

NATO in U.S. policymaking and debate - an analysis: 'drawing the map' of the U.S. think; tank debate on NATO since 9/11

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Kristina Klinkforth

**NATO in U.S. Policymaking and
Debate – An Analysis**

**‘Drawing the Map’ of the U.S. Think
Tank Debate on NATO since 9/11**

59_{/2006}

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Kristina Klinkforth

NATO in U.S. Policymaking and Debate – An Analysis

‘Drawing the Map’ of the U.S. Think Tank Debate
on NATO since 9/11

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, concerns about the future role of NATO have unleashed a substantial debate among U.S. foreign policy experts and think tank analysts. In performing a qualitative content analysis, this paper comprehends and analyzes the unfolding discussion about the role of NATO currently conducted in the United States.

In the policy-making process, think tanks are assumed to perform a double function. They shape the contents of a policy-relevant issue by advancing distinctive policy recommendations, and simultaneously carve out areas for consensus-building prior to the decisionmaking process. Accordingly, the first step of the analysis comprehends their approach, against which the line of argument regarding NATO as well as the policy recommendations are outlined. The prevailing issues of burden-sharing and NATO enlargement furthermore provide a guideline that leads through the analysis. In a second step, major differences and overlaps between the camps are identified in order to carve out trends that are likely to prevail in future NATO politics.

In the ensuing debate about NATO, four camps can be distinguished: libertarian, neoconservative, conservative, and liberal. While these camps outline distinct policy options, especially conservatives and liberals share the common objective of maintaining NATO well into the future. However, despite this commonly pursued goal, both camps remain skeptical towards NATO as a multilateral security organization and rather adopt an 'instrumentalist' view of NATO that is likely to extend into the future.

In focusing on the *input* provided by think tanks concerning a particular policy debate, rather than the outcome of specific policies, this analysis also addresses an insufficiently-researched area of foreign policymaking and identifies implications for follow-up studies.

Specifics of Quotation

The directory for literature is divided into a bibliography and a list of electronic sources, since a major part of the analyzed material is published on the web. Articles and monographs published in the same year by the same author are marked with lower case letters (e.g. Boot 2003a). Material published on the internet in the same year by the same author is marked with capital letters in order to avoid footnoting all respective websites, which can be found in the directory (e.g. Boot 2003A, online; Boot 2003B, online).

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1. Introduction

“American foreign policy at any times can only be understood with reference to its domestic sources.”¹

In June 2004, the international conference ‘The U.S.A. as a World Power,’ held by the Evangelische Akademie Loccum in cooperation with the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., revolved around the questions as to what principles guide U.S. foreign policy and how to deal with the United States’ current position as the world’s only remaining superpower. In this context, one of the main issues was the question of whether there is still a common transatlantic agenda for Europe and the United States in meeting current security challenges, especially since September 11, 2001, and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and to what extent the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO) will remain useful to help work on this agenda.

This question also seems to be emblematic for the current debate in transatlantic relations that are widely perceived to be in ‘crisis.’² While this debate predates ‘9/11,’³ it has gained momentum ever since, as the 9/11 attacks are presumed to have unleashed what is starkly defined as the “Bush Revolution in foreign policy.”⁴ On the European side of the Atlantic, the United States is continuously charged with reproaches of an ever-increasing ‘unilateralism’ and defiance of multinational organizations and international law.⁵ In the United States, meanwhile, it seems to have become fashionable to mock at European ‘weakness’ and deficiencies to cope with ‘real world’ problems. While some scholars in the United States seem to have drawn the final conclusion that Americans and Europeans are from different planets,⁶ in Europe, a “European response to the American challenge”⁷ is being called for. Both sides seem increasingly doubtful about the possibilities to formulate a new set

¹ Schweigler 2003, 57.

² Haftendorn speaks in this context of a transatlantic “estrangement,” Haftendorn 2003, 267. As Busse puts it: „What the hell happened to transatlantic relations? (...) Der kundige Beobachter erkennt erschreckt, dass nichts mehr so ist, wie es einmal war.“ Busse 2003, 19. A more comprehensive conceptualization of this observation has not yet been developed.

³ On account of issues on the transatlantic agenda predating 9/11, see Everts 2001; Haftendorn 2003.

⁴ Daalder/Lindsay 2003b. See also Rudolf, who understands 9/11 more generally as a “transformative moment” for U.S. foreign policy, Rudolf 2002, 7.

⁵ Everts 2001, 16.

⁶ Kagan 2002B, online.

⁷ Busse 2003, 23, translation K.K.

of 'strategic bargains' in meeting today's security challenges.⁸ Thus, Europe and the United States find themselves in "a second post-Cold War period of strategic transformation and redefinition,"⁹ which also leaves NATO at the crossroads once again.¹⁰ As Rühle notes,

"[t]oday's transatlantic security debate is, in essence, the debate that did not take place a little over a decade ago, when the Cold War ended. Back then, a fundamental discussion about the future shape of the transatlantic relationship seemed inevitable. But it was put off. There was simply too much unfinished business left over from the Cold War."¹¹

Far from constituting a dispute led exclusively in the transatlantic arena, Nye observes that also "Americans are divided over how to be involved with the rest of the world,"¹² especially in security politics. While the 9/11 attacks are commonly interpreted as a *symptom* for more fundamental changes in world politics arising from a new, post-bipolar order and attributing to a certain urgency to effectively meet new security challenges,¹³ they had a deep and lasting impact on policymaking and policy debate in the United States that have considered themselves at war ever since, leaving the United States now in a position where its foreign policymakers are free to consider different strategic choices.¹⁴ U.S. policymakers and foreign policy experts thus see themselves confronted with a most fundamental question:

"Where do we go from here? Americans are still wrestling with how best to combine our power and our values while reducing our vulnerabilities."¹⁵

In this context, the United States displays a mixed record vis-à-vis the use of NATO as a collective defense organization. After the organization had invoked the mutual

⁸ Hamilton 2003; Haftendorn 2003; Krause 2003.

⁹ Hamilton 2002, 154.

¹⁰ In the 1990's, NATO as a security institution had not been called into question by the United States. On the contrary, the United States sought to acquiesce European concerns about "out-of-area" missions and advocated a broader conception of NATO's tasks. The U.S. debate on NATO largely focused on the issue of the first round of NATO enlargement. On account of the "Open Door" policy during the Clinton administration, see Asmus 2002. A more critical view on NATO enlargement is offered by Brzezinski 1998. For a discussion of the strategic reorientation in the 1990's and the new strategic concepts, see Haftendorn 2003. On the new quality of today's debate, see Smith 2003, 14; Dowd 2003, online; Fugate 2002, online. On the perceived crisis of NATO, see Calleo 2003b, 17. See also Everts on account of this observation, 2001, 19.

¹¹ Rühle 2003, 90.

¹² Nye 2002, xiv.

¹³ Nye 2002, x; Segbers, 2003. Peel points out that, although political observers had first concluded that "the world will never be the same again," 9/11 did not change it as much as assumed. Instead, the issues and underlying trends that were apparent before 9/11 have simply re-emerged or gained momentum. 9/11 thus exacerbated already existing trends. Peel 2002, 20.

¹⁴ Haftendorn 2003. The United States argued that the 9/11 attacks have triggered its right for self-defense, which would also provide a basis for preemptive action. This interpretation also impacted on NATO, since Europeans tend to consider terrorism as acts of crime rather than acts of war. Busse 2003; Gießmann 2003; Schneckener 2003, 5.

¹⁵ Nye 2002, x.

defense clause enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the United States kept it sidelined in the ensuing war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Given this record, some scholars conclude that “the old alliance holds little promise to figure prominently in U.S. global strategic thinking” and is therefore “doomed.”¹⁶ At the same time, however, NATO seems far from being ‘finished business’ for the United States. In establishing the NATO-Russia-Council in May 2002 and in completing the second round of NATO enlargement in spring 2004, the Bush administration showed continued commitment towards NATO. Furthermore, statements by government officials emphasize the central role ascribed to NATO in the war on terrorism and the importance of revitalizing the transatlantic relationship.¹⁷ While NATO forces were finally permitted into Afghanistan and subsequently took over local stabilization efforts, NATO allies were also asked to contribute to post-conflict stabilization in Iraq. This mixed record partly mirrors the struggle between a number of different perspectives *within* the U.S. foreign policy establishment on how the United States should engage in the world and how old alliances fit into this picture.¹⁸ In addition to ranking high on the transatlantic agenda, NATO constitutes a major issue within the U.S. foreign policy establishment. Therefore, *capturing* and *describing* the debates on both sides of the Atlantic present necessary first steps to draw conclusions on the inner workings of what is perceived as a transatlantic ‘crisis’ in security politics. Within the limited scope of this paper, this analysis will exclusively focus on the U.S. debate on NATO, seeking to present a clear picture and to reveal major “battle lines”¹⁹ between different perspectives on this issue. ‘Drawing the map’ of the U.S. debate on security politics with regard to NATO and identifying its different strands will therefore be the objective of this analysis. Consequently, the *research question* guiding this paper is as follows:

What lines of argument and policy options are advanced to decision-makers and what are the main arguments prevailing in the U.S. debate on NATO?

How can this analysis be accomplished? Abelson points to the limited possibilities to research the inner circles of decisionmaking when lacking access to relevant sources

¹⁶ Gedmin 2002, A21.

¹⁷ See various statements by former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns. Online. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/usa/ambassador.html> (accessed 20 December 2003).

¹⁸ Hamilton 2002; Haftendorn 2003; Gießmann 2003; Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 288f.

¹⁹ Nye 2002, 154.

documenting actual decisionmaking processes.²⁰ However, “this battle [on NATO] has been fought publicly and during think-tank debates between proxies.”²¹

Accordingly, in order to reconstruct the current U.S. debate on NATO, this paper will focus on publications of foreign policy experts located in so-called ‘think tanks’ that have become an ever more visible actor in the political arena. With their statements being made publicly available, this approach furthermore allows for capturing the *entire* debate on NATO that is being conducted in the United States.

Apart from satisfying a purely hermeneutic interest,²² this approach also addresses a major shortcoming in academic research: Think tanks, although remaining at the margins of government, have assumed an important role in the fields of agenda-setting and the creation and dissemination of distinct, policy-relevant research and recommendations on specific issues. However, as Keohane and Nye have already noted, “[t]raditional analysts of international politics have paid little attention to agenda formation: to how issues come to receive sustained attention by high officials.”²³ As Abelson points out, “[i]n part, this may be attributed to the growing tendency of political scientists to concentrate more on explaining policy *outcomes* than evaluating policy *inputs*.”²⁴ This analysis, therefore, is concerned with the ‘input’ side of foreign policymaking by focusing on the policy options advanced by think tank analysts, thus seeking to shed light on an insufficiently-researched subject of foreign policy analysis. In arguing that domestic actors can exert influence on policymaking, this analysis therefore assumes an interconnectedness between foreign affairs and domestic politics.²⁵ This notion leads back to the introductory statement that “American foreign policy (...) can only be understood with reference to its domestic sources.”

In order to evaluate *input* and to pay tribute to the complexity of the subject, the debate’s *content* needs to be captured and described in the first place. This task will

²⁰ Abelson 1996, 3.

²¹ DeYoung 2001, 1.

²² Some analysts warn that the most fashionable talk about American “hyperpower” and European “weakness” renders a serious attempt to find common ground in the transatlantic debate impossible, thus leading to a serious misjudgment of current issues. It will therefore be necessary to take a closer look at the issues and proposals advanced on both sides. Krause 2003; Mols 2003.

²³ Keohane/Nye 1989, 32.

²⁴ Abelson 1996, 19, emphasis added.

²⁵ The analysis therefore fits into the findings of scholars such as Robert Putnam, who champions the notion of ‘two-level games,’ thus seeking to provide an analytical framework for analyzing the impact of domestic actors on foreign policymaking, Putnam 1993. On the assumption that policymakers seek advice of non-state actors such as think tanks see also Abelson 1996, 126.

be performed in the following analysis. It will carve out distinct perspectives advanced by think tank scholars against the backdrop of their respective analytical approach. The systematic description of the content in question and the identification of considerable overlaps between these positions that are likely to provide common ground for internal consensus-building is furthermore assumed to be a necessary prerequisite allowing for subsequent causal analysis.

In brief, the future role of NATO in transatlantic security relations once again ranks high on the transatlantic agenda. Scholars on transatlantic security relations, however, are confronted with a fragmented, though fervently led foreign policy debate on NATO in the United States. In order to draw conclusions on current rifts over transatlantic security policy, it is necessary to describe and analyze the different perspectives offered in the United States on NATO in the first place. This will be achieved by the structured analysis of communication content. This analysis looks at the input side of policymaking, thus helping address an insufficiently-researched realm of studies on foreign policymaking.

Chapter two provides insight into the main tasks and functions of think tanks, and gives a more detailed outline of the method of qualitative content analysis applied here, as well as a brief discussion of its strengths and shortcomings.

Chapter three presents the empirical material by mapping four different perspectives on NATO. Chapter four focuses on significant differences and overlaps between these perspectives. Chapter five summarizes the findings and identifies major trends in the U.S. NATO debate. Furthermore, it discusses these findings with regard to theoretical implications and identifies questions for follow-up studies.

2. Methodological Approach

2.1 The Role of Think Tanks in U.S. Foreign Policymaking and Debate

The process of U.S. foreign policymaking can be regarded as highly pluralistic and competitive, with a complex set of actors constituting a deeply fragmented U.S. governmental system. Domestic actors constantly attempt to engage in agenda-setting, thus leading to 'politicization' and 'agitation and controversy' about certain

issues.²⁶ Scholars of foreign policymaking have constructed a vast array of models and theoretical focuses to capture the “hyper pluralistic nature of American society”²⁷ and decisionmaking processes. The inherent constraints of bureaucracy, psychological pressures policymakers have to cope with, and competing interests between various U.S. agencies represent but a small number of theoretical approaches developed to describe and explain foreign policy choices.²⁸

These models, however, tend to overlook actors that help shape foreign policy options *prior* to the decisionmaking process. Given the openness of the U.S. political system for external expertise and sources of advice, U.S. foreign policymaking is not limited to policy-makers themselves, but is also shaped in critical ways by actors not formally involved in the policymaking process, such as the media, interest groups, and think tanks. U.S. foreign policymaking thus entails forging consensus among these diverse actors that influence policy outcomes in- *and* outside government. Additionally, as Keohane and Nye note, the proliferation of foreign policy-relevant issues policymakers have to focus on, steadily exasperate “the problems of formulating a coherent and consistent foreign policy (...)”²⁹ and prompt a growing need for consultation and expertise. The ‘divided government’ and ‘Balkanized’ executive branch departments as well as a weak party discipline have furthermore increased the demand for ‘intellectual ammunition’ in the U.S. policymaking process.³⁰ Think tanks therefore present a new political actor satisfying these needs and providing key input into the process of foreign policy formulation. Abelson concludes,

“think tanks in the United States are in many respects unique. In no other country they have assumed such a visible role on the political landscape or been able and willing to rely on various governmental and nongovernmental channels to help shape the nation’s political, economic and social agenda.”³¹

‘Think tank’ is an umbrella term that can be applied to different kinds of organizations. Until now, a wide variety of different *definitions* has accumulated.³² Surveys of the

²⁶ Keohane/Nye 1989, 33.

²⁷ McGunn, quoted in Stone 1996, 40.

²⁸ For an extensive discussion of theoretical models of foreign policymaking such as the rational actor model, bureaucratic models of decisionmaking, studies of the psychology of decisionmaking, elite and interest-group models of decisionmaking and a discussion of their shortcomings see Abelson 1996, 103-118.

²⁹ Keohane/Nye 1989, 27.

³⁰ Braml 2004, 282.

³¹ Abelson 1996, 2.

³² For an overview of the various labels attached to think tanks as well as attempts to develop a comprehensive definition see Stone 1996, 9ff.

think tank landscape in the United States have also encountered difficulty in providing a concluding typology of think tanks. They vary considerably in size, financial resources, staffing, and areas of specialization. Furthermore, they differ in their organizational features, the constituencies they choose to serve, and their ideological orientation.³³ According to a minimalist definition, however, a think tank can be defined as a non-profit and independent organization engaged in public policy research.³⁴ Former Brookings President Bruce MacLaury widened the definition by describing think tanks as “organization[s] that appl[y] academic skills to public policy questions through research, publication, and educational outreach.”³⁵ According to Stone, think tanks are organizationally independent from corporate or other interests as well as from governmental agencies by their status as non-profit organizations. Furthermore, they are intellectually independent, determine their own research agendas³⁶ and “are typified by a desire to inform the policy process.”³⁷

Think tanks can be separated into two broad categories or typologies:

1. Independent research organizations or ‘old guard’ institutes, characterized by heavy reliance on academic research and strong academic orientations;
2. Advocacy or ‘new partisan’ institutes that seek to put an ‘ideological spin’ on their research. New partisans can be divided into conservative, neoconservative, liberal-progressive, and libertarian institutes, thus representing different positions on the political spectrum.³⁸

In trying to capture their *function*, Smith maintains that think tanks “grapple with the larger questions of American purpose and are thereby helping policymakers to think more creatively about policy options.”³⁹ They furthermore “narrow the parameters of political debate (...) and they can give a realistic and pragmatic cast to debates.”⁴⁰ They do so by presenting interdisciplinary, science-based contributions to policymaking, and engaging in what has been termed research brokerage.⁴¹

³³ Reinicke 1996, 29.

³⁴ Reinicke 1996, 28; Stone 1996, 1, 12.

³⁵ Quoted in Reinicke 1996, 29.

³⁶ This feature distinguishes think tanks from contract research organizations, which produce research for specific government agencies. Their research agendas are determined by the research preferences of the paying agency. RAND, though usually labeled a think tank, is an example of contract research organizations. Therefore, its publications will not be taken into account in this analysis. Reinecke 1996, 30f.; Stone 1996, 19.

³⁷ Stone 1996, 15.

³⁸ Reinicke 1996, 30f. See also Ricci 1993, 19f.; Abelson 1996, 4; Stone 1996, 5.

³⁹ Quoted in Reinecke 1996, 40f.

⁴⁰ Landers, quoted in Reinecke 1996, 41.

⁴¹ Ricci 1993, 19; Stone 1996, 11.

Research brokerage constitutes “a process of conveying social scientific knowledge from universities and affiliated research organisations to the world of politics and decision-making.”⁴²

In the application of social science to public questions, policy experts derive rationales from abstract concepts and use them for outlining policy recommendations.⁴³ They therefore mold their policy recommendations in an argumentative framework consistent with a specific analytical approach,⁴⁴ thus also capturing a ‘niche’ on the competitive ‘marketplace of ideas’ to compete for influence and constituencies.⁴⁵ In so doing, they identify, articulate, and evaluate current or emerging issues, thus serving as an important catalyst for agenda-setting.⁴⁶

Think tanks employ a number of *strategies* to reach out to decision-makers. Apart from drawing up in-depth analyses on specific policy issues, think tank analysts may participate in campaigns or invite members of Congress, government officials as well as journalists to lunches, panel discussions, seminars, and lecture series in order to showcase their ideas.⁴⁷ Moreover, they may appear as guests on talk shows or testify before Congress or special committees on a wide range of issues. In addition, a lot of think tank analysts cycle in and out of government, thus constantly remaining involved in policy formation.⁴⁸ Considering their ability to provide forums for debate, they may also help mold *areas of consensus* in policy conflicts. In this respect, think tanks not only advance *distinct* policy proposals, but simultaneously act as *mediators* and platforms for consensus-building prior to the decisionmaking process.

Notwithstanding the assumed role think tanks play in the provision of input for policymakers, it is hard to measure the overall degree to which think tanks exert

⁴² Stone 1996, 122.

⁴³ Smith 1991, 17.

⁴⁴ Many policy analysts hope to add to the corpus of scientific literature. There is, however, a tension between sustaining academic legitimacy and speaking to the discipline on the one hand, and the brokerage function and engagement with policy institutes on the other. Although the tension between “the scholar” and “the practitioner” is unlikely to be resolved, think tanks can act as centers for communication between both worlds. For examples of intersections of scholarship and policy see Stone 1996, 203ff.

⁴⁵ Braml 2004, 284; Abelson 1996, 66; Smith 1991, 190ff.

⁴⁶ Braml 2004, 51f. In general, think tanks are resources of political ideas and proposals as well as evaluators of policies and programs. They offer forums for debate and are arbiters of political dialogue. They provide expertise in a specific policy field and are sources for future reference. Reinicke 1996, 32ff. In case universities perform contract research for governmental agencies, a *direct* link between universities and policymakers is installed. Furthermore, academics may also be asked to serve in government. Academic scholars can also provide necessary advice to government officials, either as consultants or as public testifiers before Congress. Often, however, academic scholars are associated with a think tank, thus combining scholarly research with policy-oriented research. Reinecke 1996, 34.

⁴⁷ Abelson 1996, 67ff.

⁴⁸ Abelson 1996, 71; Stone 1996, 124.

influence on policymaking. However, since agendas and policy considerations are increasingly undertaken outside government and before policymakers become actively involved in the decisionmaking process, think tanks can influence *how* policy is debated, thus exercising a ‘structural impact’ on foreign policymaking. As Stone concludes,

“there is little doubt that [think tanks] help provide the conceptual language, the ruling paradigms, the empirical examples that became the accepted assumptions for those in charge of making policy.”⁴⁹

To sum up, think tanks and their personnel have become an important actor in the foreign policymaking process. Although they are not part of the formal policymaking arena, they provide decision-makers with input and expertise on issues of political concern. In order to be able to compete in the ‘marketplace of ideas,’ they mold their arguments in a specific way, drawing on academic research and transforming it into policy-informing analyses for decisionmaking. In so doing, they perform two functions. First, by advancing *distinct* policy recommendations, they shape the political debate *prior* to the decisionmaking process. Second, by providing platforms for public discussion, they also help mold areas for consensus-building. These two functions will be taken into account when outlining the methodological approach and performing the analysis.

2.2 Capturing the Debate – Methodological Approach

As Abelson states, “[b]y relying on various governmental and nongovernmental channels, think-tanks, either acting alone or in concert with other actors in the political process, have attempted to influence the *content* and outcome of major policy initiatives.”⁵⁰ Accordingly, a number of different perspectives rival for domination in this ongoing communication process. In this analysis, their description will be achieved by the structured analysis of communication content.⁵¹ Rust, who first sought to establish the method of qualitative content analysis⁵² defines it as the

⁴⁹ Stone 1996, 110.

⁵⁰ Abelson 1996, 90, emphasis added.

⁵¹ Content can be defined as a means by which one person or group of persons communicates with another.

⁵² The term “content analysis” originally referred to a quantitative technique of communication research, but has been extended to “qualitative” analysis since the method was criticized as being too superficial and not able to cover the deeper “meaning” of content by focusing exclusively on quantifiable techniques. Furthermore, quantitative analysis was strongly criticized for the “atomization” of content. Instead, by “qualitatively” reconstructing main lines of argument, the material was assumed to be able to “speak for itself.” The dispute between “quantitative” and “qualitative” analysis had already started in the 1950s, when Bernard Berelson and Sebastian Kracauer strongly advocated their respective concepts. Definitions of the term are very specific and

“[c]lassification, fixation of contours of the research object in its context, disassociation against other objects and the general characterization of its inner composition.”⁵³

Thus, qualitative content analysis “identifies and describes the linguistic characteristics of a text objectively and systematically in order to draw conclusions on non-linguistic characteristics of persons and social aggregates.”⁵⁴

Qualitative content analysis entails the description and analysis of a *specific* body of content that needs to be properly defined. It furthermore requires a *systematic* approach to work on the given body of content.⁵⁵ The material in focus must be available in a *fixed* form *prior* to the analysis, e.g. in documents, protocols, articles etc. The systematic analysis of documents can be defined as

“a research technique allowing for conclusions that can be generalized beyond the single analyzed document by a systematic and objective identification of elements of any kind of item carrying meaning.”⁵⁶

Furthermore, fixed documents enable the researcher to reconstruct social processes that exist independently from the respective research question, thus allowing for repeated analysis.⁵⁷

One of the central contributions of qualitative content analysis is the establishment of assumed *inferences* about the relationship between either intent and content or content and effect.⁵⁸ This analysis assumes that communication content presented by think tank analysts will exert a certain effect on policymakers. However, it will

exclusive. Despite its shortcomings to fully capture the wide range of content analysis procedures, the term “content analysis” is also used in this study. For a critical discussion of the term see Mayring 1983, 22ff.

⁵³ “Klassifikation, Festlegung der Konturen eines Untersuchungsgegenstandes in seinem Kontext, Abgrenzung gegen andere Objekte und die allgemeine Charakterisierung seiner inneren Beschaffenheit.“ Rust 1981, 196, translation K.K. As Mayring points out, however, the difficulties to define qualitative content analysis as an analytical tool stems also from the broad range of material the analysis can focus on. The body of content does not have to satisfy specific features. It can incorporate private conversation – i.e. psychoanalytic interviews – as well as mass communication procedures such as radio communications, or conversations between specific groups of society. It may also focus on written as well as oral content. Mayring 1983, 10; Berelson 1952, 13ff.

⁵⁴ Mayntz/Holm/Hübner describe content analysis as follows: „[Eine Methode, die die] sprachlichen Eigenschaften eines Textes objektiv und systematisch identifiziert und beschreibt, um daraus Schlußfolgerungen auf nicht-sprachliche Eigenschaften von Personen und gesellschaftlichen Aggregaten zu ziehen.“ 1974, 151.

⁵⁵ Mayring points out that there is no comprehensive set of qualitative methods; they may vary in each study. See Mayring on this problem, 1983, 10, 24.

⁵⁶ „Forschungstechnik, mit der man aus jeder Art von Bedeutungsträgern durch systematische und objektive Identifizierung ihrer Elemente Schlüsse ziehen kann, die über das einzelne analysierte Dokument hinaus verallgemeinerbar sein sollen.“ Kromrey 1994, 232, translation K.K.

⁵⁷ Kromrey 1994, 292.

⁵⁸ Berelson admits that there have only been very few studies that have concretely demonstrated the nature or the extent of the relationship between content on the one hand, and intent or effect on the other. Berelson 1952, 18; Mayring 1983, 10f.

focus on describing and analyzing the content rather than attempting to track its actual effects in decisionmaking. Performing qualitative analysis entails three steps:

1. The body of content that is to be analyzed needs to be defined;
2. The material that is to be analyzed has to be contextualized;
3. The procedure of the qualitative content analysis is to be outlined.⁵⁹

2.2.1 Defining the Material

The material looked at in this analysis is composed of a variety of *written documents* and other sources that have been published by think tank analysts:

1. Books and articles published in academic journals;
2. Articles published in newspapers and columns;
3. Op-eds and short statements mostly published on the web;
4. Interviews with or testimonies of the respective analysts .

Today, there is a “bewildering array” of think tanks in the United States.⁶⁰ Although this analysis seeks to present all issues discussed and options advanced on NATO in the United States, a sample of relevant material needs to be selected. This analysis will rely on the publications of ten major think tanks in the United States.

It draws on the material of five think tanks considered as research institutes: The Brookings Institution, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Council on Foreign Relations, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Although research institutes consider themselves non-partisan, they can be associated with a more liberal (Carnegie Endowment, Brookings Institution) or conservative (American Enterprise Institute)⁶¹ agenda. Furthermore, this paper draws on publications of two conservative advocacy think tanks – the Heritage Foundation and the Hudson Institute – as well as two liberal advocacy think tanks – the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) and the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS). The libertarian perspective is represented by the Cato Institute.⁶²

⁵⁹ Mayring 1983, 40ff.

⁶⁰ Stone 1996, 18.

⁶¹ Although the American Enterprise Institute is today often classified as “neoconservative,” in its beginning AEI took a distinctively conservative perspective. Braml 2004, 278.

⁶² Libertarians usually focus on economic affairs and believe in ‘small government.’ However, in security politics, the Cato Institute speaks to a constituency that is considered “neo-isolationist” in orientation. This constituency is rather small; Cato Institute represents the only *major* institute outlining policy proposals for it.

However, since not all think tanks are ideologically conform, different perspectives on an issue may be advanced within the same think tank, sparking considerable discussion *within* the organization itself. Therefore, rather than ascribing a specific perspective to a think tank in general, this study will focus on the respective analyses of the *individual* think tank scholars.

2.2.2 Contextualizing the Material - Contending Views on U.S. Foreign Policy

Debates among foreign policy experts about a given policy issue have already been subject to scholarly research.⁶³ However, as Hamilton points out, an attempt to classify the different perspectives on a public policy issue in the United States raises the problem of how to adequately *label* them in order to be able to categorize and restructure their respective lines of argument. Characterizing them as comprehensive and exclusive ‘schools of thought’ may risk giving the debate more coherence than it actually has, while at the same time neglecting considerable overlaps existent between the different positions.⁶⁴ Instead, this analysis will resort to the term ‘camp’ in order to distinguish between the different perspectives. In this understanding, a camp is constituted by a variety of *individual* scholars that roughly share a common view on a *particular* public policy issue against the background of a specific approach. In performing their respective analyses, they positively refer to and reinforce each other’s findings. With regard to the objective of this analysis, “drawing out such distinctions may help to illuminate different ways American opinion leaders think about the issue,”⁶⁵ while at the same time also providing room for exploring considerable overlaps *between* the different camps. How, then, can the respective camps be labeled? Until now, this task was solved in different ways by scholars who focus on contending perspectives that prompt distinct policy implications on foreign policy issues in the United States.⁶⁶

However, attempts to adequately label the different camps that advance policy options on current security politics with regard to NATO too often remain unclear and diffuse. While some labels refer to the kind of policy proposals the camps are likely to promote, others are oriented towards the approach undergirding the respective argument.

⁶³ Hamilton 2002; Thränert 2002.

⁶⁴ Hamilton 2002.

⁶⁵ Hamilton 2002, 148.

⁶⁶ Asmus 2003; Nye 2002; Maynes 2001.

Nye therefore seeks to assign more *political* labels to the camps of foreign policy experts dominant in the current U.S. security debate. He starts out by observing that “[t]he debate today, however, is not only between the isolationists and internationalists, but also within the internationalist camp, which is split between unilateralists and multilateralists.”⁶⁷ Drawing on his analysis, four different camps can be distinguished.

1. The first camp that Nye classifies as ‘neo-isolationist’ in outlook is largely made up of scholars from the *libertarian* Cato Institute. By adopting a structural realist approach, they argue that the United States should engage in the world only selectively. In referring to John Quincy Adams’s famous 1821 assertion that the United States “goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy” they argue that the United States should disengage from the world, especially in security politics.⁶⁸

2. The second camp is made up of *neoconservatives* who advance a ‘new unilateralism’ combined with a “Reaganite variant of Wilsonianism”⁶⁹ that recognizes the uniqueness of the unipolar world. In contrast to libertarians, they advocate the strong promotion of U.S. values and interests abroad.

3. According to Nye, even before 9/11, this prescription was challenged by both liberals and conservatives. *Conservatives*, who consider themselves realists, closely focus on the pursuit of the national interest in a balance-of-power system as the most stable configuration of the international landscape.

4. *Liberals*, on the contrary, pursue a neo-liberal institutionalist approach on the conduct of foreign security policy; they stress the promotion of democracy and human rights within the context of international institutions.⁷⁰

This differentiation into four *political* camps seems apt to capture the current think tank debate in the United States, since think tanks are at the nexus of academics and practical policymaking and therefore design and advance policy proposals for a *specific political constituency* in Congress or government. Furthermore, these labels roughly correspond to the political orientation of think tanks.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Nye 2002, xiv.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of this group see Nye 2002, 148f.

⁶⁹ Nye 2002, 147. Ikenberry, by referring to Hassner’s phrase, labels neoconservatives as “Wilsonian in boots,” 2004, 10. On the “new unilateralism” see Krauthammer 2001, A29.

⁷⁰ Nye 2002, 148ff. On account of different foreign policy traditions that are mirrored in today’s political landscape see Schweigler 2003.

⁷¹ See section 2.1

With regard to the *time frame*, this analysis will take into account think tank publications from September 2001 until March 2004.⁷² It does not look at the material chronologically, since think tank analysts did not substantially alter their lines of arguments due to certain events, but rather referred to them *within* their respective argumentation. The current debate on NATO is far from being finished. This analysis can therefore only capture a part of the current debate that is to be continued well into the future.

2.2.3 Procedure of the Analysis

The analysis will proceed in two steps. First, the material will be captured and described. Therefore, *guiding questions* that naturally flow from the research question are established in order to lead through the analysis.⁷³ For each camp (libertarian, neoconservative, conservative, liberal), the following guiding questions will be looked at:

1. How are the analysts' arguments molded (approach)?
2. What is the main line of argument concerning NATO (agenda)? How is NATO's role being assessed in this context?
3. Which strategies are being proposed?

Second, drawing on the findings of the material's description, the main *differences and overlaps* between the camps will be extracted in order to carve out the main topics prevailing in the U.S. NATO debate and to point to trends that may determine it well into the future. In the following, a brief background is provided and the first step of the analysis is performed.

⁷² The NATO Summit in March 2004, which completed the second round of NATO enlargement, will mark the end of this analysis.

⁷³ As Mayring points out, the lack of a well-established set of specific methods presents one of the main disadvantages of qualitative analysis. Guiding questions, however, allow for capturing the content with regard to the respective research question; Mayring 1983.

3. Empirical Analysis

3.1 Background

In this section, a brief overview of the main events that have occurred since 9/11 in the context of NATO will be sketched out.⁷⁴ Two major trends can be observed that will be focused on in the following: First, U.S. ignorance vis-à-vis NATO's attempts to act as a military alliance in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing breakdown of its relevance in military terms. Second, the ongoing U.S. commitment to bring about NATO reform as well as the second round of NATO enlargement.

As John Hulsman, scholar at the Heritage Foundation, maintains, “[o]ne of the most underreported stories in the wake of the 9/11 attacks was the non-use of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.”⁷⁵ In the aftermath of 9/11, for the first time since NATO came into being, Article 5⁷⁶ of the North Atlantic Treaty was invoked, declaring an attack on one member of the alliance an attack against all. However, following this commitment, NATO was deliberately bypassed by the United States: “[The] image of the three Musketeers was quickly belied by the American response (...): Thanks, but no thanks. Washington saw the alliance as simply not worth the bother.”⁷⁷ Apart from the rather symbolic deployment of NATO AWACS surveillance planes for the United States to assist in the air cover, NATO as a military alliance was not assigned any role by the United States in response to the 9/11 attacks. After having rejected NATO's offers to participate in the mission in Afghanistan, the United States instead assembled a ‘coalition of the willing,’ including, but not limited to, a number of NATO allies.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ An extensive discussion is provided by Lansford 2003.

⁷⁵ Hulsman 2002, online.

⁷⁶ “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked (...).” North Atlantic Treaty, Article 5. Online. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm> (accessed June 20, 2004).

⁷⁷ Hulsman 2002, online. Article 5 was invoked due to an initiative of NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson, not in response to a U.S. request. Haftendorn 2003, 254.

⁷⁸ Cooper 2003, 190. Great Britain proved to be the only NATO member that had troops and equipment at its disposal that were deployable abroad. Major coalition partners outside of the formal NATO structure were Russia and Central Asian countries as well as Pakistan. An overview is provided by Haftendorn 2003.

The formal adoption of the policy of preemption outlined in the National Security Strategy of the United States⁷⁹ in September 2002 added to a growing sense that the Bush administration would continue to reject traditional alliances and instead adopt a unilateralist approach, thus becoming “less bound to its partners and to global rules and institutions while [stepping] forward to play a more unilateral and anticipatory role in attacking terrorist threats and confronting rogue states seeking weapons of mass destruction.”⁸⁰ In addition, fears raised that U.S. action would become increasingly unpredictable; in the State of the Union Address in January 2002, President Bush referred to Iran, Iraq, and North-Korea as ‘axis of evil’ and accused them of harboring terrorists and seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction.⁸¹

Moreover, the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., triggered the Bush administration’s ‘war on terrorism’ and the call for ‘regime change’ in Iraq with the removal of Iraq’s leader Saddam Hussein, who was accused of developing weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorists, especially the international terror network Al-Qaeda.⁸² Although individual NATO allies were asked to consider a range of contributions, including non-combat activities, NATO as an alliance was initially neither expected to play a direct role in Iraq nor was it comprehensively consulted on this issue.⁸³ Furthermore, while UN Security Council Resolution 1441 provided a basis on which Iraq was called upon to disarm, consensus among NATO member states fell apart over how the resolution should be backed up. The ensuing rupture over the legitimization of a military intervention in Iraq in the United Nations Security Council in February and March 2003 additionally “placed the United States squarely at odds with some of its closest NATO allies,” thus exacerbating transatlantic tensions and leading to an unprecedented split in the transatlantic alliance.⁸⁴ In this context, France, Germany, and Belgium blocked the U.S. request to transfer military equipment to Turkey in the event of an Iraq war by arguing that this would be viewed

⁷⁹ National Security Strategy of the United States (2002): Online. Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html> (accessed 20 February 2004).

⁸⁰ Ikenberry, quoted in Cooper 2003, 191.

⁸¹ State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002. Online. Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01> (accessed June 1, 2004). Furthermore, Bush posited a stark choice in saying “Either you are with us, (...) or you are with the terrorists.” Quoted in De Young 2001, A01. For an account of the stark rhetoric employed after 9/11 by President Bush, see Daalder 2003; Rudolf 2002.

⁸² Cooper 2003, 179.

⁸³ However, as Loeb and Ricks point out, there has been considerable disagreement over this issue within the administration. While Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld answered a question about what role NATO might possibly have in Iraq by saying that the administration had not even proposed it, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz had outlined steps NATO could take in Iraq as early as December 2002. Loeb/Ricks 2002, A35.

⁸⁴ Cooper 2003, 179.

as inappropriate NATO endorsement of an ill-advised military action. This “rare display of defiance of U.S military leadership” has additionally pushed the alliance “into one of its deepest crises ever.”⁸⁵

As the rhetoric about the Iraq policy became more heated, however, a deep split emerged within Europe itself. According to a statement by U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the countries eventually falling in line with the United States were referred to as ‘new Europe,’ as opposed to ‘old Europe.’ The latter term in particular referred to France and Germany, both of which continued to reject the prospect of regime change in Iraq, with France being ready to use its veto power in the UN Security Council to oppose, and eventually block, a resolution aimed at authorizing a military strike on Iraq.⁸⁶ In brief, this situation has led some foreign policy and security experts to ask whether the long-standing alliance can weather the rapidly changing security environment. As Kissinger concludes, NATO’s bypassing as a military alliance as well as the differences over Iraq have “produced the gravest crisis in the Atlantic Alliance since its creation five decades ago.”⁸⁷

While having kept NATO sidelined from any relevant military action, the United States, however, has simultaneously continued to substantially contribute to NATO reform, arguing that NATO should be able to engage in post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization efforts.⁸⁸ In this context, NATO was eventually given a role in Afghanistan as a stabilization and peacekeeping force. As early as December 2001, British and Turkish troops were the first to take over command of the peacekeeping force in Kabul.⁸⁹ Furthermore, as former U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns pointed out, “[w]e’re deconstructing the old NATO to build a new one to meet the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.”⁹⁰ At the NATO Summit in Prague in November 2002, President Bush made clear that NATO then still constituted an important tool for the United States; however, it needed to be transformed. “A strong and vibrant NATO is in the best interests of America, so we’ll

⁸⁵ Cooper 2003, *ibidem*. See also Ignatius 2003, A31 on account of this issue.

⁸⁶ Cooper 2003, 194.

⁸⁷ Kissinger 2003, A21.

⁸⁸ See various statements by former U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns. Online. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/usa/ambassador.html> (accessed 20 December 2003).

⁸⁹ This NATO mission was the first one entirely conducted out of Europe, thus finally terminating the “out-of-area” debate that had dominated the 1990’s. Cooper 2003, 192; Graham/Kaiser 2002, A14.

⁹⁰ Burns, quoted in Dowd 2003, online.

be active and good partners,” he vowed and added pointedly, “we expect the same from our NATO friends.”⁹¹

Responding to concerns about military capabilities, alliance members adopted the ‘Prague Capabilities Commitment’ at the NATO Summit in Prague in November 2002. Allies committed to modernize alliance forces and improve key capabilities for modern military operations.⁹² This commitment succeeded and streamlined the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), set up in 1999.⁹³ The ‘new NATO’ was expected to build up new command procedures and capabilities. This view was also reinforced by then NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson. In this context, NATO leaders agreed to the U.S. proposal to forge a 21,000-man NATO Response Force (NRF), to which member states are expected to voluntarily contribute specialty units, thereby accentuating their strengths. Furthermore, an agreement on a Partnership Action Plan against terrorism was reached at the Prague Summit, in which NATO was defined as a focal instrument for any multilateralist response to international terrorism.⁹⁴ This statement was given credibility with the agreement to provide Germany and the Netherlands with NATO planning and support as they assumed command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The second round of NATO expansion, including the Baltic states, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria, was another major project accomplished in 2002. At the Prague Summit, seven new members to NATO were formally admitted and scheduled to join NATO in 2004. The second round of enlargement was eventually completed in March 2004, thus expanding the alliance to a membership of 26. Thus, a ‘double’ enlargement of membership and mandate took place at the ‘Transformation Summit’ in Prague.

In brief, the U.S. record on NATO since 9/11 is mixed.⁹⁵ While NATO was given no credibility as a military alliance in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the United States simultaneously became the main driving force of NATO’s ‘double enlargement’ at the

⁹¹ Bush, quoted in Dowd 2003, *ibidem*.

⁹² This commitment was designed to eventually quadruple the number of outsize aircraft in Europe, to establish air-to-air refueling aircraft, to ensure that most of NATO’s high-readiness forces will be equipped with chemical, radiological, biological, and nuclear defense capabilities, and to increase European precision-guided munitions. Cooper 2003, 192; Rühle 2003, 95.

⁹³ The DCI identified more than 400 areas in which capability improvement was deemed necessary. However, this transformation aim was not considered realistic.

⁹⁴ Rühle 2003, 93.

⁹⁵ The policies of the Bush administration vis-à-vis NATO are commented on in very different terms: While some observe the emergence of a new “grand strategy,” others complain about the continued lack of a clear strategy, especially with regard to the Iraq intervention. Ignatius 2002, A31.

Prague Summit. Consequently, two issues crystallized in the current U.S. debate on NATO. First, NATO's ability to share the security burden with the United States is critically discussed. Second, potential benefits and perils arising from NATO enlargement are assessed. These two issues will provide focal points for the reconstruction of the camps' lines of argument. In the following, the first step of the analysis is performed. The analysis will start out with the camp most critical of continued U.S. commitment in NATO.

3.2 The Case for Decoupling from a NATO Worse than Useless⁹⁶

A rather critical strand of scholars mostly affiliated with the Cato Institute⁹⁷ maintains that "NATO is irrelevant without an enemy."⁹⁸ In this view, NATO has irrevocably lost its *raison d'être* with the end of the Cold War and is not suited to address the security challenges of the 21st century. Against the odds, however, NATO is not disappearing, as realist scholars had predicted after the end of the Cold War. It has thus become an expensive and dangerous anachronism in the post-Cold War era; therefore, the United States should withdraw from a perilous security engagement with Europe. Libertarian scholars adopt a structural realist approach. In connecting the burden-sharing issue with NATO enlargement, they point to the perils arising from an extended U.S. security guarantee to strategically irrelevant regions. In this view, the United States will inevitably encounter rising powers that are irritated by the U.S. extended defense parameter and will therefore seek to counterbalance it. Furthermore, European 'freeriding' due to its military weakness will accelerate the process of U.S. decline. In the following, the approach, the line of argument, as well as the policy recommendations advanced by this camp are sketched out.

3.2.1 Approach

Scholars affiliated with Cato Institute maintain that the structural realist school's concepts of structural anarchy, self-help, and security competition are still applicable and extremely useful when thinking about implications for foreign policy.⁹⁹ Layne

⁹⁶ Tupy 2003, online.

⁹⁷ In the following, the analysis relies on a number of seminal texts and analyses of scholars affiliated with Cato Institute like Christopher Layne, Ivan Eland, Ted Galen Carpenter, and Doug Bandow.

⁹⁸ Bandow 2002, online.

⁹⁹ Dunne and Schmidt point out that realism does not constitute a single coherent theory. Instead, there is "a variety of realisms" proposing contending views on the nature of conflict in international affairs and ways to

argues “[t]he simple answer is that international politics remains fundamentally what it has always been: A competitive arena in which states struggle to survive.”¹⁰⁰

Structural realism rests on a number of distinct assumptions. International politics is determined by a struggle for power¹⁰¹ in a system characterized by structural anarchy. States constitute the dominant actors in world politics and are seen as coherent units with sovereignty¹⁰² as their distinguishing trait. Survival constitutes their primary objective. In a perilous international environment, states therefore compete with other states for security and influence. This competition is often seen in ‘zero-sum’ terms: One actor’s gain means the other actor’s loss. While other instruments may also be employed, force is seen as the most effective one to protect vital security interests. Accordingly, security politics constitute the realm of ‘high politics’ as opposed to the ‘low politics’ of other means not directed towards ultimate survival.

If one state becomes more powerful than others, it will inevitably be perceived as a threat to survival; accordingly, weaker states will seek to reduce this threat and strengthen their position vis-à-vis the stronger state. Two strategies are likely to be employed in so doing. First, if one power becomes dominant, other states will seek to ‘counterbalance’ it and band together in order to offset it.¹⁰³ Second, ‘bandwagoning’ with the powerful state is more likely to be employed as a strategy in case the dominant power has acquired too much strength or is viewed as a ‘benign hegemon.’ Despite benign intent, however, a dominant power will naturally continue to behave in ways that are frightening to others, until its power is again brought into balance.¹⁰⁴ Security can thus only be ensured by self-help and the constant accumulation of power.¹⁰⁵ No other state can reliably guarantee for survival in the long-term.

In a system with balance-of-power governing international relations and security dilemmas representing the defining moments for policy generation, political

cope with it. In the course of this analysis, different versions of realism are also revealed to be at the heart of the respective groups’ argumentation. Dunne/Schmidt 2001, 147f.

¹⁰⁰ Layne 2003, 26.

¹⁰¹ Different strands of realists conceptualize power in different ways. Drawing on Kenneth Waltz’ analysis, structural realists closely focus on capabilities as power resources. For a more extensive discussion of different concepts of power in realism see Dunne/Schmidt 2001, 150.

¹⁰² Sovereignty can be defined as the supreme authority to conduct and create policies and laws. Dunne/Schmidt 2001, 150.

¹⁰³ Waltz 2002, 30; Eland 2002B, PDF, 22.

¹⁰⁴ For an extensive discussion of the “origins of alliances” see Walt 1987.

¹⁰⁵ Waltz 2002, 33. Providing for one’s own security, however, will entail diminishing other’s security. The ensuing spiral of insecurity is described as a “security dilemma.” Dunne/Schmidt 2001, 153.

integration remains slight and lasts only as long as it serves the vital interests of states.¹⁰⁶ In this view,

“(…) alliances have always been contextual and contingent. Pageantry and proclamations accompany their creation, and permanent interests and eternal principles are invoked hopefully, but change over time eventually corrodes such institutions, which ultimately are rooted in particular historical circumstances.”¹⁰⁷

According to structural realism, longstanding international alliances and regimes can only be maintained by a hegemonic power – a state that is powerful enough to create and safeguard a specific international regime or organization and is also willing to do so.¹⁰⁸ This also implies military preponderance of the hegemonic power. According to realist theory, however, a hegemonic system will inevitably lead to its own decline, since unipolarity represents the least durable international configuration.

Put more dramatically, Eland maintains that a ‘strategy of empire’ will inevitably encounter two major limitations. First, other powers will start to balance against the hegemonic power. No matter how moderate the hegemon behaves, weaker states will continuously worry about its future behavior.¹⁰⁹ Since states cannot be sure that a hegemonic power will not become intrusive and domineering at some point in the future, they attempt to accumulate as much power as possible to eventually get into a position to be able to challenge it. Thus, the strategy of empire allows other states to ‘freeride’ on the expense of the hegemon; bandwagoning will therefore eventually turn into counterbalancing.¹¹⁰

Second, the dominant power will in any case exhaust itself with attempts to sustain its primacy. It will take steps to ward off potential challengers and persuade security dependents that they are still protected. Thus,

“[a] hegemon tends to overpay for security, which eventually weakens the internal foundation of its external position. Other states underpay for security, which allows them to shift additional resources into economically productive investments. (...) As a consequence, differential growth rates trigger shifts in relative economic power that ultimately result in the emergence of new great powers.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ See Keohane/Nye on account of the structural realist approach, 1989, 23ff.

¹⁰⁷ Menon 2003, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Keohane/Nye 1989, 44; Dunne/Schmidt 2001.

¹⁰⁹ Eland 2002B, PDF, 6.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of this argument see also Keohane/Nye 1989, 45f.; Eland, 2002, PDF, 6.

¹¹¹ Layne, quoted in Eland 2002B, PDF, 6.

The chief danger for a hegemon therefore lies in the eventual strategic overextension that might occur in the pursuit of a military protectorship that is de facto open-ended. “The process of strategic overextension becomes self-reinforcing because, each time a hegemon expands its perimeter, new potential threats are encountered that demand further expansion.”¹¹² In the realist tradition, the hegemonic equilibrium will inevitably erode over time, and crumble back into a balance-of-power system. For libertarians, hegemony therefore constitutes a perilous strategy prone to falter due to the logic of the international system.¹¹³

3.2.2 Line of Argument

In applying realist theory, Eland maintains that the system of international politics has not been transformed after the end of the Cold War; the emergence of the United States as the only superpower merely represents a change *in* the system, not a change *of* the system.¹¹⁴ Accordingly, Layne argues that current transatlantic dissonances are deeply rooted in power imbalances in the international system due to the military preponderance of the United States.¹¹⁵ In this view, the current transatlantic rifts over NATO date back to its founding in 1949. The creation of NATO was guided by the objective “to keep America in – *and on top* – so that Germans could be kept down, Europe could be kept quiet militarily, and the Europeans would lack any pressing incentive to unite politically.”¹¹⁶ The United States aimed at creating a de-nationalized and economically, but not politically, integrated Europe. In order to achieve that end, it pooled and subordinated European military capabilities to U.S. command. While often being seen as an instrument to contain the Soviet Union, NATO in this view primarily constitutes a vehicle for establishing U.S. hegemony in Europe.¹¹⁷

According to Layne, the prospect of hegemony did not falter after the demise of the Soviet Union, but was rather continued in the Bush senior and Clinton

¹¹² Eland 2002B, PDF, 9.

¹¹³ As Waltz points out in this context, realist theory cannot make any predictions on how long this process will take. Currently, the process is very slow, but nonetheless inevitable. Waltz 2002, 42.

¹¹⁴ This argument is also adopted from Waltz 2002, 65.

¹¹⁵ Layne 2003, PDF, 1.

¹¹⁶ Layne, referring to Lord Ismay’s well-known dictum that NATO was founded to keep the Americans in, the Germans down and the Russians out of Europe, Layne 2003, 19, emphasis as in original.

¹¹⁷ Layne 2003, 22. In this context, Layne makes also clear that creating NATO was not only in the interests of the United States, but also in the interests of the European states that could rely on the U.S. security guarantee while at the same time constraining U.S. freedom of action in a multilateral security institution.

administrations.¹¹⁸ The continued reaffirmation of NATO's importance by U.S. policymakers reveals U.S. post war interests in Europe that are still valid today. NATO thus continues to be a means for maintaining and lengthening the United States' grip on the foreign and military policies of Europe.

“In other words, NATO is still in business to advance long-standing American objectives that existed independently of the Cold War and hence survived the Soviet Union's collapse.”¹¹⁹

In drawing on the findings of structural realist theory, Cato analysts maintain that continuing to pursue such hegemonic strategy will be perilous for the United States since balance of power constitutes the inevitable logic of international affairs. In discussing the perils flowing from the United States' continued commitment to the alliance, the issues of NATO enlargement and the problem of European freeriding are addressed.

NATO's *double enlargement*¹²⁰ is viewed as particularly perilous to U.S. security due to a number of reasons. First, NATO was founded primarily as an alliance to defend the territorial integrity of its members by providing a mutual defense guarantee. However, with its first missions taking place in Bosnia and Kosovo, NATO departed starkly from its original purpose and performed a dramatic transformation of its rationale, without, however, substantially reviewing the obligations originally outlined in the North Atlantic Treaty. Despite continuing attempts towards a functional redefinition, NATO thus remains a military alliance; expanding it in geographical terms therefore also

“(...) extend[s] U.S. security guarantees to peripheral regions without augmenting Western military power. And there should be no doubt that it would be Washington that would be expected to resolve any new security problem. The membership might be in NATO, but the security guarantee is American.”¹²¹

¹¹⁸ After the demise of the Soviet Union, the Bush senior administration did not consider leaving Europe or scale down its commitment to NATO. It rather took the position that it was necessary to maintain crucial features of NATO even after the breakup of the Soviet Union to ensure political and military influence in Europe. The Clinton administration argued in a similar way by maintaining that U.S. interests in Europe 'transcended' the Soviet threat, and that NATO should be "reinvented" by pursuing a double enlargement strategy, both in functional and geographical terms in order to endow NATO with new missions, thus slowly altering its rationale. Both the Bush and Clinton administrations understood NATO as an instrument for maintaining U.S. domination of the foreign and military policies of European states. Layne 2003, 19ff.

¹¹⁹ Layne 2003, 19.

¹²⁰ This term refers to enlargement in geographical terms and function.

¹²¹ Bandow 2002, online.

In brief, NATO is still about giving security guarantees; "the United States is obligated to defend every member – no matter how small, how militarily and economically insignificant, or how strategically exposed that member might be."¹²² In this context, Carpenter points to the significant security threats triggered by NATO expansion for the United States. Carpenter is especially concerned about a resurgent Russia that might rise against the United States to challenge it. While admitting that today's Russia is in no condition to seriously pose a threat to the United States and acknowledging Russia's President Putin having adopted a pro-Western attitude by supporting the establishment of the NATO-Russia-Council, it cannot be assumed that Russia will remain militarily weak and politically compliant forever. While the danger of a breach between Russia and NATO allies may have receded at the moment, Russia may seek to restore its 'sphere of influence' in case of a serious political crisis.¹²³

"Indeed, a crisis could be triggered if a future Russian president concludes that a Western military presence in the Baltic region is an intolerable intrusion into what should rightfully be Moscow's sphere of influence."¹²⁴

This logic is also true for other great powers that might feel threatened by continued NATO enlargement. Yet, NATO obligations go on indefinitely. In Carpenter's view, permanent security obligations are thus a 'perilous pledge' and may turn into disastrous liabilities in a changing and unstable security environment.

"When permanent commitments are made to strategically and economically irrelevant clients, the folly is compounded. The security pledges to Lithuania and the other Baltic republics are a case in point. If the U.S. commitment is ever challenged, Washington would face a choice between a bad outcome and a worse one."¹²⁵

Such commitments could even force the United States into encountering a nuclear-armed regional power militarily. Any future challenge from Russia or other powers that feel threatened by the United States' expansionist outreach through NATO might therefore prove to become a serious dilemma for the United States. As Carpenter concludes, "[t]hat degree of risk should never be incurred except in the defense of

¹²² Carpenter 2002, online.

¹²³ In advancing this argument, Carpenter recasts a debate led in the United States in the wake of the first round of NATO enlargement, when relations with Russia were of concern to U.S. policymakers. Today, no other camp adopts this argument any more, since Russia is not seen to be in any condition to challenge the United States.

¹²⁴ Carpenter 2002, online.

¹²⁵ Carpenter 2002, online.

America's most vital security interests."¹²⁶ It therefore ought to be a firm interest of the United States not to extend security guarantees that may prove too perilous to guard. In supporting NATO enlargement, however, policymakers have been violating this 'cardinal rule' of foreign policymaking.

By creating "a weird hybrid entity – part traditional alliance and part collective security organization," the United States will in this view most likely end up with

"a NATO that periodically becomes entangled in messy, Bosnia-style peacekeeping missions and Kosovo-style military interventions involving disputes that have little, if any, relevance to vital American interests and a NATO that is obligated to protect the alliance's new members in Central and Eastern Europe if a threat by one of their neighbors – including their great-power neighbor, Russia – ever emerges."¹²⁷

Second, extending security guarantees to strategically irrelevant allies and getting entangled in humanitarian interventions will also contribute to the strategic overextension of the United States causing the eventual 'imperial overstretch' that will lead to the demise of the hegemonic structure. As Eland points out, "[e]mpires get into trouble because they get bogged down fighting protracted small wars in the hinterland, garrisoning myriad outposts, and accumulating manifold security and treaty commitments they are obliged to honor."¹²⁸

Third, in supporting NATO enlargement, Washington is involved in a strategy of 'divide and rule.' Layne argues that the United States strongly advanced the case of a second round of NATO enlargement in an attempt to find new allies in 'new Europe' that will side with the United States against 'old Europe.'

"In short, U.S. policy seeks to encourage an intra-European counterweight that will block French and German aspirations to create a united counterweight to American hegemony."¹²⁹

Thus, in line with its persistent hegemonic strategy, the United States seeks to 'subordinate' Europe through NATO. With the absence of a common threat that renders European interests consistent with U.S. interests, however, this behavior will inevitably lead to European counterbalancing efforts.

In this context, Eland and Bandow furthermore point to the problem of freeriding that the United States is confronted with in the context of *burden-sharing*. Freeriding

¹²⁶ Carpenter 2002, online.

¹²⁷ Cato Handbook for Congress 2003, PDF, 525.

¹²⁸ Eland, 2002B, PDF, 15.

¹²⁹ Layne 2003, 26.

powers seek to pass on the costs of their own security to the dominant power. As Bandow maintains, the growing military gap between the United States and Europe is a result of a painstaking 'underinvestment' of European states in military affairs relative to a continued growth in the U.S. defense budget since the 9/11 attacks and constitutes an indicator for European freeriding. Up to now, Tupy argues, the U.S. security guarantee is only exploited to preserve European "inefficient welfare states"¹³⁰ and is – for the moment – not directed at seriously challenging the United States in military terms. It nonetheless induces an "unhealthy attitude of dependence"¹³¹ on the European allies. A growing "impotent frustration"¹³² regarding their dependence on the United States has become ever more evident in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. This frustration may result in a poisoned transatlantic relationship that will over time lead to more serious counterbalancing efforts. In this context, Eland maintains that balancing can also be very nuanced. A full-fledged military response as an attempt of 'offense-balancing' represents only the last resort and the final step in a long line of balancing measures. By contrast, 'defense-balancing' or 'soft-balancing' is a hedging activity, aimed at keeping options open.¹³³ Layne maintains that "soft-balancing against the United States has already started by voicing open opposition in the run-up to the Iraq war. Furthermore, freeriding per se constitutes an effort to counterbalance the dominant state."¹³⁴ Thus, the United States is confronted with a European 'security black hole' that consumes U.S. defense resources while providing few assets in return.

Cato analysts argue that in response to the 9/11 attacks the Bush administration has embarked on a dangerous path in abandoning its first impulse to conduct a 'humble' and more isolationist foreign policy. Instead, the administration has expanded an already extended defense perimeter by enlarging NATO that "will actually reduce the security of all Americans rather than enhance it."¹³⁵ Simultaneously – and in contrast to previous administrations - it has sidelined NATO in important military questions, thus further contributing to European resentments.

¹³⁰ Tupy 2003, online.

¹³¹ Carpenter 2002, online.

¹³² Carpenter 2003, online.

¹³³ Eland 2002B, PDF, 18.

¹³⁴ In this context, Eland also seeks to define Russia's eagerness to create a NATO-Russia-Council as a "shrewd strategy" of buck passing. Eland 2002B, PDF, 11.

¹³⁵ Eland 2002A, online. On this argument see also Layne 2001, PDF, 1.

3.2.3 Strategy: U.S. Withdrawal from NATO

Libertarians argue that NATO represents a Cold War relic not useful to meet current security challenges. The only objective it serves is the maintenance of U.S. hegemony in Europe. With NATO continuing to exist, however, the United States will be exposed to incalculable strategic risks.

First, policymakers should therefore abandon any attempt to reinvigorate NATO. Instead, the United States should phase out its security commitments on the Balkans. Moreover, Congress should refuse to appropriate funds for any 'out-of-area' military missions of NATO. Any further expansion of NATO should be opposed. Instead of admitting new members into NATO that would enhance perilous security pledges on the part of the United States, membership in the World Trade Organization, freer trade with America, and accession to the European Union would better serve the aim of integrating Eastern European countries without exposing the United States to avoidable risks.¹³⁶

Second, the United States should end the era of hegemony in Europe. U.S. forces should be entirely withdrawn from Europe. In order to meet the problem of freeriding, European states should take over responsibilities for their own region with the EU creating a setting in which the United States is no longer needed as a guarantor of stability. The United States should support the development of an independent European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and establish a limited security relationship with Europe as a hedge against developments within the EU that might have an adverse impact on U.S. interests in the long run. A purely European NATO may furthermore provide Europe with the incentive to end the "strategic infantilization"¹³⁷ created by the long-term European security dependence on the United States. A U.S. withdrawal from the European 'security subsidy' would also galvanize serious economic reform. Instead of remaining defenseless, the European states would be urged to raise more revenue by cutting the size of the welfare state and increasing their economic growth. A vibrant Europe with a strong economy and a credible military force would also prevent Europe from engaging in any balancing efforts against the United States.¹³⁸ More importantly, with the Europeans having the main security responsibility in Europe, U.S. risk exposure would be appropriately

¹³⁶ Bandow 2003, online.

¹³⁷ Menon 2003, 7.

¹³⁸ Tupy 2003, online.

limited. According to Layne, the United States should therefore start to act as an offshore-balancer. If managed well, a new European pole could pay off in providing the United States with well-equipped allies.¹³⁹ In brief, an “amicable strategic divorce”¹⁴⁰ will serve the interests of both Europe and the United States.

3.2.4 Summing Up

Libertarian scholars argue that NATO is an outdated and useless alliance. It does not serve any purpose but to maintain and extend U.S. hegemony in Europe. By expanding NATO and simultaneously sidelining it in military issues, the current U.S. administration has embarked on a dangerous path. Expanding NATO will commit the United States to extending security guarantees to strategically peripheral regions of the world, thus increasing the risk that other powers may feel threatened and subsequently engage in counterbalancing efforts. Moreover, by fencing off European NATO allies in military affairs, the United States provokes counterbalancing behavior and suffers from continued European freeriding. The unsolved question of NATO’s competence in peacekeeping and humanitarian mission efforts will further exacerbate existing trends. Staying in NATO therefore constitutes a foreign policy folly that needs to be corrected. The United States should ultimately withdraw from NATO and establish a limited security partnership with Europe. In relying on economic and international financial organizations, Eastern European integration will also provide more benefits to each side.

3.3 The Case for Transforming NATO into a Political Club

A group of analysts that is commonly referred to as ‘neoconservative’ has recently become the subject of much comment. Today’s¹⁴¹ neoconservative thinkers such as

¹³⁹ Layne 2003, PDF, 14; Carpenter 2002, online. This approach was advocated by Layne as early as 1997, PDF.

¹⁴⁰ Carpenter 2003, online.

¹⁴¹ Boot maintains that the “original” neoconservatives were liberal intellectuals, rebelling against the Democratic Party’s leftward drift on defense issues in the 1970s. After having “clustered” around the Democratic Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson, they soon aligned themselves with Ronald Reagan and the Republicans, who promised to confront Soviet expansionism by proposing a different “vision of strategic and ideological victory” over the Soviet Union, in particular by calling for large increases in defense spending, advancing moral clarity and purpose in U.S. foreign policy, and refusing to accept any limits on U.S. power. Thus, the first neoconservatives, in the formulation of one of their most well-known scholars, Irving Kristol, were “liberals mugged by reality.” Some were influenced by thinkers such as Leo Strauss or Leon Trotsky, as was Irving Kristol himself. Most of them, however, were conservative Democrats who felt “left behind” by the left-wing drift of their party in the 1970’s. Boot points out that today’s generation of neoconservatives have never been on the left; today’s “neocons are no less conservative than anyone else on the right.” Thus, the term has become unmoored from its original meaning. However, ever since its origins in the 1970’s, the manifold

Robert Kagan, Max Boot, and Tom Donnelly are spread over a range of think tanks such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Council on Foreign Relations. Neoconservatives believe in the uniqueness of a unipolar era and combine the assumption of a prolonged hegemony of the United States with the quest for a 'morally sound' foreign policy. They maintain that NATO has become irrelevant as a military alliance since the United States constitutes the seminal provider of security and stability for security dependents. Furthermore, in realization of the 'Perpetual Peace,' Europe is in no state to effectively address, let alone encounter, current security challenges. However, with regard to NATO enlargement, neoconservatives argue that NATO may remain necessary in providing the United States with allies legitimizing U.S. action, thus enabling them to pursue 'moral ends' in foreign policy. Furthermore, it remains a vehicle to reach out to strategically relevant regions. Therefore, NATO is to be transformed into a 'political club' exclusively designed to serve these purposes. In the following, the approach, the line of argument, as well as the policy recommendations advanced by this camp are sketched out.

3.3.1 Approach

Neoconservatives strongly believe in using U.S. military power to promote U.S. ideals abroad. In this view, it is both desirable and possible to extend the "unipolar moment"¹⁴² that occurred after the end of the Cold War, into a unipolar era. Their approach to foreign policymaking rests on three key assumptions that are not in line with a single approach to International Relations but rather mingle a variety of IR related approaches.

First, following a structural realist approach, neoconservatives believe that states constitute the primary actors of international relations and pursue survival as their foremost goal. However, in contrast to structural realists, they are convinced that unipolarity¹⁴³ represents a stable, peaceful and durable structure of international

"neoconservatism" has constituted an intellectual undercurrent that surfaces intermittently. Boot 2002B, online; Boot 2004, online; Kagan/Kristol 1996, 19; Tanenhaus 2003, 117; Drew 2003, online. For a discussion of the thinking of Leo Strauss flowing into neoconservative approaches, see Tanenhaus 2003, 118; Boot 2002B, online. For a critical discussion of the neoconservative approach see Ryn 2003.

¹⁴² Krauthammer 1990, A19.

¹⁴³ Unipolarity is defined as a condition, in which one state enjoys a position of superiority over all other powerful states in all critical components of power: Military, technological, economic, and geographical. Wohlforth 1999, 7ff. For an account of the United States' dominance in the military, economic, and technological arenas see Wohlforth 1999; Wohlforth/Brooks 2002.

relations and can therefore be maintained well into the future. Scholars like William Wohlforth argue that the clearer and larger the concentration of power of a hegemonic state, the more peaceful the order associated with it will be. Taking realism as a starting point, he suggests the existence of ‘thresholds,’ beyond which the unipolar structure of the international system remains unquestioned.¹⁴⁴

“Overall, then, unipolarity generates comparatively few incentives for security or prestige competition among the great powers. (...) Unipolarity does not imply the end of all conflict or that Washington can have its way on all issues all the time. It simply means the absence of two big problems that bedeviled the statesmen of past epochs: hegemonic rivalry and balance-of-power politics among the major powers.”¹⁴⁵

According to Wohlforth, balancing behavior will presumably occur among second-tier states, without, however, threatening the background unipolar structure. Thus, under conditions of unipolarity, the United States is simply too powerful to be balanced. Since counterbalancing alliances among states are costly and states are tempted to pass the buck or bandwagon with the hegemon, “the robustness of unipolarity”¹⁴⁶ is further underscored. While rhetoric may continue to be resentful of U.S. predominance, counterbalancing will ultimately fail in a unipolar system; today, much of the presumed international balancing behavior is therefore presumed to be mere “posturing.”¹⁴⁷

Second, the realm of power remains the determining factor in international relations. In order to maintain primacy, military power and the *willingness* to exercise it must stand at the heart of U.S. foreign policy, thus demonstrating that security dependents will be protected and enemies punished. In this view, enemies must fear the United States, otherwise they will be emboldened to challenge it.

Third, U.S. primacy should serve the pursuit of a clear moral purpose; exercising and preserving ‘benevolent’ global hegemony well into the future should constitute the primary goal of U.S. foreign policymaking. In championing this argument, neoconservatives starkly depart from any realist assumption and rather take a normative view on International Relations. Exercising power to remake the world in the U.S. image, however, is not assumed to represent mere idealism, but also good national security policy: “If democracy and the rule of law are established in troubled

¹⁴⁴ Wohlforth 1999, 7, 23ff.

¹⁴⁵ Wohlforth 1999, 26.

¹⁴⁶ Wohlforth 1999, 33.

¹⁴⁷ Kagan/Kristol 2000, 68. See also Wohlforth/Brooks 2002, 28.

countries around the world, they cease being threats.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore, as early as 1996, Kagan and Kristol advocated a “neo-Reaganite foreign policy of military supremacy and moral confidence.”¹⁴⁹ They claim that in adhering to moral standards of foreign policymaking, the United States should not blindly do business with any ‘rogue’ regime. In this view, ‘regime change’ constitutes an adequate means to promote U.S. foreign policy goals.¹⁵⁰ As Kagan and Kristol stress,

“[t]he United States achieved its present position of strength not by practicing a foreign policy of live and let live, (...) but by actively promoting American principles of governance abroad – democracy, free markets, respect for liberty.”¹⁵¹

In this view, the promotion of democracy cannot be left to the long-term forces of economic development, but constitutes a proclaimed foreign policy goal that should be pursued by the use of force, if necessary, and the willingness to undertake expensive missions. Thus, living in a Hobbesian world of ceaseless conflict,¹⁵² the United States should make use of its military power to enforce peace and freedom, thus acting as an order-creating force. Due to this task, the United States must refuse to play by the same rules as other states; this is the price to be paid by the international community for the unipolar provision of security as envisaged by the United States. Multilateral institutions are therefore far from being essential or conducive to U.S. interests. On the contrary, “[t]he chaos in the world is too threatening to ignore, and existing methods for dealing with that chaos have been tried and found wanting.”¹⁵³ Concordantly, neoconservatives are frustrated with the entangling rules and institutions and resent submerging U.S. power to collective decisionmaking. They argue that formal institutions and organizations do not work when it comes to dealing with rogue regimes that are believed to be at the nexus of international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Rather, they constrain U.S. action in effectively encountering these threats. Instead, “U.S. imperialism has been the greatest force for good in the world during the past

¹⁴⁸ See Ikenberry on account of this argument, Ikenberry 2004, 10.

¹⁴⁹ Kagan/Kristol 1996, 20ff.

¹⁵⁰ Kagan/Kristol 1996, 27f.

¹⁵¹ Kagan/Kristol 1996, *ibidem*.

¹⁵² Kagan 2002B. A critical discussion of the article is provided by Calleo 2003a.

¹⁵³ Mallaby 2002, 6.

century.”¹⁵⁴ Therefore, there is “no need to run away from label.” Instead, the United States “should definitely embrace the practise” of neoimperialism.¹⁵⁵

3.3.2 Line of Argument

Against this background, Robert Kagan argues that Europe and the United States are separated by fundamentally different worldviews that are also mirrored in the *burden-sharing* debate with regard to NATO. “It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world.”¹⁵⁶ Europe, in this view, is entering a ‘post-historical paradise’ of peace and prosperity in realization of Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace.’ It rejects the exercise of unconstrained power and instead believes in the means of diplomacy and international law to achieve foreign policy ends. The United States, on the contrary,

“remained mired in history, exercising power in the anarchic Hobbesian world where international law and rules are unreliable and where true security and the defense and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might.”¹⁵⁷

The main source for this “strategic chasm”¹⁵⁸ is the transatlantic power gap that has also opened a broad ‘ideological’ gap between Europe and the United States. Moreover, the disagreement between the stronger and the weaker manifests itself in the current transatlantic dispute about U.S. unilateralism and the issue of *burden-sharing*. While NATO has served as a powerful vehicle in establishing the favorable European order after World War II, the divergent paths taken by the United States and Europe ever since have gradually led to a staggering gap in military capabilities and the resulting disparity of military power that account for NATO’s waning military importance.

Due to their aging populations, weak economic performances and soaring budget deficits, European allies are assumed to remain in this position. Accordingly, the United States should not require Europe ‘to join the posse’ and follow up on demands to scale up defense spending so that European allies can become the United States’ ‘junior partner’ in meeting threats that Europeans find strongly exaggerated.

¹⁵⁴ Boot 2003a, 15A.

¹⁵⁵ Boot 2003a, *ibidem*.

¹⁵⁶ Kagan, 2002B, online, 1. For a shorter version of the article, see Kagan 2002A, online.

¹⁵⁷ Kagan 2002B, online, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Kagan 2002B, online.

“Why should we [the United States] be greater advocates of European power than the Europeans themselves? They have practiced international affairs long enough to know that diminished power means diminished influence – and a radically diminished NATO, their place at the decision-making table.”¹⁵⁹

While NATO may still play a role in peacekeeping missions, it has become useless for waging war and is therefore ‘finished’ as a serious military alliance, according to leading neoconservative voices. However, given U.S. power under the condition of unipolarity, the United States can best prepare for and respond to the strategic challenges around the world without European help. Furthermore, “[i]f Americans and Europeans no longer agree on the utility and morality of power, what remains to undergird their military alliance?”¹⁶⁰ At best, ‘coalitions of the willing’ could be assembled to complement U.S. forces. Given its current role in international relations as an order-preserving force, however, the United States would be better off by not succumbing to multilateral decisionmaking; in short, the United States “must not be tied by Lilliputians.”¹⁶¹ As Richard Perle, a leading neoconservative political figure, claims, “[a]t the end of the day, (...) we have to defend the American people, and if no one else is with us, then we will defend ourselves alone. No American president can concede that responsibility to a coalition or to anyone else.”¹⁶²

However, Kagan addresses a paradox that reveals a fundamental tension between the faith in the necessity to wield military power on the one hand, and the claim to do so consistent with moral standards on the other. As Kagan admits: “The problem the United States faces today is (...) profound. It is a problem of legitimacy.”¹⁶³ It is, he observes, deeply rooted in the emergence of a unipolar order since the end of the Cold War. “The problem is, to the liberal democratic mind there is something inherently illegitimate about a unipolar world (...).”¹⁶⁴ Referring to the run-up of the Iraq war when the United States sought legitimization at the United Nations, Kagan argues that the United States needed the support of at least Great Britain.

“Why? Not because British troops were essential to the success of the invasion. It was the patina of international legitimacy that Tony Blair’s support provided – a legitimacy that the American people wanted and needed as the Bush administration well understood. Nor can there be any question that the Bush administration has suffered from its failure to gain the broader approval

¹⁵⁹ Krauthammer 2002a, A35.

¹⁶⁰ Kagan 2002A, online.

¹⁶¹ Boot, 2003A, online.

¹⁶² Quoted in DeYoung 2001,1.

¹⁶³ Kagan 2004, online.

¹⁶⁴ Kagan 2004, online.

of Europe, and thus a broader international legitimacy, for the invasion of Iraq – and suffered at home as well as abroad. (...) Europe matters because Europe and the United States remain the heart of the liberal, democratic world.”¹⁶⁵

Thus, it is doubtful whether the United States could operate effectively without the legitimacy-building support of the Europeans since constant charges of illegitimacy may eventually erode domestic support for U.S. action abroad. As Kagan admits: “In the end, it is America’s need for legitimacy that will prove more decisive in shaping America’s course.”¹⁶⁶ According to Kagan, to counter this unipolar predicament, the United States needs to demonstrate that it wields its power on behalf of its principles. “The United States, in short, must pursue legitimacy in the manner truest to its nature, by promoting the principles of liberal democracy, not only as a means to greater security but as an end in itself.”¹⁶⁷ Especially the situation in post-war Iraq has emphasized the notion that the United States may need international legitimization to a certain degree to sustain its preeminence. As Donnelly concludes, institutionalizing the current ‘Pax Americana’ to a certain extent is therefore unavoidable.¹⁶⁸ This argument is also advanced in the neoconservative discussion of *NATO enlargement* that is regarded to have major political benefits in store for the United States.

First, NATO may prove vital to gain legitimizing support of Eastern and Central European states. Given the fundamental differences between Europe and the United States, for neoconservatives, the key challenge today is not that Europe might become more powerful, but rather that its ‘lowest-common-denominator-politics’ will rob the United States of its most vital allies in Central and Eastern Europe that remain necessary for legitimizing U.S. action abroad. With continued European integration, Central and Eastern Europe’s ‘gratitude’ may fade, as they become economically more dependent on Western Europe. Moreover, Russia is expected to be drawn into the orbit of the EU rather than maintain close ties with the United States. Germany and France are assumed to lead Europe in the future, rather than Great Britain, given its Atlanticist attitude.¹⁶⁹ In order to effectively counter these developments, the maintenance of NATO will remain vital for the United States.

¹⁶⁵ Kagan 2004, online.

¹⁶⁶ Kagan 2004, online.

¹⁶⁷ Kagan 2004, online.

¹⁶⁸ Donnelly 2003, online.

¹⁶⁹ Boot 2003B, online.

Therefore, although it cannot follow any military functions any more, it should neither cease to exist.

Second, NATO will also remain an important vehicle for the United States to maintain and expand its hegemony in Europe. In this context, it may also serve as an incubator for continued Russian integration. Thus, NATO is slowly evolving into a “transatlantic club of advanced democracies” that will serve purely political functions in providing a platform for political consultations.¹⁷⁰ NATO’s irrelevance in military terms is thus further underscored; however, as a political instrument to ensure legitimization, it remains relevant for the United States.

Third, NATO also continues to provide a platform from which to reach out to regions of strategic interest such as the Middle East. As Boot maintains in this context, not permitting Turkey into the EU despite its NATO membership since 1952, “represents a spectacular bit of geopolitical folly.”¹⁷¹ Therefore, in order to continue to integrate Turkey into the league of Western nations, NATO will remain a useful tool.

Furthermore, Boot complains that “[w]hile being tough on the friendly Turks, Europe has a long history of appeasing terrorists and rogue rulers, from Moammar Gadhafi to Saddam Hussein.”¹⁷² In a post-9/11 world, Europe may be accused of seeking to buy the goodwill of terrorists. Thus, “NATO’s continuing purpose is to save Europe from the consequences of its own strategic nearsightedness and moral obtuseness.”¹⁷³

Finally, NATO should not be abandoned since it constitutes an integral part of a “world order conducive to American interests and principles”¹⁷⁴ and continues to be a means to promote U.S. interests and liberal democratic principles. After all, “it is more than a cliché that the United States and Europe share a set of common Western beliefs. Their aspirations for humanity are much the same, even if their vast disparity of power has now put them in very different places.”¹⁷⁵

3.3.3 Strategy: NATO as a Political Club

Due to the premium neoconservatives place on U.S. freedom of action in pursuing security policies, they take an unsentimental view on alliances and are frustrated with

¹⁷⁰ Krauthammer 2002a, A35.

¹⁷¹ Boot 2002A, online. For an elaboration of NATO enlargement enabling the United States to reach out to strategically relevant regions see Bumiller 2002, 1.

¹⁷² Boot 2002A, online.

¹⁷³ Boot 2002A, online.

¹⁷⁴ Kagan/Kristol 2000, 61.

¹⁷⁵ Kagan 2002B, online.

entangling multinational organizations, regimes, and treaties. In this context, NATO is considered militarily dead and is regarded to have evolved into little more than a political 'talk-shop.'¹⁷⁶ However, while Europe does not matter as much as it did in the past, it neither has become irrelevant. The need for political legitimization from democratic countries is most likely to be satisfied by Central and Eastern European countries within NATO. In addition, due to NATO's political functions, it has the capacity to reach out to strategically relevant regions. Ironically, NATO will remain useful precisely because of its political benefits. Therefore, its political functions must be strengthened. Given the neoconservative approach and outlook, however, they do not advance policy proposals as distinct as libertarians. Rather, they draw a more general picture of future U.S. policies vis-à-vis NATO.

Policymakers should work to further transform NATO into a political body that provides a platform for gaining political legitimization and international support. To achieve this aim, the United States should work behind the scenes to strengthen ties with likely European partners, while simultaneously forestalling as much as possible the centralization of European security policy. In this context, giving Poland its own sector in Iraq is regarded as a strategic move to boost 'new Europe.' Such proceeding would strengthen the U.S. position in Europe and further promote its interests. In addition, U.S. policymakers should acknowledge that Europeans do not have the abilities to considerably constrain the United States. Therefore, the United States may show some generosity of spirit vis-à-vis Europe. In this context, Kagan also warns that "if Americans were to decide that Europe was no more than an irritating irrelevancy, would American society gradually become unmoored from what we now call the West? It is not a risk to be taken lightly, on either side of the Atlantic."¹⁷⁷ NATO must therefore continue to represent a political tool for the United States, although it has become entirely superfluous as a military alliance.

3.3.4 Summing Up

According to the neoconservative perspective, NATO is irrelevant as a military alliance due to U.S. hegemonic provision of security. Given current U.S. military power and the assumed stability of the unipolar structure of international relations, military alliances are not considered necessary. Rather, the United States should

¹⁷⁶ Krauthammer 2002b, A41.

¹⁷⁷ Kagan 2002B, online.

avoid getting entangled in multinational decisionmaking in order to pursue its foreign policy goals. However, to secure the political legitimization necessary to maintain domestic support for U.S. military action abroad and in order not to harm the international order the United States seeks to establish, NATO will remain politically relevant in the future. Furthermore, NATO constitutes a vehicle to reach out to strategically relevant regions and to secure and expand U.S. hegemony on the European continent. To achieve these ends, NATO should be transformed into a 'political club' that will provide the political support necessary to pursue U.S. foreign policy goals and maintain U.S. benevolent hegemony.

3.4 The Case for NATO as a Well-equipped Toolbox

Conservative scholars¹⁷⁸ mostly affiliated with the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, and the American Enterprise Institute maintain that NATO is no longer strategically and politically flexible enough to cope with current security threats due to the large capabilities gap between the United States and Europe. Consequently, Europeans resent U.S. power, despite their military weakness. Due to the assumptions of structural realism applied by conservative scholars, resentment will ultimately lead to counterbalancing behavior in the long run. With regard to the issues of burden-sharing and NATO enlargement, conservative scholars reach two conclusions. First, NATO enlargement will provide the United States with allies supportive of U.S. action. Central and Eastern European countries will constitute a balancing weight against Western European countries, thus keeping Western Europe – especially France and Germany – in check. Second, to prevent Europe from freeriding on the expense of the United States, European NATO allies must upgrade their capabilities in order to provide the United States with relevant niche contributions. In this context, conservative scholars advance the case of NATO as a well-equipped toolbox for future 'coalitions of the willing.' Therefore,

“NATO is nowhere near as useless as its detractors suggest, nor is it as seminal as its proponents blithely assert. What is needed is a new syntax to discuss the post-9/11 alliance that moves away from the stale theology that itself is impeding successful reform of NATO. (...) In the new era, NATO will

¹⁷⁸ In the following, this analysis will especially draw on the seminal work of John Hulsman and Helle Dale, who are affiliated with the Heritage Foundation, Radek Sikorski, fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and chairman of the New Atlantic Initiative, and Craig Kennedy as well as Alan Dowd, scholars at the Hudson Institute.

be an important politico-military option on both American and European policymakers' menus, while ceasing to be the only game in town."¹⁷⁹

In the following, the approach, the line of argument, as well as the policy recommendations advanced by this camp are sketched out.

3.4.1 Approach

Conservatives maintain that current dissonances in transatlantic relations are about far more than “carping, black-leather-clad, ineffectual Europeans, glowering about American dominance from the safety of a Parisian café.”¹⁸⁰ On the contrary, the reasons for this ‘resurgence’ are to be seen in structural developments in the international system that are likely to endure and entail far-reaching consequences for the conduct of transatlantic security relations. In contrast to neoconservative scholars, conservatives thus reject the notion that Americans and Europeans are not from the same planet. On the contrary, as John Hulsman, scholar at the Heritage Foundation, maintains,

“[a]ny thought that classical balance-of-power thinking was no longer relevant in today’s global environment, ought to be put to rest by any vague scrutiny of the French government’s rationale for a more coherent Europe.”¹⁸¹

Accordingly, conservative scholars adopt a structural realist approach and outline their arguments against the theoretical assumptions of the structural anarchy of the international system, the principle of self-help of security-seeking states, and the balance of power as the most stable international structure.¹⁸²

3.4.2 Line of Argument

Conservative scholars maintain that while the United States has emerged as the sole remaining superpower after the end of the Cold War, Western European states have remained regional powers. However,

“[n]ot only has America gone from strength to strength in the new era, but Europe also has conspicuously failed to emerge as a coherent power in its own right. This sense of a resurgent and increasingly unfettered America, coupled with an introverted, increasingly marginalized Europe, does much to explain not only the differences in policy between the two poles, but also the

¹⁷⁹ Hulsman 2002, online.

¹⁸⁰ Hulsman 2003A, online.

¹⁸¹ Hulsman 2003A, online.

¹⁸² See section 3.2 for a discussion of this approach.

increased virulence many Europeans feel toward American policies with which they disagree.”¹⁸³

Today, the United States is confronted with a paradox: “Military weakness, economic stagnation, and political disunity – this is the reality that confronts American decision-makers today when looking at Europe.”¹⁸⁴ However, although Europe is militarily weak and therefore not likely to seriously challenge the United States in the near future, especially ‘old Europe’ – namely France and Germany – seems to get ever more ‘Gaullist’ – at least in rhetoric. The notion of this paradox serves as a guideline for conservative analysis and the respective policy recommendations that connect the issues of burden-sharing and NATO enlargement against the background of a structural realist approach to international affairs.

In discussing the future role and function of NATO in transatlantic security politics, conservative scholars are especially concerned with the differences in military capabilities between the United States and Europe.¹⁸⁵ They argue that the transatlantic problem of *burden-sharing* has come to the fore after the end of the Cold War and was made explicit in the Kosovo campaign that portrayed European military ineffectiveness.¹⁸⁶

“The result has been an alliance that is in danger of not being interoperable, that possesses a cumbersome decision-making structure, and that places around 85 percent of the total NATO capability on one pillar.”¹⁸⁷

While conservative scholars admit that records of European defense spending remain mixed, they observe that, while some European states have made considerable efforts to adapt to the new security environment, most “continue to take a strategic holiday.”¹⁸⁸ Hulsman argues that such large disparity in military capabilities is not sustainable, neither operationally nor politically in the new security environment ushered in by the 9/11 attacks.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Hulsman 2003A, online.

¹⁸⁴ Hulsman 2003A, online.

¹⁸⁵ Kennedy 2003, online; Hulsman 2000, online; Hulsman 2002, online.

¹⁸⁶ For an elaboration of this argument see Hulsman 2000, online.

¹⁸⁷ Hulsman 2002, online.

¹⁸⁸ Hulsman 2000, online.

¹⁸⁹ Severe gaps in military capability are becoming obvious in the areas of electronic jamming, air-to-ground reconnaissance and surveillance, air-refuelling tankers, lift and logistics capabilities. Furthermore, Europeans lack computerized weapons, night-vision equipment, and advanced communication resources and intelligence, thus raising doubts about the continued compatibility of the allied military forces. Western European countries produce less than one quarter of the United States’ deployable fighting strength, thus further aggravating shortcomings in capabilities. Hulsman argues that while these discussions have persisted since the alliance was founded, it has never seemed more treacherous than today, in the absence of the Soviet threat that had provided a

Due to Europe's 'anemic' defense spending, a direct involvement of NATO in future U.S. military operations is unlikely. Conservatives maintain that in the war in Afghanistan, the Pentagon decided that it was not worth working through the cumbersome NATO decisionmaking structure to add Europe's limited capabilities to its own. According to Hulsman,

“[s]uch a public breakdown of the central relevance of NATO merely confirmed what many of us have been warning for years. It signalled that the long-term rot at the heart of NATO – the burden-sharing/power-sharing controversy – has finally led to unquestionable damage.”¹⁹⁰

Today, NATO lies at the ruins of the burden-sharing disparities, with the United States being increasingly unwilling to consult with European allies, and (Western) Europe becoming ever more resentful of U.S. power and its willingness to use it.¹⁹¹ This situation, however, entails serious consequences for the conduct of U.S. security politics and leads conservative scholars to assume that NATO should be preserved despite its lack of military capabilities.

First, conservative scholars observe that European 'Gaullists' increasingly turn to the European Union as an alternative model to NATO in security politics. In this context, the announcement of France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Belgium to establish separate EU military headquarters with an independent planning capacity in Tervuren, Belgium, within the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in the run-up of the Iraq war are interpreted as firm 'Gaullist' efforts to create a counterweight to the United States and to lessen the U.S. role in Europe. Currently, any desire to compete effectively with the United States is curtailed by European military weakness relative to U.S. capabilities; however, Radek Sikorski from the American Enterprise Institute points to the fact that a Europe with independent military capabilities at its disposal would necessarily think of itself in terms of competition and comparison vis-à-vis the United States.¹⁹²

“A Europe with its own military capability will more frequently say 'No' to the United States on a plethora of international issues and, unlike today, that may not mean resentful acquiescence but active opposition.”¹⁹³

“glue” for the transatlantic security alliance and the presence of new threats that need urgently to be dealt with. Hulsman 2000, online; Hulsman 2002, online.

¹⁹⁰ Hulsman 2002, online.

¹⁹¹ Kennedy 2003, online.

¹⁹² Sikorski 2004B, online.

¹⁹³ Sikorski 2004B, online.

Second, a non-NATO defense establishment in Europe might eventually start to seek allies other than the United States; instead, states such as Russia and China may become partners in the balancing game *against* the United States. A non-Atlanticist Europe might constitute a more viable partner for the United States considering current power disparities; however, given current trends, the United States will more likely encounter a strong Europe seeking to counterbalance the United States by forging alliances with different partners.¹⁹⁴

Third, in the long run 'new Europe' is assumed to adapt to Franco-German terms of integration. Great Britain is presumed to complete its internal realignment and become, with its Atlanticist ties curtailed, a "true European social democracy."¹⁹⁵ In short, while U.S. supporters in Europe would be weakened without continued U.S. presence in Europe, U.S. potential rivals would be boosted. With EU enlargement accomplished in May 2004, Europe's pull on Central and Eastern Europe is assumed to further multiply. As Sikorski recommends: "If the United States wants to remain a player [in Europe], it better get into the game."¹⁹⁶ In brief, considering these arguments, the United States can neither afford to withdraw from NATO, nor let it continue to falter; European counterbalancing efforts would be the ultimate result.

In this context, the issue of *NATO expansion* is addressed and assumed to hold major political benefits in store. First, NATO expansion is expected to help work on the maintenance of U.S. presence in Europe and the continued pursuit of its vital security interests through NATO. Hulsman and Dale maintain that "[i]n Europe, with the honorable exception of Great Britain, the general rule of thumb is that the farther east one moves across the continent, the more pro-American the leaders are."¹⁹⁷ Eastern European states supportive of U.S. policies are therefore assumed to have the potential to counterbalance Western European states that are perceived as 'Gaullist,' thus bringing a pro-American "critical mass" into NATO.¹⁹⁸

Second, given the military and strategic capabilities gap between the United States and any of its partners, the kind of support the United States needs today is largely

¹⁹⁴ Sikorski 2004B, online.

¹⁹⁵ Sikorski 2004B, online. See also Kennedy 2003, online.

¹⁹⁶ Sikorski 2003, online.

¹⁹⁷ Hulsman/Dale 2002, online.

¹⁹⁸ On this argument and the "dynamics" of the U.S. – Eastern European connection see Bumiller, commenting on President Bush's speech given to the Romanian public in November 2002. In his speech, he pointed to the Eastern European experience with the Soviet "occupation." With regard to current tensions over Iraq he maintained: "The people of Romania know that dictators must never be appeased or ignored. They must be opposed." Bumiller 2002, 1.

symbolic and political in nature. NATO enlargement therefore provides the United States with the allies needed to achieve this end, since “[t]his is the kind of support that Eastern European countries could easily and willingly provide, despite their shaky economies.”¹⁹⁹ By gaining this support from ‘new Europe,’ the United States may therefore not only perform an intra-European balancing act, but simultaneously push much of ‘old’ Western Europe into strategic irrelevance.²⁰⁰

Third, NATO enlargement can also be viewed as a means to significantly increase the number of possible military partners for the United States in assembling and conducting ‘coalitions of the willing.’²⁰¹ Taking the current capabilities gap between the United States and Europe as well as internal European cleavages into consideration, Hulsman maintains that a “two-tiered NATO is bound to emerge.”²⁰² The first tier will continue to preserve the Article 5 commitment of collective self-defense. The second tier – that is also expected to evolve into the more vibrant one – will involve ‘coalitions of the willing’ emerging from Brussels as “the likely diplomatic and military configuration of choice.”²⁰³ In this context, Central and Eastern European countries substantially increase the number of likely partners in favor of U.S. policies and ready to join coalitions of the willing.

This analysis, however, presents conservative scholars with a dilemma: While NATO seems unsustainable due to the large capabilities gap, it continues to remain the most important vehicle for the United States to remain a European player. In this context, conservative scholars switch back to the issue of burden-sharing in arguing that European allies cannot be given a ‘free ride’ any more, since this will ultimately weaken the U.S. position. Thus, while the United States must remain committed to the transatlantic link in order to remain a ‘European power,’ U.S. policymakers must also promote serious changes in NATO’s military configuration. In this context, conservatives argue that NATO must be strengthened militarily in order to function as a reliable forum to assemble coalitions of the willing.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Aligica 2002, online.

²⁰⁰ Aligica 2002, online.

²⁰¹ Hulsman 2002, online.

²⁰² Hulsman 2002, online.

²⁰³ Hulsman/Dale 2002, online; Hulsman 2002, online.

²⁰⁴ Hulsman 2003A, online. With regard to European economic stagnation and defense spending habits, however, Hulsman maintains that all to expect are willing NATO member states filling niche roles in an overall U.S. conception.

3.4.3 Strategy: Transforming NATO into a Toolbox

NATO has proven next to useless as a military alliance in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, while continuing to be a vehicle to ensure U.S. presence in Europe; remaining a 'European power' will constitute a vital security interest for the United States, given current 'Gaullist rhetoric' and soft balancing attempts in Western Europe that might eventually lead to more serious balancing efforts. NATO enlargement will provide an internal balancing weight to keep 'Gaullist' Europe in check and gradually push it into strategic irrelevance. Furthermore, an enlarged NATO will provide the United States with well-functioning 'coalitions of the willing.' However, in order to make this approach work, NATO's military capabilities must be enhanced, and its structure must be made more flexible. The overall strategic vision of the United States should therefore be to maintain NATO and transform it into a well-equipped 'toolbox' for future coalitions of the willing. In serving a more instrumentalist purpose, NATO will also ensure its usefulness well into the future.²⁰⁵ In the following, an overview of the comprehensive policy recommendations advanced by scholars with a conservative perspective and embodying both military and political dimensions will be provided.

In *military* terms, policymakers should pursue four goals, two of which have already been accomplished: Creating a vehicle for a strategic dialogue with Russia, ensuring a robust second round of enlargement, promoting the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF), and pushing for the technological modernization of European militaries. The first two goals have already been achieved by having enlarged NATO and established the NATO-Russia Council in May 2002. In the following, CJTF and the NATO Response Force are discussed.²⁰⁶

First, CJTF should be explicitly recognized as the tool that will allow NATO to establish greater alliance flexibility in both decisionmaking and crisis-response. Initially endorsed at the NATO Summit in Brussels in 1994, it enables allies to meet security challenges that do not threaten the primary security interests of all NATO members alike.²⁰⁷ While the consensus-rule has so far only allowed for a full engagement of all members in NATO action or, respectively, prevented one from occurring, CJTF provides a third option by allowing for the usage of NATO assets by

²⁰⁵ Hulsman 2002, online.

²⁰⁶ Hulsman/ Dale 2002, online.

²⁰⁷ Hulsman/Dale 2002, online; Hulsman 2002, online.

alliance members without all members explicitly endorsing the ensuing military action.²⁰⁸ At the same time, the United States' ability to prevent the alliance to act in ways not coherent with the pursuit of U.S. security interests is maintained by retaining NATO's consensus-blocking power. CJTF also constitutes an instrument that facilitates the process of assembling and conducting missions of 'coalitions of the willing.' The CJTF process should therefore be made a central point in future deliberations about reforms in NATO's decisionmaking structure.²⁰⁹

"In an era where American and European interests are at best complementary, but certainly not identical, this 'yes, but' option is imperative. Rather than dragging member states into secondary interest missions or forcing unopposed yet disinterested nations to prevent a mission from occurring altogether, CJTFs provide NATO with a third political answer through which both European allies and the U.S. can decide not to stand in the way of a mission yet opt not to directly participate in it."²¹⁰

Second, the multinational NATO Response Force should also constitute a necessary component of a strategic reconfiguration of NATO. With approximately 21,000 allied troops, this force should be able to deploy out-of-area on seven days' notice.²¹¹ Such a force would not only enhance allies' capabilities, but also ensure the deployment of relevant niche contributions from member states, demonstrating that NATO is still founded on a common military approach and outlook. This may also be an option for the Europeans to re-engage in the shared technological modernization of the alliance and reduce the gap in capabilities.²¹²

With regards to NATO enlargement, conservatives furthermore argue that in addition to current membership standards set forth by the Membership Action Plan and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) that are largely political in nature, an additional standard for prospective members must be established. New NATO members should also have to recognize that today's challenges have to be met by action running beyond the declaration of Article 5. The decision to join NATO must therefore entail both the

²⁰⁸ A brief account of the NATO conflict-prevention mission in Macedonia that is viewed as a first attempt to deploy a CJTF is provided by Hulsman/Dale 2002, online.

²⁰⁹ Hulsman/Dale 2002, online. For a broader discussion of CJTF see Hulsman 2002, online.

²¹⁰ Hulsman 2002, online.

²¹¹ In this context, allies have made new commitments, for example towards the leasing of U.S.-made tanker aircraft for in-flight refueling as well as air-transportation planes and lift capabilities. Up to now, these capabilities are missing, thus limiting allies' usefulness to participate in long-range missions.

²¹² In this context, the constitution of a separate European military structure is not acceptable. ESDP forces should rather augment NATO capabilities instead of rivaling it. Nonetheless, the United States should continue to lend conditional support to the ESDP initiative since it may contribute to building up Europe's capabilities. Hulsman 2002, online; Donnelly 2003, online.

willingness and ability of new members to contribute to potential out-of-area missions.

Apart from fulfilling mere political accession standards, candidate states and new members should therefore also be judged on their ability to develop capabilities and resources that would be useful to equip coalitions of the willing, thus acting as a 'force provider' for the United States.

In *political* terms, a comforting conclusion can be drawn out of the paradoxical situation in Europe the United States is confronted with. According to Hulsman,

“[t]he very lack of European unity that hamstrings European Gaullist efforts to challenge the United States presents America with a unique opportunity. If Europe is more about diversity than uniformity, if the concept of a unified 'Europe' has yet to really exist, then a general American transatlantic foreign policy based on cherry-picking – engaging coalitions of the willing European allies on a case-by-case basis – becomes entirely possible.”²¹³

'Cherry-picking'²¹⁴ represents an overall strategy that will serve U.S. interests and provide it with the possibility to cope with existing realities. It constitutes a tool that enables the United States to manage transatlantic relations while remaining engaged on a continent “that will rarely be wholly for, or wholly against, specific American foreign policy initiatives.”²¹⁵

In order for 'cherry-picking' to work politically, the United States must find the divisions in European opinion based on differing conceptions of national interest and use them to form coalitions of the willing on any given policy initiative. This policy outline, which is considered to be essentially realist in approach and outlook, therefore calls for enhanced diplomatic efforts on the part of the United States in order to remain 'up-to-date' in European affairs. If full support on a given issue is not forthcoming in NATO, cherry-pickers will continue to invest diplomatic efforts in order to assemble coalitions of the willing within NATO by exploiting existing cleavages on a given policy issue in Europe. Thus, a Europe that is shaped up in military capabilities, but remains deeply divided over how to position itself towards U.S. policies perfectly suits U.S. interests:

²¹³ Hulsman 2003A, online.

²¹⁴ The term was coined by John Hulsman, a scholar of the conservative Heritage Foundation, an advocacy think tank. More traditional conservative “Atlanticists” would therefore not necessarily outline the same strategy in terms as drastic as Hulsman. On the approach of cherry-picking see Hulsman 2003B, online.

²¹⁵ Hulsman 2003A, online.

“Its [Europe’s] member states are capable of assisting the U.S. when their interests coincide with America’s; yet it is too feeble to easily block America over fundamental issues of national security.”²¹⁶

In combining the military and political dimensions of their proposed strategy, conservatives argue that CJTFs will constitute a suitable instrument for coalitions of the willing to be assembled. Due to the assets of interoperability and common standards, assembling coalitions of the willing outside NATO or taking unilateral action should therefore remain a last resort.²¹⁷ In short, a strategy to create coalitions of the willing within NATO

“will preserve a status quo where the transatlantic relationship, despite fraying a bit at the edges, continues to provide common goods to both sides of the Atlantic. Such an overall policy acknowledges an awkward current truth of the transatlantic relationship: The United States wants Europe neither to be too successful nor to fail. As such, the Europe of today suits America’s long-term strategic interests.”²¹⁸

The New Atlantic Initiative (NAI), sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute, and drawing on the efforts of a network of European policy research organizations, represents an attempt to further develop and implement these proposals. NAI, chaired by Radek Sikorski, aims to revitalize transatlantic political, economic, and security institutions and to integrate the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe into these institutions. It regularly sponsors conferences, debates, and seminars on both sides of the Atlantic and publishes reports and policy papers on issues such as trade liberalization, European integration, and NATO security matters. NAI’s central objective is to strengthen Atlantic cooperation in the post-Cold War world by bringing together Americans and Europeans to work toward common goals.²¹⁹

3.4.4 Summing Up

With regards to NATO conservatives argue that although it has become almost useless as a military alliance due to the huge capabilities gap between the United

²¹⁶ Hulsman 2003A, online.

²¹⁷ In addition, Sikorski points to the difficulties of forming ad hoc international coalitions for military operations. Especially the coalition of the willing in Iraq proves to be a fragile instrument, whose major advantage – its international character – is also a handicap in military operations. Managing allies with competing expectations and cultural attitudes turns out to be much more difficult than relying on a long-standing alliance that has developed common standards and procedures over time. Sikorski 2004A, online.

²¹⁸ Hulsman 2003A, online.

²¹⁹ For further information on NAI see <http://www.aei.org/about/contentID.20038142215000100/default.asp> (accessed 20 April 2004).

States and Europe, it remains a vehicle enabling the United States to pursue its security interests in Europe. An enlarged NATO provides the United States with 'allies' to keep European 'Gaullist' counterbalancing efforts in check. Furthermore, NATO represents a pool for coalitions of the willing. A strategy of 'cherry-picking' will enable the United States to maintain the status quo, prevent a unified European rival from emerging, and gain substantial support for military action. Militarily, policy-makers should work to make NATO more flexible to facilitate the implementation of a strategy of 'cherry-picking.' This rather instrumentalist view of NATO will also keep it relevant in the future. According to conservatives, NATO should constitute a toolbox that will be used frequently, though not necessarily. Thus, NATO can remain "the bedrock of our common security, and we can both use it as a toolbox for those actions that the other side does not object to, but feels no inclination to get involved in. We can be Europe and America, but we are also the Western civilization, with NATO as our invincible arm."²²⁰

3.5 The Case for a New Transatlantic Bargain

Liberal scholars²²¹ honor NATO as "a unique and invaluable alliance that has continued to function as a reliable instrument for multilateral military cooperation after the end of the Cold War,"²²² thus still constituting "the most important diplomatic relationship in the world."²²³ They argue that the alliance's outreach programs as well as the two rounds of NATO enlargement have continued to constitute the core of U.S. security policy in Europe in the 1990s.²²⁴ Notwithstanding this initial success-story, liberals are concerned that current transatlantic differences will entail the "effective end of Atlanticism."²²⁵ In adopting a neo-liberal institutionalist approach, analysts address a fundamental paradox: While NATO's long-term potential in helping to promote peace and democracy could be assessed as limitless, its ultimate cohesion is supposed to be at risk. Furthermore, liberals maintain that "these days the many allies are feeling not so much led by the United States as bossed around;

²²⁰ Sikorski 2004B, online.

²²¹ In the following, the analysis will especially draw on the work of Ivo H. Daalder and Philip Gordon, scholars at the Brookings Foundation, Celeste A. Wallander from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), as well as James M. Goldgeier, Ronald D. Asmus, and James A. Lindsay from the Council on Foreign Relations.

²²² Wallander 2002, 2.

²²³ Moravcsik 2003, 81.

²²⁴ Wallander 2002, 2.

²²⁵ Daalder 2003, 147.

for them, the exercise of American power has become less a source of protection and more a cause of resentment and a problem to be managed.”²²⁶ Liberals advance three proposals to deal with NATO. First, NATO needs to adjust to new realities in order to remain a useful political and military instrument for both sides of the Atlantic. Second, NATO’s institutional shortcomings need to be addressed. Third, the U.S. foreign policy course must be corrected. Europe and the United States should work jointly to strike a new transatlantic bargain and keep NATO relevant well into the future. In the following, the approach, line of argument, as well as policy recommendations advanced by this camp are sketched out.

3.5.1 Approach

Liberal scholars argue that “the age of global politics has begun.”²²⁷ It replaces the interplay among states and confronts the United States with a new international environment. In this context, liberal scholars argue that the 9/11 attacks were symptomatic for the advent of the era of global politics characterized by complex interdependence.²²⁸ The rapid forces of Globalization²²⁹ “unleashed economic, political and social forces that are beyond the control of any one country, including the United States.”²³⁰ Globalization is therefore regarded as a decisive factor that changes the very nature of international relations and renders realist assumptions insufficient: Rather, the territorial state is eclipsed by non-state actors that diminish the sovereignty of the nation-state.²³¹ Policymaking does not remain in the monopoly

²²⁶ Talbott 2002, 47.

²²⁷ Daalder/Lindsay 2003a.

²²⁸ In a situation of interdependence or mutual dependence actors’ behavior is determined or significantly affected by external forces; interdependent situations are therefore characterized by reciprocal effects among actors. These effects often result from international transactions – flows of money, goods, people, and messages. Furthermore, interdependence involves costs, since it restricts autonomy. Likewise, it might also entail benefits. In short, whenever there are reciprocal, although not necessarily symmetrical, costly effects of transactions, there is interdependence. In this analytical framework, the term “power” is reconceptualized as the ability of an actor to get others to do something – at acceptable costs – that they would otherwise not have done. This understanding of power refers to the potential to affect outcomes, not the amount of power resources that are at an actor’s disposal. Political bargaining is the usual means to translate potential into effect. In this context, it is especially asymmetries in dependence that provide sources of influence for actors in their interactions with one another. Less dependent actors can use this source of power in bargaining situations. Keohane/Nye 1989, 8ff. On the distinction between joint gains and losses versus relative gains and losses see also Keohane/ Nye 1989.

²²⁹ Globalization can be defined as a complex phenomenon characterized by growing interconnectedness and interdependence in the realms of communication technology, economics, politics, and environment. It is not an entirely new phenomenon; what distinguishes today’s Globalization from yesterday’s, however, is the speed and volume of its cross-border contacts. Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 296ff.

²³⁰ Daalder 2003, 151. See also Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 288.

²³¹ Keohane/Nye 1989. Dunne points out, however, that neo-liberal institutionalists assume that non-state actors are subordinate to states. Furthermore, they also accept the structural anarchy of the international system that realism proposes. Dunne 2001, 176.

of the state any more; it is rather directed and influenced through multiple channels, many of which are non-state.

In an era of Globalization, international conflict will not disappear. On the contrary, it will take new shape, and may even increase. As Keohane and Nye point out, “[w]e must therefore be cautious about the prospect that rising interdependence is creating a brave new world of cooperation to replace the bad old world of international conflict.”²³² Instead, Globalization brings new perils; borders become porous to new challenges such as drug trafficking, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and international terrorism. Globalization is thus putting new items on the agenda; simultaneously, many issues cannot be resolved by individual states due to their complex nature. Furthermore, a clear hierarchy of issues and a distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ politics does not exist any more as realism assumes. Rather, the pure want for survival is substituted by a more complex set of interlocking preferences in an interdependent world.

Shaping policy in a globalized world will incur costs that need to be carefully weighed. In order to do so, policymakers and analysts must examine underlying patterns of vulnerability²³³ before adopting a specific policy, and give special attention to the question, what costs will be incurred for oneself and others by so doing.²³⁴

The use of force will nonetheless remain the most important component of national power, since it is ultimately necessary to guarantee survival. Military power continues to predominate economic power, since economic power is likely to be ineffective against the serious use of military force.²³⁵ However, force is regarded as an increasingly ineffective instrument of politics, since exercising more dominant forms of power will entail higher costs without guaranteeing the achievement of the desired outcome.²³⁶ Furthermore, using force against a state on one issue will most likely interrupt gaining potential benefits on another one.²³⁷ Thus, the use of force is likely to be constrained under conditions of interdependence; no actor can enforce its will on others any more or will only do so at harmful costs.

²³² Keohane/Nye 1989, 10.

²³³ Vulnerabilities can be defined as the costs occurred by a change of policy.

²³⁴ If a given set of rules leaves an actor in a disadvantageous position, this actor will most likely try to change those rules if she/he can do so at reasonable cost. Keohane/Nye 1989, 16ff.

²³⁵ Keohane/Nye 1989, 27.

²³⁶ Keohane/Nye 1989, 17.

²³⁷ Keohane/Nye 1989, 24ff.

Drawing on Nye's findings, analysts with a neoliberal institutionalist perspective argue that Globalization transforms the nature of power itself: "Power today is distributed among countries in a pattern that resembles a complex three-dimensional chess game."²³⁸ The first dimension remains the realm of military power, in which the United States has unrivalled advantages. The second one is made up by economic power, which is distributed in a multipolar world. The third dimension relates to transnational relations, in which power distribution is widely dispersed and beyond governmental control. Consequently,

"[t]hose who recommend a hegemonic American foreign policy (...) are relying on woefully inadequate analysis. When you are in a three-dimensional game, you will lose if you focus on the interstate military board and fail to notice the other boards and the vertical connections among them."²³⁹

Accordingly, a dominant power such as the United States is not only bound to lead, but, and more importantly so, "bound to cooperate."²⁴⁰

Multinational and international organizations gain relevance in coalition-building and provide a platform to jointly address complex issues that cannot be resolved by the state alone.²⁴¹ Furthermore, as Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay point out, "[c]ooperative structures that provide for repeated interactions over time create the opportunity to turn separate national interests into shared ones."²⁴² Since it has become much harder to "get others to want what you want" in an interdependent world, international coalitions and alliances must be mobilized to influence other states' policies. Thus, the "institutionalization"²⁴³ of commonly established 'rules of the game' lies within the vital interests of states acting under the conditions of interdependence. Cooperation therefore may become long-term and is no longer tied to basic survival interests of states, as the realist approach suggests; rather, it is assumed to possess a value of its own.

3.5.2 Line of Argument

Liberals maintain that under conditions of complex interdependence, the United States cannot dictate its policy preferences to the world, confident that others will

²³⁸ Nye 2002, 39.

²³⁹ Nye 2002, 39.

²⁴⁰ Nye 2002, xiv. In this context, Nye also speaks of the "paradox of American power."

²⁴¹ Keohane/Nye 1989, 35. This argument distinguishes neo-liberal institutionalist thinkers from realists. See also Dunne 2001, 171.

²⁴² Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 311.

²⁴³ Neo-liberal institutionalism represents a very distinct strand within liberal thinking. For an extensive description see Dunne 2001, 164ff.

follow. The exercise of “soft power”²⁴⁴ and the creation of a lasting international order based on cooperation are therefore assumed critical in sustaining U.S. primacy.²⁴⁵ Therefore, crucial and complex problems defy purely unilateralist solutions. With regard to transatlantic security relations, liberals argue that Europe and the United States differ on a variety of issues; however, they still share the same values and the notion of common threats; transatlantic differences can therefore be resolved by diplomatic efforts and cooperation in security matters.

In this context, liberal scholars disparage current U.S. policies as “unilateralism on steroids”²⁴⁶ and complain that „[o]ne of the most striking consequences of the Bush administration’s foreign policy tenure has been the collapse of the Atlantic alliance.”²⁴⁷ Sidelining NATO in the war in Afghanistan and especially in Iraq constituted a “spectacular political train wreck.”²⁴⁸ The assumption that the United States, because of its military power, has the ability to go it alone, is perceived as extremely short-sighted, the argumentation that alliances are no longer needed is “both wrong and dangerous.”²⁴⁹

For liberals, the collapse of NATO’s relevance in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks came on the heels of the alliance’s renaissance in the 1990s. During this time, NATO evolved from a collective defense organization into Europe’s main security institution, helping stabilize the Balkans, establishing military practices with 27 partnership countries, forging new relationships with erstwhile adversaries, and engaging Russia in the NATO-Russia-Council. As Talbott maintains, NATO enlargement further contributed to the post-Cold War consolidation of this “security solar system.”²⁵⁰ After the 9/11 attacks, however, NATO’s confidence-building role has been increasingly marginalized.²⁵¹

²⁴⁴ Soft power is defined as the ability to effect the desired outcomes by “soft means” and to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences of others. Soft power thus constitutes a more indirect way to exercise power. It is derived from the attraction of U.S. values and culture as well as from its successes in using hard power. Hard power therefore continues to provide the foundation of soft power, but there can be a trade-off between the two. Seen in this light, it would be a mistake to focus too narrowly on the military power of the United States to achieve its foreign policy goals. Nye maintains that power in the twenty-first century will rest on a mix of hard and soft resources. The United States should therefore make use of its soft power, since making power legitimate in the eyes of others will also help the United States to encounter less resistance to U.S. foreign policy goals. Nye 2002, 9f. For an application of this concept see Daalder/Lindsay 2003a.

²⁴⁵ On account of this assumption see Lamy 2001, 184.

²⁴⁶ Daalder 2003A, online.

²⁴⁷ Asmus 2003, 20.

²⁴⁸ Asmus 2003, 21.

²⁴⁹ Daalder/Gordon 2002, 17. As Daalder and Lindsay maintain: “There are true costs of unilateralism.” On account of the situation in Iraq and continued military overstretch see Daalder/Lindsay 2003B, online.

²⁵⁰ Talbott 2002, 49.

²⁵¹ Daalder 2003, 154.

According to their approach, liberal scholars claim that in a world characterized by complex interdependence, it would be a mistake to base U.S. foreign policy on the principle that European support for U.S. action is neither possible nor necessary. However, in order to reinforce NATO and to prepare it to fulfill ambitious new agendas, liberals argue that NATO must adapt to new realities; until now, as Asmus points out “[w]e have the best alliance in the world to deal with the least threat, and we don’t have an alliance to deal with the most likely threat.”²⁵² In short, while NATO is regarded as having much to offer, it must make itself relevant again.²⁵³ In this context, liberals especially connect the issue of *burden-sharing* with the prospect of a ‘new transatlantic bargain.’

“Overcoming the current transatlantic rift will require (...) bold rethink. After September 11 and Iraq, the United States and Europe must (...) coalesce around a new purpose and a new grand strategy, one fit to meet a different set of challenges beyond Europe.”²⁵⁴

While some scholars remain sceptical that the Atlantic alliance can be restored,²⁵⁵ others more emphatically draft a new transatlantic agenda with NATO as its most important instrument. According to this view, NATO should help Russia continue its transformation, anchor a democratizing Ukraine to the West and reach out to Belarus. NATO allies should also move beyond a strategy to manage the crumbling status quo in the Middle East.²⁵⁶ In order to work on this agenda, however, military capabilities constitute an “indispensable component.”²⁵⁷ Liberals view the current capabilities gap as a most serious problem in recasting a new transatlantic bargain. Although Europeans are regarded as contributing a lot to global security,²⁵⁸ liberals argue that once again building an explicit partnership with Europe will require Europeans to show a willingness to shoulder more of the security burden. NATO enlargement is seen to further exacerbate the capabilities problem, since new NATO members are not assumed to make substantial military contributions or to be structurally equipped to meet new security threats.

In the context of *NATO enlargement*, however, some scholars argue that another fundamental problem pointing to NATO’s current institutional shortcomings needs to

²⁵² Quoted in Nider 2002, online.

²⁵³ Singer 2003, online.

²⁵⁴ Asmus 2003, 22.

²⁵⁵ As an example see Daalder 2003.

²⁵⁶ Asmus/Blinken/ Rosner 2001, online; Asmus/Weisser 2001, online; Nider 2002, online.

²⁵⁷ Asmus 2003, 27.

²⁵⁸ On account of this argument see Daalder/Gordon 2001, 17.

be adequately addressed. While NATO enlargement is commonly assumed to provide the opportunity “to lock in democracy and peace in Europe,”²⁵⁹ more sceptical scholars point to the fact that the ‘post-communist success stories’ celebrated in NATO have turned into tales with rather mixed plotlines. Wallander of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) argues that within the context of NATO enlargement, the very qualities that make NATO work are at risk.²⁶⁰

“NATO is a uniquely effective multilateral military alliance precisely because it is a political security community of countries of common values and democratic institutions. NATO works only because it is both military and political in nature. Dilute NATO’s coherence, and the result will be a one-dimensional traditional military alliance that cannot operate effectively.”²⁶¹

Thus, apart from the ongoing concerns about NATO’s capabilities, the debate about the consequences of enlargement on NATO’s functioning also needs to be conducted. In this context, liberals argue that NATO needs to take steps to ensure that (prospective) members live up to NATO’s political standards in order to secure the alliance’s future coherence and relevance.²⁶²

Since the first round of enlargement, doubts have raised as to whether the new members could live up to their commitments not only in military but also in *political* terms once they have been admitted into NATO.²⁶³ Prior to accession, the prospect of NATO membership had served as a powerful incentive for internal reform as well as a driving force of Central and Eastern European integration into Western security and economic institutions.²⁶⁴ The most pertinent question liberals address in this context is how the incentives for new members to *continue* on the path of reform in accordance with NATO standards can be upheld, once they have officially joined NATO. In this context, scholars concerned with NATO’s institutional shortcomings argue that it lacks any institutional procedures for dealing with members that violate its rules and standards. NATO accession standards should be better safeguarded in order to continue to provide an incentive for Central and Eastern European countries to engage in reforms after admission.

²⁵⁹ Asmus/Weisser 2001, online.

²⁶⁰ Wallander 2002, 2.

²⁶¹ Wallander 2002, *ibidem*.

²⁶² Goldgeier/Chollet 2002, online.

²⁶³ Goldgeier/Chollet 2002, online.

²⁶⁴ Wallander 2002, 2. The accession standards are laid out in the Membership Action Plan (MAP) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP). The MAP can be accessed at <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-066e.htm> (accessed 20 June 2004). The PfP is available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b940110b.htm> (accessed 20 June 2004).

“In fact, this incentive effect is one of the main arguments for the future importance of the alliance. If it is true that countries’ adherence to NATO standards advances U.S. security, then the question of holding members to those standards is not only legitimate but vital to American interests.”²⁶⁵

Furthermore, adherence to accession standards will also positively affect cooperation within NATO military planning. Military interoperability rests on the alliance’s problem-solving and consensus-finding principles that enable NATO to pursue unified policies. Willingness to operate by consensus, however, is derived from trust rooted in common interests and values; it constitutes a vital element for the alliance’s foundation.²⁶⁶

“Ultimately, then, NATO works as a military alliance because its members share a common heritage of transparent and just government and military professionalism in the service of civilian authority. The alliance’s effectiveness is unavoidably rooted in the qualities of its members, primarily in their democratic values and institutions.”²⁶⁷

Member states ruled by rather authoritarian or corrupt leaderships may therefore result in an ultimate break-up of the alliance, thus severely diminishing its relevance:

“Like a team, NATO is only as good as its members.”²⁶⁸

NATO needs to establish rules to deal with those not adhering to standards in order to safeguard what is at the foundations of the alliance. In order to remain a relevant Western security institution as well as an instrument to provide stability in Central and Eastern Europe, NATO must again be based on a common political commitment with agreed upon standards beyond mere accession criteria. Mechanisms to effectively sanction members need to be put into place; otherwise, NATO membership will not continue to provide incentives for democratic reform and ultimately cease to be an effective military and political instrument for the consolidation of security in Europe.²⁶⁹

3.5.3 Strategy: Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain

Under the conditions of complex interdependence, U.S. policy-makers face the challenge of using current U.S. power to create an environment conducive to its interests and values by extending the economic and political benefits of Globalization, encouraging other powers to work on a liberal international order,

²⁶⁵ Wallander 2002, 3.

²⁶⁶ Wallander 2002, *ibidem*.

²⁶⁷ Wallander 2002, 4.

²⁶⁸ Wallander 2002, *ibidem*.

²⁶⁹ Wallander 2002, 6; Gordon 2002, 97.

stemming and reversing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and confronting threats to global environment.²⁷⁰ In order to effectively implement this order, the United States must take the lead in creating and maintaining multilateral institutions such as NATO and equip them to handle the challenges of a globalized world.²⁷¹ In conducting a cooperative foreign policy in the age of global politics, the United States must furthermore *combine* power and cooperation.²⁷² Liberals argue that while power remains fundamental to the United States' ability to firmly advocate its agenda, it is only through cooperative efforts that the United States can pursue and implement its foreign policy goals. Therefore,

“[t]he point of using American primacy to build cooperative structures is not to give foreign capitals a veto over American foreign policy (...). It is instead to make the most of American power by maximizing the number of potential partners for the United States and deflating the grievances that others have against it.”²⁷³

As Daalder and Lindsay point out, arguing that U.S. foreign policy should be either unilateral or multilateral is to posit a false choice. Both must be combined and rightly used, since “[p]ower without willing cooperation veers toward diktat and breeds resentment and resistance. Cooperation without power produces posturing, not progress.”²⁷⁴ A more ‘pragmatic’ internationalism should acknowledge that the United States does not need to choose between power and cooperation; instead, both should guide U.S. foreign policy.²⁷⁵

In the context of NATO, U.S. policymakers should return to a policy of treating Europe as a partner of choice. The hard-line view of the Bush administration presented by U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld should be abandoned. In the liberal view, the model of purely relying on ‘coalitions of the willing’ will fail in the future. Instead, policymakers must recognize that only a unified and strong Europe can constitute a meaningful partner for the United States.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁰ Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 312; Daalder/Lindsay 2003A, online.

²⁷¹ Daalder/Lindsay 2003A, online. In this view, the establishment of the rule of law requires the ability and willingness to enforce it. U.S. primacy is therefore considered indispensable for sustaining an international order based on the rule of law. On the argument that the promotion of global governance requires a large state to take the lead see also Nye 2002, 15.

²⁷² Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 290.

²⁷³ Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 311.

²⁷⁴ Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 312.

²⁷⁵ Daalder/Lindsay 2003A, online.

²⁷⁶ Asmus 2003, 29. With regard to the conservative strategy of “divide and rule,” Daalder maintains that a divided Europe may undermine its capacity to act; however, in this case it will also fail to continue to constitute a valuable partner for the United States. Daalder 2003B, online.

In order to bring about a new transatlantic bargain, Europe will have to shape up its military capabilities. In so doing, it should not duplicate U.S. prowess; instead, it should raise its capacities to be able to intervene in coalition operations together with the United States, to sustain long-term peacekeeping missions, and to act on its own in smaller crises. First, it should establish mechanisms for concrete, small-scale operations. In this context, the establishment of a European Rapid Reaction Force will provide a first step.²⁷⁷ Second, European NATO member states should commit to increasing their defense budgets and making smarter investments in order to improve their military capabilities for missions against new security threats.²⁷⁸ Furthermore, both sides of the Atlantic need to reinstate a close web of consultations to pull together divergent viewpoints on security policies.²⁷⁹

In the context of NATO enlargement, U.S. policy should strengthen the ability of NATO to monitor and coerce compliance with political standards beyond accession. Wallander maintains that mechanisms that allow for the reporting on and sanctioning of members in the case of misconduct or even failure to comply with the standards set out by NATO must be developed. A solution should be sought at two levels.

First, within the organizational procedures, the creation of a NATO Membership Monitoring Committee, subordinate to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) that monitors and discusses members' political performance and reports to the NAC on the conduct of members, should be considered.²⁸⁰

Second, a comprehensive revision of the North Atlantic Treaty must take place in order to provide for two new features: Since no member is going to agree on its own sanctioning or suspension, decisions on membership status must be taken by consensus minus one. Article 10 of the Treaty²⁸¹ would furthermore have to be

²⁷⁷ Asmus 2003, 27; Goldgeier/Chollet 2002, online, Singer 2003, online.

²⁷⁸ Nider 2002, online. Nider points to the fact that today's European militaries are still geared towards deterring an attack from the Soviet Union and therefore lack the capacity to fight new threats that require different military formats to effectively encounter them.

²⁷⁹ Asmus 2003, 30.

²⁸⁰ Such an institutional arrangement can be established according to Article 9 of the North Atlantic Treaty and would fit seamlessly into NATO's practices. Wallander suggests that the Monitoring Committee should be based on the standards set forth by the North Atlantic Treaty as well as the more detailed requirements established by the Membership Action Plan (MAP) and the Annual National Programs (ANPs), to which each prospective member is required to agree prior to accession. Wallander 2002, 7; Gati 2002, 88.

²⁸¹ Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty deals with membership issues.

amended to allow for three different ways of 'disciplinary action' against non-conforming states: Sanctions, suspension of membership, and expulsion.²⁸²

3.5.4 Summing Up

Analysts coming from a liberal perspective and adopting a neo-liberal institutionalist approach are strongly in favor of the promotion of democracy by international cooperation in multinational organizations and alliances, and of the establishment of an international liberal order. However, this is considered a long-term process. In a world with states acting under conditions of global interdependence, the use of force to achieve this end is too costly and does therefore not represent an effective instrument of international relations. Instead, working through multinational organizations such as NATO will ensure more positive results. In this view, NATO still represents a valuable instrument to address security challenges. Maintaining and adapting NATO to new challenges will therefore be in the vital interest of the United States. However, with regard to current transatlantic rifts, U.S. unilateralist foreign policy and European gaps in defense capabilities and spending, NATO's relevance and coherence are considered to be seriously at risk. While U.S. policymakers should press for the enhancement of European capabilities, they should also address institutional shortcomings that might endanger consolidating the achievements gained in two rounds of NATO enlargement. In order to work on this ambitious agenda and to cope with the perils of an interdependent world, the United States should rightfully combine power and cooperation. Choosing between 'unilateralism' and 'multilateralism' is posing a false choice; instead, both should be usefully merged in order to accomplish an extensive foreign policy agenda.

3.6 Summary

In 'drawing the map' of the U.S. debate on NATO, four camps advancing four different cases on U.S. NATO politics can be distinguished. The first step of the analysis described their lines of argument against the background of their respective approach. The findings can be summarized as follows.

²⁸² Wallander 2002, 7f. According to Wallander's suggestion, sanctions may include suspension from participation in specific committees, military planning or joint exercises. Suspension from the NAC with the possibility to regain full membership upon regular evaluation of their performance would be the next step. The expulsion of a member would constitute third level sanctions. The decision to expel a member would also have to be ratified by national institutions that are also responsible for ratifying membership in the first place. See also Gati 2002, 88.

1. Scholars from the libertarian Cato Institute adopt a structural realist approach. They regard NATO as a systemic anomaly that needs to be corrected since it exposes the United States to incalculable security risks. Accordingly, they promote U.S. strategic withdrawal from Europe. Thus, scholars coming from a libertarian perspective adopt a neo-isolationist approach in the realm of security politics.
2. Neoconservatives believe in unipolarity and the prevalence of U.S. power and combine this view with the claim for the pursuit of moral objectives in foreign policy. NATO, while being irrelevant in military terms, may therefore continue to serve as a tool for gaining political legitimization. Consequently, neoconservatives make the case for transforming NATO into a political club of like-minded societies led by a benevolent hegemon that provides for comprehensive security. While the neoconservative approach is largely 'unilateralist,' this line of argument also reveals a fundamental tension between the advocated politics of power and the claim to conduct a 'morally sound' policy.
3. Conservatives advance their arguments against the backdrop of structural realist thinking. While regarding NATO as a vehicle for remaining a European power to keep 'Gaullist' Europe in check, they also advocate for military upgrades in NATO in order to prevent European freeriding. They make the case for NATO as a well-equipped toolbox that would help implement U.S. political and military objectives in Europe.
4. Scholars adopting a neo-liberal institutionalist approach argue that a new transatlantic bargain in military and political terms should provide a new basis for a cooperative transatlantic security relationship. NATO will thus remain a most valuable alliance and an instrument to jointly address the perils of an interdependent world. However, in order to enhance an international liberal order conducive to U.S. interests and with regard to current institutional shortcomings, the United States should not entirely rely on NATO, but instead effectively combine power and cooperation.

While these camps seem to differ profoundly in approach and outlook, they also display considerable overlaps in their argumentation that may provide room for consensus-building prior to the decisionmaking process. Carving out major differences and overlaps between the camps is considered necessary in order to 'weigh' the different proposals and to point to major topics that are likely to determine

future U.S. NATO politics.²⁸³ In the following, this second step of the analysis will be performed.

4. Differences and Overlaps

In order to detect differences and overlaps between the camps' argumentation, two steps need to be performed. First, the arguments concerning burden-sharing and NATO enlargement advanced by all four camps are compared. Second, by detecting considerable overlaps, the main arguments determining the current U.S. debate on NATO will be extracted.

4.1 Comparison

In the context of *burden-sharing*, all four camps point to European military weakness. The greatest difference in assessing the consequences of this weakness can be observed between the libertarian and neoconservative camps. Scholars from the libertarian Cato Institute point to the perils of European military weakness for U.S. security and strategic outlook. European freeriding will inevitably lead to U.S. decline. Instead, Europeans should be given the opportunity to develop their own capabilities *outside* of NATO so that the security dependence on the United States that has so far only bred resentment against it would end. Contrarily, neoconservative thinkers simply mock at European military weakness and do not assume that it will have a lasting impact on the U.S. strategic outlook.

Conservatives share libertarian concerns about European freeriding on U.S. security guarantees. However, they take a different view on the conduct of U.S. security politics. In contrast to the libertarian camp, they do not believe that disengagement will prevent Europe from engaging in counterbalancing efforts. On the contrary, they argue that the United States needs to stay engaged in Europe in order to keep in check European balancing efforts that will inevitably occur if the assumptions of structural realism are consequently applied. A policy of disengagement would therefore expose the United States precisely to the security risks it should seek to actively confront. Instead, the United States must remain a 'European power,' keep

²⁸³ For a major overview of the arguments advanced by the four camps with regard to the issues of burden-sharing and NATO enlargement, please see appendix.

an eye on European security developments, and influence them in a way that will serve U.S. interests and complement U.S. capabilities. In order to effectively counter the effects of European freeriding, the United States must work to enhance European military capacity, but only within the context of NATO. In contrast to libertarians who advocate a neo-isolationist approach and neoconservatives, who take a unilateralist stance on NATO, conservatives can thus be considered to advocate a more 'multilateralist' approach and outlook.

Liberals, in contrast to the other three camps, assess European military contributions more positively. However, in order to work on a new transatlantic bargain, liberals argue that Europeans need to upgrade their capabilities to stay interoperable with the United States. In the neoliberal institutionalist perspective, the prospect that NATO may simply provide the United States with a "useful joint-training and exercise organization from which they can cherry-pick 'coalitions of the willing' to participate in U.S.-led operations"²⁸⁴ is strongly dismissed. Shaping up European militaries should not serve a U.S. security policy that, however multilateralist in approach, continues to focus on a narrowly-defined national interest and therefore engages in a 'divide-and-rule' game. Instead, in order to counter complex international problems, NATO will need a strong and *unified* Europe to function.

Notwithstanding these differences, except for neoconservatives, who remain largely indifferent vis-à-vis the impact of European military weakness on their own security policies, all camps argue that European military capabilities need to be shaped up substantially in order to serve U.S. security interests. While libertarians argue that Europe should do so *outside* of NATO, conservatives and liberals strongly advocate for European upgrades *within* the NATO structure.

At this point, different assessments of *NATO enlargement* come into play. Again, libertarians are seriously concerned with the consequences that extending U.S. security guarantees into strategically irrelevant regions might entail, arguing that U.S. risk exposure will outweigh all potential benefits of NATO enlargement. In contrast, the remaining three camps assess NATO enlargement differently and judge it vital to maintain U.S. security interests.

Neoconservatives are ignorant of NATO's role in U.S. military policies; however, the league of democratic NATO countries will remain necessary to provide for

²⁸⁴ Kitfield, quoted in Daalder 2003, 156.

legitimization of U.S. action, no matter how enclosed in a Kantian world of 'Perpetual Peace' they are. In more general terms, NATO is also seen as a vehicle for extending U.S. hegemony to regions considered strategically relevant.

By arguing to transform NATO into a political club of like-minded democracies, neoconservatives therefore emphasize the *political* benefits of NATO enlargement.

In contrast to neoconservatives, conservative thinkers tend to emphasize both *political and military* benefits of NATO enlargement. In pointing to the *political* benefits, they assume that the United States and Europe *are* from the same planet, with the Western European states actively engaging in counterbalancing efforts. NATO enlargement will provide the United States with allies that are capable of forging a counterbalancing weight to Western Europe. At the same time, and in contrast to neoconservatives, conservatives also appreciate the *military* benefits of NATO's maintenance and enlargement. If NATO can be transformed into a well-equipped toolbox, Central and Eastern European states are most likely to act as future force-providers in 'coalitions of the willing' that will preferably be assembled within NATO. Although scholars of both perspectives look differently at the overall relevance of NATO enlargement, they emphasize its benefits, with conservative thinkers pointing to a certain necessity of even further enlarging NATO in order to amount more critical 'pro-U.S. mass.'

Scholars with a neoliberal institutionalist perspective tend to be far more critical than conservative and neoconservative scholars about consolidating the benefits of NATO enlargement in terms of stabilizing Central and Eastern Europe and integrating these countries into the league of Western democracies. In arguing that multilateral organizations *per se* play a pivotal role in creating and maintaining an international order, they are simultaneously concerned with NATO's current institutional shortcomings and address the question as to which kind of structures, processes, and practices make international institutions capable of affecting policies.²⁸⁵ In the context of NATO enlargement, liberal scholars are therefore anxious about how NATO's political mechanisms need to be shaped in order to further consolidate democracy and the rule of law in Central and Eastern European countries. In contrast to neoconservative and conservative scholars, they closely focus on the institutional aspects of NATO enlargement instead of its geopolitical benefits. In general,

²⁸⁵ See Keohane 2002.

although they support NATO enlargement, they are far more sceptical vis-à-vis its pace and feasibility than conservatives and neoconservatives with regard to NATO's institutional arrangements.

4.2 Extracting the Main Lines of Argument

Notwithstanding considerable differences in approach and argumentation, NATO's military capabilities are considered insufficient especially by conservatives and liberals, who maintain that shaping up military capabilities constitutes a necessary component for NATO to remain relevant. Furthermore, neoconservatives, conservatives, and – with reservations – liberals argue that maintaining and enlarging NATO also holds major political benefits in store. Therefore, apart from scholars adopting a libertarian perspective, all camps argue that the United States must stay involved in European affairs and therefore in NATO. While conservatives and neoconservatives point to the geopolitical benefits of maintaining NATO, liberals argue that the United States' extensive global ties and its vulnerability to outside forces make disengagement impossible.²⁸⁶

Thus, neoconservatives, conservatives, and liberals come to a similar conclusion by taking different paths: All three camps seek to restructure the transatlantic security alliance to a certain extent. As Barry maintains, a variety of initiatives and bodies that also give important impetus to decisionmaking, serve as platforms for mutual consensus-building on how to work on this objective. The Committee to Expand NATO provides an instrument to carve out common lines of understanding between neoconservatives and liberals by bringing together several prominent neoconservatives, some of whom are serving in the Bush administration such as Paul Wolfowitz, along with Democrats such as Will Marshall, founder and president of the Progressive Policy Institute and the Democratic Leadership Council.²⁸⁷ Another forum for understanding is provided by the New Atlantic Initiative (NAI) promoted by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). NAI includes on its advisory board military hard-liners such as Donald Rumsfeld, right-wing political figures such as Newt Gingrich, as well as 'realist' Atlanticists such as Henry Kissinger.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 288.

²⁸⁷ For a more extensive discussion see Barry 2004, online.

²⁸⁸ Barry 2004, online.

Conservatives share the neoconservative emphasis on U.S. military power and the prospect of sustaining U.S. military primacy, and they overlap in defining a strategy of ‘cherry-picking,’ if for different reasons. Liberals, on their part, agree with neoconservatives that the creation and maintenance of a liberal international order and the emphasis on democracy should constitute first order principles in U.S. foreign policy. However, despite considerable overlaps, liberals and conservatives also strongly criticize the neoconservative argument. Conservatives consider neoconservatives to be dangerously unbound in their ambition to ‘remake the world in their image’ by force, if necessary, and regard the assumption of unipolarity as a dangerous illusion. Liberals strongly criticize the neoconservative ignorance vis-à-vis NATO in adopting Joseph Nye’s argument that

“[i]n the absence of international institutions through which others can feel consulted and involved, the imperial imposition of values may neither attract others nor produce soft power.”²⁸⁹

In opposing libertarian and neoconservative assumptions and arguments, conservatives and liberals share room to coalesce. Furthermore, neither camp entirely rules out unilateral action, thus sharing further common ground. Conservatives, though preferring to work through NATO for assembling coalitions of the willing, argue that the United States may also do so outside NATO and, if necessary, should resort to unilateralist action. Liberals place premium importance on multinational organizations. However, when vital interests of the United States are touched upon or when multilateral arrangements interfere with the U.S. ability to produce stability and peace in volatile areas, the United States should be cautious to continue working through multilateralist arrangements. Despite maintaining that “unilateral actions are best when buttressed by multilateral support,”²⁹⁰ liberals also argue that à la carte multilateralism may indeed constitute a viable option to pursue U.S. foreign policy goals.²⁹¹ Put more generally, while liberals do not agree with conservatives on transforming NATO into a mere toolbox, they admit that not every “problem has an international or multilateral solution (...). In fact, however, an effective foreign policy in the age of global politics must *combine* power and cooperation.”²⁹² In brief, although they have different perspectives, both conservatives and liberals regard the maintenance of U.S. power as essential to the

²⁸⁹ Nye 2003, 67.

²⁹⁰ Nye 2002, 159f.

²⁹¹ See Nye on this argument, 2002, 159.

²⁹² Daalder/Lindsay 2003a, 290, emphasis as in original.

United States' ability to achieve its foreign policy goals. While both camps conclude that it is through cooperative efforts that the United States is *most likely* to achieve its foreign policy goals, they also maintain that multilateralism can only represent a *means* to achieve a certain end; if it fails to do so, the United States must resort to unilateral action as a last resort in pursuit of its national interest.

In brief, this second step of analysis sought to extract areas with consensus-building power in the current U.S. debate on NATO. The findings revealed that, while major differences exist between the four perspectives dominant in the current U.S. think tank debate on NATO, major overlaps can also be detected. For different reasons, the neoconservative, conservative, and liberal camps advocate the continued relevance of NATO in political terms. Simultaneously, conservatives and liberals seek to enhance NATO's military capabilities; while liberals argue that the United States will benefit from a strong Europe, conservatives maintain that *specific niche capabilities* need to be developed. Although NATO's military relevance is seriously doubted by all camps except for the liberal one, its political capacities are regarded as being of continued importance. In criticizing the libertarian and neoconservative perspectives as being wildly off the mark, conservatives and liberals share most common ground in debating NATO. In this context, while both camps prefer working through NATO in addressing transatlantic security issues, both adopt an instrumentalist view to conducting U.S. multilateralist policies. However, both camps also reject the notion of following this multilateralist path in case it hamstrings the implementation of U.S. security policies or the pursuit of vital points on the U.S. agenda. Thus, a selective approach to NATO is likely to determine future U.S. decisionmaking considerations.

5. Conclusion

This analysis looked into the U.S. security debate on NATO that has gained new impetus in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. In order to capture the entire U.S. debate on NATO, this paper drew on the analyses of think tank fellows of ten different think tanks.

By performing a qualitative analysis of the debate's content, this study sought to reconstruct the different perspectives on NATO that are currently prevailing in the

United States. Drawing on earlier discussions, the analysis distinguished between four ‘camps’ that advance distinct policy analyses and recommendations to policymakers:

Camp 1	Camp 2	Camp 3	Camp 4
Libertarian	Neoconservative	Conservative	Liberal

In a first step, the major lines of argument were presented according to the issues of burden-sharing and NATO enlargement that are assessed differently by the respective camps. Additionally, policy recommendations advanced to U.S. policymakers were depicted. In a second step, the analysis carved out differences between the approaches, and - more importantly so - major overlaps that may give way to consensus-building in U.S. NATO politics.

The findings of this analysis gain *relevance* in two major fields: First, they provide insight into the revitalized debate on NATO conducted in the United States. Second, they address an insufficiently-researched area in foreign policy analysis by looking at the *input* side of the decisionmaking process on the issue of NATO.

1. This analysis explored the main lines of argument as well as the broad range of policy options advanced to decision-makers by the four camps. The *findings* can be summarized as follows.

Libertarians adopt a structural realist approach. They maintain that NATO does not serve any purpose but to maintain U.S. hegemony in Europe. With regard to the inevitable logic of balance-of-power politics governing international relations, they point to the perils arising from an extended security parameter into strategically irrelevant regions, since this will provoke other powers into balancing behavior. Furthermore, European military freeriding will lead to gradual U.S. decline. Therefore, they advocate a strategic withdrawal from Europe.

Neoconservatives meld the idea of prolonged hegemonic stability with the claim to conduct a ‘morally sound’ foreign policy. They consider NATO irrelevant as a military alliance. However, the alliance maintains relevance as a provider of legitimization for U.S. action. Therefore, it should be transformed into a ‘political club’ of like-minded democracies.

Conservatives argue that NATO enlargement serves to create an intra-European counter-weight to ‘Gaullist’ European states. Furthermore, Central and Eastern European states will act as force-providers for the conduct of ‘coalitions of the willing.’ In order to prevent Europe from engaging in freeriding, however, European capabilities need to be shaped up substantially within NATO. Conservatives therefore advocate for transforming NATO into a well-equipped toolbox.

Liberals argue that in an interdependent world, multinational organizations play a pivotal role in creating an international liberal order. To strike a new transatlantic bargain, European NATO allies need to shape up militarily. In addition, institutional shortcomings need to be addressed to consolidate the benefits of the previous round of enlargement. Although liberals prefer working through multinational organizations, they also point to the need to combine power and cooperation.

While – in contrast to libertarians – the neoconservative, conservative, and liberal camps advocate the importance of staying engaged in Europe, conservatives and liberals share most common ground.²⁹³ While both camps regard NATO as an instrument of continued relevance to pursue U.S. foreign policy goals in security politics, they remain, however, sceptical towards NATO’s capacities and do not rule out unilateral action either: Whereas conservatives disparagingly regard NATO as a ‘necessary evil’ to pursue their security policies in Europe, liberals are especially doubtful regarding NATO’s institutional capacities to cope with an ever-increasing number of members with mixed political records.²⁹⁴

Therefore, the United States will most likely continue to make use of NATO selectively. In this context “[e]ven most American multilateralists are unilateralists at the core.”²⁹⁵ U.S. policymakers and analysts mostly are not principled multilateralists, but instrumental multilateralists who see multilateralism in terms of a cost-benefit analysis rather than a primary principle guiding the conduct of policy. In brief,

“[t]his blend of unilateralism and multilateralism reflects a broad and deep American consensus. Americans prefer to act with the sanction and support of the other countries if they can. But they’re strong enough to act alone if they must.”²⁹⁶

²⁹³ With regard to the unsustainability of exclusively unilateralist policies, Ikenberry heralds the “end of the neoconservative moment.” Ikenberry 2004.

²⁹⁴ Singer 2003, online.

²⁹⁵ Kagan 2002C, online.

²⁹⁶ Kagan 2002C, online. On account of this argument see also Nelson 2002, 56; Haftendorn 2003.

Therefore, also a potential change of administration in the context of U.S. presidential elections will not necessarily herald a fundamental change in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. While the language employed may be more considerate and the general willingness to work through NATO may be enhanced due to the influence of more liberal policy advocates, U.S. cautiousness vis-à-vis NATO as a multilateral institution will likely prevail, given current trends in the U.S. debate on NATO.

2. The findings of this analysis also entail a range of *theoretical implications* that can be identified. This study is considered a first and necessary step in addressing an insufficiently-researched topic pointing to the input provided by think tanks into the foreign policymaking process. However, as Abelson points out,

“despite preliminary efforts (...) to examine the role of think-tanks in the policy-making process, the study of policy research institutions and their involvement in foreign policy decision-making is far from complete.”²⁹⁷

While this analysis is rather concerned with *what* is being discussed in the U.S, thus focusing on the content of the think tank debate, follow-up studies will have to point to the question of *how* the respective arguments and policy recommendations will actually be integrated into the policymaking process.

Recent studies have already attempted to measure the actual impact of think tank analyses on policymaking; however, these analyses remain rather quantitative in nature and try to amount empirical evidence for policy impact in general. Therefore, a follow-up study may draw on the findings of this study in order to track the different lines of argument in the policymaking process, thus gaining insight into the *extent* to which think tanks can actually serve as mediators prior to the decisionmaking processes. Furthermore, by tracking the content of a specific issue in the policymaking process, further studies may also focus on *how* and *by which strategies* think tanks manage to have influence on specific policy issues. As Abelson concludes,

“[b]y examining the participation of think-tanks in the policy-making process, political scientists can provide a more comprehensive explanation of how policy decisions are shaped and moulded in Washington. (...) In studying the policy-making environment, political scientists must be cognizant of the changing role of think-tanks in the United States.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Abelson 1996, 124.

²⁹⁸ Abelson 1996, 125.

APPENDIX

	Burden-Sharing	NATO Enlargement	Policy Recommendations
Libertarians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NATO useless as a military alliance - Danger of European freeriding through security guarantee by the U.S. that will eventually weaken the U.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Danger of extending security guarantees to strategically insignificant regions - Danger of getting 'bogged down' in small and strategically insignificant wars and peacekeeping missions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.S. strategic withdrawal from NATO - Integration of Central and Eastern Europe via international economic institutions
Neo-conservatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NATO is entirely insignificant in military terms; as an alliance, it is not needed either because of U.S. prevalence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NATO remains a vehicle for securing U.S. hegemony in Europe and extending it to strategically significant regions (Turkey, Russia, Central Asia) - NATO can be used as a vehicle to gain political legitimization for U.S. action, especially from Central an Eastern European countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transforming NATO into a 'political club' of no military significance
Conservatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NATO is useless as an alliance because of European military weakness - Europeans cannot be allowed to continue to free-ride on U.S. security guarantee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NATO remains a vital instrument for the U.S. to remain a 'European power' and prevent European balancing - U.S. should keep in touch with Central and Eastern European states to form 'coalitions of the willing' within NATO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transforming NATO into a well-equipped toolbox (force-provider of niche capabilities); cherry-picking
Liberals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Europeans contribute to missions, also in military terms, especially in the peacekeeping and nation-building fields - To work on a new transatlantic agenda, capabilities must be upgraded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NATO enlargement guarantees for a Europe 'whole and free' - To consolidate this achievement, institutional shortcomings must be addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Striking a new transatlantic bargain in military and political terms

ABBREVIATIONS

AEI	American Enterprise Institute
ANP	Annual National Program
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DCI	Defense Capabilities Initiative
EU	European Union
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
IPS	Institute for Policy Studies
ISAF	International Security and Assistance Force
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NAT	New Atlantic Initiative
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRF	NATO Response Force
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PPI	Progressive Policy Institute
UN	United Nations

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