



# SPECIAL REPORT

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

Beneath the celebratory rhetoric at NATO's Fiftieth Anniversary Summit lies a host of unanswered questions about the future of the Atlantic Alliance. What are the prospects for continued enlargement and by what benchmarks should the process move ahead? Is NATO being transformed into an institution for crisis management and peace support missions; under which legal mandate will they operate; and how "global" should it become? Is NATO prepared to deal with the threat of weapons of mass destruction? What roles should the European Union and the OSCE play in the future European political and security architecture? These are the critical issues that

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**The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policies.**

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*Andrew J. Pierre*

## NATO at Fifty

### New Challenges, Future Uncertainties

#### Briefly...

- NATO's Fiftieth Anniversary Summit on April 23-25, 1999, will be the largest meeting of heads of state and government ever held in Washington, with 44 countries represented.
- Despite promises of an "open door" to NATO membership and the expectation that a second tranche would be announced, none of the current nine "aspirants" are slated to be invited, nor will a date for the second round be announced.
- This "no names, no dates" approach could cause a significant loss of momentum, jeopardizing the enlargement process. Slovenia is qualified and its accession would keep NATO's promise credible. An annual review of progress toward membership made by the aspirant states should be instituted.
- Crisis management and peace support, known as non-Article 5 missions, have become one of the primary tasks of NATO and should be identified as a core function in the new Strategic Concept.
- Controversy over the need for a UN Security Council legal mandate for NATO peace operations should be resolved by a compromise based upon humanitarian law and the general principles of the UN Charter.
- There is no support for "globalizing" NATO, nor for emphasizing the Alliance's "common interests." NATO should focus on the Euro-Atlantic area and its periphery, act on a case-specific basis, and create "coalitions of the willing" as needed.
- A senior group should examine "no first use," including a return to the 1990 language about weapons of "last resort."
- NATO should welcome the recent Anglo-French initiative to give Europe an autonomous capacity in defense.
- Summit leaders will not address the *hard* issues about the long-term future. They should commission an independent report, similar to the Harmel Report of 1967, to answer the question: What should be the Pan-European political and security architecture, and the place of the Trans-Atlantic alliance, in world affairs a quarter of a century from now?

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NATO's Fiftieth Anniversary Summit in Washington, DC, on April 23-25, 1999, will be the largest meeting of heads of state and government ever held in the nation's capital, with 44 countries represented. Not only will the leaders of the Alliance's sixteen nations be joined by those of its three new members, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which were formally admitted in March, but also the leaders of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, (EAPC) which includes an additional 25 "partner" nations, will be present. Only the participation of the Russian leadership remains in doubt.

The first session will be commemorative and held, appropriately, in the Mellon Auditorium where on April 4, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed. Plans will be announced for the construction of a new headquarters building for NATO in Brussels. This is not only a necessity for the enlarging alliance but a fitting symbol of the confidence that NATO, born to respond to a Cold War threat, will have an important future in the new international environment of the twenty-first century. A "vision statement" will be signed, with public and parliamentary audiences in mind, underlining the successful transformation of NATO in the past decade and the continuing need for the Alliance in the years to come.

## The Enlargement Conundrum

The celebratory mood being sought for this major anniversary, however, will mask a number of quite divergent perspectives and fundamental issues that will remain unresolved. The most significant of these is the future enlargement of the Alliance's membership. At the last summit held in Madrid in July 1997, NATO's leaders proclaimed an "open door" policy, affirming that the Alliance "expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities of membership." The widely shared presumption was that a second tranche of new invitees would be decided upon at the 1999 summit. Before Madrid, 9 of NATO's 16 members had been prepared to include Romania and Slovenia in the first tranche, but the Clinton administration, concerned about the upcoming Senate ratification debate, insisted upon limiting the first grouping to the Visegrad Three. Having been reassured many times that the "first would not be the last," 9 aspirant countries have now indicated their interest in early membership: Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In addition, the 3 "neutrals"—Austria, Finland and Sweden—would be in extremely strong positions should they opt for inclusion in the Alliance.

Although no country is now slated to be invited to begin accession talks at the Washington summit—an unexpected consensus that has emerged in recent months—this does not mean that countries do not have their chosen candidates for inclusion in the second tranche in April. France supports Romania and Slovenia. Italy and Turkey, with some Spanish backing, wish to extend NATO to southeastern Europe and would add Bulgaria to Romania and Slovenia. Denmark, and to a lesser extent Norway, would like to see at least one of the Baltic states brought in, and the list goes on. Not surprisingly, the Mediterranean members have different priorities than the northern European ones. However, there is a palpable lack of enthusiasm for a second wave now in some of the major capitals: London, Bonn, and, most important, Washington. In addition, the difficulty of creating a "package" of several states that could obtain consensus portends that no nation will be invited to walk through the "open door" this spring. The only possible exception is Slovenia, a small state with two million people, which most agree is qualified for membership.

The argument has been made that admission to the Alliance must be "performance based," that is, aspirants must be seen as fully complying with military and political criteria. Such criteria were established with the guidelines adopted in the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement* and reaffirmed at Madrid. They include political systems that adhere

to democratic principles and are based on the rule of law; market economies and an environment favorable to foreign trade and free enterprise; civilian control of the military; willingness to resolve territorial and ethnic disputes with neighboring countries; and an ability to undertake the military requirements of NATO, including active participation in the Partnership for Peace. An unstated but implicit consideration is geographic location, particularly proximity to Russia, a factor that would weigh heavily in the consideration of the Baltic states or Ukraine.

Meeting such performance-based criteria is a judgement call with an array of pros and cons relevant to prospective members (See back cover). Many of the aspirants will need additional time to qualify. Some argue that first requirement is a period of consolidation, allowing for the full integration of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into the command and force structure of the Alliance. Political considerations, however, are of still greater importance than those involving performance-based estimations. The first tranche was in every respect the easier one. The Western nations felt a deep sense of moral obligation to Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, which was skillfully played upon by both Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa. Germany's national interest in bringing its eastern neighbor into the Alliance also was a significant factor. The NATO alliance needed to prove that it could metamorphose into an institution relevant to post-Cold War Europe. Furthermore, President Clinton saw NATO's enlargement as a key part of his foreign policy legacy. All these factors contributed to the momentum that helped push the first tranche through the door relatively easily, in spite of the many doubts in Europe and the United States about the wisdom of the policy.

These doubts have now become second thoughts, which while they may not block further expansion in the long run are contributing to a pronounced sense of hesitation about a significant second tranche at this time.

The principal concerns are as follows:

- Expanding the Alliance would dilute its cohesion and reduce its ability to take decisive action. A NATO of 25 countries would be far more difficult to manage institutionally than an Alliance of 19. This becomes even more relevant as NATO is called upon to undertake non-Article 5 peace support missions outside its members' territory. At the same time, it is important to maintain the cohesion of the Alliance if it is to retain its traditional collective defense capacity.
- The closer NATO moves toward Russia's borders, the more difficult it is for Russia to accept. A period of great political uncertainty and turmoil in Russia, such as is currently the case, is not a propitious moment to undertake actions that Moscow sees, rightly or wrongly, as antithetical to its interests.
- In the United States, the ratification debate in the Senate revealed the limits of support for early further enlargement. An amendment proposed by Senator John Warner calling for a three-year pause in the enlargement process received forty-one votes, more than sufficient to block the two-thirds majority needed to ratify the new candidates. This has reportedly been on the mind of former senator and Secretary of Defense William Cohen, who has not spoken out in support of any enlargement at the Washington summit. Similarly, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a vociferous supporter of the Visegrad Three, has been noticeably silent on further enlargement.
- The end point of NATO's enlargement has not been thought through, nor have the enormous consequences of a vastly expanded Alliance. Where does enlargement stop? At 21 states with only Romania and Slovenia added? At 28 with all the current aspiring countries? At 31 if one adds the 3 "neutrals"? At 44 if one includes all the present nations of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council? Despite the statements about the Alliance not excluding any country, can NATO really take in

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Russia, or for that matter Belarus and Ukraine? One must also think through how NATO would be totally altered under such scenarios and what would be its essential mission and purpose. These questions have been pushed off as “too hard to handle”; yet the further one contemplates expanding the Alliance, the more pressing it becomes to address them.

“No names, no dates” has recently been adopted as the mantra in Brussels to describe expectations for the summit. Unlike the Madrid Declaration of two years ago, when Romania and Slovenia were singled out and favorable reference was made to the “states in the Baltic region,” no countries or region will be identified as more promising for membership than others. No date will be given for the next round of invitations to join NATO.

This way out would come at a considerable cost. A “no names, no dates” approach could lead to a significant loss of momentum, which would put the entire enlargement process in jeopardy. Slovenia, as the most suitable of the aspirants, should be invited to begin accession talks. Many believe that, according to the 1995 guidelines, Slovenia is as politically and economically qualified for membership as the 3 new members coming in this year. This was already true in the eyes of a majority of NATO states in Madrid, and unlike Romania, Slovenia is not seen as having regressed since then. Slovenia would provide a land corridor to Hungary, without which the latter would have no contiguous NATO state. It might have a stabilizing effect on the other parts of the former Yugoslavia. The fact that Slovenia is a small country should not make its adherence to the Alliance insignificant, as some have argued, because a Washington decision to admit Slovenia would demonstrate that the enlargement process is in good faith and is being maintained.

Not selecting a date to consider the membership of aspiring states would also contribute to a loss of momentum. Thus far, these decisions have been left to dealmaking at the summit level, as occurred in Madrid. The next NATO summit is unlikely to take place until 2001, after the usual two-year period and after the American presidential election. A new approach is needed that allows for a systematic review of the progress



made by the candidate states on an annual basis; these reviews should take place at the foreign ministers' meetings starting with the scheduled session of June 2000. Such regularity would reassure would-be members that the Alliance is serious about its open-door policy. Although final decisions would continue to be made at the summit, the careful review of qualifications at the ministerial level would enhance the credibility of the process. It might also reduce fears that selection depends less on true merit than on trade-offs based on favorite candidates or geography.

To counter the demoralization that could set in for the aspirant states if the Washington summit is seen as a step backward from Madrid, NATO is planning for a "Madrid Plus" package. At its center is an American proposal for a Membership Action Plan. This plan would institute a vastly intensified dialogue with the aspirant states on defense planning and force structures, a clearinghouse for bilateral military assistance to identify shortfalls and duplications, and an increase in defense transparency between NATO and its would-be members. These actions would create a roadmap that would help the candidates meet the requirements for membership. However, they have been forewarned that successfully completing the Membership Action Plan does not guarantee that they will be automatically admitted to the Alliance. Because an enhanced Partnership for Peace program was already adopted two years ago, this further enhancement, although substantively valid, is viewed by some as essentially a consolation prize.

### **Crisis Management and Peace Support: A New Core Function for NATO?**

The core mission of NATO has been the collective defense of the member states, as spelled out in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This will not change. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, future needs for the threat or the use of military force are almost certain to be outside the geographic area of NATO. This has already occurred in Bosnia and Kosovo. NATO, often with the assistance of additional countries in the Partnership for Peace, must now be prepared to use force in other areas, both within the wider European continent and beyond. Such non-Article 5 operations will be the primary military task of NATO in the uncertain world of the coming decades.

The Washington summit will approve a new, forward-looking Strategic Concept to replace the one that was adopted in 1991, not long after the end of the Cold War but before the new geopolitical environment had developed much clarity. One issue will be whether non-Article 5 missions should now be specifically recognized in the Strategic Concept as a new *core* function of NATO. This issue has implications for the military forces of the Alliance, which are expected to equip and train according to the political guidelines of the concept; adopting such a new core mission would emphasize armed forces that are highly mobile, logistically supportable at a distance, and geared to an expeditionary role.

Within the Alliance, views on the priority of non-Article 5 missions vary. The United States and Great Britain propose their full acceptance as a core function of NATO, while most continental Europeans prefer a more limited approach. Such missions are described by Americans as "crisis response operations" (an activist approach), by Germans as "peace support missions" (implying that such missions would only be used to support a peace agreement), and by the French as "crisis management and peacekeeping" (*peacekeeping* suggesting that the mission must be tied to a United Nations mandate). The exact wording and description adopted in the concept are less important than the principle that crisis management and some form of peace support or peacekeeping should be widely accepted as a core function of NATO, because this is what the Alliance will be called upon to undertake in the twenty-first century.

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## A Global Role for NATO?

Another area of divergence within the Alliance is the potential geographic scope of prospective NATO operations. The United States has stressed the defense of the “common interests” of the Alliance rather than only the defense of its “common territory,” noting the shared interests of Allies in such global matters as preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, dealing with international terrorism and managing dangerous regional conflicts as in the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia. American commentators and analysts—from the RAND Corporation for example—have stressed this theme. During the ratification debate, several U.S. senators spoke of the need for NATO to support the United States in its worldwide role if it is to retain a sufficient level of public support.

Many Europeans have voiced deep reservations about this view, suggesting that the United States seeks to “globalize” NATO. Their fear is that Washington will demand that its allies do its bidding; that in a moment of crisis they will be submitted to a loyalty test with negative consequences should they fail it. Such views are in keeping with the concern heard in some quarters that the United States, as the world’s only superpower, acts at times like an international *Rambo*. Europe, it is argued, should not be dragged into America’s conflicts through the instrument of NATO.

“Hogwash!” responded Secretary of State Albright to the notion that the United States wants to globalize the Alliance, seeking to defuse the issue. Nevertheless, it would only be appropriate for the United States to look to its closest allies for political and if need be military support at a moment of crisis. There *are* common interests at times, even if they do not always lend themselves to a common policy. Missile proliferation in the Middle East could threaten Europe, as would a cut-off of energy supplies. Most of the European allies agree that NATO has common interests in the Mediterranean area. Many understand that the day could come when NATO may need to get involved in such places as the Persian Gulf or even the Caucasus. It is when the issues move to Asia that the disparity in views grows deep.

Nevertheless, the globalization debate remains somewhat existential. There would be little point in discussing this sensitive question in general terms at the Washington summit or in making it a matter of principle. Acceptable language might be found that would encompass the Euro-Atlantic area and parts of its periphery, but there is no consensus for anything larger or for a broader, U.S.-supported definition based on “common interests.” In reality, however, nineteen nations will have difficulty agreeing on joint actions in distant places, for example, in Nagorno-Karabakh. Therefore, the Alliance’s decisions will be case specific. When there is consensus, as in Bosnia, the Alliance as a whole can be the chosen instrument. When consensus is lacking, “coalitions of the willing” should be put together, as was the case with Operation Desert Storm. In fact, NATO is developing the Combined Joint Task Forces for just such a purpose.

## The Mandate Question

One of the issues on which there is least agreement within the Alliance is: Under what international legal basis can NATO threaten or use military force in a non-Article 5 operation? The issue of the appropriate mandate did not arise until October 1998, when NATO threatened to use air power in Kosovo. In Bosnia, NATO entered by invitation. An Article 5 mission of collective defense would be covered by Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The French and German views, widely shared in Europe and strongly supported by Russia, are that non-Article 5 missions must be authorized by the UN Security Council. Because the OSCE has been recognized as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, an OSCE mandate could substitute for a Security Council resolution. The United States and some other nations have rejected this view, basing their argu-

ment on the evolving principles of humanitarian law and the danger of a large-scale human tragedy in the case of Kosovo, and more generally on the legal principles in the UN Charter regarding the maintenance of international peace and security.

Where each nation stands on this legal issue has important domestic political roots. The new Social Democratic-Green coalition in Germany is just now moving its way out of past rejection of a German military role abroad. France continues to give preference to the United Nations, where it has a seat on the Security Council, rather than to NATO, where it remains outside the military integrated command. Russia continues to look skeptically on NATO, in spite of its special relationship with the Alliance through the Russian-NATO Permanent Joint Council, and fears that the Alliance could someday involve itself in a crisis in the former Soviet Union. And in the United States, there are members of Congress who abhor the notion that the Security Council could prevent a U.S.-supported NATO operation.

The practical issue in the minds of American policy-makers is the risk that a non-Article 5 action could be vetoed in the UN Security Council by Russia or China. Beijing's recent veto of the extension of the UN peacekeeping force in Macedonia, because of its pique at the latter's extension of diplomatic recognition to Taiwan, demonstrates the problem. Washington is also mindful of the woeful record of the United Nations in Bosnia and the inability of the Security Council to agree in recent months on a strategy for dealing with Iraq. In the United States' view, the nineteen allies cannot allow their chosen course of action in a peace support crisis to be blocked by a nonmember of the Alliance.

Many of the allies nevertheless do believe that it is necessary for future non-Article 5 crisis management and peace support operations to be covered with the basis of an international legal framework. In most cases this may be achieved through a UN Security Council resolution, but this cannot be guaranteed for all exigencies. Secretary Albright has been right to reject forcefully the view that all non-Article 5 missions automatically require a Security Council mandate. An appropriate compromise will need to be found at the Washington summit through careful diplomatic wording. It might be stated along the lines of preserving NATO's freedom to act while requiring that such actions be "consistent with the United Nations Charter's principles and purposes."

## **Dealing with Weapons of Mass Destruction**

The United States has been vigorously seeking to give NATO a greater role in dealing with the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, which senior Clinton administration officials identify as the greatest danger of the twenty-first century. Washington has sought to draw more European attention to the gravity of the problem and the threat posed to the populations, territory, and military forces of the allies. As Secretary Albright observed at NATO last December, "a ballistic missile attack using weapons of mass destruction from a rogue state is every bit as much an Article 5 threat to our borders as a Warsaw Pact tank was two decades ago." Initially, the American proposal was comprehensive and ambitious, containing elements of an activist counter-proliferation policy that included some special command arrangements and pointed to the desirability of a theater missile defense. This has been significantly pared down now as a result of the allies' response, and a more restrained anti-proliferation package is likely to be approved at the Washington summit.

Since 1994, NATO has had a special committee, co-chaired by the United States and a rotating European state, that has studied the proliferation challenge. Now the Alliance will establish a special center for sharing intelligence information related to proliferation. A database will be created that will include new information resulting from satellite tracking. Attention will also be given to such measures as the creation of

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decontamination units and the provision of vaccines, although most of these activities will result from augmenting national civil defense programs. There is no consensus on giving theater missile defense much increased attention beyond its continuing review by the High Level Group, which consists of experts under NATO's Nuclear Planning Group.

The mind-set of many of the European governments regarding the proliferation danger is of interest. The long-term risk of proliferation is acknowledged, although the concerns are focused more on the potential missile threats coming from the nearby region of the Persian Gulf and the Middle East than on more distant places such as North Korea. There is also an understanding that highly urbanized Western Europe is vulnerable to chemical and biological attacks from ideologically motivated terrorist groups. But European officials are reluctant to draw too much public attention to these dangers, fearing widespread apprehension and panic within their populations. Clearly, they do not wish to stir up greater public concern. For the same reason they have not taken up Washington's suggestion to approve a counter-terrorism program at the summit; there is no support for declaring a "war on terrorism," as has occurred in the United States. European officials also do not want to increase spending for such purposes at a time of declining defense budgets. This contributes to their lack of interest in examining more closely the possibilities for theater missile defense. European interest in having NATO assume a more aggressive approach to weapons of mass destruction is therefore shallow. This problem, they argue, should be left to the institutions existing for this purpose: the International Atomic Energy Agency, Nuclear Suppliers Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Chemical Weapons Organization, and Wassenaar Arrangement. What added value, they ask, can NATO bring to this problem?

### **Nuclear Doctrine and No First Use of Nuclear Weapons**

The Strategic Concept of 1991 states that "the fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. They will continue to fulfill an essential role by ensuring uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies' response to military aggression." This basic tenet is unlikely to be altered at the summit. However, all participants recognize that the strategic environment has been drastically changed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the disorder within the military-industrial complex in Russia, the international dispersion of nuclear and missile technology and knowledge, and the resulting attempt to further promote the aims of nonproliferation.

Whether the Alliance still needs to threaten nuclear attack against a conventional threat is now a fair question. Recently, the argument has been heard in Washington that nuclear weapons are also necessary to deter potential threats from chemical and biological weapons originating from anywhere in the world, but this proposition is also debatable. Proposals have arisen within two NATO governments for adopting a policy of "no first use" of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the manner of their emergence caught Washington and other NATO capitals by surprise. The remarks of Joschka Fischer, the new German foreign minister, were made in the context of the Social Democratic-Green coalition agreement and had not been carefully vetted in Bonn, while the ideas of Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy had not been adequately discussed through diplomatic channels. Accordingly, they received a prompt, knee-jerk negative reaction in Washington and in the other nuclear powers of the Alliance, Britain and France.

It is unlikely, however, that this issue can now be completely buried—nor should it be. The consensus at the December 1998 NATO ministerial meeting was that there would be no attempt to hurriedly address it before the April summit. Yet it has become evident in recent months that "no first use" is a complex and tangled issue, involving not just NATO forces but the role of nuclear weapons in the global context. There are existing

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American commitments not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear parties of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, unless such states attack the United States in alliance with a nuclear weapons state. Today, stockpiles of American free-falling nuclear bombs for dual-capable aircraft remain in seven NATO countries in Europe, totaling an estimated 150 to 200, whose purpose is to provide a strategic “coupling.” This reflects Cold War-era assumptions that are now of questionable necessity. Furthermore, there is a growing recognition that the nuclear states need to devalue the political role of nuclear weapons if further progress is to be made towards non-proliferation goals.

The NATO summit should therefore appoint a senior-level task force to examine all aspects of the “no first use” proposal, with a view to making recommendations on this important question a year from now. In its deliberations the task force should review possible alternatives to the proposal, such as a return to the language of the 1990 London summit communiqué that nuclear arms will only be used as weapons of “last resort.”

## Defense Capabilities Initiative

Allies at the summit will be asked to approve the Defense Capabilities Initiative, which has been proposed by U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen. This initiative is designed to enable NATO to take advantage of emerging technologies for the battlefield, many of which are highly innovative and based on digital information. The experience in Bosnia has revealed that NATO's transformation from a fixed, positional defense to a flexible, mobile defense is incomplete. If the Alliance is to operate effectively outside its territory in peace support operations in the future, it must expect to do so without preexisting communications, logistics, headquarters, or other infrastructure.

The initiative calls for improvements in *mobility* to project forces rapidly, in *compatibility* through the effective engagement of the armed forces of member nations, in *sustainability* with more tailored and efficient logistics systems, and in the *survivability* of the forces by better protecting them from chemical, biological, terrorist, and even cyber-attacks. In practical terms, this involves a number of force enhancements, the most significant of which may be the development and implementation of an integrated C3 (command, control, and communications) architecture.

The American worry is that the technology gap across the Atlantic is widening, which will make it more difficult for the Allies to participate in joint operations. The Europeans, on the other hand, fear that the Defense Capabilities Initiative will become a “Buy America” program, and an expensive one at that. But they do acknowledge the increasing technology gap and are worried about its implications. The summit is therefore likely to establish a high-level group, with a sunset clause, to implement the Defense Capabilities Initiative.

## Forward Movement on the European Security and Defense Identity

Meeting in St. Malo, France, last December, Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Jacques Chirac initiated one of the most interesting and potentially significant developments in the landscape of European security. Positing that the European Union (EU) must now move toward playing a full role on the international stage, including defense, they called upon the EU to acquire the “capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.” Simultaneously and therefore ambiguously, their statement also spoke of the need to maintain the collective defense commitments of the Atlantic Alliance. Since then, French and British foreign and defense ministries have been burning the midnight oil, planning concrete ways to move this initiative forward without raising incompatibilities with NATO.

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***While accepting the idea of Europe becoming more organized for independent action, the United States focuses on the Anglo-French initiative as an opportunity for the Europeans to improve their capabilities for force projection and sustainability.***

The Washington summit will need to give this new European *élan* attention and support, which it should be able to do without compromising the Alliance's interests. NATO's Berlin meeting of 1996 fully accepted the concept of a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) *within* NATO while recognizing the need to be able to place European forces under the political control and operational command of the Western European Union (WEU) if the United States decided to stay out of a mission. Military forces would be "separable but not separate," allowing for independent European action if warranted. What is new and important is that Britain has dropped its former objection to merging the WEU with the EU, a step that might now be accomplished in just two to three years. At that point the EU would have the choice of either creating a "fourth pillar" for security or alternatively integrating its new defense function with the Common Foreign and Security Policy in the EU's "second pillar." The devil will be in the details: for example, consolidating the differing memberships of the fifteen-nation EU and the twenty-eight-nation WEU, including its associated members, and coordinating the defense functions of the EU with NATO, the two major Brussels institutions that until now have appeared to live on different planets.

Whether this fresh initiative toward "Europeanizing" defense will succeed where others have run into shoals remains to be seen. Some evidence of divergent approaches has already emerged. Paris stresses Europe's political need to be able to undertake independent action and would have some ESDI structures quite separate from NATO. London is focusing on a "Berlin plus" package that underlines the desirability of "double-hatting" command and planning structures with NATO. For the moment Germany has been content to watch from the sidelines, no doubt keeping an eye on the American response.

The United States has generally welcomed this initiative, in keeping with its more supportive approach toward "Europe" in recent years, although Washington policy-makers do not always sing from the same choir book. While accepting the idea of Europe becoming more organized for independent action, the United States focuses on the Anglo-French initiative as an opportunity for the Europeans to improve their capabilities for force projection and sustainability. In the most direct response to date, Secretary Albright has spoken of the need to avoid the three D's: *decoupling* of European decision-making from that of the Atlantic Alliance; *duplication* of scarce defense resources, and *discrimination* against NATO members who are not EU members. This can be done and the NATO summit should give its full endorsement to this promising European development.

### **NATO's Challenge in the Balkans**

Public perceptions of the credibility of NATO today are inevitably tied to its ability to deal with the Balkans powder keg. Too often the necessary distinction is not made between the political will and cohesion of the allies, on the one hand, and NATO's ability to undertake military action, on the other. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the allies initially looked to the European Union and the United Nations to resolve the situation. Several bloody and costly years were lost in the interim, but once the political leadership coalesced, the military of NATO undertook an effective air campaign that helped bring the conflict to a halt and opened the way for the Dayton accords. NATO was able to deploy IFOR and later the thirty-nation SFOR forces. For the remaining skeptics, this made clear the continuing need to maintain NATO after the end of the Cold War.

Today the challenge in Kosovo is even more difficult and sensitive. Without Yugoslavia's agreement, NATO would need to enter as an intervention force. Moreover, NATO is considering bombing Yugoslavia in order to limit its actions in Kosovo and try to force an agreement. However achieved, should an agreement be reached between Belgrade and the Kosovars, NATO is prepared to mount a Kosovo Peace Implementation

Force. For the first time such a force would be led by a European officer and have a relatively small American contingent of four thousand troops. But we should be clear: what is at stake now is not the credibility of the military of NATO but the political leadership of the Alliance and the Contact Group, which includes Russia.

In the Balkans, as NATO's Secretary General Javier Solana has recently noted, the Alliance will be called upon to do more than protect the peace. It must also help create the climate for reconciliation and the conditions for reconstruction. This will involve political as well as economic reconstruction and will not be NATO's task alone. When the political conditions permit, after significant change from today's situation—and this will take some time—Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should be invited to join Slovenia, Macedonia, and Albania in the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

### **Beyond the Summit: Critical Choices**

The Fiftieth Anniversary Summit will be a success, but only up to a point. There is much to celebrate. The Atlantic Alliance saved its members from harm and “won” the Cold War. Over the past decade it has successfully adapted to a new role, reached eastwards by creating a web of constructive relationships with over two dozen nations, and in the process it has transformed itself. Indeed, the NATO of the past has metamorphosed into the New NATO.

The Kosovo situation may be the wild card during the summit. Yet, NATO's availability will also serve as a reminder that it remains the world's only multinational, integrated, and militarily effective alliance at the disposal of political leaders.

But the *hard* questions will not have been addressed during the summit. How far should NATO expand? Is it really possible to keep the “open door” open, beyond some geographical limit? How does one avoid drawing a new dividing line across Europe? Are there some alternatives that should be examined, such as a Baltic Sea security alliance? At what point does NATO so dilute itself that it no longer retains its effectiveness and *raison d'être*?

Considerable thought and attention must be given as well to the other existing institutions and the manner by which all these should relate to each other. The European Union is also enlarging its membership, and in two or three decades may have a membership parallel to that of NATO, save for the United States and Canada. The EU is developing a security component through the European Security and Defense Identity with which the Western European Union may be merged. A more important role could be played in the future by the larger fifty-five nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has the advantage of including Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union. Ultimately, a form of variable geometry may emerge with a system of mutually reinforcing institutions.

Governments and especially international institutions are not good at producing deep, sustained thought. They deal with the immediate issues and act by compromise. Over three decades ago, at another time when there was a necessity of choice, NATO requested a report from a wise men's group headed by a former Belgian foreign minister. The Harmel Report brought valued clarity to the fundamental purposes of the Atlantic Alliance. The Fiftieth Anniversary Summit should now commission a report to respond to today's seminal question: What should be the Pan-European political and security architecture, and the place of the Trans-Atlantic alliance, in world affairs a quarter of a century from now?

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## NATO's "Open Door" Derby

### ASPIRANT STATES

**ALBANIA:** Political turmoil, economic disarray, crime and organized corruption, and military disintegration in recent years—not to mention Kosovo—places this candidate near the end of the pack.

**BULGARIA:** After seven lost years of self-imposed isolation, Bulgaria in 1997 began creating a viable political system and market economy. Large military, but further reform is needed before it is ready for NATO integration. A dark horse rapidly moving up.

**ESTONIA:** Politically and economically well qualified. Has begun accession talks with European Union. Small nation, small army. Vulnerable neighbor of Russia. Finland is its "patron" nation. However, Estonia may not want to join NATO at the cost of serious political conflict with Moscow.

**LATVIA:** Large Russian-speaking minority has been an important political and citizenship issue, exacerbating tensions with

Moscow. Parliamentary democracy with a developing free-market economy. Vulnerable neighbor of Russia. Probably last in the pack among the Baltic states.

**LITHUANIA:** Politically and economically well qualified. Seeking entry negotiations with the European Union. Vulnerable neighbor of Russia, but it has developed stable relations with Moscow. If brought into the Alliance, the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad would be surrounded by NATO member states. Poland is a strong supporter. Moving up.

**MACEDONIA:** Formerly the poorest republic in the Yugoslav federation, Macedonia continues to face severe economic difficulties. Problematic relations with neighboring states. Over strong objections from Belgrade, has hosted a NATO "extraction force" available for rescuing OSCE monitors in Kosovo. West has empathy, but Macedonia is still a very long shot.

**ROMANIA:** Has had difficulty throwing off the yoke of the Ceausescu legacy after decades of economic mismanagement and repressive communism. Upturn with a more reform-minded government since 1996, but some recent economic slippage. Large but ill-equipped military. Strong French support but less promising candidate today than it was two years ago at Madrid.

**SLOVAKIA:** Only after the defeat of the undemocratic Meciar government in 1998 could Slovakia become a serious contender. Recent economic and military reform has been impressive. Can count on strong support of the Czechs. Rapidly moving up.

**SLOVENIA:** Fully democratic political system with a successful economy. Highest per capita GDP in Central and Eastern Europe. Has begun accession talks with European Union. Improved relations with neighbors. The least problematic of the aspirant states.

### "NEUTRAL" STATES

**AUSTRIA:** Despite its small military, a very strong candidate should it decide to opt for membership. Member of European Union with a healthy economy and a mature democracy. Joining NATO is under domestic discussion. Currently there is no political consensus, but that could change with the next parliamentary election.

**FINLAND:** Strong candidate should it wish to join NATO, although that remains unlikely for time being. Defense taken seriously with small but very well equipped armed forces. Long border with Russia but much experience in prudently managing that relationship.

**SWEDEN:** A shoo-in if it decides to take the leap. But over a century and a half of successful neutrality is a big psychological hurdle. Not interested now. Yet it could change its mind if Finland joins. After all, Sweden did join the European Union, and elite attitudes are changing.

### MUCH FURTHER DOWN THE TRACK ...

**BELARUS:** A Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council nation. Nevertheless, requires a fundamental political and economic transition before its membership could even be considered.

**RUSSIA:** The 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act and the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council brought Russia up to the starting line. Participation in peacekeeping has been valued. All depends on the big unknown: the future direction of Russian society and foreign relations. Entry into NATO would be a tectonic change for the Alliance.

**UKRAINE:** Early and strong participant in Partnership for Peace and peacekeeping in Bosnia. The Charter for NATO-Ukraine partnership is a plus, as was nuclear dismantlement. Disappointing economic performance and political situation. Russian factor still looms large.