NRF in peace, crisis, and war. Likewise, U.S. forces in Europe must remain capable not only of fulfilling their other defense commitments to NATO, but also of deploying off the continent swiftly to carry out operations of their own. The same applies to U.S. bases and facilities in Europe, which should provide hubs for power projection. Another mission will be to signal continued U.S. engagement and leadership of NATO to old and new members in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the northern and southern regions. Guarding the Mediterranean and its sea lanes against new threats will remain critical. Yet another mission will be to maintain interoperability between U.S. and European militaries. A final mission will be to help keep U.S. and NATO defense transformation on parallel tracks.

### **American missions for NATO suggest that the United States should not reduce its presence too far**

All of these missions should be taken into account in designing the future U.S. military presence in Europe. American missions for NATO suggest that while this presence can be smaller than now, the United States should take care not to reduce its presence too far. The future presence should be neither tiny nor purely symbolic. It will depend in part on the size of U.S. force deployments in the Gulf region. The U.S. forces that remain should disperse outward from current bases in Germany to occupy positions in Eastern Europe and along the southern region: locations where new-era requirements are growing to perform both multinational integration and power projection missions. The United States will no longer require four Army brigades in Germany, but it likely will need two clusters of ground forces in Europe. One cluster should be composed of heavy forces in Northern Europe for promoting NATO interoperability and transformation. The other cluster should be composed of light forces in Italy and elsewhere in southern Europe for swift power projection to the Middle East and other regions. The same calculus applies to designing U.S. air forces in Europe: current bases in Germany (e.g., at Ramstein), Britain, Italy, and elsewhere will remain valuable. As for U.S. naval forces, existing bases and facilities will still be needed to support the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet, but its Mediterranean deployments may be smaller than during the past, and in any event, likely will vary as a function of changing conditions.

What do these imperatives mean when they are added up? Future manpower levels will need to be determined on the basis of analysis, but the more important consideration is the type of U.S. forces deployed, their locations, and their missions. Manpower levels should stem from these considerations, not the other way around.

Indeed, the manpower level may be a variable, not a constant. The future U.S. presence will rely more heavily than now on forward operating locations and prepositioned equipment rather than fixed bases occupied by stationed forces. During times of training and exercises, U.S.-based forces will temporarily deploy to Europe, thereby elevating manpower well-above normal levels. After they leave, troop strength will recede until the next deployment cycle. Regardless of their manpower levels, the forces that remain in Europe, or are newly deployed there, should be designed to support U.S. interests and to help enhance NATO strategic effectiveness. Provided this is the case, the new U.S. presence may be smaller and significantly altered, but it can be a powerful instrument for pursuing a bright future for the Alliance.

## The Second Track: Pursuing Political Transformation for Strategic Realignment

For all its importance, a vigorous NATO defense transformation agenda will lack a compelling strategic purpose and will not be fully effective unless it is accompanied by the second part of a dual-track strategy: NATO political transformation for strategic realignment. Whereas the Afghanistan war demonstrated NATO need for defense transformation, the war in Iraq highlighted NATO's need for strategic realignment by exposing fault-lines that can cripple the alliance's ability to act in politically unified ways outside Europe. Defense transformation is unlikely to succeed unless political transformation also occurs, and vice-versa. These two enterprises thus go hand in hand.

What does "strategic realignment" mean? Basically, it means a process of change by which the Alliance enhances its political-military capacity to project power and purpose southward into the Middle East and adjoining areas. As stated earlier, strategic realignment can best be pursued through the following four-fold agenda that, along with defense transformation, will produce a more unified and effective Atlantic Alliance:

- Creating a common vision of threat perceptions, goals, strategy, and standards for using military force
- Reforming NATO decisionmaking to create greater flexibility and responsiveness for handling security issues outside Europe
- Organizing NATO forces for stabilization and reconstruction operations
- Creating a new Partnership for Cooperation in the Greater Middle East.

These four measures should be seen not only on their individual merits, but also in terms of their combined impact. The first two measures aim at strengthening NATO political capacity to forge united and effective policies for the Middle East and other regions. In the aftermath of the Iraq debate, opportunities have opened for the United States and Britain to work closely with Spain, Italy, Poland, and other new members. Whether the "Quad" can be recreated is to be seen, but NATO clearly cannot function effectively if the United States and Britain are always at loggerheads with Germany and France in ways leaving other members torn between them. The first measure of creating a common vision aims at bringing these four

leaders closer together so that NATO will be better able to act as a unified alliance. Conversely, the second measure of reforming NATO decisionmaking aims to provide the Atlantic Alliance with the flexibility to act when lack of unanimous consensus threatens the capacity of mission-responsible countries to defend common interests.

Whereas these two measures address NATO internal politics, the last two measures seek to enhance NATO performance for situations other than war-fighting. Obviously NATO needs the ability to fight wars at long distances. The defense transformation measures discussed earlier will provide the requisite capabilities and are a part of strategic realignment. Yet NATO will be a limited alliance if it can only fight wars but do little else. It also needs a better capacity to address post-war situations and to become active in the Middle East in peacetime. The third measure aims to provide NATO with a stronger role in post-war situations, such as the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq. The fourth measure creates a peacetime outreach program, similar to NATO Partnership for Peace (PFP) in Eastern Europe that would pursue improved ties to friendly Middle East militaries. Together, these four measures are intended to strengthen NATO cohesion and performance in mutually reinforcing ways. If they are all adopted, along with a robust set of military measures, they will produce a new Atlantic Alliance that is strategically realigned in the best sense of that term.

### the war in Iraq highlighted NATO's need for strategic realignment

## Writing a New Harmel Report to Help Establish a Common Strategic Vision.

The damaging confrontation over Iraq makes the importance of this measure crystal clear. The Atlantic Alliance badly needs to forge a common strategic vision that will narrow the cavernous gap between the United States and key European countries—especially Germany and France—on the issues surrounding the use of strategic power outside Europe. Otherwise, similar confrontations may erupt in the future, and the next one could destroy NATO, not merely damage it. The term "common strategic vision" does not mean that the United States and Europe must agree on everything. But it does mean that they must agree on the strategic basics, possess a shared framework for cooperative action, and respect each other in areas where disagreements still exist.

Some observers judge that now is not the time to debate these issues. Their understandable reason is fear that a high-profile debate will do more harm than good by widening the gap in visions rather than narrowing it. They argue that since an eerie calm has settled over NATO in the aftermath of Iraq, the prudent choice is to let wounds heal. Today's calm in Brussels, however, is illusory. The bitter divide on strategic policy is not caused by differences at NATO Headquarters, where most people think alike and want to keep NATO alive. Instead, the divide is caused by sharply differing views in national capitals, the media, and public opinion. Ignoring the divide will not close it. It will reappear with the next crisis. The only way to lessen it is to grapple with the core issues in ways that produce a better transatlantic understanding.

The bitter flare-up over Iraq occurred because a gap-closing dialogue had not taken place earlier. Such a dialogue was attempted in 1999 when the new NATO strategic concept was adopted at the Washington Summit, but this compromise document largely papered over unresolved differences that lay hidden for the next three years and surfaced at the United Nations. The terrorism of Sept. 11, 2001, exacerbated the problem by deeply alarming the United States while leaving Europe less worried. Because the current interlude between crises may be temporary, it may be a last opportunity to resolve these issues before they can no longer be addressed in a civil manner. The gap between Americans and Europeans is not so great that it cannot be closed or at least appreciably narrowed. The United States grasps that the use of military force in the Middle East and elsewhere must be tempered by mature political judgment and respect for international law. The Bush Administration has made clear that it anticipates no additional wars in the Middle East, that it will use diplomacy to address remaining problems, and that military force will be a last resort. Most European governments grasp that sometimes military power must be used against dangerous threats arising from these regions. The interim EU report by Javier Solana on "A Secure Europe for a Better World" provides a good basis for a sensible dialogue. Many European foreign ministers acknowledge that on occasions of imminent threat, preventive war sometimes is necessary. The grounds for a meeting of minds exist by forging a sensible blend of these positions.

Confidence in success also comes from history. This is not the first time NATO has been divided. Indeed, stiff debates arose during the Cold War. An especially bitter debate erupted in the early 1960s when the United States wanted to shift NATO defense strategy from massive retaliation to flexible response, and the Europeans resisted out of fear this step would weaken deterrence. The debate resulted in Germany threatening to develop nuclear weapons and France leaving the integrated command. But it was finally resolved when Americans and Europeans rolled up their sleeves, began talking calmly, and showed the patience to analyze the complex issues carefully. They eventually agreed upon a new strategy of flexible response that bolstered conventional forces but preserved the option to climb the ladder of nuclear escalation if the initial defense failed. The common strategy adopted by them proved to be highly successful. It laid the foundation for NATO growing defense strength that helped win the Cold War. A successful outcome of this sort is possible again if the Alliance merely recalls its own history and its mechanisms for consensus-formation.

Exactly what is to be done? How can the Alliance transform the bruised feelings and deep suspicions over Iraq into a constructive dialogue that results in a meeting of minds? The answer is not for NATO to engage in an official study, for this step could result in many governments digging deeper into entrenched positions. A better idea is to prepare a new Harmel Report akin to the original report written

in 1967. Such a report would be written by a team of independent European and American thinkers. They would have the freedom to examine the issues outside the glare of publicity and pressures from their governments. When their judgments and recommendations were finalized, NATO would be free to accept, reject, or modify them. The good features of their analysis could be adopted as official policy to help harmonize American and European perspectives.

The Harmel Report was named after Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, who proposed the idea. It sought to blend detente with deterrence and defense in ways that maintained NATO solidarity. It was commissioned in early 1967 and written over a period of six months. Although it was conducted under the auspices of NATO Secretary General, its four sub-groups were led by senior rapporteurs from outside NATO, who spoke for themselves and did not take official instructions from their governments. When their final report was issued, it was reviewed by NATO headquarters and national capitals.

Many of its arguments were adopted by NATO ministers in December 1967, and the entire document was issued as an annex to

## **the EU Solana report could become a launch pad for a new Harmel Report**

their communiqué. As the logic of the Harmel Report became established throughout NATO in the following months, the effect was to help provide the Alliance with stronger footing for handling a troubled future.

Today, a new Harmel Report could be drafted using a similar procedure. Its goal should not be a bland compromise that submerges differences, but an intelligent blend of American and European views that resolves these differences and produces coherent strategic concepts acceptable to both sides of the Atlantic. The EU Solana report takes future threats seriously and calls upon the EU to play an assertive role in global security affairs in partnership with the United States. Although Solana's study does not put forth an agenda for NATO, it could become a launch pad for a group of European and American wise-men to create a new Harmel Report.

What issues should the new Harmel Report address? First, it should focus on establishing a common definition of future threats. Whereas today the United States is deeply worried about threats posed by terrorists, tyrants, and WMD proliferation, Europe has less fear of them. If a shared understanding of threats can be forged, the United States and Europe will have a stronger basis for acting jointly and be better able to elicit support from parliaments and publics. However, it must offer more than an intelligence estimate. It must also provide a coherent sense of common goals, strategies, and actions not only for combating these threats but also for eradicating the conditions that generate them. Thus, it must address how the United States and Europe should work together to promote democracy and markets across the Middle East and elsewhere.

Likewise, a new Harmel Report should forge a common understanding of the strategic roles that the United States and Europe are to play in carrying burdens and accepting responsibility in the coming years. It should aim for a relationship in which both sides work together in exercising soft and hard power, rather than rely upon a dysfunctional division of labor in which Europe provides the soft power and the United States the hard power. Finally, it must help forge a shared understanding of standards for employing military

force against threats. Many Europeans cling to the Westphalian concept that military power should be employed only after aggression has occurred. By contrast, the United States has adopted a new doctrine of preventive war when threats are “grave, gathering, and imminent.” NATO cannot survive in the face of a militant America and a pacifist Europe. A similar mindset on this critical issue is vital if NATO is to remain united in the coming years. If this difficult issue is discussed sensibly, an alliance-wide standard for going to war can be found.

A new Harmel Report need not result in a NATO strategy that either hamstring the United States or compels Europeans to blindly support decisions from Washington. Instead, it can help ensure that the United States and Europe work closely more often to strike a wise synthesis of restraint and the muscular use of power. Before and after a new Harmel Report is written, both sides of the Atlantic can take other steps to encourage a respectful dialogue. The United States can do a better job of consulting with European governments. It also can mount a public relations campaign to explain its foreign policy to Europeans, including its many still-important contributions in Europe. Meanwhile, Germany and France can rediscover the importance of acting as counterparts of the United States and Britain, not counterweights. Other European governments can do a better job of explaining the benefits of cooperating with the United States to their publics in ways that counter the simplistic, erroneous messages often conveyed in their media. Such steps would help cool the temperature of what has become a fevered relationship, thereby allowing calm heads to prevail.

### Reforming NATO Decisionmaking

Even with a common strategic vision, making decisions to project NATO power into distant areas does not promise to be easy. During the Cold War, NATO possessed consensus behind defense plans for responding quickly to aggression against its borders. In the current era, swift responses may also be needed against threats that emerge outside NATO borders, and even normal peacetime activities often will not permit extended delays. Difficulties will especially arise when gray-area situations create legitimate debates over how best to respond. Such situations typically take place under Article 4, when the use of NATO power is discretionary, rather than under Article 5, when alliance borders are threatened and using military power is virtually mandatory. In such situations, NATO must be able to perform two key functions: to debate options thoroughly and then to act decisively. NATO today is good at the former, but not the latter.

Most democracies value both debate and action. This is why they make most policy decisions by majority rule, not unanimous votes, which are a prescription for paralysis because dissent is inevitable. NATO, however, is not a normal democracy in this regard. Today's problem is that France and Germany oppose key features of how the United States and Britain are acting in Iraq. But a big underlying problem will remain, even if these four countries patch up their current differences. The problem is that NATO is a big alliance with a proclivity to act only when its members unanimously agree on the action. Because NATO already has 19 members and will soon have 26, unanimity could become a scarce commodity in the years ahead.

True, a single, stubborn country will normally be hard-pressed to use its veto power to block NATO action. But as the debate over defending Turkey in the weeks before invasion of Iraq showed, a small group of dissenting countries can cause serious problems. While the Turkey problem was ultimately solved, in the future such a group could prevail in damaging ways by stubbornly standing its ground. The risk is that NATO will be plunged into paralysis when assertive activity and regular gear-shifting are needed. When unanimity does not exist, NATO could be prevented from responding in crises and wars. Equally bad, mission-responsible countries—those willing to accept responsibility for performing demanding missions outside Europe—will lack the peacetime authority to work with the integrated command to prepare the forces and plans that must be

invoked in crises. If advance preparations are not made, quick and decisive NATO action at the moment of truth may be impossible even if members unanimously agree to act. This risk is not hypothetical and futuristic: it already exists in spades

because the integrated command cannot prepare full-scale plans and programs unless the NAC unanimously authorizes it to do so in each case.

NATO possesses finessing mechanisms that can help circumvent the unanimity rule on occasion, but all of them are thin reeds to rely upon in today's world. One finessing mechanism is the “silence procedure” whereby a member who disagrees with a widespread consensus chooses to abstain from voting, thereby allowing the consensus to carry the day. Another mechanism is to shift decisionmaking from the NAC to the Defense Planning Committee (DPC). This allows NATO to make decisions without France, which belongs to the NAC but not the DPC. A third mechanism is for the Secretary General to claim to speak for a unanimous consensus without taking a formal vote. This mechanism was employed in the Kosovo war and helped enable NATO to conduct military operations even though some members had misgivings. A fourth mechanism is that SACEUR and other commanders can prepare informal defense plans.

The problem with these finessing mechanisms is that they only work sometimes and can easily be overturned by a small number of members intent on having their way. Such members can refuse to stay silent, can insist the NAC be used, can deny the Secretary General the authority to speak for NATO, and can block NATO military commanders from planning informally.

Today's situation requires decision processes that are more flexible and responsive. NATO can gauge how to create them by recalling its history. The use of unanimous voting is a recent practice. It began in the early 1990s, when France was objecting to emerging NATO policies in the Balkans, and the Alliance wanted France and others on board for this new out-of-area operation. During the Cold War, NATO employed unanimity when making major decisions about core strategic concepts or such controversial nuclear matters as deployment of Pershing II and GLCM missiles. But in conventional defense planning, NATO acted differently. It

## **NATO unanimity could become a scarce commodity in the years ahead**

wisely delegated considerable authority to those countries that were mainly responsible for key missions in different areas. For example, it permitted the nine countries responsible for defending FRG borders to carry out their important business without interference from other members. The same practice applied in the north Atlantic, northern Europe, and southern Europe, where defense plans and forces were built by even smaller coalitions of responsible contributors. The bottom line is that NATO has shown flexibility in the past, and there is nothing in the Washington Treaty that mandates unanimous voting practices.

What can be done to create more flexibility in ways that avoid paralysis yet preserve healthy debate and widespread consensus-formation? The guiding principle should be to craft new decision procedures whereby members who regularly accept responsibility for new-era missions are granted reasonable discretionary authority to act in proper ways yet are still subjected to scrutiny by the rest of the alliance to ensure that they are acting wisely. An initial step toward this model can be taken by allowing the Secretary General to authorize the integrated command in peacetime to prepare contingency plans for potential contingencies. The Secretary General could take this step in response to requests from a threatened member, from SACEUR, or from members that could be called upon to perform NATO missions outside Europe. These planning activities would be supervised by the Secretary General and the Military Committee. Provided they are consistent with NATO strategic concepts and Ministerial Guidance, they could not be vetoed by the NAC and DPC. Likewise, NATO military leaders would be authorized to prepare the necessary forces under the Secretary General's guidance by using the standard force-building process in consultation with participating members. These steps would have the advantage of enabling NATO to prepare for future responses, thereby helping ensure that the Alliance has the necessary wherewithal when the need arises.

Along with this practice, a bigger step would be to depart from the unanimity principle at the NAC for making decisions in crises. While alternatives need to be studied, a sensible model for NATO might be a variation on decisionmaking by the U.N. Security Council. UNSC gives veto power only to its five permanent members. When these five members agree, it seeks only majority support from the Council as a whole, which has ten non-permanent members. The Council does not have a reputation for impulsive conduct, but unlike NATO, it can act despite limited internal dissent, and it has done so in the past. If NATO adopts such a model, it should not create "permanent members" who always have veto power. Instead, it should grant veto power only to those members who regularly commit substantial resources and efforts to each key mission. When these countries agree to act in their area of responsibility—for example, by using the NRF—voting by the rest of the NAC would be conducted by majority rule or a two-thirds rule. Normally, this practice would mean that a solid NAC majority of 15–20 members must vote in favor of an action. Such a practice would ensure review by the NAC, yet allow for action even if a few countries disagree.

Perhaps this U.N.-like model could be applied to the NRF and, if it proved its worth, be expanded to other NATO forces and bigger operations. This model does not imply creation of a single coalition of members for carrying out all actions. Most likely, it would result in multiple coalitions or "committees of contributors", each of which would handle a different mission or region.<sup>1</sup> These coalitions would vary in composition, size, and orientation. A coalition handling North Africa might differ from one handling the Persian Gulf. Often, the United States and Britain would lead these coalitions, but not always. Regardless, all NATO members would be welcome to belong to the coalitions of their choice. But to join as a full-fledged member, a country would be required to commit significant resources and to prove its mettle as a worthy, reliable partner. Its influence within the coalition would be a function of its resource commitments and its willingness to accept responsibility for missions.

This model is not a prescription for liberating the United States and Britain from the shackles of Germany and France, who still could recruit supporters when they dissent. Moreover, if these or other countries want veto authority, they merely must establish demonstrated track-records of accepting responsibility in the mission-areas of their choice. Germany, France, and other countries thus would be free to participate in missions of importance to them and would wield substantial influence over how these missions are handled. Indeed, they may find themselves leading some NATO missions and thereby value their enhanced discretionary authority.

Would the United States lose its veto power? The answer is that if it wants veto power, it merely needs to be a leading contributor to missions of its choice. In most cases of NATO power projection, the United States will be such a contributor. What about the matter of identifying who should possess veto power within each coalition? To prevent countries from making small contributions to gain veto power with disruptive purposes in mind, a standard should be established whereby veto power is granted only to those members who make significant contributions and establish consistent track records for responsible conduct. Such standards were applied in the Cold War. When France withdrew from the integrated command, it lost its right to major influence over NATO forward defense plans even though it still made forces conditionally available for rear-area roles. By contrast, the FRG and other members maintained their influence at high levels because they never flagged in their forward defense duties.

The following chart summarizes how these changes would produce a new style of NATO decisionmaking. Yes, this process would be more complex than the current practice of unanimity across the board. NATO still would require unanimity for such encompassing decisions as its strategic concept, core goals, strategy inside and outside Europe, decisions to admit new members, and generic standards for using military force. But it would have greater flexibility to

### **NATO might consider a variation on decisionmaking by the UNSC, which can act despite limited internal dissent**

## Changes to NATO Decisionmaking

NATO Decisions	Cold War	Today	Proposed
<i>Contingency Planning</i>	Continuous	NAC-Directed	SACEUR-Authorized with Oversight by NATO Secretary General
<i>Force Preparations</i>	Ongoing	NAC-Directed	NATO Secretary General-Authorized Through Consultations with Members
<i>Crisis Response</i>	When Attacked	NAC-Directed	U.N. Security Council Model
<i>Overall Process</i>	<b>Automatic</b>	<b>Road-Blocked</b>	<b>Flexible and Responsive</b>

prepare contingency plans and engage in necessary pre-crisis force preparations. When crises erupt, it would make decisions in a manner similar to the U.N. Security Council, and thus would have greater flexibility in handling them. It no longer would face the type of paralysis that threatens its relevance and effectiveness.

### Involving NATO in Post-War Stabilization and Reconstruction.

Creating a common strategic vision and adopting flexible decisionmaking processes will strengthen the Atlantic Alliance for the years ahead. But concrete steps are also needed to broaden NATO activities in the Middle East and elsewhere for the near-term. What can be done? Decisions in this arena should be guided by the principle that NATO must become an alliance that has a full spectrum of capabilities.

When the time is right, NATO clearly should become involved in the post-war task of stabilizing and reconstructing Iraq. Performing this task seemingly will require a sizable military presence for a considerable time. Today, the United States is contributing most of the forces for this duty, yet it will face strong pressures to trim its presence in the months ahead. Britain, Poland, and other NATO countries are already present in significant numbers, but larger European forces will be needed. If the NATO integrated command is called upon to help, it could provide the leadership architecture needed to guide multinational forces.

In addition, NATO should broaden its thinking beyond Iraq. Crises and wars that mandate NATO participation may occur elsewhere. As a result, NATO should develop a better organized standing capacity to perform stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) missions. They involve such activities as securing still-troubled zones, establishing police forces and the rule of law, restoring public services in electrical power, water and sewage, repairing damaged bridges and roads, cleaning up war destruction, and building democratic governments. These diverse functions require specialized military and civilian assets such as military police, construction engineers, medical personnel, and civil administrators. European militaries and governments possess such assets. New NATO members could make major contributions. But these assets need to be organized so that they are ready when needed. NATO can work with members to prepare for such missions by either the integrated command or ad-hoc coalitions.

Some Americans blanch at the idea of NATO becoming regularly involved in S&R missions. They fear a loss of U.S. influence and bungled operations. In this arena, however, NATO already has proven its mettle in the Balkans and is now taking over the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. In Iraq, much will depend upon whether participating NATO members agree upon the strategic goals for reconstruction. In other cases, a common vision will be equally necessary. Provided consensus exists on strategic goals, NATO can be an effective instrument for this important mission.

### Creating a Partnership for Cooperation in the Greater Middle East.

NATO could helpfully involve itself in peacetime affairs of the Middle East by creating a Partnership for Cooperation (PFC) that would seek to establish constructive relations between NATO and friendly militaries there. NATO already has a "Mediterranean Dialogue" with some North African countries, but it is mostly confined to diplomatic exchanges and does not cover the entire Middle East and Persian Gulf. A PFC might be part of the existing Partnership for Peace (PPF) in Eastern Europe and surrounding areas. Alternatively, it might be an entirely separate creation, with a mission and administrative staff of its own. The tradeoffs between these two models need to be examined. Expanding upon the PFP would be the simplest, easiest, and least-costly alternative. Yet dealing with the Middle East will be quite different from dealing with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This argues for a separate effort.

Regardless of the option chosen, a PFC would not be intended to prepare Middle East countries for admission into NATO. Instead, it would aspire to build ties with Middle Eastern militaries in peacebuilding efforts that strengthen their roles in the war on terrorism, encourage their democratization, familiarize them with the United States and Europe, and enhance their efficiency for self-defense missions. A PFC might provide collaboration in such areas as law enforcement, disrupting terrorist cells, budgeting and programming, peacekeeping, search and rescue, disaster relief, and border control. Such a PFC must be focused on enhancing regional stability, not fostering military competition. The PFC must not endanger the security of any country, including Israel. It could begin small, with such already-friendly countries as Egypt, Jordan, and Gulf Cooperative Council States. Afterward, it could gradually expand to include a widening set of other countries.

## **NATO should develop a better organized standing capacity to perform stabilization and reconstruction missions**

A PFC would be intended to initiate a process of growing dialogue and cooperation between NATO and Middle Eastern Countries. This PFC would not be a one-size-fits-all creation. Instead, each participating country would be able to craft a PFC program suited to its tastes, in consultation with NATO members willing to work closely with it. Thus, PFC programs might differ appreciably. The NATO PFP in Eastern Europe pursued flexible arrangements from the onset, which helps account for its considerable success over the past decade. East European countries were able to approach NATO at a scope and pace of their own choosing. The same philosophy would apply to a PFC for the Middle East.

A PFC would be a historic departure for NATO. It would give NATO a valuable new mission and would involve NATO in the visionary task of bringing peace, security, and democracy to a big region that, even after the victory in Iraq, promises to be troubled for years to come. It could begin by taking stock of comparable efforts already being pursued by NATO members that act unilaterally in various Middle Eastern countries. It could ascertain how efforts by additional countries could be added to forge a multinational NATO program with each PFC member. Each PFC member thus would benefit from help provided by a team of NATO countries.

How effective can a PFC be? Especially in its initial stages, it likely will be considerably less effective than was the PFP in Eastern Europe. At the time PFP appeared, East European countries had recently been liberated from communism and the Soviet Union. They were struggling to adopt democracy and market economies. They wanted to join NATO to gain security and the EU to become prosperous. Their militaries wanted collaboration with NATO militaries to adopt new doctrines, weapons, and practices that clearly were better than those of the Warsaw Pact. For all these reasons, their governments wanted to belong to the Western Club, and their publics mostly agreed with them. As a result, many rushed to embrace PFP because it was a vehicle for pursuing these larger goals, not because of specific measures.

Middle Eastern conditions today are vastly different. The Israel-Palestinian conflict could inhibit many Arab governments. Most Arab states are ruled by monarchies or traditional regimes that are chary of democratic reforms, even though they recognize the advantages of market economies. Still animated by nationalism, many governments are also suspicious of western countries, fearing American domination or renewed European imperialism. Islamic societies vary in their fundamentalism, but few hold much love for western culture, which is seen as too secular and materialist. Their militaries likely will see significant technical attractions in a PFC that allows them to strengthen their capabilities in useful areas. But they will not want NATO to control their defense strategies and forces, or even to acquire full knowledge of them. These attitudes are impediments to quick success of a PFC.

Whether initial success by a PFC would produce a wholesale shift toward pro-western Arab foreign policies is another matter. NATO members might find themselves laboring in PFC vineyards for a long period while questioning the merits of the enterprise. Yet, gains might be made in such important areas as counter-terrorism and in softening the sharp edges of Islamic fundamentalism. Likewise, PFC might help nudge the Middle East toward greater stability and help plant seeds of democratization. If such gains are achieved, they could make PFC a sound investment even if they do not transform the Middle East in the ways that Eastern Europe has been transformed. As a result, NATO needs to be realistic in its expectations, yet assertive in pursuing an idea that makes sense.

## Conclusion

Is this dual-track strategy of political and military transformation for strategic realignment needed by an Atlantic Alliance in deep trouble? Yes. Will it be adopted and will it succeed? That remains to

be seen. One thing can be said. Ten years ago, a common refrain was that NATO must "Go out-of-area or go out of business". The Alliance responded by moving eastward but not southward. For the good of the United States and Europe, it now needs to move southward. The larger meaning of the war on terrorists and tyrants is

that the United States is now coming ashore in the Greater Middle East in a historic attempt to bring peace, democracy, and freer markets to that troubled region. NATO also needs to do so because the United States cannot handle this ultra-demanding task alone. If NATO fails to respond, this time it truly will go out of business.

### Note:

<sup>1</sup> The "Committee of Contributors" model is developed in Leo G. Michel, "NATO Decisionmaking: Au Revoir to the Consensus Rule?," Strategic Forum 202, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, August 2003).

## **PFC might help nudge the Middle East toward greater stability and help plant seeds of democratization**

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