

New Threats to the Alliance's Security and Strategies to Reform NATO

By: Erika Simpson

NATO needs a much greater transformation of its structures and procedures if it is to serve the common security interests of the allies and others. Traditional policies should be seriously reconsidered and perhaps drastically reevaluated. Old ways of thinking no longer apply to the world in which we live. This article suggests new types of threats to allied security and proposes alternative strategies to reform NATO so as to enhance international security.

CONDUCT INDEPENDENT THREAT ANALYSIS

For decades, NATO's assessment of threats has been shaped and influenced by American military threat analysis. This development was not considered a serious problem until recently. As George Bush explained during the second presidential debate with John Kerry: "We all thought there was weapons there, Robin. My opponent thought there was weapons there. That's why he called him a grave threat. I wasn't happy when we found out there wasn't weapons, and we've got an intelligence group together to figure out why."¹ While Prime Minister Tony Blair has been largely exonerated for taking American intelligence at face value, many will not accept this sort of backhanded logic in future wars. In the future, domestic publics will demand hard evidence of a country's professed transgressions, even if American politicians argue that such evidence exists but cannot be released for security reasons. Some of the lessons of the war against Iraq are that NATO allies need to undertake more of their own independent military threat analysis. They need to institute the infrastructure and procedures necessary to carry out such independent threat analysis and share their findings.²

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SHARE ALTERNATIVE THREAT ASSESSMENTS AND INTELLIGENCE

In conjunction with United Nations monitoring agencies and international watchdog institutes, NATO could unite with like-minded nations to provide the UN Security Council with timely and accurate threat assessments based on new information and possibly conflicting analysis of the threat. Such alternative threat assessments could play a valuable role in reducing tensions and defusing arms spirals in the weeks and months preceding possible multilateral or unilateral actions (such as air strikes).

Naturally, critics will retort that sharing intelligence, especially contrary evidence on the nature of the threat, will not necessarily prevent the US administration from undertaking preemptive or unilateralist measures. For



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many American diplomats, the lessons of the Kosovo campaign in 1999 and the Franco-German rebuff in 2003 reinforced their belief that NATO is far too cumbersome and bureaucratic. Now that targets have to be approved by 26 members, "coalitions of coalitions"³ may seem more practical, as exemplified by the United States' "coalition of the willing" in Iraq. Even if one or more of the non-US NATO allies puts forward contradictory evidence about the nature of the threat, the US and members of its "fast alliance" may choose not to accept such evidence. A great deal will depend on the quality of the intelligence and in this respect, France, Germany, and the UK could have a lot to offer. NATO headquarters should inculcate a culture where competing

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interpretations of threats are encouraged among the twenty-six allies.

PROMOTE AN ATMOSPHERE OF CONCILIATION THROUGH NATO

Admittedly, fostering an atmosphere of conciliation and acceptance may take a long time. As the Ditchley Foundation concluded in a recent discussion of NATO's future role: "Whatever the underlying causes, most of us agreed that this level of transatlantic insult had not been seen before and that it had contributed to an unnecessary crisis, the effects of which would be with us for some time. There was a good deal of broken crockery about."⁴ During the presidential debates, John Kerry appealed to American citizens to vote for him, stating "I believe America is safest and strongest when we are leading the world and we are leading strong alliances."⁵ He criticized George Bush for attacking Iraq too quickly before ensuring a strong coalition was in place. In the future, another important way to promote an atmosphere of conciliation would be for the United States (and Canada) to refrain from viewing threats to North American security as markedly different from, and more important, than threats to Europe.

The failure of the nuclear weapon states to implement their Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations means that many countries, like Iran and North Korea, have the rationale they seek to obtain nuclear arsenals of their own.

DECLINE PARTICIPATION THROUGH NORAD IN SPACE-BASED PROGRAMMES

After the Cold War's end, the decline of the Soviet threat meant that the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) was no longer as important to North American security. But now some argue that preparing for possible warfare in space is necessary, and the US (possibly in conjunction with Canada) should work through NORAD to develop space-based interception capabilities. In Europe and Canada, concerns have long been raised about possible contributions to the US military's global surveillance, warning, and

communications systems. As one observer has pointed out, the American government needs to be especially careful that it is not perceived to be intent upon erecting some kind of "Fortress America."⁶ Accordingly, NATO governments should maintain official positions of non-participation in the US missile and space-based defence programme because it is not configured in a manner consistent with international disarmament and proliferation interests and the prevention of weaponization of space. In addition, the allies should organize preliminary discussions on the contents of a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in space. Such a treaty could build on the longstanding commitment of most of the world's states to the basic tenets of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (although the Bush and Putin administrations chose to abandon the ABM Treaty). Of course, US government participation in such discussions is unlikely at present, but many states with space capabilities might participate. And if discussions were organized to ensure representation by non-governmental entities, including corporate space interests, US corporations with an interest in non-weaponized space might participate. Such discussions could set the groundwork for actual treaty negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament or elsewhere when conditions for progress are more propitious.⁷

SAVE THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) FROM CHARGES OF HYPOCRISY

The failure of the nuclear weapon states to implement their NPT obligations under Article VI of the NPT means many countries, like Iran and North Korea, have the rationale they seek to obtain nuclear arsenals of their own. As a result, the upcoming "Third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty" (RevCon) faces daunting challenges. The original nuclear weapons states (US, Russia, UK, France, and China) have not lived up to their obligations under Article VI of the NPT to move decisively toward the irreversible elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Such inaction "invites charges of hypocrisy when these same countries seek to deny access to nuclear technologies to non-nuclear weapons states - and moreover, threaten and carry out military preemption to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by other countries as in the case of the US and UK concerning Iraq."⁸

Prior to the NPT's Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting at the UN in 2004, the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) and Pugwash Canada sponsored a roundtable for

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Canadian officials and NGO representatives. The paper *Building Bridges: The Non-Proliferation Treaty and Canada's Nuclear Weapons Policies* is based on this event. It recommended building bridges between NATO member states and those of the New Agenda Coalition, which focuses on nuclear disarmament. The aim is to strengthen the "moderate middle" of the nuclear debate. It discussed building a bridge between the nuclear-weapon states and the non-nuclear-weapon states to open the road to substantive disarmament and non-proliferation progress. It also made recommendations regarding Canada's role and responsibilities with respect to the US ballistic missile defence project and possible weaponization of space.⁹

Eight NATO states calling for more speed in implementing commitments to the NPT supported a New Agenda Coalition resolution at the UN. They built a bridge on the long road to nuclear disarmament. The bridge gained extra strength when Japan and South Korea joined with the NATO 8 - Belgium, Canada, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway and Turkey. These states, along with the New Agenda countries - Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden - now form an impressive centre in the nuclear weapons debate and can play a determining role in the outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference.¹⁰

Just as Canada and Germany took the lead in NATO by asking the Alliance to review its reliance on deterrence, the non-nuclear weapon states in NATO, the New Agenda Coalition, and the Middle Powers Initiative will play a significant role. Seven NATO states have joined with Canada, which for two years had stood alone in NATO in supporting the New Agenda resolution. The fact that such important NATO players as Germany, Norway, The Netherlands and Belgium have also now taken a proactive stance indicates that they want to send a message to the US to take more significant steps to fulfilling commitments already made to the NPT. As retired Canadian Senator Douglas Roche, chair of the MPI states, "The situation the NPT finds itself in is so serious and the threat of nuclear terrorism so real that governments need to put aside their quarrels and power plays and take meaningful steps to ensure that the NPT will not be lost to the world through erosion."¹¹

MAINTAIN LOW LEVELS OF DEFENCE SPENDING

The European allies in NATO and Canada have made laudable efforts to decrease their defence spending. Since 2001, the non-US NATO members' spending on NATO has been less than 2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Over the last three years, however, the United States has laid out 3.6 percent of its GDP on its defence commitments worldwide. Canada expended 1.2 percent, approximately the same percentage as Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Spain. The Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, and the UK ranked at or above this average. All other NATO members fell below this average highlighting the fact that American remonstrations to spend more are failing to convince.¹²

For example, Germany is making drastic cuts in equipment and slimming down its organizational structures; its focus has switched to peacekeeping, crisis management, and the war against terrorism, rather than defending itself from Cold War attacks. Similarly, Canada has refrained from markedly increasing its defence spending on capital and equipment in favour of a modest increase to the number of available peacekeepers. Even US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld acknowledges that big-ticket costly weapons systems are unlikely to find Osama bin Laden or prevent a terrorist attack. When US army officials expressed confidence that they would capture bin Laden in 2004, "they cited better intelligence - not powerful new arms - as the basis for their optimism."¹³ Increasing defence spending to American levels is not an option for responsible policymakers.

Although some European and Canadian defence lobbyists bemoan lower levels of defence spending, domestic publics will not tolerate higher levels. The newer allies will have a tough time coming up with the money to bring their militaries up to NATO's basic standards of interoperability. In the biggest defence contract by a former Soviet bloc country since the end of the Cold War, Poland agreed to buy 48 US-made F-16 jet fighters for US\$3.5 billion. Such modernization will cost Poland about \$7.76 billion through 2012. Like Poland, all the new allies are facing steep modernization costs to replace obsolete or inadequate equipment. But the target force goals they agreed to with NATO prior to joining

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the Alliance are proving difficult to reach.¹⁴ (Those goals, outlining the contribution to the Alliance that each member intends to make, are classified by NATO).

CALCULATE DEFENCE SPENDING FAIRLY

In forthcoming analysis of the allies' abilities to meet an agreed-on set of pledges related to their capabilities, the "Prague Capabilities Commitments," the NATO countries need to consider alternative sorts of commitments—such as UN and NATO-sponsored peacekeeping—because they improve the Alliance's military preparedness and close the spending gap between the US and its European allies. Even the EU's efforts to field a rapid-reaction force of 60,000 personnel should count as a monetary contribution to NATO's security. After all, the United States calculates the percentage of GDP spent on NATO incorporating all US defence spending worldwide— including US spending in the Middle East on defence and American foreign military assistance to Columbia. It makes sense to reply to American concerns about burden-sharing by asking NATO officials to calculate spending estimates on all types of defence expenditures, particularly peacekeeping under NATO and UN auspices.



NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
and UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan - UN

CONTRIBUTE MORE HEAVILY TO PEACEKEEPING UNDER NATO AUSPICES

Most of the NATO allies, including the United States, are participating more heavily in peacekeeping under NATO auspices than in the past. Recent new NATO missions include commanding the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and assisting in Poland's command of a NATO-supported peacekeeping force in Iraq. NATO is also improving its ability to act far beyond Europe and North America through a major restructuring that includes cutbacks at NATO headquarters in Belgium and a stronger presence in the United States. A command centre in Norfolk, VA, "Allied Command Transformation," is overseeing this modernization. More robust, rapidly deployable

capabilities will change NATO into a much more nimble, deployable, action-oriented organization. The most significant development has been the institution of a 20,000-strong "NATO Response Force," ready to deploy within days.

At the same time, the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) is contributing 25,000-32,000 alliance and non-alliance troops. And until mid-2003, the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina included about 13,000 NATO and non-NATO troops. In June 2003, the forces were reduced to 7,000 and since the end of 2004, the mission has been transferred to the EU. Furthermore, NATO members have been patrolling the Eastern Mediterranean since the terrorist attacks of 2001, a mission called *Operation Active Endeavour*.

But the risk is that as NATO involves its allies in more and more "out-of-area" operations—similar to those in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and now Iraq, the rest of the world may come to perceive NATO peacekeepers as defenders of the American empire. As such, while NATO should continue to increase its commitment to peacekeeping, there needs to be a complementary return to the UN as the chief guarantor of safety. This will help to avoid the widespread perception that the "NATO club" consists mainly of Northern, "rich," "white" nations based in North America and Europe.

RETURN TO THE UN WITH INCREASED FUNDING AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO SHIRBRIG AND A FUTURE UN EMERGENCY SERVICE

The UN continues to experience a funding crisis due to member states' failure to honour their financial obligations. Member states of the UN invest an average of \$1.40 in UN peacekeeping activities for every \$1,000 spent on their own armed forces. For example, for every dollar that it has invested in UN peacekeeping, the United States has tended to spend over \$2,000 on its own military.¹⁵ The NATO allies need to contribute more money and personnel to UN peacekeeping or run

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the risk of being accused of trying to channel all actions through NATO peacekeeping. One effective way to do this would be to contribute standby forces and equipment to the UN's Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). Sixteen countries are members of the brigade, which successfully monitored the ceasefire between Eritrea and Ethiopia, but more contributors and resources are needed. While SHIRBRIG aims to provide the UN with a jump-start, rapid deployment force of as many as 5,000 troops within 30 days notice, plans are

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afoot to establish a UN Emergency Service (UNES). It would be a UN 911 that could avert genocide and armed conflict worldwide, not just in Sudan and Rwanda but in all regions of the world, including NATO's backyard. While NATO's new "Rapid Reaction Force" runs the risk of being perceived as US-led and status quo oriented, each participating state in SHIRBRIG would reserve the right to decide whether to deploy national personnel on a case-by-case basis. This would ensure that its final composition would be wider and more inclusive. Moreover, UNES would be composed of professional volunteers, military police, and civilians working directly for the UN. This would reduce the pressure on national decision-making and the immediate demand for national armed forces in UN peace operations.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

NATO has limited time and a small window of opportunity to take advantage of its fairly benign reputation. It is highly unlikely that this regional military alliance will be seen in such a positive light ten years from now. Right now, NATO is well-situated to make the important changes proposed in this article because the NATO allies did not acquiesce to American pressure to join the war on Iraq. It was evident from France, Germany, Belgium, and Canada's reluctance to join the war that not everyone could agree on the best methods and most efficient means of achieving commonly valued objectives, including ousting Saddam Hussein. The important

lesson is that every NATO ally - not just the current hegemon - now has a duty and responsibility to put forward alternative proposals to enhance international and national security. The foreign ministers of the allied powers may not be able to summon fleets of frigates in aid of their diplomacy or threaten to use nuclear weapons, let alone decide to use them. But they can carry briefcases stocked with practical proposals and promises of more money to put toward alternative strategies. ■

Notes:

1. "Transcript: second presidential debate," online: <http://www.debates.org/pages/trans2004c.html>.
2. For a detailed analysis of NATO's progress and lack of progress on instituting new infrastructure and procedures since 9/11, see Eric R. Terzuolo, "Regional Alliance, Global Threat: NATO and Weapons of Mass Destruction, 1994-2004," online: <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellowi/03-04/terzuolo.pdf>.
3. The term "coalition of coalitions" was used by US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell and quoted by Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002) p. 49.
4. The Ditchley Foundation's News and Conference Reports, Report by the Director, "The Future Role of NATO", February 21-23, 2003, p. 1, online: <http://www.ditchley.co.uk/news/13.htm>.
5. "Transcript: first presidential debate," online: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/debaterereferree/debate_0930.html.
6. Ann Denholm Crosby, "Defining Security Environments for Global Governance: Canada and the US 'Global Protection System'," *Global Governance*, 4, 1998, pp. 331-353.
7. Canadian Pugwash Group and the Middle Powers Initiative, *Building Bridges: The Non-Proliferation Treaty and Canada's Nuclear Weapons Policies*, a policy paper for the government of Canada, online: <http://www.pugwashgroup.ca>.
8. Statement of the International Pugwash Council, Seoul, Korea, 9 October 2004, online: <http://www.pugwash.org/reports/pac/54/seoul2004-statement.htm>.
9. See *Building Bridges: The Non-Proliferation Treaty and Canada's Nuclear Weapons Policies*. A shorter version for an international audience, *Building Bridges: What Middle Powers Can Do to Strengthen the NPT*, is online: the Middle Powers Initiative website: <http://www.gsinitiate.org/mpipubs.html>. For further discussion of NATO nuclear policy and attempts to modify it, see Erika Simpson, "NATO's Nuclear Weapons Policy: relationships to the 2000 and 2005 NPT Review Conferences, the paragraph 32 process and future Canadian policy," paper presented to the CPG-MPI Roundtable, 27 February 2004, online: the Canadian Pugwash Group website: <http://www.pugwashgroup.ca>.
10. According to Douglas Roche, "A New Bridge to Disarmament," *Waging Peace*, website of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, 1 November 2004, online: http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2004/10/30_roche_new-bridge-disarmament.htm.
11. *Ibid*
12. NATO Press Release, "Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence," 1 December 2003, Table 3, online: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2003/p03-146e.htm>.
13. Sanford Gottlieb and Christopher Hellman, "Weapons won't defeat terrorism," *USA Today*, 22 March 2004, online: http://64.177.207.201/pages/8_542.html.
14. "Integrating New Allies into NATO," October 2000, Ch. 3, *Restructuring and Modernization*, p. 2, online: <http://www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?index=2665&sequence=0>.
15. Roger Coate, ed., *US Policy and the Future of the United Nations*, (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1994) p. 12.
16. Howard Peter Langille, *Bridging the Commitment-Capacity Gap: A Review of Existing Arrangements and Options for Enhancing UN Rapid Deployment Capabilities* (United States: Centre for UN Reform Education), August 2002 online: http://www.centerforunreform.org/publications_listofpublications.asp.