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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Arbeitspapier / working paper

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
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Global NATO or Global Partnerships?

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[1] The analysis and opinions purported in this article represent the personal opinion of the author.

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As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization advances into the 21st century, the Atlantic Alliance remains determined to adapt itself to a changing international environment. NATO agreed to participate in UN peace-keeping missions as well as OSCE operations even outside its area. Specifically, NATO trained security forces in Iraq, gave logistical support to the African Union's mission in Darfur, coordinated the tsunami relief effort in Indonesia and assisted humanitarian aid in the United States during Hurricane Katrina as well as in Pakistan during a massive earthquake in 2005. In August 2003, NATO took over the command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, where it was recently involved in heavy fighting on the ground for the first time in its history. The Atlantic Alliance also leads the military mission in Kosovo (KFOR). Throughout the 1990s, NATO encouraged a "separable but not separate" European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), decided to carry out its territorial enlargement and developed strategic relationships with its former enemies, including Russia. Moreover, the intervention in Kosovo in 1999 forcefully demonstrated NATO's military significance but also its willingness to act even without explicit UN authorization. In the run-up to the NATO Summit in Riga in November 2006 and the absence of a considerable agenda, a debate on both sides of the Atlantic has now evolved over NATO's global engagement that touches on the very foundations of NATO's original purpose and definition.[2] Critically, some even question whether NATO needs to retain its exclusive transatlantic character at all and suggest to aim for a global military security organization with a democratic identity instead.[3]

The question of whether NATO should follow a predominantly global agenda or instead concentrate on its Euro-Atlantic core experienced an increasing urgency with the emergence of America's "War on Terror" as the threat comes from remote regions that transcend NATO's original geographic frame. However, the debate is no longer about whether NATO should go "out of area or out of business" but whether the Atlantic Alliance should enlarge on a global level from Vancouver to Tokyo and Wellington. The relevance of this question dates back to the early days of the post-Cold War era. NATO's Strategic Concept of November 7, 1991, clearly underlines that the

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[2] See for example the German debate: Fuecks, Ralf. "Israel in die NATO!", in: *Internationale Politik* 6/2006, 34-37.
[3] Daalder, Ivo and James Goldgeier. "Global NATO", in: *Foreign Affairs* 85/5 (2006), 105-114.

security of the Euro-Atlantic region must be viewed in a global context.[4] Today, this question becomes pivotal for the Atlantic Alliance as it faces security threats of inherently global nature, such as internationally organized terrorism and crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, collapse or lack of state structures in certain regions, and the ruptures in the stable supply of energy resources.

I will examine U.S.-European security relations since September 11, 2001, in the context of NATO in order to analyze the following questions: What is the prospect of NATO going global? How will it affect NATO's future course?

First, I will briefly focus on the lessons learnt from the intervention in Afghanistan as well as the impact and consequences of 9/11 regarding NATO. Second, I will look at the war in Iraq and its implications for NATO and the transatlantic security relationship. Finally, I will attempt to capture the benefits and limits of NATO's global engagement.

NATO in a Post-9/11 World

Since the Korean War (1950-53), unanticipated crises have constantly reshaped NATO. At the end of 2001, within two years, the Atlantic Alliance had gone to war and, furthermore, invoked Article 5, both for the first time in its fifty-two-year history. Considering the impact and significance of these challenges, it could rightly be argued that "NATO will never be the same again."[5] However, the question remains whether this has caused a radical change or simply a continuation of NATO's post-Cold War transformation process while adapting to political realities.

For all its symbolic significance, the Article 5 pledges along with the degree of political support and solidarity after 9/11 appears to be highly ambiguous. NATO's contributions were limited and largely confined to securing NATO territory, including the United States, while its two strongest members conducted the military operation in Afghanistan. Even though, NATO allies joined U.S. and British forces at a later stage of "Operation Enduring Freedom," the campaign revealed a multiple set of differences among the transatlantic partners.

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[4] Declaration by the Heads of States of the North Atlantic Council on November 8, 1991, at Rome on Peace and Cooperation, in: *Europa-Archiv*, 2/1992, D 70.
[5] Gordon, Philip H. "NATO After 11 September", in: *Survival* 43/4 (Winter 2001), 89-103, 89.

First, the U.S. decision to limit NATO's formal military role in Afghanistan reflected American dissatisfaction with the alliance's decision-making process. One of the key lessons of Kosovo, particularly in the eyes of the Pentagon and much of the Republican Party, was that, despite its relative effectiveness in deterring conflict, NATO had proven to be ill suited as a war-fighting organization. Lieutenant General Short, the U.S. Air Force General in charge of executing the air campaign during "Operation Allied Force" in 1999, articulated this longstanding mindset, complaining that "political interference by the NATO states was counterproductive to military goals."[6]

Moreover, American discontent about the limitations of interoperability within the Atlantic Alliance re-emerged highlighting a widening military capability and technology gap. As NATO's former Secretary General Lord Robertson pointed out, "[t]he Kosovo air campaign demonstrated just how dependent the European Allies had become on US military capabilities."[7] These gaps are largely the result of a different strategic thinking during the Cold War. While NATO's European members prepared to fight in place against a possible attack by the Warsaw Pact, the United States focused largely on logistical support to project troops and fire power at great distances.[8] In addition to different priorities, the U.S. today spends a higher percentage of its Gross National Product on defense and also allocates this money more efficiently than its European allies whose forces combined are more expensive due to the duplication of national defense structures. According to former U.S. Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, "NATO [European] countries spend roughly 60% of what the United States does and they get about 10% of the capability."[9] Consequently, these American perceptions of insufficient burden-sharing threaten the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance.

Also, the military and technology gap transfers a disproportionate amount of political responsibility to the United States in relation to its economic and demographic status in the alliance. In absence of an accepted leader for security policy within Europe, who could accelerate the process of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), a military combat operation without U.S. leadership appears to be virtually impossible. In

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[6] Daalder, Ivo H. and Michael E. O'Hanlon. Winning Ugly. NATO's War to Save Kosovo. Washington, D.C., 2000, 220/221.

[7] Yost, David S. "The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union", in: *Survival* 42/4 (Winter 2000-01), 97-123, 99.

[8] Hay, William Anthony. "Watch on West. Atlantic Partnership After September 11". Paper by the Foreign Policy Research Institute 3/3 (February 2002), 6.

[9] Yost, David S. "The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union", in: *Survival* 42/4 (Winter 2000-01), 97-123, 99.

turn, this lack of substantial European defense capabilities makes Europe in the eyes of Washington a less valuable partner to conduct multinational military operations with. An unhealthy division of labor coupled by new resentments about European "free-riding" and burden-sharing debates could thus lead to a further weakening of cohesion within the alliance. Moreover, drifting further apart in military terms could eventually lead to a marginalization of NATO because – under growing deficiencies in interoperability – its members would be unable to perform side by side. Even though most Western European governments supposedly realize this danger, budgetary factors apparently restrain national governments from boosting their defense spending. However, while the social costs of a changing demographic structure accompanied by moderate economic growth and the financial costs of EU enlargement make up good arguments for reduced defense spending, they nevertheless conceal underlying sentiments that derive from a transatlantic value gap.

First, Europeans do not share American threat assessments, strategic assumptions and conflict scenarios in a post-Cold War world. As David S. Yost has rightly observed,

> the European military budgets will not be increased, because there is no sentiment of being threatened in Europe. The increase in the US defence budget is incomprehensible for a European today, when there is no obvious threat and when the United States enjoys an overwhelming superiority over any potential enemy.[10]

Despite initial efforts on behalf of the Bush administration to forge an "anti-terror" alliance with its European allies after September 11, differences about military spending have actually increased after the terrorist attacks as many Europeans are convinced that the asymmetrical threat of international terrorism cannot be answered predominantly by military force. Instead, EU policy focuses on concerted action in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs, Transport and Border Security, Terror Finance as well as Health Security and Civil Protection.[11] Evidently, the often-overlooked differentiation between the U.S. "War on Terror" and the EU's "Fight Against Terror" marks the rhetorical peak of an iceberg of underlying substantial differences over policy and strategy.

Another strategic difference is of geopolitical nature. Henry A. Kissinger famously remarked in 1973 that Europe remains largely a regional power while the United States is

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[10] Yost, David S. "The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union", in: *Survival* 42/4 (Winter 2000-01), 97-123, 120.
[11] The European Union. "EU and the Fight Against Terrorism". Fact sheet. Brussels, June 2004.

a global power. Indeed, as American strategy planners aim at containing powers in various regions, such as China, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, or India, the European Union focuses predominantly on Central and South-Eastern Europe as well as the peripheries of Europe, namely Russia, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Middle East. To be sure, the EU aims to become a "global player" with global interests – yet, up till now, lacks the coordinated will of its members to implement this policy.[12] As a result, it is the United States as the sole military superpower that would assume the main risks of having to threaten or use force in case of a regional crisis or conflict possibly even involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Moreover, the transatlantic value gap highlights different attitudes towards the degree of multilateralism. The European countries, overshadowed by two major wars as well as the permanent confrontation during the Cold War and encouraged by the peaceful experience of European Integration, have developed a strong interest to set up rules and institutions to govern international behavior. The United States, on the other hand, supports multilateralism where possible and desirable. Yet, if necessary, due to its overwhelming military advantage, America is far more ready to pursue its received national interests unilaterally and by force. Former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld expressed this policy at the National Defense University in 2002 when he stated that,

wars can benefit from coalitions of the willing ... [b]ut they should not be fought by committee. The mission must determine the coalition, and the coalition must not determine the mission.[13]

Specifically, the last difference in transatlantic strategic thinking must be viewed in a similar context. Despite the attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1941 as well as on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001, Americans have never experienced the sort of feeling of vulnerability that Europeans have. Two world wars were fought on European soil followed by the permanent threat of a nuclear conflict during the Cold War. The United States, on the other hand, protected by its geostrategic position between two oceans and, on the whole, friendly neighbors has not been invaded since the War of 1812. As a result, this has encouraged Americans to develop a certain historic optimism and

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[12] The European Union. A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy. Brussels, 12 December 2003, 1.
[13] Quoted in: Yost, David S. "Transatlantic Relations and Peace in Europe", in: *International Affairs* 78/2 (April 2002), 277-300, 298.

willingness to act against existing threats rather than to resort to what some Americans perceive as European threat accommodation or even resignation.[14] After September 11, 2001, these general diverging views on transatlantic security provided the basis for very specific reservations.

First of all, Western Europeans insisted on the use of diplomacy, law enforcement and international intelligence cooperation in response to the terrorist attacks rather than to conduct a primarily military campaign. While the Bush administration identified "nations that ... harbor or support terrorism"[15] as the most urgent issue, European leaders emphasized the need to focus all available resources to tackle the sources of terrorism, such as finances, fanatical and destructive ideologies, and conflicts or crises that provide human resources to the terrorists.[16] In this context, an increased political engagement to resolve regional problems, particularly Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, seemed to be essential to Europe in order to eliminate the roots of global terrorism.

Second, in case of a military response, European leaders demanded that any attack should be limited to Afghanistan and to precise terrorist targets in order to avoid any damaging effects and the cohesion of a grand, yet fragile coalition against terror consisting of many countries with predominantly Muslim population. Any attack by the West against Muslim civilians would almost certainly spark internal resistance in partner countries, e.g. Pakistan or Jordan, and hence compromise the free flow of intelligence information as well as crucial public support from and military cooperation with these countries.

Third, following the previous argument, Europeans stressed the need for legitimacy of a military response. Inevitably, this would include an as broad as possible international coalition as well as the approval and involvement of the United Nations. Clearly, European leaders remembered the public domestic debates over the war in Kosovo which had demonstrated the overwhelming importance of legitimizing military action.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Europeans warned its American ally not to "[fall] into the diabolical trap that the terrorists wanted to set, that of a 'clash of civilizations'".[17] As European governments tried to reassure their Muslim minorities that the West did not intend to fight the Islamic world *per se*, U.S. President George W. Bush, in contrast to

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[14] Gordon, Philip H. "Bush, Missile Defence and the Atlantic Alliance", in: *Survival* 43/1 (Spring 2001), 17-33, 24.
[15] Bush, George W. Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the Country. September 20, 2001.
[16] Gordon, Philip H. "NATO After 11 September", in: *Survival* 43/4 (Winter 2001), 89-103, 94.
[17] Quoted in: Gordon, Philip H. "NATO After 11 September", in: *Survival* 43/4 (Winter 2001), 89-103, 95.

similar assurances earlier, used the historically burdened word "crusade" to describe the American-led "War on Terror" which led some Arab states to believe the West was fighting a Holy War against the Islamic world.

America's changed thinking about NATO and its role in the "War on Terror" was also reflected in its new priorities regarding the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002. Despite an emerging debate about future enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance, the Bush administration pointed out from the very start that discussions about new capabilities would come first. Only then would discussions follow about new members and new partnerships.[18] In his speech at the NATO Conference at Brussels on October 3, 2002, Stephen J. Hadley, then U.S. Deputy National Security Advisor and now U.S. National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush, explicitly spelled out these changes as four-folded.[19]

First of all, as a result of NATO's decision in Reykjavik in May 2002, NATO would have to meet Article 5 threats wherever they arise effectively ending the "out of area" debate.

Secondly, the Atlantic Alliance and its members needed to opt for a specialization of militaries which would then lead to more efficiency and flexibility in action. While every nation should submit what they can do best, all could become part of a broader "coalition of the willing" not necessarily confined to NATO.

A third aspect involved the creation of a network of cooperation including the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program with Russia and Ukraine in particular, the European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which was an altered version of the "interlocking institutions" concept of the 1990s. The absence of the United Nations (UN) in this context was remarkable.

Finally, NATO membership would be open to all European democracies that sought it and were ready to share the responsibilities that NATO membership brings with it, according to the Washington Treaty. According to Hadley, such an "open-door" policy had thus far provided a powerful incentive to political, economic and military reform among the applicants particularly in Eastern Europe.

In sum, the message reads that a larger NATO makes a stronger NATO and thereby creates greater effectiveness: "The free nations of the world must act together,

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[18] "The Future of NATO: A Moment of Truth". Special Report, in: *The Economist*, 4 May 2002, 24.
[19] Hadley, Stephen. Challenge and Change for NATO. A U.S. Perspective. Speech held at Brussels, 3 October 2002.

and we act most effectively when we do act together."[20] While the U.S. administration recognized that not all allies had all the capabilities needed, each nation was expected to make contributions according to their abilities. For example, while the Czech government would be unable to deliver substantial amounts of ground troops or planes, they had specialists on chemical weapons that could be of valuable help.

However, a sort of burden-sharing that merely focused on America to do the fighting while Europe concentrated on reconstruction and development would have ultimately resulted in an extremely uneven strategic relationship with Europe as America's garbage collector as Julian Lindley-French, Senior Scholar, Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP), University of Munich, puts it.[21] As Stephen J. Hadley pointed out in 2002, such a crude division of labor was not envisioned by the United States.[22] Yet, if NATO, i.e. the European allies, were either not able or not willing to adapt, the Atlantic Alliance would soon become marginal because the U.S. would increasingly be able and willing to meet the threats resulting from the nexus between weapons of mass destruction and terrorists as well as states that support and harbor terrorist networks unilaterally.

The Transatlantic Crisis over Iraq: A Defining Moment?

Former U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry A. Kissinger called the transatlantic rift over Iraq "the gravest crisis in the Atlantic Alliance since its creation five decades ago."[23] Indeed, the issue of how to properly deal with the threat the Saddam Hussein regime posed to regional and international stability and security turned into a fundamental dispute over diverging views on multilateralism, the use of force and America's role in the world. The impact of this rift in transatlantic relations became so severe that prominent bipartisan members of the United States foreign policy establishment, such as former Secretaries of State Madeleine K. Albright and Warren M. Christopher as well as former Senator Robert J. Dole and former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, labeled it a "defining moment in the history of America's relations with Europe."[24] In Europe, the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, observed that, "we have witnessed a diverging perception of

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[20] Hadley, Stephen. Challenge and Change for NATO. A U.S. Perspective. Brussels, 3 October 2002.
[21] "The Future of NATO: A Moment of Truth". Special Report, in: *The Economist*, 4 May 2002, 24.
[22] Hadley, Stephen. Challenge and Change for NATO. A U.S. Perspective. Brussels, 3 October 2002.
[23] Kissinger, Henry. "Role Reversal and Alliance Realities", in: *The Washington Post*, 10 February 2003, 1.
[24] Serfaty, Simon (Project Director). Joint Declaration. Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership. 14 May 2003.

reality on the two sides of the Atlantic."[25] However, divisions occurred as much within Europe as across the Atlantic with some EU members siding with the United States and others in outright opposition. If this truly was a defining moment, it was one for transatlantic security relations as much as it was for European integration. This section intends to look at the transatlantic dimension of security and defense policy on Iraq and its implications for NATO as a security organization.

The rift over Iraq and the subsequent U.S.-led invasion revealed a transatlantic landscape that had been in turmoil long before "Operation Iraqi Freedom" yet had been concealed behind friendly rhetoric and joint declarations. While the long-term effects of this moment of truth in transatlantic relations are currently developing, the short-term lessons can be summed up as follows:

First of all, following the successful and swift campaigns in Afghanistan as well as Iraq, the Bush administration appeared overconfident in relying on its superior military power. This perception can be demonstrated when looking at President Bush's statement, referring to possible dangers for U.S. troops in post-war Iraq: "There are some who feel the conditions [in Iraq] are such that they can attack us there. My answer is: bring them on."[26]

Second, "Operation Iraqi Freedom" reinforced a certain trend in U.S. security policy to show an increasing willingness to use military force as an instrument of or even as a substitute for diplomacy. As Seyom Brown in his book "The Illusion of Control" (2003) rightly pointed out, this trend had been on the rise well before 9/11 in Kosovo as well as in Bosnia where the Clinton administration certainly used its superior military power to achieve diplomatic ends.[27]

Third, the Bush administration showed a determination to concentrate on and emphasize its national security interest defined as eliminating the nexus of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and the so-called rogue states. While it has been traditional practice in the United States to closely follow its perceived national interests, "Operation Iraqi Freedom" introduced a new U.S. approach towards multilateral cooperation based on the lessons of Kosovo and Afghanistan. Instead of relying on traditional multilateral

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[25] Prodi, Romano. "Looking Ahead in Transatlantic Relations". Speech held at Washington, D.C., 24 June 2003.

[26] Bush, George W. Remarks by the President in Announcement of the New Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally. Washington, D.C., 2 July 2003.

[27] Brown, Seyom. The Illusion of Control. Force and Foreign Policy in the 21st Century. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2003.

security structures, such as the UN or NATO, the Bush administration deliberately chose to join multinational forces under a looser concept of the so-called coalitions of the willing. In doing so, the Bush administration was able to enlist military support from various countries without the need to grant coalition membership based on formal equality. Hence, the United States openly violated the very constitutive norms on which NATO had been based on in the past, namely consensus, consultation and collective security. The main dividing line between the United States and Europe concerned the commitment to multilateral norms.[28] While Europe, including Great Britain, stressed the importance of multilateral structures and procedures under the primacy of internationally agreed rules and concepts, the United States emphasized a more pragmatic view as expressed by President Bush who declared that, "the success of multilateralism is not measured by adherence to forms alone, the tidiness of the process, but by the results we achieve to keep our nation secure."[29]

Finally, the need to consult with NATO allies before reaching a decision on the use of force appeared to run contrary to U.S. interest. The depth of the consequences resulting from this obvious lack of dialogue became apparent in Prime Minister Blair's speech urging American policymakers to "show that this is a [transatlantic] partnership built on persuasion, not command. … America must listen as well as lead."[30]

As for Europe, the lessons of Iraq drastically demonstrated that the European Union, including its future members, were forced to let the use of military power be dictated by the United States due to a lack of capability as well as a lack of political cohesion and unity. As a result, the European states reverted to distinctly national approaches on Iraq by building alliances while sidelining the European Union. In addition, Europe lacked the common strategic thinking necessary in order to be capable to act in times of crisis and conflict. As the then-President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, acknowledged,

> There can be no denying this is a bad time for the Common Foreign and Security Policy [and] for the European Union as a whole. … it is time to draw the lessons from this crisis. Europe can make an effective contribution to peace in the world only if its nations pull together within the European Union. … It is not in our

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[28] Risse, Thomas. "Beyond Iraq: The Crisis of the Transatlantic Security Community". Working Paper, Center for Transatlantic Foreign and Security Policy, 16/17.
[29] Bush, George W. "President Bush Discusses Iraq Policy". London, United Kingdom. 19 November 2003.
[30] Blair, Anthony. Address to a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress. Washington, D.C., 17 July 2003.

interest to continue relying on others when it comes to defending our values militarily.[31]

Second, the war in Iraq aroused fears in Europe of an increasingly U.S. imperialistic behavior in foreign policy. As a result, the acceptance of U.S. leadership in a predominantly unipolar world significantly decreased because of Iraq. Many Europeans started to believe that U.S. leadership, which had originally founded and committed itself to the norms of international law, was in fact turning into U.S. imperialism which placed itself above the rules of international law.[32]

Finally, European policymakers realized that any serious crisis in transatlantic relations, such as the one over Iraq, would inevitably cause negative consequences for European integration as well. Evidently, Iraq demonstrated how the transatlantic partnership and the process of European integration had grown increasingly interdependent. Consequently, Romano Prodi pointed out that,

> I fully agree with the President [Bush] when he recently declared that when Europe and the United States are united, no problem and no enemy can stand against us. This is the real lesson. I would only add that if we fail to unite, every problem may become a crisis.[33]

NATO, on the other hand, came out of the transatlantic dispute over Iraq largely unharmed. However, this was actually a sign of its marginalization during the conflict because – apart from a brief argument over NATO protection of Turkish territory – the main dispute between the United States and the European countries opposing war in Iraq was not carried out within the institutional framework of NATO. Instead, the debate took place in a public sphere of press briefings, media interviews, and newspaper articles.[34]

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[31] Prodi, Romano. "Statement on Iraq". Brussels, 20 March 2003.

[32] Risse, Thomas. "Beyond Iraq: The Crisis of the Transatlantic Security Community". *Working Paper*, Center for Transatlantic Foreign and Security Policy, 5.

[33] Prodi, Romano. Summary of Remarks Made During the Joint Press Conference at the EU-US Summit. Washington, D.C., 25 June 2003.

[34] For example: Comments by Secretary Rumsfeld at a Press conference on "old" and "new Europe", quoted in: Guy Dinmore and James Harding, *Financial Times*, 3/4 May 2003; Interview with Chancellor Schroeder on his decision to oppose military actions against Iraq under any circumstances, in: *The New York Times*, 5 September 2002.

The Road Ahead: NATO's Global Mission

At the dawn of the 21st century, NATO's role and purpose appear to remain highly ambiguous. Some claim that the ongoing "War on Terror" – resulting from the combined threats of weapons of mass destruction and global terrorism – constitute the counterpart to the defiance of Communism during the political generation of U.S. President Harry S. Truman. Recently, President George W. Bush reaffirmed this mindset by claiming that Islamic terrorists "are successors to Fascists, to Nazis, to Communists, and other totalitarians of the 20th century."[35] Furthermore, President Bush did not shy away from comparing Osama bin Laden to the likes of Adolf Hitler.[36] Others disagree to diagnose a repetition of history for NATO and refer to future challenges, such as the rise of China and India, or promoting and protecting democracy in Eastern Europe instead.[37]

In this context, the underlying question is how much political clout should be added to NATO's military capabilities and how its geographical range should eventually be defined. Philip H. Gordon, Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy and Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, accepts the alliance's ability to fight major military operations everywhere in the world, yet he also emphasizes that "even with all the right reforms, NATO will probably not again become the central defense organization that it was during the Cold War." Critically, due to the transatlantic military and technology gap as well as slow decision-making processes, the United States seriously questions the benefits to revert to NATO in any conflict involving the use of military force. America does, on the other hand, recognize the advantage to use "coalitions of the willing" while simultaneously relying on NATO structures and individual NATO members as a "tool box" as well as to legitimize the use of force.

Turning an unreformed NATO into a kind of global alliance would certainly fail because it would further widen the military capability and technology gap within the Atlantic Alliance and reduce NATO's interoperability while overlooking remaining, underlying and diverging transatlantic threat perceptions, identities, and interests. Despite recent efforts of rapprochement among policymakers, the public image of the United

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[35] Bush, George W. President Bush Addresses American Legion National Convention at Salt Lake City, Utah, August 31, 2006.

[36] Bush, George W. "President Discusses Global war on Terror". Capital Hilton Hotel at Washington D.C., September 5, 2006.

[37] See for example: Brzezinski, Zbigniew. The Choice. Global Domination or Global Leadership. New York 2004.

States has not recovered from its steep decline after the war in Iraq.[38] Moreover, a global NATO would inevitably rival the UN for legitimacy in the global security arena that would almost certainly trigger negative reactions from Russia and China. Internally, a globally oriented NATO that would possibly invite non-Euro-Atlantic members, such as Israel, Australia or Japan, to join its inflexible institutional structures would ultimately lead to an overly complex or even paralyzed decision-making process involving diverse security and geostrategic interests.[39]

Before continuing the long-term task of "widening" NATO's geographical operating range, such as in Afghanistan, the members of the Atlantic Alliance must first turn to the immediate chore of "deepening" its institutional mechanisms to facilitate future cooperation. Setbacks in Iraq have demonstrated that the United States simply cannot achieve its goals unilaterally. Consequently, both partners will continue to rely on NATO as the most significant transatlantic forum for security consultation and cooperation as well as the only institutional link between Europe and the United States. In this context, the threat assessment involving global terrorism and proliferation of WMD combined with a more coherent U.S. engagement to form a common U.S.-European strategic position could provide new external and internal pressures for NATO forcing the alliance to eventually transform and reform itself and be able to cope with the diverse challenges and threats of the 21st century.

Today, many allies feel not so much led but bossed around by an assertive United States.[40] However, without credible and, most importantly, widely accepted U.S. leadership, the Atlantic Alliance will almost certainly be destined to fail since NATO works only with its strongest member. In this context, a widening military interoperability gap and a static transatlantic value gap constitute the two central problems blocking NATO's long-term potential and capacity. Moreover, transatlantic consultation and coordination of individual policies – though technically existent – require a more honest debate about controversial issues and interests. What NATO really needs is an open and substantial dialogue best captured in the German term *streitkultur* (culture of controversy).[41]

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[38] Transatlantic Trends 2006. The German Marshall Fund of the United States and Compagnia di San Paolo.
[39] Haftendorn, Helga. "Israel in die NATO? Was dagegen spricht", in: *Internationale Politik* 7/2006, 82-83, 83.
[40] Talbott, Strobe. "From Prague to Baghdad: NATO at Risk", in: *Foreign Affairs* 81/6 (November 2002).
[41] Ruehle, Michael. "Different Speed, Same Direction. NATO and the new transatlantic security agenda", in: *Internationale Politik* 3/2006 (Summer), 77-82, 82.

In sum, despite the continuing need for transatlantic security cooperation, NATO's cohesion and capability to act are at imminent risk at the beginning of the 21st century. How could NATO's transformation process be enhanced and facilitated?

First of all, this process involves a formal expansion of NATO's defense guarantee, as expressed by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, to include a terrorist attack. Obviously, the original meaning assumed that an attack would come from the Warsaw Pact, i.e. a territorial state, not a terrorist group. With the invocation of Article 5 on September 12, 2001, and with little public debate, NATO's members have now interpreted this defense guarantee to include a terrorist attack. Yet, as radical as it may sound, this move only confirmed a long-standing consensus within NATO. The Strategic Concepts of 1991 and 1999 both explicitly recognize that "Atlantic security interests can be affected by ... proliferation of weapons of mass destruction ... and actions of terrorism...".[42] Nevertheless, such an expansion of Article 5 entails serious problems that have to be dealt with first. NATO structures were not involved in the initial phase of "Operation Enduring Freedom" thus turning the formal and rapid invocation of Article 5 into a mere symbolic act. Even taking into account that Article 5 does not require a military commitment, the U.S. decision to conduct the military response largely on its own significantly undermined the alliance's credibility "since NATO must be taken seriously by its strongest member if it is to be taken seriously by anyone."[43] While this problem could be resolved by bridging the military gap between the US and its allies, another issue is more complex. The inclusion of terrorist attacks into Article 5 could allow other regimes and governments, such as Russia in Chechnya or China in Tibet, to exploit this for their own domestic struggles since a valid and universally shared definition of terrorism does not exist. Thus, the Western allies must define what they view as terrorism and specifically name the groups which they regard as being terrorists.

Secondly, cooperation with Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) must be intensified. In particular, NATO partnerships with countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia highlight the significance of the Atlantic Alliance as a global security actor. Yet, for all its efforts to promote Western values in these regions, NATO's

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[42] The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "The Strategic Concept of the Alliance". Washington Summit Meeting in April 1999.
[43] Talbott, Strobe. "From Prague to Baghdad: NATO at Risk", in: *Foreign Affairs* 81/6 (November 2002).

purpose in reaching out as far as the Chinese border has remained extremely vague as the line between the policies of individual NATO members and those of NATO itself in the Caucasus and Central Asia have often become blurred. The risks of relapsing into mere "pipeline politics" as well as the danger of possible entrapment in local or regional conflicts call for a clearer political strategy instead of relying on policy-by-default.[44] Moreover, geographic expansion of military and strategic relationships could result in a potential overload of interests and responsibilities. As *The Economist* put it bluntly, "stretch NATO itself too far and the glue will not hold."[45]

Finally, the Atlantic Alliance needs to develop a new capacity in transatlantic cooperation and global reach. While the European allies worry about giving NATO too much of a global or political role over other institutions, such as the EU or the UN, the unanticipated gravity of the terrorist threat – despite the war in Iraq – has advanced transatlantic security cooperation on all levels. On one level, the European Union and the United States have taken over issues of law enforcement, immigration, financial control, and domestic intelligence. On another level, NATO is seeking to coordinate the various member-state Special Forces as well as information on nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and ballistic missile programs. In addition to that, the global nature of terror has rendered the distinction between "in" and "out of area" virtually meaningless. Consequently, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice clearly stated that "unless you expect a war in Bonn, you know, then of course the wars are going to be out of area for NATO."[46] The territorial integrity of the Euro-Atlantic region is no longer at stake. Instead, instability and collapse of state structures in other regions threaten Western security through terrorism, proliferation of WMD, unstable supply of natural resources, migration, climate change, and pandemics. Thus, NATO must turn its focus to these global challenges outside its treaty territory and tackle the threats at their source. As U.S. Senator Richard G. Lugar argues, "to leave NATO focused solely an defending the peace in Europe from old threats would reduce it to a housekeeping role in an increasingly secure continent."[47] Hence, while there is a consensus on the fact that it is neither imaginable nor desirable for NATO to turn itself into a global security institution, its

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[44] Bhatty, Robert and Rachel Bronson. "NATO's Mixed Signals in the Caucasus and Central Asia", in: *Survival* 42/3 (Fall 2000), 129-141, 140/41.
[45] "NATO: Improve it, don't destroy it", in: *The Economist*, 16 November 2002, 14.
[46] Taylor, Adrian. TIES Webzine Interview with U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. June 2000.
[47] Lugar, Richard G. "NATO After 9/11 – Crisis or Opportunity?", Speech at the Council on Foreign Relations. Washington, D.C., 4 March 2002.

operating range should still be defined in global terms. This includes an increase of political influence through partnerships, activities, and new members but also the need for selectivity regarding applicants and conflicts. As NATO's General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer put it: "[T]he alliance must be an alliance with global partners not a global alliance."[48]

In any event, even though NATO's long-term potential may be virtually limitless, its future will depend on U.S. leadership for American military capabilities make up the bulk of NATO's capabilities. Throughout the 1990s, the alliance sought a new role in a changing geopolitical environment. Aiding the United Nations in resolving regional conflicts and humanitarian crises as well as protecting and advancing peace without UN backing, NATO constantly adapted to new situations rather than to define a new purpose for its organization. Critically, the inability of the EU to create a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and henceforth gain more clout in NATO's decision-making process has actually invited unilateral tendencies on behalf of the U.S. administration. As a result, NATO as a forum for transatlantic security consultation and cooperation has been increasingly sidelined by the U.S. in favor of more flexible alliances and bilateral partnerships that do not compromise Washington's freedom of action. Moreover, if NATO members fail to acknowledge the alliance's necessity to reach out globally, it will increasingly become even more unattractive for the U.S. which harbors and acts on predominantly global interests. All things left unchanged, NATO could eventually face a fate similar to that of the OSCE which has become a service *provider* of security but not a security *actor*.[49]

In the wake of September 11, 2001, and the re-emergence of familiar threats in a globalized shape in remote regions of the world, NATO must accept its global engagement as the rule – not the exception. However, without adapting NATO's institutional structures to these changes as well as bridging existing transatlantic gaps and differences, the Atlantic Alliance will almost certainly face down a road towards a loose and increasingly incompatible political and military structure without any transatlantic institutional arrangement to replace it.

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[48] Press Conference at the Summit of NATO Foreign Ministers in Sofia, Bulgaria, 27 April 2006.
[49] Schlotter, Peter. OSZE – Von "Kollektiver Sicherheit" zum "Dienstleistungsbetrieb", in: Ferdowski, Mir A. (ed.). Internationale Politik im 21. Jahrhundert. Munich 2002, 293-308.