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**INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES**  
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**NATO: Potential Sources  
of Tension**

Joseph R. Wood

February 1999

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## FOREWORD


We are pleased to publish this twenty-third volume in the *Occasional Paper* series of the US Air Force Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). As we approach NATO's fiftieth anniversary and a crucial NATO summit, INSS offers two studies that address the state of the alliance and critical issues that it must face if it is to survive its Cold-War roots. In this study, Joseph R. Wood's *Occasional Paper 23, NATO: Potential Sources of Tension*, the focus is on the range of issues, large and small, that comprise the NATO agenda in this golden anniversary year. The paper does an excellent job of presenting both the issues and the political-economic-military context in which they must be addressed. In the accompanying follow-on study, David S. Fadok's *Occasional Paper 24, Juggling the Bear*, one of the most thorny of those issues—NATO expansion to include Russia—is examined in exhaustive detail. Together these two studies, written by two extremely talented and rising minds within the USAF today, present a fitting intellectual tribute to perhaps history's most successful alliance as they develop the issues upon which hinge its future prospects for success.

### *About the Institute*

INSS is primarily sponsored by the National Security Policy Division, Nuclear and Counterproliferation Directorate, Headquarters US Air Force (HQ USAF/XONP) and the Dean of the Faculty, USAF Academy. Our other sponsors currently include the Air Staff's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Directorate (XOI); the Secretary of Defense's Office of Net Assessment (OSD/NA); the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (incorporating the sponsorship of the Defense Special Weapons Agency and the On-Site Inspection Agency); the Army Environmental Policy Institute; the Plans Directorate of the United States Space Command; and the Air Force long-range plans

directorate (XPXP). The mission of the Institute is “to promote national security research for the Department of Defense within the military academic community, and to support the Air Force national security education program.” Its research focuses on the areas of greatest interest to our organizational sponsors: arms control, proliferation, regional studies, Air Force policy, information warfare, environmental security, and space policy.

INSS coordinates and focuses outside thinking in various disciplines and across the military services to develop new ideas for defense policy making. To that end, the Institute develops topics, selects researchers from within the military academic community, and administers sponsored research. It also hosts conferences and workshops and facilitates the dissemination of information to a wide range of private and government organizations. INSS is in its seventh year of providing valuable, cost-effective research to meet the needs of our sponsors. We appreciate your continued interest in INSS and our research products.

  
JAMES M. SMITH  
Director

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATO's history has been characterized as one of continuing crisis and division, overcome only by a combination of compelling need on one hand, and constant attention and statesmanship on the other. By contrast, 1999 marks a period of relative internal calm for the Alliance. From the U.S. Senate's overwhelming approval of NATO enlargement to the fact that Germany's Green Party was forced to mute anti-NATO views even to be considered a potential government coalition partner, substantial concrete evidence suggests that NATO today is not in obvious crisis, is threatened neither by a powerful external threat nor by overarching internal strategic differences, and enjoys a degree of support that may indeed be higher than during the Cold War.

Nevertheless, there are potential sources of strain and tension within the Alliance. They do not immediately pose grave threats to Alliance cohesion, but they could grow into significant strains if not handled effectively. Moreover, several of the strains collectively have the potential to interact in ways that could introduce more serious tensions, especially with the imposition of other, unanticipated kinds of tension or crisis.

Several long-term tensions that existed during the Cold War continue to affect NATO today. The first is geography, which affects the policy of each Ally according to how that Ally perceives its own interests and its proximity to potential security problems. The second is the French exception and France's interpretation of and value on its national independence. The third is a collection of issues that spring from the question of what are the real purposes of the Alliance. Collective defense against an external enemy? Protection of shared interests in Europe? Shaping the European security environment? Preventing

renationalization of defense while furthering European integration? The last long-term tension involves differing perspectives on the Western relationship with Russia.

The short- and medium-term issues inducing stress in the Alliance today include the following:

- Enlargement: Most Allies favor a pause in enlargement after the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland join in 1999. But the Alliance will have to evaluate how long to pause and what candidates are next if its "open door" policy is to be effective.

- Strategic Concept Review: As the Alliance reviews its Strategic Concept for the first time since 1991, it must decide to what degree to emphasize traditional, core Article 5 missions or whether to emphasize the flexibility some think necessary to deal with more frequent non-Article 5 missions.

- Cost Issues: A major problem for the Alliance is how to sustain support for defense resources absent a large and looming threat. This absence could allow domestic political forces in all Allied countries more room to assert themselves and use NATO as a tool for domestic purposes; a hypothetical example that illustrates the problem is how the Air Force transition to Air Expeditionary Forces could have an eventual, unintended impact on U.S. European presence and on the larger Alliance. There are also significant issues associated with the cost of enlargement that must be resolved.

- The European Security and Defense Identity: NATO has agreed on the importance of realizing the ESDI within NATO and on using the Western European Union as a vehicle for developing the ESDI in concrete terms. But the actual process of doing so, and the larger problem of defining the role of the WEU, remain contentious.

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- Counter-Proliferation and Terrorism: The U.S. is eager to see NATO play a role in responding to these issues, while the European Allies are less convinced that the Alliance should be involved. This may be one of the more significant tensions in NATO in the years ahead, as it brings up questions of the fundamental goals of the Alliance and highlights differing transatlantic perspectives.

- U.S. Technological Gap: A technology and doctrine gap is emerging between U.S. forces and their European counterparts, and the gap is set to widen as the U.S. spends about three times as much on research and development as all European Allies combined. The effects could be a) a divide between the U.S., with a stand-off capability that keeps its forces out of harms way, and the Europeans who are left with “dirtier,” riskier tasks; and/or b) greater or even total European dependence on the U.S.

- Adaptation Issues: Most problems involving NATO’s new command structure, Combined Joint Task Forces, and other post-Cold War institutional adaptation reforms have been resolved, but the “end game” could still produce tensions.

- Greece and Turkey: These nations pose the most serious threat for intra-Alliance conflict, especially as the Greek part of Cyprus prepares to receive advanced surface-to-air missiles while Turkey has vowed to prevent their becoming operational.

- The Balkans: NATO faces very difficult choices over whether and how to respond to violence that could well spread and pull in other nations with ties in the region.

Of course, any number of unexpected changes could produce substantial new stresses for NATO: failure in Kosovo, or a general economic crisis which drives nations to turn inward and reduce cooperation across the board, or conflicting evidence of a resurging

major military threat, or events that seriously impair American ability to provide leadership, all could cause more serious tension. The combined longer-term trends of economic integration in Europe even as sub-national regions reassert themselves may leave defense as one of a smaller number of issues dealt with at the national level, with unpredictable consequences.

But for the moment, the primary task for NATO policy makers is to deal with the less dramatic but important issues described above in such a way as to prevent their growing into more profound tensions. The Alliance is healthy, with revamped institutions and substantial public support. There is every reason to expect that NATO's 50th anniversary summit and celebration in Washington will be an opportunity to reflect on the success of the Alliance in the past while preparing it to sustain that success in the future.

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## Preface

This paper explores potential sources of tension in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the near and medium terms, defined here as the next five years. It aims at individuals in policy advisory or operational positions who 1) work on NATO issues routinely and who might benefit from a comprehensive look at potential Alliance tensions, or 2) do not work directly on NATO issues but whose jobs require an understanding of Alliance matters.

With such a target audience, I wrote the paper as a policy study rather than an academic treatise. Although I conducted a literature review as background for the paper, the paper itself is based predominantly on interviews at the Ministry of Defense in Bonn; the Ministry of Defense in London; the Ministry of Defense in Paris; the Missions and Delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany at NATO Headquarters in Brussels as well as NATO's International Staff there; the U.S. Embassies in Bonn, London, and Paris; and in various academic settings. The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at the U.S. Air Force Academy funded this research. I also conducted interviews in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff at the Pentagon (not funded by INSS). To encourage frankness and to ensure a policy orientation, I conducted all interviews under conditions of non-attribution by name or post.

I am very grateful for the generous funding provided by INSS that made the paper possible. I deeply appreciate the extraordinary amounts of time offered by busy policy makers and policy advisors during my interviews. Their willingness to share their thoughts, their experience, and their frank assessments provided a rich and thorough basis for this research piece. I also thank, especially, Dr. David Yost of

the Naval Postgraduate School for his exceedingly generous and gracious donations of time, reflection, and materials.

With that much help from others, it is much more than a mere formality to add that any gaps or errors of interpretation are entirely my own responsibility. This paper reflects my own views and not those of the U.S. Government, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Air Force Academy, or INSS.

*JRW*

*Paris, January 1999*

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## *NATO: Potential Sources of Tension*

### INTRODUCTION

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has a solid basis for a claim to be the most effective and durable military alliance in history. The Alliance has overcome deep divisions and crises at several stages over the almost 50 years since the Washington Treaty was signed: the integration of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1954-55; the tensions generated by decolonization on the part of France and Great Britain; the Suez crisis; repeated Berlin crises; the long adaptation of conventional and nuclear strategy after Sputnik and the American shift away from Massive Retaliation, culminating in NATO's MC 14/3 and Flexible Response in 1967-68; the withdrawal of French forces from the integrated command structure in 1966-67; the management of détente with the Soviet Union; the debate over the deployment of cruise missiles and intermediate-range nuclear forces in the 1970s and early 1980s; the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany together with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, which had comprised what many considered to be NATO's original reason for being; and Bosnia. Indeed, based on that incomplete review, one could argue that NATO's history is one of continuing crisis and division, overcome only by a combination of compelling need on one hand, and constant attention and statesmanship on the other.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, 1999 marks a period of relative internal calm for the Alliance even as it is engaged in Bosnia, considers action in Kosovo, revises its command structure, reviews its Strategic Concept in preparation for a 50th Anniversary Summit in April 1999 in Washington, and prepares at that same summit to welcome as members three nations of the former Warsaw Pact. Support for the Alliance, despite the loss of its largest enemy, remains high on both sides of the Atlantic, and NATO's prestige is substantial after its success in bringing at least a temporary peace to Bosnia (that success, partly credited to the efficacy of NATO's pre-existing military command structure and procedures as well

as its ability to include French forces, stood in marked contrast to the earlier non-NATO multinational effort directly under United Nations control). Today, there is general consensus in Europe and North America on the need for a continuing transatlantic security link and general recognition that NATO is the principal European security organization, at least for its member states as well as for many or all of the participants in NATO's Partnership for Peace (known collectively as "the Partners"). There are no "flash point" issues, such as the deployment of Pershing II missiles in the 1970s and 80s, that will bring large crowds into street demonstrations in European capitals, and there are no fundamental strategic divisions among the Allies.

Several concrete examples illustrate NATO's current political strength:

- In Germany, during the run-up to the September 1998 elections, the Green Party was forced to mute its opposition to NATO in order to be considered a serious potential coalition partner (a decision reminiscent of the British Labour Party's need to renounce convincingly its long-held anti-nuclear, "soft" defense policies in order to be seen as electable). Although degrees of intensity of Atlanticism have varied among German leaders over recent years, Germany's fundamental commitment to Atlanticism was unquestionable under Chancellor Kohl. His replacement, Gerhard Schroeder, has seen fit to underline his support for NATO and to reassure the Allies that German foreign policy will remain essentially constant under a Social Democratic Party-led government. A key liability for Oscar Lafontaine, also a Social Democrat and a potential candidate for Chancellor, at the national level is his earlier record of questioning the Atlantic link (Lafontaine has been less determined and adroit than Schroeder in leaving behind the effects of a left-leaning political past that included anti-NATO and anti-American positions). Popular German support for NATO, measured by internal German government polling, remains very high.

- In the United Kingdom, the recent Strategic Defense Review initiated by the New Labour government recommended important force structure changes, including a reduction of front-line air defense aircraft (those used in homeland defense) and the construction of two new

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aircraft carriers, in line with a general emphasis on force projection. The Report concluded: "Underpinning the changes to our forces is our reinforced international commitment. NATO will continue as the cornerstone of our defence planning, and we intend to build on our role as a leading European member of the Alliance. . . . We are also prominent members of the OSCE and the WEU."<sup>2</sup> Both the first sentence of that pronouncement, and the relative strength of the statement on NATO versus that on the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the WEU, leave little doubt that the New Labour government, like its Conservative predecessors, is strongly Atlanticist. The "New" part of New Labour thus includes defense policies that are perhaps relatively new for some elements of the Labour Party but well-established for Great Britain.

- France has not taken the political step of reintegrating its military forces into NATO's integrated command structure, and it remains in some ways distant from and suspicious of that structure. However, at the operational level France continues to take steps to ensure its military will be better able to cooperate effectively with NATO in contingencies. In 1998, the French military adopted a new operational planning methodology that explicitly intends to mirror the NATO methodology.<sup>3</sup> The French Army has restructured and re-sized some of its units to be more compatible with NATO units, while the French Air Force and Navy continue to train with Alliance forces, often in bilateral exercises such as "Red Flag" in Nevada. These exercises familiarize French forces with NATO approaches and procedures. Moreover, France continues to be a major force contributor to NATO operations in Bosnia and has continued to take a more active role in NATO's Military Committee. An indication of France's practical view on the value of the Alliance came when the Western European Union, whose foremost advocate in recent years has often been France and which is eager to develop an operational capability within NATO, quickly took a back seat to NATO in efforts to plan a response to the crisis in Kosovo.

- The perceived broader importance and value of NATO are clear from the list of nations that wish to join (a list longer than NATO can accommodate at the moment). As the debate proceeded within

NATO about the advantages and disadvantages of enlargement (and about the relevance of NATO in the post-Cold War era), many non-NATO countries seemed to have little doubt that their interests would be best served by winning an invitation to join. Even in nations that face little apparent security threat or that have a long tradition that might argue against NATO membership, such as Austria, the fact that there is a significant debate around pursuing NATO membership testifies to the central role played by the Alliance in European security. Some nations will continue to pursue membership, while others will be content with an individualized relationship to NATO in the framework of the Partnership for Peace. But the general conclusion is that on matters of European security, in practical terms, NATO will remain the most important single organization, the one institution with sufficiently developed structures and procedures to permit both political consensus-building on important issues and policy execution "on the ground."<sup>4</sup>

- Despite uncertainties about cost, in 1998 the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly approved NATO's invitations to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to become members, suggesting that the vast majority of senators view NATO as an organization with an important future role.

Thus, NATO today is not in obvious crisis, is threatened neither by a powerful external threat nor by overarching internal strategic differences, and enjoys a degree of support that may indeed be higher than during the Cold War.

Nevertheless, there are potential sources of strain and tension within the Alliance. These problems are manageable, but they will have to be recognized and attended to. They do not immediately pose grave threats to Alliance cohesion, but they could grow into significant strains if not handled effectively. Moreover, several of the strains collectively have the potential to interact in ways that could introduce more serious tensions, especially with the imposition of other, unanticipated kinds of tension or crisis that do not directly affect NATO but do affect its members in different ways, thus impinging indirectly on Alliance relations.

This paper will provide a review of several wider tensions that have existed within NATO since its beginnings and that persist today. It will proceed to a survey of specific policy tensions and stresses present in NATO now and in the immediate future.

#### **A NOTE ON FOCUS**

This paper focuses on the views and perceptions of four Allies: France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Although it explores tensions among Allies other than these four, it assumes that they will be directly involved in leading the resolution of those tensions. The reasons for the focus on these four nations are practical:

- Three are members of the United Nations Security Council, and the same three are NATO's only nuclear powers.
- All four are members of the G7 Economic Group, indicating their relative economic power.
- Germany and France are the two NATO members with the longest and broadest histories as European continental powers, while the United Kingdom and, more recently, the United States have intervened decisively in continental wars and maintained substantial forces deployed on the continent during and after the Cold War.
- In 1997, France, Germany, and the U.K. had the three largest defense budgets among the European Allies and together accounted for 65%—about two-thirds—of the total defense spending by all 14 European NATO members. These three nations, together with the U.S., accounted for 86% of defense spending by all NATO nations.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, there are valid political, economic, and military reasons to focus on these four nations. Given that focus, it is useful to recall that other nations often play critical roles in NATO decision making and capability. All 15 NATO member countries that have military forces have contributed to NATO's Stabilization Force in Bosnia, while the 16th member, Iceland (which has no military) has sent civilian medical personnel. Italy (also a G7 member and the fourth largest defense spender among the European allies) is a member of the Balkans Contact Group and occupies a position pivotal to NATO operations in that region and elsewhere in and around the Mediterranean; that role was

underscored by Italian operations during the 1997 collapse of order in Albania. Turkey fields the largest military among the European NATO allies, and it occupies a strategic position that is no less interesting today than it was during the Cold War. Spanish forces participated in NATO's 1995 aerial bombing campaign in Bosnia, and Spain will play an important role in NATO's southern region planning. On the other flank, Norway has a small but highly professional force. In the author's personal experience, the Netherlands and Belgium produce exceptionally capable officers who are both highly competent technically and exceedingly thoughtful regarding military doctrine and strategy. Moreover, NATO's Secretaries General, by tradition Europeans, have usually come from Allies other than the ones who receive focus here, while many of the Alliance's most important political and strategic efforts, such as the 1956 "Committee of Three" Report and the 1967 Harmel Report, were led by other Allies.

Nevertheless, limitations of space and research resources necessitated a narrowing of focus to four Allies for the practical reason explained above.

#### **BROADER SOURCES OF TENSION**

There is a variety of broader, "grander" sources of tension in NATO that have deep well-springs in history and that persist today. These tensions were often evident during the Cold War, but the urgent and continuing need to deal with the presence of the Soviet threat acted to place limits on their manifestations. Absent such an immediate military threat, there is room for other interests (economic and political) to play a larger role in shaping attitudes and policies. But in the post-Cold War NATO to date, the common values of democracy and commitment to liberal market economies (in some form or another), as well as a shared determination by Germany and France to deepen European economic integration and to preserve a security environment conducive to that deepening, have more than outweighed traditional sources of tension as factors directly influencing NATO policies. The specter of instability in the Balkans that could spread beyond Bosnia and that is now a danger in Kosovo (and by extension Albania), and the difficulty of organizing a

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response to that instability outside of NATO channels, have provided additional motivation to avoid allowing old tensions to drive policy. The rarely discussed (in public) but real sense that the transition to democracy and liberal values in Russia is uncertain and the potential that Russia might, in the very long term, reassert itself militarily also provide reasons to preserve common ground in NATO. This point is certainly salient for those nations that will shortly join NATO and for many that still hope to join. Finally, the general sense that international politics have entered uncharted waters with unknown dangers ahead has underscored the value of a NATO that enjoys a strong institutional development (both for political consensus building and for military action) and widespread public support.

The traditional broader sources of tension within NATO, then, have thus far proven manageable and will probably remain so. But to understand the stresses in specific policy issues that exist today or might develop soon, it is essential to review these broader tensions.

### **Geography**

With regard to national positions on many NATO issues, geography is key. The fundamental facts of geography drove many aspects of NATO's foundation, including the name "North Atlantic" and how it was defined. Those same facts are a fundamental source of differing perspectives within the Alliance today.

The United States spent the 19th century in "splendid isolation," engaged in nation building interrupted by the occasional overseas or cross-border excursion. Its leaders explicitly rejected involvement in European conflicts. But two world wars since 1900 and half a century of maintaining American military presence in Europe and Asia have altered the American perspective significantly. Despite occasional rumblings that might reflect old isolationist tendencies (most notably on trade issues), the American public now seems to accept American commitment abroad as a fact of life and a "cost of doing business." However, the relative physical distance between the United States and any conflict in Europe is still as large as it was in the 19th century. Further, geography is an important determinant of trade flows: in 1996 for example, 76.5% of all commercial revenues in North America came from within North

America, while 13.3% came from Europe. For Europe, the figures are a mirror, with 71% of European revenues coming from within Europe itself and 15.2% from North America.<sup>5</sup> Inter-regional trade is important, but the perspective on trade is different and geographically driven.

Moreover, for Americans, news from Europe remains “foreign news” with little direct discernible impact on their daily lives. While most Americans understand in general terms the importance of the American commitment to Europe, that understanding is “intellectual” rather than emotional or visceral. As the influence of the World War II generation fades and as fewer Americans spend time in military service and stationed abroad, the relative weight of Americans’ geographical distance from Europe, versus their personal experience of being in Europe or knowing someone who was, may change. Although more Americans are traveling abroad today than in the past, a vacation experience does not create the same bonds as an extended stay. Anecdotes from U.S. officials in Europe regarding visiting congressmen who discuss the distance of Europe from their districts, and thus its lesser relevance to their constituents, are not rare. In some European capitals, the congressional visits themselves seem to have become less frequent, a sign in itself either that American presence is taken for granted and not in need of on-the-spot oversight, or that the American presence (and foreign policy in general) is of less interest to busy congressmen.<sup>6</sup> For U.S. leaders, then, geography represents both a factor that distinguishes their view of national interests from their European counterparts and a challenge to be dealt with in sustaining American support for NATO.

The United Kingdom has a long record of intervening in continental conflicts to prevent the emergence of a predominant European power that could in turn threaten the home isles. Its tradition as an island nation produces a tendency to see itself as distinct from continental Europe, with distinct interests as a result. A shared language and close cultural links with the U.S. give the U.K. cause to look west across the Atlantic while, at the same time, its proximity to the continent draws it towards those nations. The ambivalence in the U.K. towards the idea of a single European currency is an example of how intellectual

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traditions rooted in geography pull the country in different policy directions.<sup>7</sup>

Both the United States and the United Kingdom, then, view European security with a certain detachment created by bodies of water of different sizes, the Atlantic or the English Channel. This is not to say that either nation lacks commitment to or vital interests in Europe. But the perspective on those vital interests is partly a function of geography.

Germany and France, of course, have traditions as continental powers. For these nations, the overwhelming fact of European security is that its dramas and wars have been played out again and again on their soil.<sup>8</sup> Their locations have either made them the strategic prize or put them in the path to the strategic prize, frequently with catastrophic results. This history makes geography an important prism through which they view NATO issues. At the same time, France's more extensive overseas empire, its difficult loss of that empire especially in the wars in Indochina and Algeria, and its maintenance of an extensive network of bilateral defense cooperation agreements in Africa and elsewhere have given it a geographic reason for focusing attention outside Europe as well as inside and, relevant for NATO, for seeking ways to ensure its own freedom of action in areas it considers beyond NATO's sphere of interest or influence. Germany, meanwhile, has dealt with the tragedy of the Nazi regime partly by focusing its military efforts exclusively on the defense of central Europe, contributing to the NATO effort in Bosnia only cautiously, after much debate, and with a *Bundesgerichtshof* (Constitutional Court) decision that confirmed that such a contribution would be permissible within the German constitution.

Finally, while the geographic fact of being in and/or having vital interests in Europe unites the Allies, geography also molds each Ally's view of particular problems and possible threats in a different fashion. Norway and Turkey, for example, see substantial residual Russian forces on the flanks as a continuing potential problem, while the collapse of the Warsaw Pact essentially removes Russian forces as a direct source of concern for Germany, France, and the Benelux countries. Spain, Italy, and Portugal will be more immediately concerned with instability in the Maghreb or the Middle East than will Denmark.

Proximity to problems thus drives each Ally's policy and presents an ever-present source of differing perspectives that must be reconciled.

### **French Independence**

France prizes its independence as a strategic objective in itself and defines this independence in ways that are different from the other Allies. Surveying the post-World War II strategic scene in 1947, General de Gaulle commented, "Although one may hope they do not automatically become enemies, America and Russia are automatically rivals. . . . In view of our situation, the preservation of our independence becomes the most burning and decisive issue."<sup>9</sup> Many factors contributed to President de Gaulle's decision in 1966 to withdraw from NATO's integrated military command, but a perception of the need for independence was chief among those reasons. In his letter explaining his decision to President Johnson, de Gaulle stressed that France would continue to be ready to fight on the side of the Allies in the event of aggression, but he wrote, ". . . France is determined to regain on her whole territory the full exercise of her sovereignty, at present diminished by the permanent presence of Allied military elements or by the use of her air space." Revealing a different interpretation of the idea of independence, Johnson responded, "I am puzzled by your view that the presence of Allied military forces on French soil impairs the sovereignty of France. These forces have been there at French invitation pursuant to a common plan to help ensure the security of France and her allies."<sup>10</sup>

These themes persisted during the 1980s and after. The current French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, has emphasized cooperation with the United States and other Allies, but while serving under President Mitterand he is said to have remarked that the United States is "like a [sic] elephant under which one is in constant danger of being crushed. In order to stay independent we must battle against it every day." More recently, he indicated that "France and the United States, the only two actors in the world with the means and will to pursue a global policy, will try to work together,"<sup>11</sup> a statement that emphasized partnership at the same time it underlined the uniquely independent status of France vis-a-vis the nation he has characterized as a "hyper-power." In September 1998, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin reiterated the

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fundamental objectives of his government with respect to defense, the first of which is "to maintain the strategic autonomy which constitutes a distinctive feature of the defense policy of our country."<sup>12</sup>

Many government officials and citizens from all parts of the political spectrum in Allied countries other than France, would undoubtedly share the concern that the U.S. is very powerful and at times seems to be an overwhelming economic and cultural force. But the unique French emphasis on and interpretation of the concept of independence affect its approach to NATO issues in several ways. Many who have worked in both operational and more policy-oriented positions in and around NATO often remark on two distinct French approaches. At the operational level, cooperation is often quite close, especially in the Air Force and the Navy. After France withdrew from NATO's integrated military command, it continued to coordinate airspace protection with NATO. Contact between French forces and other Allied forces at sea was routine. Allies have standard overflight agreements with France that minimize problems associated with diplomatic clearance procedures. Officers who exercise with French forces, or work with them in Allied operations, routinely report very favorable experiences. At the operational level, then, cooperation between France and the other Allies is usually smooth, professional, and friendly. Indeed, when newspaper accounts reported that a French officer in Bosnia had allegedly informed Radovan Karadzic of NATO plans to capture him, both the U.S. and the French governments quickly emphasized that cooperation among all NATO forces in Bosnia, including French forces, had been and continued to be excellent.

At the policy level, however, it is fair to say that the French determination to assert independence consistently during NATO deliberations frequently frustrates other Allies. Most officials from Germany, the U.K. , or the U.S. would agree that French cooperation is often difficult to come by, even where real policy differences are minimal and eventual policy outcomes are not affected. This difficulty is attributed variously to a French emphasis on Cartesian logic, language problems, French pretensions to a lost status as an imperial power, and any number of other cultural, emotional, and practical factors. But the

common theme running through all these factors is the French assertion of independence and of the existence of and right to a “French exception.” Underlying the response to that theme by the other Allies is a sense that France unfairly selects to participate in those areas of NATO where it will receive benefit without paying “the full price of admission” in partnership.

From the French perspective, the tendency is for NATO policy to follow closely—too closely—American policy. For French purposes, the North Atlantic Council does not exert sufficient political control over subordinate NATO agencies and structures.<sup>13</sup> The NATO integrated military command structure is often seen as entirely a creature of the United States, with the most powerful posts filled by American officers. Evidence for this view comes from the fact that SACEUR and SACLANT are always American, and from American insistence on filling positions such as CINCSOUTH.<sup>14</sup> Further, because French officers do not serve in NATO headquarters positions, they do not have the opportunity to observe first-hand the substantial, often decisive contributions of non-American officers at every level, and they may lack an understanding of NATO procedures that leads to an oversimplification of those procedures and an overestimation of the American role.

The French conception of independence has allowed the nation to preserve what it values most despite the power of the United States and without sacrificing the real security advantages of the Alliance, both to France and to the Allies. Few doubt that French forces would have fought side-by-side with NATO in a European conflict during the Cold War, and the French have effectively integrated their forces with NATO in Bosnia despite their political determination to maintain their independence. Moreover, French officials and experts often argue that France serves most effectively as an Ally when its independence forces more thorough policy analysis and policy option development on the part of the U.S. and other Allies, as in the February 1998 crisis over United Nations inspections in Iraq. Some Allied officials from other countries privately agree that this defense of French exceptionalism is sometimes valid. From the perspective of the other Allies, however, French

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independence is often a factor that inhibits or prevents Alliance progress or increases the time and energy expended to achieve that progress. The presence of an Ally that does not participate in the central Allied apparatus, the integrated command structure, and whose non-participation is one manifestation of a different appreciation of the concept of national independence, is a continuing source of tension for NATO.

**A Complex of Related Issues and Stresses: The Purposes of NATO, American Presence, and European Integration**

A final general source of tension among the Allies is a collection of questions that relate to the fundamental purposes and structure of the Alliance. These tensions have the potential to cause greater problems in the post-Cold War era than ever before.

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949 after a series of events had led Western leaders to accept that the World War II alliance between the West and the Soviet Union had irretrievably collapsed and that the Soviet Union sought to control at least those nations that would later form the Warsaw Pact and possibly to dominate Western Europe.<sup>15</sup> The treaty itself represents a political commitment. It does not call for the integrated command structure that would be created subsequently in response to growing concrete evidence of a Soviet buildup and the increasingly strong perception of a direct Soviet military threat (and as a result of changing perceptions in the United States that made politically feasible a peacetime military alliance for the first time since the 18th century).<sup>16</sup> In this sense, it is true that NATO was formed to respond to the Soviet threat.

What is often forgotten is that there was a Soviet threat to “something,” and that “something” was shared North American and European interests that demanded security and stability in Europe. Those interests existed with or without a Soviet threat; they were what made the Soviet threat important and worthy of a response; and they remain vital today in the absence of a Soviet threat. The post-Cold War change has been not in the existence of the shared interests that justified NATO at its inception but in the nature and immediacy of the threat to those interests.

Throughout the Cold War history of NATO, individual nations perceived the shared interests defended by the Alliance through national lenses. But differences in national perceptions were generally smoothed over to create the cooperation necessary for the Alliance to succeed in its defense functions. The effect was that important political and economic differences were subordinated to the exigencies of the military and security situation. An important, perhaps the most important, thematic tension for the future Alliance will be sustaining the habits of cooperation developed under the duress of the Soviet threat in the absence of that threat. The question is whether, over the long-run, conflicting economic and political (and possibly military) tensions will render unsustainable the general consensus on security issues that made NATO successful.

In addition to defense against the Soviet Union, NATO also served as a vehicle for the reconstitution and integration of German forces in a manner that did not threaten her neighbors. This military integration has arguably enabled the economic integration of Western Europe by ensuring that as German economic power re-emerged it was embedded in a web of European institutions. One of NATO's principal aims, then, became the prevention of the renationalization of defense, which in practice meant ensuring that Germany was secure and that it was seen to contribute to, rather than threaten, the rest of Europe. The future viability of NATO depends on a continued recognition of the need to avoid renationalization of defense.

NATO thus responded to the need to "keep the Soviets out and the Germans down," as the old and now obsolete encapsulation went.<sup>17</sup> The third, still relevant element of this formulation was to "keep the Americans in." As discussed above, the American commitment to NATO and to European security seems sure for the moment. Indeed, most European officials no longer see a "magic number" of 100,000 American troops in Europe as an important quantitative signal of continued U.S. presence, as the quality of the U.S. commitment has been reassuringly strong in the 1990s (although it is also true that a sudden or substantial reduction in forces would startle and concern European observers and perhaps activate now-dormant domestic U.S. debates

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about overseas troop levels). But the long-term problem of how best to secure the transatlantic link remains. Germany in particular works hard to avoid the development of any situation where it would be forced to choose between its European partners and the U.S. on a major security issue.

Throughout the Cold War, the United States argued for the broad integration of Europe both to build the surest route to permanent peace and to create a genuine defense partner in Europe. Such a partner would be able to shoulder its share of the defense and security burden, easing the problem of sustaining the American commitment. While a few U.S. observers might enjoy the thought of long-term American predominance in European security, most serious observers agree that a more integrated Europe that absorbs a greater share of European defense costs (financial, political, and human), and is simultaneously a strong economic and political partner globally, is in American interests. Similarly, while some Europeans are content to allow the U.S. to shoulder a major portion of the defense burden, most European officials and experts seek a more integrated, or at least a more cohesive, Europe with a more balanced partnership role in its own defense. The tension has always been and will remain in finding the balance. The United States will want to see Allies share the burdens while it retains the advantages that go along with American leadership. The Europeans will want to retain the advantages of American participation while gaining some of the advantages that had accrued to the U.S. in an earlier time of American dominance. The pace of change will be dictated by European will and capability as well as by the willingness of both sides to guide the change.

A final, related question under the theme of the Alliance's purposes is whether NATO exists to respond to external threats or to prevent the emergence of threats, internal or external, in the first place. Obviously, this is not a binary question; the Alliance may serve both purposes. The Alliance may work to shape the security environment within and beyond its members' borders even as it sustains its military defense capabilities. For example, in 1998 the North Atlantic Council issued a statement condemning the nuclear tests conducted by India and

Pakistan, events well beyond NATO's direct or traditional area of interest; at the same time, NATO operated in Bosnia, outside but near the borders of its members, and it trained for similar peace keeping and peace enforcement operations in the European region with Partnership for Peace members; and all the while it sustained exercises in NATO member countries to train for traditional defense functions. Indeed, collective security problems, if not managed properly, can become collective defense problems. But the answer to this question, to whether and to what degree NATO remains a collective defense organization or transitions to a collective security organization, drives outcomes from the most overarching and fundamental ones such as NATO's strategic approach down to the lowest operational level, as in what kinds of exercises units will undertake.<sup>18</sup> The relative emphasis on collective defense or collective security preferred by each Ally will be driven largely by its proximity to or distance from potentially dangerous military capability, as in the flanks, or from areas which are unstable and potential sources of conflict with attendant problems ranging from refugee flows to economic disruption to direct military danger, such as the Balkans.

#### **Relations with Russia**

NATO's relations with Russia will be discussed below in the context of Alliance enlargement. The issue of how to deal with the Soviet Union played a role in France's decision to withdraw from the integrated military command structure, and it partly drove the 1967 Harmel Report as well as Germany's *Ostpolitik* and U.S. détente. Relations with Russia remain an important issue for the Alliance. Germany's location and, to a lesser degree, its substantial economic investment in Russia give it a particular desire to see the success of the Russian transition to democracy and a market economy. Germany and France have traditionally been especially sensitive to Russian concerns. The potential that Russia may someday again present a military threat is a factor in the thinking of all the Allies even as they use the channels available at NATO to attempt to lay the groundwork to avoid that outcome.

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## PARTICULAR ISSUES AND SOURCES OF TENSION

The broader, general sources of tension within NATO discussed in the previous section have existed since the inception of the Alliance, and they continue to animate and provide the backdrop for debates today. Moving from the general to the specific, this section surveys particular policy issues that might produce stress within the Alliance in the coming years.

### Enlargement

Prior to the Madrid Summit of 1997, the question of enlargement dominated the NATO agenda for much of the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of the Warsaw Pact. The decision in Madrid to issue invitations to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to join the Alliance in 1999 reflected a fundamental appraisal that the risks of not expanding NATO and the advantages of doing so exceeded the risks of antagonizing Russia and of reducing the Alliance's ability to reach consensus. For each Ally, the calculation of risks was different. For Germany, the advantages of expanding the territory covered under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty include the depth provided vis-a-vis any potential threat to the east, a strategic consolidation that removed Germany from the front line of any confrontation and furnished a more secure environment to complete the process of German unification,<sup>19</sup> as well as bringing potential close trading partners into the security structure and thus generally stabilizing central Europe. For the United States, these factors were all salient, as was the domestic political support for these nations that made their entry into NATO a popular initiative. The history of Yalta and of subsequent repression in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in the early 1980s also predisposed U.S. and U.K. attitudes favorably. France supported these three candidates and also favored invitations for Romania and Slovenia, nations that were felt by Germany, the U.S., and the U.K. to be less ready for entry and less important strategically for the first round of new invitations.

Three major concerns accompanied the decision to expand NATO. The first was relations with Russia, a factor of importance to all

four of the Allies examined here. The United States was sensitive to Russian concerns but adamant that NATO, not Russia, would decide who might be invited to join. Germany and France were perhaps more concerned for Russian reactions but supportive of enlargement. The second concern was that any decision on inviting new members is also a decision not to invite others; thus Europe could emerge from NATO enlargement simply redivided. The third concern was the impact of NATO enlargement on internal NATO processes and the need to maintain NATO effectiveness and to avoid turning the Alliance into a "talking shop."

While Russia expressed opposition to NATO enlargement, its officials seemed to signal early grudging acceptance that the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland were to be invited. NATO's Founding Act established extensive consultation mechanisms with Russia and put in place a Russian presence at NATO Headquarters. Russian officials have indicated concern about future possible enlargement, especially with respect to the Ukraine, with its size and location, and the Baltic States with their important strategic positions and substantial Russian populations. Some have argued that NATO enlargement has produced a backlash, notably in the fields of arms control and other areas of Russian cooperation with the West. In this author's view, it is difficult to discern this backlash. Public reaction in Russia to NATO enlargement has been muted and limited to more extreme elements who would likely be anti-Western with or without enlargement. Russia seems to have pursued policies that fit its interests rather than fit a pattern of anti-NATO behavior. It is hard to imagine, for example, that had NATO deferred to Russian concerns on enlargement, Russia would in return have ratified and implemented START II, been more supportive of sanctions against Iraq (especially as France has also argued for taking a more positive approach there), or been less supportive of its traditional Serb allies in former Yugoslavia. Russia's concrete defense policies do not seem to reveal a sense of increased threat: despite defense spending that remains high by the standards of developed countries, Russia's defense industry produced 5 main battle tanks and 25 fighter aircraft in 1996, compared to the Soviet Union's production of 1600 tanks and 430 fighters in 1990.<sup>20</sup>

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The most vocal insistence that a backlash has occurred sometimes comes from those who vociferously predicted such a backlash before enlargement.

NATO's policy is that its door remains open to new members and that those not yet invited still have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from Alliance efforts through Partnership for Peace agreements tailored to their individual needs. The current sense among Germany, the U.K., and the U.S. is that NATO should pause for an unspecified period of time after admitting its three new members. Such a pause would allow NATO to assess the impact of those new members on Alliance institutions, focus on the steps necessary to begin their integration into the military command structure, and more accurately assess the cost of that integration.

Publicly, France (possibly with the support of Italy) remains in favor of issuing invitations to Romania and Slovenia. France, which has historical ties to Romania, argues that both countries are ready to begin the membership process, that extending NATO membership to them would provide additional depth for the Alliance and offer support for stable regimes in the Balkans (thus improving stability elsewhere in the region), and that an invitation would preserve the credibility of NATO's open door policy while softening the perception of a new line through the center of Europe. Other Allied officials agree with much of the French reasoning but argue that for the moment, the problems of inviting these two outweigh the advantages. These officials note that France may also have the additional motivation of wanting a maximum number of nations in the Alliance to reduce the influence of any one nation, notably the U.S., in line with the general French proclivity towards multipolarity. Finally, the other Allies believe that France probably understands that no new invitations will be forthcoming at the Washington summit and that France privately accepts the value of a pause, for the same reasons the other Allies see such value. Some believe that France will not push the issue. Others believe that France will push either because it believes in its position or because it will seek to use the issue to extract concessions on other issues. In any case, Germany especially sees the value of at least a private but clear understanding well before the summit that no

new invitations will be issued, both to avoid intra-NATO confusion and conflict and to reduce any post-summit disappointment on the part of those wishing to join.

The existence of the open door policy and the probable absence of additional invitations in 1999 leave open two questions: when to invite new members, and which members to invite. The question of when to issue additional invitations, of how long to pause, brings ambivalent responses. Two to three years seems to be the best guess as a minimum. Such a time frame might be sufficient to allow NATO to assess its progress with the next three new members and to permit Russia in particular to adjust to the new security landscape. The issue, at least for Germany, will be at what point it becomes necessary to admit new members in order to preserve the credibility of the open door policy. But no Allies have begun seriously thinking about how to assess the tradeoff between the risk of a less credible open door versus the risks of bringing in new members, or how to evaluate the risk of exclusion versus the risk of inclusion for particular candidates. The absence of consideration of that question suggests that the Allies may be content to pause for several years, barring developments that drive a more rapid expansion. Alternatively, if the Allies do not begin seriously considering the problem in 1999 after the Washington summit, they may well face charges of a hypocritical or hollow policy and subsequent pressure to take precipitate decisions to demonstrate that the door is in fact open.

The question of which members might be next is also open. In general, the Allies agree that new members should bring no major problems for the Alliance, i.e., they should be generally democratic with clear civilian control of the military, they should have resolved significant ethnic and border disputes that would otherwise introduce an element of instability into the Alliance, and they should be militarily ready to begin the process of joining the integrated military command structure. However, the Allies oppose establishing a strict list of criteria that could later minimize flexibility.

France will continue to support Romania and Slovenia for membership, again supported by Italy based on its proximity to the Balkans. The U.S. also seems generally open to considering these two at

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some point in the relatively near-term. The U.K. and Germany harbor some concern that domestic political pressures may drive the U.S. towards relatively quick support for Baltic state membership. British and German officials saw domestic political blocs as at least very influential and possibly decisive in the U.S. decision favoring the current three invitees, and the U.S.-Baltic Charter of early 1998 commits the U.S. to support Baltic efforts to prepare for NATO membership.<sup>21</sup> While U.S. officials agree that the U.S. will follow through on its Charter commitments, they note that the Charter sets no time frame for NATO membership and that the U.S. emphasized at the time of the signing that enlargement was a question for the Alliance as a whole; some see the Charter as a security assurance that can render less urgent the question of actual NATO membership. U.S. officials also argue that domestic politics influenced but did not drive the U.S. position at Madrid and that the domestic alignment in the Baltic case is much different, producing considerably weaker support in the U.S. Senate especially if the projected financial bill is high. However, the Baltic expectations were typified by Estonian President Meri's assertion that "NATO enlargement to the Baltics will be the next big project of the Alliance" and the "real test of post-Madrid security thinking."<sup>22</sup> The U.K., especially Germany, and probably France, would be very concerned about Russian reaction to efforts to make the Baltic states NATO members (as would many U.S. officials). Denmark, however, is expected to support the Baltic bid for membership as early as possible and may bring other Allies with it.

Some U.S. officials believe that Germany may ultimately remain skeptical for some time about new members, as the three current invitees provide Germany with the strategic conditions it hoped for and additional entrants would bring only risk. Germany emphasizes its belief that enlarging NATO can have the effect of enlarging stability, if handled properly, and that long-term stability and overall Alliance interests, rather than the narrow interests of particular candidates, should be the guiding objective of the process as individual candidates are evaluated. At the same time, some German officials agree that at least for the moment, including new members beyond the next three would be desirable for those candidates themselves, while excluding them is not a

negative factor for Germany—an implicit cost-benefit evaluation that would support a go-slow approach.

The U.K., the U.S., and Germany emphasize that enlargement will have to take place consistent with NATO's ability to remain militarily effective and consistent with the need to avoid expanding membership to the point where cohesion and institutional efficacy are damaged. These three nations often contrast the OSCE, a useful speaking and listening forum, with NATO, a militarily useful organization as well as a forum for consultation.

An interesting unknown will be the future positions on enlargement adopted by the three new members. Their own experience may lead them to favor early invitations to yet more members; alternatively, their desire to gain the largest available share of NATO funds and to preserve the consensus-generating capability of NATO might lead them to oppose additional immediate enlargement.

#### **Issues in the Strategic Concept Review**

NATO has begun the process of reviewing its Strategic Concept, last revised in 1991. That concept was produced about two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and went some way towards beginning the process of adaptation to the post-Cold War world, but it contained references to the Soviet Union that at least give it the appearance today of being obsolete. NATO currently plans to have a new Strategic Concept ready for approval by heads of state in Washington in April 1999. All Allies agree that the new concept must clarify NATO's *raison d'être*. Such a statement is necessary both to guide the Alliance in future planning and to sustain domestic support for NATO. Although the new German government raised the idea of NATO's adopting a "no first-use policy," there is also general agreement that the nuclear aspects of the concept do not require an update and that any changes would be more problematic than worthwhile; after the U.S., France, and the U.K. objected, the German government quickly accepted that "no first-use" would not be included as part of this Strategic Concept, although it indicated it wants to see the idea discussed and debated in the future.

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France may be the only Ally to have spelled out clearly, in public, its approach to the new concept. In September 1998, Prime Minister Jospin listed three fundamental principles for the review:

- the Alliance is an organization of a military nature; its principal objective remains the collective defense of the Allies;
- the Alliance is a major actor in the stability and security of Europe, thus it is one of the structures of the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI);
- the Alliance could be brought to conduct operations outside its zone of responsibility if it is mandated to do so by the UN Security Council or the OSCE.<sup>23</sup>

The first principle, the nature of NATO, is one that raises the issue of collective defense and collective security discussed above. All Allies would agree with the fundamental precept spelled out here by Jospin. But, nations actually occupy a position along a spectrum ranging from a fairly narrow view of the functions of the Alliance to a broader view. France is perhaps the most conservative in its approach to NATO. Its officials do not wish to see NATO transformed into a broader instrument of U.S. power, nor do they wish to see NATO veer into policy areas that might infringe in the domains of other organizations such as the European Union with its objective of a common European foreign and defense policy. Hence France will argue for a strategic concept that emphasizes the original Article 5 missions of NATO. France has generally indicated its desire to rely on language that incorporates previously agreed text, which would probably produce a conservative concept.<sup>24</sup>

Germany will also tend towards a narrower strategic concept emphasizing core Article 5 missions. The German view is that all NATO missions and tasks should clearly flow from or be derived from Article 5. This is important to Germany for several reasons. Its location at the center of Europe puts it relatively far from problems that occur in the areas on the Alliance's periphery. The traditional Article 5 mission is also the primary justification for conscription and for the German defense budget; most German officials expect a major defense review after the September 1998 elections regardless of which party is in power

(with a probable reduction in manpower, possibly affected by reducing the length of time served by conscripts), and the German defense budget is already under pressure from other demands on the German treasury such as unification and persistent high unemployment. At the same time, Germany recognizes that the likely sources of security problems for the Alliance in the short- and medium-terms will be on the Alliance's periphery. It will want to see a strategic concept that balances emphasis on Article 5 with a clear message that NATO has adapted to the post-Cold War world, in order to explain the need for continued defense spending and to sustain support for the Alliance. Germany will also be keen to avoid language that might in any way call into question the purposes of NATO under which it can act in accordance with its earlier Constitutional Court decision.

The U.S. and the U.K. will agree that Article 5 remains the core of NATO. But, perhaps because of their relative geographic detachment, they will favor a strategic concept that goes further in emphasizing non-traditional, non-Article 5 missions for NATO. For the U.K., this will be an extension of their emphasis in their recent Defence Review on threats outside of NATO territory and on power projection forces. The U.K. already contributes a high proportion of NATO's most immediately-ready forces, and the U.K. has argued for more deliberate planning for non-Article 5 contingencies as well as for a process for Allies to declare what forces they would contribute to non-Article 5 missions (similar to the process that exists today whereby Allies declare forces available for Article 5 purposes). The U.K. will seek a strategic concept that clarifies the case for intra-European burden-sharing on non-Article 5 missions to ensure that British forces do not remain disproportionately engaged in Alliance tasks.

The main U.S. concern will be to ensure that NATO is seen to have moved beyond the Cold War and to establish a concept that is responsive to future circumstances demanding flexibility. The U.S. will seek a concept that forcefully spells out NATO's relevance in responding to security problems in an era where there is no large central European threat. In practice, this means adopting language in the strategic concept that makes plain NATO's relevance for non-Article 5 cases. U.S.

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officials also point out the real possibility that non-Article 5 problems can grow into Article 5 threats if not handled effectively, making the line between Article 5 and non-Article 5 situations less distinct.

A particular point of contention will be the French desire to condition any NATO non-Article 5 missions on approval by the U.N. Security Council or the OSCE, a condition stated by President Chirac and noted by Prime Minister Jospin above. This French objective stems from their concerns over potential U.S. use of NATO as an instrument of U.S. power as well as from their view of an international hierarchy of organizations in which international law would be strengthened by assuring the U.N. Security Council's status as the premier world organization. Chirac has expressed concern that NATO action without a Security Council mandate would open the door to similar action by others. There is some support for the French view in the North Atlantic Treaty itself, which contains numerous references to the U.N. Security Council including the requirement for NATO to report any action it takes to the Council, suggesting a subordination of the NATO to the U.N.

The U.S. opposes such a condition as an unnecessary limit on NATO's flexibility, given the difficulties of obtaining Security Council approval of action. The U.S. adds that France, or any Ally, has the capability to block action in the North Atlantic Council where Russia and China cannot exercise a veto (though this might increase the risk that the French would be perceived as the sole and isolated opponent of a contemplated NATO action, whereas in the Security Council they would be more likely to be able to fashion a coalition with Russia or China). Germany and the U.K. would generally support the idea of seeking Security Council approval for NATO action, both as a practical matter in securing public support in a crisis and as a measure to strengthen international law. The preference on the part of the U.S., the U.K., and Germany is to avoid an explicit statement regarding a Security Council mandate for any operation and to work the issue outside the context of the strategic concept review. Most officials from these countries agree that the French will eventually acquiesce. However, the fact that both France's head of state and head of government have called, sometimes in

strong terms, for the U.N. mandate may reduce the flexibility available to French officials in the matter or raise the price of agreement.

Thus, the language of the new strategic concept will have to balance a continuing reference to Article 5 as NATO's core with the flexibility necessary for the non-Article 5 missions that are more frequent and more relevant in NATO's present and future than in its past. All NATO nations will want to ensure that the Washington Summit appears as a success, and in all likelihood the Alliance will find acceptable language for its Strategic Concept. But the underlying tension of how far to stretch the Alliance in new directions will remain evident for the years to come.

An additional problem for those writing the strategic concept will be the guidance to be provided to NATO's military planners. This concrete guidance must flow from the political and strategic ideas expressed in the concept, but such guidance may be harder to fashion because it will have to provide clear direction rather than a conceptual framework. Germany, with most of the other Allies, would like to avoid guidance calling for a new round of adaptation of NATO features such as the command structure; Germany has played a leading role in the adaptation that is now nearing completion, and all Allies agree that NATO's structural adaptation has outpaced its formal conceptual adjustments since 1991. The need for the concept to provide guidance to planners is real if the document is to have meaning; just what that guidance should be is less clear.

#### **Cost Issues: Spending Without a Threat**

Cost issues including burden-sharing among the Allies have been a continuing but manageable source of tension throughout NATO's history. The most frequent manifestation of this tension was repeated calls throughout the Cold War by the U.S. Congress for the European Allies to pay more of the cost of their own defense, and recent years have seen similar appeals. But with a greatly reduced post-Cold War U.S. presence in Europe (100,000 troops today vice over 300,000 before 1989) and with a strong bipartisan consensus between Congress and the Administration on the general level of the defense budget (together with a lower U.S. spending deficit and the prospect of a balanced budget or

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surplus), the issue of Allied burden-sharing will remain but will be raised by American policy makers with less force than in the past.<sup>25</sup> U.S. officials point out that efforts by any one Ally to attempt to force others to expend more resources absent a large threat would introduce new, serious tensions into Alliance deliberations.

In other nations, however, the issue of burden-sharing may arise in new ways and with new pressures. Germany is seeking to reduce its share of the contribution to NATO common funds to a proportion more in line with its economic position within the Alliance. Although officials from other nations do not see a long-range stress, the Germans themselves see the demands of unification and unemployment, together with the possible economic fallout from collapse in Russia, as generating requirements for funds that must come from somewhere, and that somewhere could be the country's NATO contribution.

The fact that German officials perceive this stress, while other Allied officials do not, indicates a shift that may have taken place with little notice after the Cold War. Domestic politics has always been an important factor in the defense policies of democracies.<sup>26</sup> During the Cold War, though, concern within NATO generally focused on U.S. domestic politics and how those politics affected the U.S. presence and commitment in Europe. U.S. officials often sought Allied assistance on particular policies by arguing that failure to accept the U.S. position would draw a negative reaction from the Congress. After the Cold War, with the absence of a looming threat, domestic politics will have room to play a greater role in all nations, especially during times of economic stress when budgets will be called into question. While the fundamental consensus in favor of NATO may not erode as a result, the problem of sustaining actual NATO capability will become more difficult. This problem will in turn demand greater sensitivity by all Alliance officials not just to the domestic politics of member nations that directly affect NATO matters, but to cross-cutting pressures that affect NATO less directly but equally importantly. NATO becomes more vulnerable to being used as a tool domestically if the short-term consequences, absent a large threat, seem less grave.

*An Illustrative Scenario.* To illustrate this point, one can imagine a scenario that combines actual developments with hypothetical consequences. The United States Air Force announced in August 1998 that it would restructure itself around Air Expeditionary Forces (AEFs). USAF units will, by October 1999, be grouped into about 10 AEFs that can respond to crises around the world. At any one time, some AEFs might be partly deployed overseas for contingency operations with the remainder of their forces on alert to deploy and reinforce as required; other AEFs would be in a state of reduced readiness as they recover from or train for their turn in the rotation as the deployed (or ready to deploy) AEFs. The AEF concept positions the Air Force to be more responsive to the airpower requirements of theater commanders while stabilizing and making more predictable the deployment and training cycles of its units, important factors in readiness and personnel retention. The overseas presence of the USAF, permanent or temporarily deployed, does not change directly as a result of the introduction of AEFs.

However, the Air Force also faces a problem of excessive infrastructure, or too many bases for the aircraft and people it now has. The Congress has refused to allow another round of base closings that would allow the Air Force eventually to transfer infrastructure funds into readiness and acquisition; no congressman with a base in his district wants to see it close with the attendant economic impact, and many congressmen resent the alleged politicization of earlier base closure rounds despite a process that was intended to ensure independent, fair and objective closure and realignment decisions. But under continual pressure to keep their bases open, congressmen are in search of missions for those bases. If the Air Force argues that it can respond quickly from U.S. bases to overseas crises by using AEFs, many congressmen (especially those without military experience or with less interest in U.S. foreign policy) might well be willing to accept that argument and demand that Air Force units fill bases in their districts rather than remain overseas. Such a solution would reduce overseas infrastructure costs rather than U.S. base costs, answering the Air Force's request to transfer funds into other accounts.

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Such a hypothetical scenario could produce no serious consequences, or several. Other European nations might cite such a U.S. action as reason to reduce their own force levels even further. The means with which the U.S. asserts its leadership in NATO would be weakened, perhaps weakening the Alliance's cohesion that often depends on American direction. Some Europeans might see such a decision as the triumph of isolationism over internationalism as the result of domestic politics, substantially weakening the transatlantic link.

Fortunately, this scenario has not played out. But it does point out the less obvious but plausible ways in which cross-cutting political pressures might affect the post-Cold War NATO.

A second area of tensions surrounding costs involves the new NATO members. The costs of integrating the invitee countries into NATO are unknown, and estimates range from small to large. The first aspect is the sharing of those costs, both among the current Allies and between the older members and the new ones. NATO will face difficult questions over how far it is necessary to bring the new Allies up to traditional NATO standards. On the one hand, as the budget share devoted to defense shrinks in many European nations and seems poised for stability in the U.S., there will be pressure to overlook any funding requirements for the new Allies that are not absolutely essential. On the other hand, failure to provide adequate funding will slow the integration of the new Allies, raising the possibility of a long-term gap in capabilities as well as the question of whether a NATO invitation to join really carries any value.

The new Allies also face the problem of competing demands for limited funds. The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland are each at various stages of transition to market-oriented economies, a challenging and expensive process at best. They will face internal questions over the pace of modernization and the resources necessary for defense. The other NATO Allies will face the questions of how hard to push the new members and of finding a balance between encouraging a measured rate of modernization and not encouraging expenditures that would unnecessarily introduce additional domestic tensions in the new members.

A final source of stress regarding cost issues lies in the fact that, traditionally, countries on the southern flank of NATO have received considerable NATO funds for infrastructure and for other purposes, owing to their smaller economies and thus their reduced relative capacity to fund NATO needs. These southern Allies will now face competition from the new members for limited funds. Southern Allies will argue that the real threats to NATO lie in or near their region (the Balkans, the Maghreb, the Middle East), while the new members will counter that central Europe is the historical field of major European conflicts and that their own military strength is the best long-term guarantee of stability for the Alliance as a whole. German experts see this as a real source of future tension; British analysts are more optimistic, suggesting that NATO funds will probably be sufficient to cover short-term needs without creating a major stress for the other Allies.

#### **ESDI, the Western European Union, and France**

In Berlin in 1996 and again in Madrid in 1997, NATO officials proclaimed that the Alliance welcomed the development of a European Security and Defense Identity with the Western European Union—acting within NATO—as the main agent of the ESDI. These decisions effectively ended any rivalry between the WEU, with support from France, and NATO for primacy as the central European security organization. The 1998 St. Malo accord between France and the U.K. opens the door to greater European “autonomy” in defense but reasserts that such autonomy will develop within NATO.

Nevertheless, questions remain. British and German observers see value in a stronger European “pillar” or identity on defense matters, as an effective partner to the U.S. in the transatlantic relationship. But they also see the WEU as an organization in search of a mission or role, and they view the ESDI as a concept that will escape counterproductivity and bear fruit only if it is carefully developed and implemented. They do not wish to see the WEU construct overlapping or redundant defense structures that would sap energy and effectiveness from NATO. The exact means whereby the WEU will work with, or within, the EU at the same time it works within NATO are also yet to be developed.

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Questions also remain over how the WEU will implement a capability to execute missions using the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept now being implemented by NATO. Theoretically, the WEU will be able to field a European-only CJTF with NATO means at its disposal should a contingency arise where the U.S. did not want to become involved but the European Allies chose to act. While most Allies agree that such a capability would be useful in reducing European dependence on America and in providing a second "decision center" which could react in times of crisis, few analysts see such a European-only scenario as likely or even plausible. There are plans to exercise a WEU CJTF in 2000 at the headquarters and command post level, but any plans to exercise an actual CJTF with forces in the field seem distant.

If it eventually succeeds in developing a CJTF capability, the WEU could reduce tension within NATO by providing a means for the U.S. to "opt out" of contingencies where there is a consensus among the Allies in favor of action but where the U.S. prefers not to engage its own forces directly. In practice, because many of NATO's common tools that are to be at WEU disposal are in fact American, the U.S. is likely to retain a close interest in any WEU decision to execute a CJTF using NATO means. This in turn may frustrate European Allies (at least their publics, if not their authorities who understand more thoroughly such issues) by disappointing their expectations that they had developed an independent capability.

If NATO and the WEU succeed in creating a stronger European sense of security identity at the political level, that sense may serve the purpose of creating the political conditions that would eventually allow France to reenter the integrated military command structure, especially in the wake of the St. Malo accord. Such a development would be welcomed by all Allies and may well reduce the tensions that accompany the exceptional arrangement France has with NATO; it would also improve NATO's military capability.

The WEU may also have a role to play in identifying European arms requirements and in assisting the process of defense industry consolidation in Europe. U.S. officials argue that a genuine European security identity will require a capable defense industrial base; the

European Allies would be quick to agree. Encouraging the continued viability of such a base could be an area where the WEU might contribute effectively within NATO.

### **Counter-Proliferation and Terrorism**

American officials have increasingly emphasized the importance of countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as a matter of national security. Such weapons are potentially dangerous in the hands of a rogue state or in the hands of terrorists. The U.S. has attempted to interest the Allies in cooperating against these threats within NATO. With events such as the August 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa and the subsequent American response with cruise missile attacks against camps in Afghanistan and a possible nerve gas production center in Sudan, the U.S. has entered what its officials characterized as a long and difficult war against terrorism. The U.S. will likely want to use all available means, including NATO, in prosecuting this war.

The European Allies vary in their reaction to this effort. In general, while some U.S. officials see terrorism as an Article 5 issue worthy of a military response, the European Allies prefer to see it as a police problem. Some, such as France with its links to Arab states and its substantial Arab population, perceive the threat as less severe and see no reason to involve the Alliance, especially given the French desire to limit NATO to a strict interpretation of Article 5. Others such as Britain are more sympathetic to the U.S. position and suggest that with the nuclear tests in India and Pakistan, France has come to view the proliferation threat more seriously also.

But the fact that the U.S. is likely to remain the principal terrorist target (except for Algerian threats against France, a potential resurgence of terror in Northern Ireland and related attacks in the rest of the U.K., or attacks such as the ones against German tourists in Egypt) means that there will remain a certain asymmetry in how these problems are perceived and whether NATO is considered an appropriate organization to handle them. If attacks against the U.S. continue, or if the proliferation threat worsens again, and NATO does not take significant steps, many on the American side may question the Alliance's

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relevance to the real security problems of the day. If the Alliance does act vigorously, many in Europe will question the link between Article 5 and the counter-proliferation or counter-terrorist missions, especially if the perception grows that NATO is expending resources against a problem that does not significantly threaten Europe.

#### **The U.S.-Allied Technological Gap and Interoperability**

The Allies have made great strides over the years in developing a level of material and doctrinal interoperability that permits effective Alliance military operations. However, there is considerable concern, among all the Allies, that there is a growing technological gap between U.S. forces and their European counterparts. The general sense is that this gap is not unmanageable today but that it is set to widen to such a degree that interoperability may be seriously degraded over the next five years. This unease stems from observations of U.S. systems being fielded today or still in the planning stages, and from the fact that the U.S. spends about three times as much on research and development as the European Allies combined, thus ensuring that the growth of the gap will accelerate.<sup>27</sup> As technology changes, doctrine must change as well, adding another component of degraded interoperability.

While the problem is recognized by all Allies, none seems to have a solution in mind. Constraints on resources will prohibit any substantial growth in European technology investment. The danger is the development of a "2-tier" Alliance, where only the U.S. has the capability to lead military operations and where European dependence on the U.S. will actually increase. An additional risk is that as U.S. stand-off capability grows, it will be in a position to avoid putting its forces at risk, leaving the "dirty" and dangerous missions to the European Allies. Such a development would substantially alter the relative risks to the U.S. and the Europeans of undertaking military operations, introducing a substantial tension in crises.

#### **Adaptation Issues**

NATO is nearing the completion of a series of actions, collectively known as adaptation, which are intended to reform the Alliance's structures for the post-Cold War environment. These actions include the

establishment of Combined Joint Task Forces and their planning cells as well as realignment of NATO's command structure. Most key decisions regarding adaptation have been taken. As of this writing, some questions remain regarding "flags to posts," or which nations will hold what positions. The debate over flags to posts has reflected both the desire of Allies to hold posts "where the action is," or in the southern region, as well as debates over the relative numbers of posts and how to apportion them. Nations favoring narrower interpretations of Article 5 argue that those nations most directly involved in or affected by traditional Article 5 operations should receive a larger share of key positions. Nations favoring a more expansive approach to NATO's mission, including power projection, argue that they are best suited and qualified for key posts because they will have larger roles in the most likely NATO operations. In general, these problems are well within NATO's ability to manage on a routine basis.

There is some chance that some Allies may attempt to hold progress on adaptation issues hostage to other issues, such as support for particular NATO-funded projects in those nations. There is also some question over how to extend adaptation to the three nations that will join in April 1999. These nations must be slotted into NATO headquarters positions, and they will be among the few NATO nations not to host an Allied headquarters on their territory. A final question on adaptation involves the French, who seek to post officers at the CJTF headquarters (whose officers from all the Allies would work on general headquarters issues and be available to work on CJTF staffs as required) as well in a permanent CJTF planning cell (devoted exclusively to CJTF issues). The other Allies respond that while the French will be welcome in the permanent planning cell because of their potential contribution to a CJTF, they should not be given posts in the headquarters because they have not rejoined the integrated military command structure.

In general, the adaptation issues will likely be resolved in 1999 and will not pose longer-term problems for the Alliance.

### **Greece and Turkey**

By far, the most significant potential for intra-NATO conflict is between Greece and Turkey, which have sometimes been close to war and that

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still have important disputes over territory in the Aegean Sea and over Cyprus.

The Turk-Greek dispute has deep historical roots and encompasses all policy areas. Greece is often credited with blocking European Union aid to Turkey or the development of deeper trade links between Turkey and the EU. NATO's record of aiding the resolution of acute security crises between the two countries is generally good, and such resolution will be a continuing role for NATO as it attempts to manage and contain this chronic strain. Some Allies agree that the management of this relationship is one reason for CINCSOUTH to remain an American officer for the foreseeable future.

#### **A Note on the Balkans**

The primary source of future tension in NATO over the Balkans lies in potential failure. Both France and the U.K. have bad memories of the UNPROFOR experience before NATO intervened, and both have said they would withdraw their own forces if the U.S. withdraws. If for any reason the U.S. tires of the mission, or if a sudden change such as an event bringing a number of American casualties forced American withdrawal, the other Allies would probably follow suit. Most observers agree that in such a case a relapse to violence in Bosnia is the likely outcome. Such a failure could call into question the value of the Alliance.

In Kosovo, the Alliance initially had difficulty organizing a military response in the face of continued violence in 1998. This difficulty stems from the peculiar situation in which the Alliance finds itself, essentially opposing the Serbian campaign but also opposing the prospect of a separate Kosovo. The problem of how to apply military power to achieve such a finely balanced outcome is challenging and perhaps impossible, especially given the personalities on both sides of the conflict. There is also a real legal question as to the grounds for military action, given the fact that the violence has not crossed international borders. Further, Germany has been especially concerned to accommodate Russian interests and concerns, which generally support the Serb government in Yugoslavia. The Alliance is thus faced with the possibility of acting militarily where the legal justification and the

military outcome are highly uncertain, and where the risks of failure are high with serious potential consequences for NATO's credibility. The risks of not acting, on the other hand, include the prospect of a humanitarian disaster as well as the potential for the instability to spread and draw unilateral reactions from other nations in the region, something NATO leaders have long worried about and hoped to forestall. NATO's military staffs have developed a range of possible responses; the tension lies in the political risk assessment. The threat of force brought a temporary halt to the major violence in 1998, but events in January 1999 reopened the prospect of continued violence and deterioration. Faced with no good options, most officials agree that so far the risks of acting (and failing) outweigh the risks of not acting, but that calculus may change quickly based on any number of factors.

#### CONCLUDING NOTE

After such a survey of the stresses in NATO today, it is important to reiterate the opening message of this paper: NATO faces no truly major divisions or sources of strain, and the Alliance's ability to handle the crisis-ridden years of the Cold War suggests that its capacity to handle stresses like the ones described above is more than adequate to keep the Alliance viable. Of course, any number of unexpected changes could produce substantial new stresses: failure in Kosovo, or a general economic crisis that drives nations to turn inward and reduce cooperation across the board, or conflicting evidence of a resurging major military threat, or events that seriously impair American ability to provide leadership, all could cause more serious tension. The combined longer-term trends of economic integration in Europe even as sub-national regions reassert themselves may leave defense as one of a smaller number of issues dealt with at the national level, with unpredictable consequences.

But for the moment, the primary task for NATO policy makers is to deal with the less dramatic but important issues described above in such a way as to prevent their growing into more profound tensions. The Alliance is healthy, with revamped institutions and substantial public support. There is every reason to expect that NATO's 50th anniversary

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summit and celebration in Washington will be an opportunity to reflect on the success of the Alliance in the past while preparing it to sustain that success in the future.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Hoffman observed this state of perpetual crisis in his discussion of NATO tensions in the Cold War context. "Perpetual Problems in the NATO Alliance," in John F. Reichart and Steven R. Sturm, eds., *American Defense Policy*, 5th Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982), 323-332.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Defence, *The Strategic Defence Review* (London: HMG Stationery Office, 1998), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Méthode Interarmées D'Appréciation et De Raisonnement sur Une Situation Militaire (M.A.R.S.)

<sup>4</sup> Derived from tabular data in International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 1997/1998* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 34.

<sup>5</sup>Table: "Average Global Revenue Exposure," *International Herald Tribune*, Sept 5-6, 1998, 16.

<sup>6</sup> A senior Republican leader in the House of Representatives, speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York in 1997, explained to the audience the need to conduct a formal program to educate new congressmen on foreign and defense matters, a domain completely new to many of them. He also asked the audience to help congressmen avoid the political price of perceived "junketing" when they make overseas trips, as such trips are essential to encouraging an international awareness and outlook in Congress but are often unpopular among voters.

<sup>7</sup> This ambivalence is relative. Support for the Euro has been weak among many continental populations as well, and what marks the U.K. as distinctive is less a matter of a higher proportion of the population in opposition to the single currency than its political decision not to join the Euro at the first opportunity.

<sup>8</sup> For example, a recent lecturer on French history at Collège Interarmées de Défense in Paris insisted that anyone who does not understand the trauma of the 1870 occupation of parts of France could not possibly understand subsequent French history. Most French and English villages have monuments to the dead of World War I, a daily reminder of the enormity of the carnage and trauma of that war. In Paris today, the visitor often encounters signs memorializing individuals "killed by Germans" in World War II.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in Alfred Grosser, *The Western Alliance: European-American Relations since 1945* (New York: Vintage, 1982), 62. De Gaulle was echoing de Tocqueville's well-known observations on Russia and America from a century earlier.

<sup>10</sup> Quotes from de Gaulle and Johnson from Ibid., 213-214.

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<sup>11</sup> Both quotes from “Hubert Vedrine: France’s Clever Cockerel,” *Economist*, Feb 28, 1998, on-line archives.

<sup>12</sup> Author’s translation of an unpublished text of Prime Minister Jospin’s speech to L’Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale (IHEDN), Paris, September 3, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> The French do not single out NATO with their concern for political control. They have also championed greater political control over the newly created European Bank that will determine monetary policy for the Euro.

<sup>14</sup> Many French officials would agree, however, that the recent dispute over CINCSOUTH was as much the result of poor communication as of U.S. dominance, and the failure to resolve the dispute is more attributable to the May 1997 elections in France than to the absence of satisfactory options.

<sup>15</sup> For an excellent review of these events, see Alan K. Henrikson, “The Creation of the North Atlantic Alliance,” in Reichart and Sturm above, 296-320.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>17</sup> Sometimes attributed to Lord Ismay, NATO’s first Secretary General.

<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive treatment of this question see David S. Yost, “The New NATO and Collective Security,” *Survival* 40/2 (Summer 1998): 135-160.

<sup>19</sup> Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty states that “an armed attack against one or more of [the Allies] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. . . .” This clause is the fundamental security commitment undertaken by NATO members.

<sup>20</sup> IISS, *Military Balance 1997-1998*, 105.

<sup>21</sup> In signing the Charter, President Clinton declared that, “America is determined to create the conditions under which Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia can one day walk through [NATO’s] door.” Steven Erlanger, “Clinton and 3 Baltic Leaders Sign Charter,” *New York Times*, January 17, 1998, A4.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Jospin, IHEDN Speech.

<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, this approach by France would also have the effect of reemphasizing language that supports the integrated command structure; this language in some NATO documents was agreed at a time when France seemed very near to rejoining that structure.

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<sup>25</sup> Obviously, this assessment assumes no major new budget stresses in the U.S. and no new need for increased defense resources elsewhere.

<sup>26</sup> Examples include the role of domestic politics in the French decision to withdraw from the integrated command structure and the impact of European public perceptions during debates over the "neutron bomb" and, later, intermediate range nuclear force deployments.

<sup>27</sup> IISS, Military Balance 1997-1998, 35.

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