

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

NATO: STILL RELEVANT  
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

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## ABSTRACT

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has served the United States, Europe, and the world extremely well since its creation in 1949. It has been instrumental in maintaining the peace and deterring aggression in Europe during this time. However, some believe NATO's time has passed, that there are no longer any compelling reasons for it to remain intact.

NATO's role has evolved over the past fifty six years, from a purely defensive alliance to one that is increasingly offensive. Member nations have deployed military forces to Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terror (GWOT) portends no end in sight to these types of commitments.

Since its inception in 1949, NATO has expanded five times and grown from its original 12 members to today's 26. The latest expansion occurred in 2004 and there is little reason to believe that this will be the last as NATO continues to look to the east and south for prospective new partners. Despite these enlargements, however, the emergence of the European Union (EU), coupled with growing disenchantment across much of Europe with military solutions to modern challenges, makes NATO's future far from certain.

The purpose of this paper is to assess whether NATO is still a relevant alliance, given the dissolution of the Soviet Union and rise in prominence of the EU, and to provide a logical and appropriate course of action for the United States to adopt for its future NATO policy: continue to expand, contract or dissolve the alliance.



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## NATO: STILL RELEVANT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

### OVERVIEW

Dr. Steven E. Meyer, Professor of Political Science at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, recently wrote, "During the Cold War, NATO provided the proper linchpin of American – and West European – security policy, and served as a useful, even fundamental deterrent to Soviet military might and expansionism. However, NATO's time has come and gone and today there is no legitimate reason for it to exist."<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the Bush Administration's National Security Strategy (NSS) states that "NATO must develop new structures and capabilities to carry out [its] mission under new circumstances" and then proposes to "expand NATO's membership to democratic nations willing and able to share the burden of defending and advancing our common interests."<sup>2</sup>

This represents two divergent views of an extremely complex issue. This paper will assess whether the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is still a relevant alliance, given the dissolution of the Soviet Union and emergence of the European Union (EU), and provide a logical and appropriate course of action for the United States to adopt for its future NATO policy: expand, contract or dissolve the alliance.

### BACKGROUND

The end of World War II in 1945 brought new optimism to a war-weary world. After two world wars in the span of less than thirty years, many believed the nations of the world would finally be able to peacefully coexist without fear of the next "war to end all wars." The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 represented an expression of hope for the possibilities of a new global security arrangement and for fostering the social and economic conditions necessary for peace to prevail.<sup>3</sup>

But the turbulent and often shaky relations during the war between the Grand Alliance powers (United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union) was a precursor of troubled times ahead. A new empire was rising, under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, and the Soviet Union now stood opposite the free world and democratic ideals.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Harry S. Truman was elected president in his own right in 1948 and his new administration placed most of its emphasis on domestic spending in the form of his New Deal. The New Deal focused spending on housing, schools, and national health insurance primarily. To pay for these programs without increasing taxes or running a deficit, Truman trimmed military spending.<sup>5</sup>

Europeans, already threatened and distrustful of Soviet intentions, were now also alarmed at the United States' sudden inward shift towards domestic issues. They feared the perception of an isolationist American policy might fuel Soviet expansionism by sending mixed signals of Washington's intentions. To reassure European concerns and demonstrate unity through collective defense against military aggression, the United States and eleven other nations created the NATO alliance in April 1949. From the outset, NATO's primary purpose was to demonstrate American resolve to defend Europe against an attack by the Soviet Union. This goal was successfully achieved for forty years until the Cold War ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989.

In the wake of the end of the Cold War, NATO has expanded twice: in 1999 to include former east bloc countries Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, and again in 2004 to include Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. These eastward expansions have swelled membership to twenty six nations (Figure 1) and not gone unnoticed in Moscow. NATO's latest expansion in 2004 extends its reach to within 160 kilometers of St. Petersburg, fueling suspicions within the Russian government, despite assurances from the West of NATO's peaceful intentions.

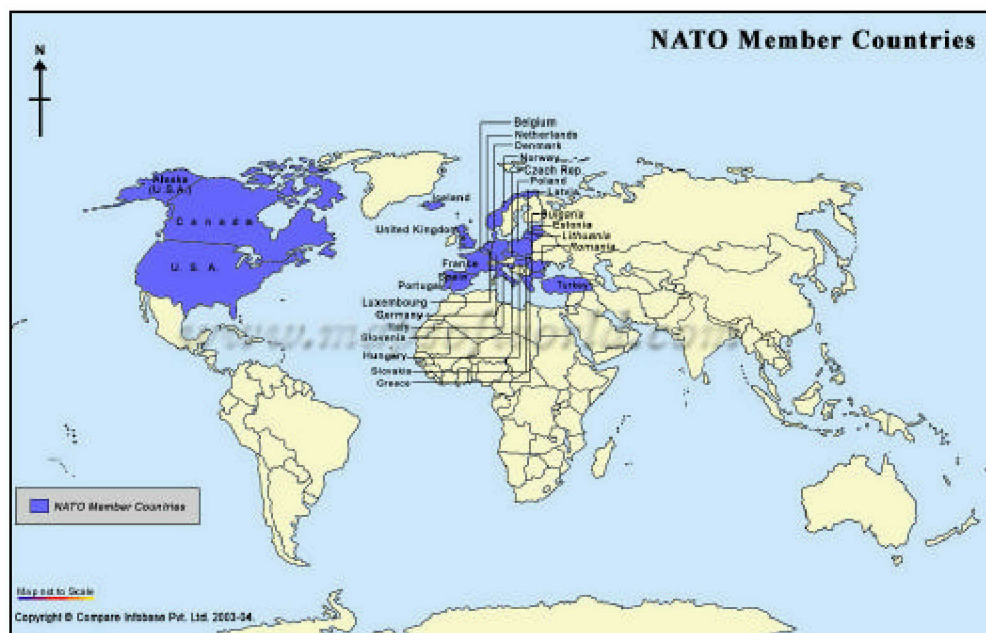


FIGURE 1 – NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES (2004)

But while NATO membership is still much coveted throughout most of Europe, the evolution of the European Union (EU), founded as the European Community in 1957, serves somewhat as a counter-balance to NATO, at least from an American perspective. The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe was finalized and agreed to in June 2004. The intent of this new EU constitution is to create a political and economic alliance amongst the EU's twenty five member nations (nineteen of which also belong to NATO – see Figure 2) and ultimately develop a military arm as well. The constitution also includes appointment of a single foreign minister to eventually oversee a combined, single foreign policy for all EU members. Clearly, as the EU continues to grow, it emboldens its members and provides them with a degree of independence they haven't often enjoyed within the US-dominated NATO alliance.

| Country         | Joined NATO | EU Member | Country        | Joined NATO | EU Member |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| United States   | 1949        | No        | Czech Republic | 1999        | Yes       |
| United Kingdom  | 1949        | Yes       | Bulgaria       | 2004        | Applicant |
| Belgium         | 1949        | Yes       | Estonia        | 2004        | Yes       |
| Canada          | 1949        | No        | Latvia         | 2004        | Yes       |
| Denmark         | 1949        | Yes       | Lithuania      | 2004        | Yes       |
| France          | 1949        | Yes       | Romania        | 2004        | Applicant |
| Iceland         | 1949        | No        | Slovakia       | 2004        | Yes       |
| Italy           | 1949        | Yes       | Slovenia       | 2004        | Yes       |
| Luxembourg      | 1949        | Yes       | Austria        | No          | Yes       |
| The Netherlands | 1949        | Yes       | Cyprus         | No          | Yes       |
| Norway          | 1949        | No        | Finland        | No          | Yes       |
| Portugal        | 1949        | Yes       | Ireland        | No          | Yes       |
| Greece          | 1952        | Yes       | Malta          | No          | Yes       |
| Turkey          | 1952        | Applicant | Sweden         | No          | Yes       |
| Germany         | 1955        | Yes       | Croatia        | Prospective | Applicant |
| Spain           | 1982        | Yes       | Albania        | Prospective | No        |
| Hungary         | 1999        | Yes       | Macedonia      | Prospective | No        |
| Poland          | 1999        | Yes       |                |             |           |

FIGURE 2 – NATO/EU MEMBERSHIP (2004)

NATO's future, therefore, is at a crossroads and must be re-evaluated in light of the new roles of Russia and the EU. The fact that the United States is not a member of the EU increases the potential for NATO/EU friction. Consequently, the United States must determine what its future interests in Europe are and develop a new strategy that pursues expansion, contraction or dissolution of NATO.

## **ANALYSIS**

A number of relevant factors can be used to assess the future of NATO. The following factors are key: European goals and objectives, US strategic interests, the impact of NATO military commitments, NATO-Russian relations, and political will of select key nations. Although this issue is certainly much more complex than just these five factors, they will nonetheless provide a framework within which to discuss the pros and cons of expansion, contraction or dissolution.

*European goals and objectives:* The disintegration of the Soviet Union has lessened Europe's dependence on the US and empowered the EU to move beyond being just a purely economic alliance and into foreign and military policies. More than 80 percent of European positions in the United Nations are now coordinated, and a coherent defense identity is slowly emerging.<sup>6</sup> As a result, Europe's goals and objectives are no longer necessarily consistent, or even compatible with those of the United States, presenting a potential schism in US-Europe relations that threatens the very existence and relevance of NATO. In a world where homeland security, nation-building and international legitimacy are increasingly important, particularly in European eyes, NATO seems an anachronistic military defense organization constructed to oppose Soviet forces, and retains something of the static cast of cold-war deterrence.<sup>7</sup>

Many analysts believe widespread hostility toward US foreign policy and fear of US willingness to use force in the Middle East could help push the EU toward a unity it has been previously unable to achieve.<sup>8</sup> Increasingly, Europeans are more likely to view the key to their future as being more closely tied to the EU than with NATO. France and Germany are outspoken in their desire to lift EU restrictions on weapons sales to China, over the strategic and humanitarian objections of the United States, and also reject any future NATO role in Iraq, although both countries have contributed troops to the International Security and Advisory Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The EU has also recently shown an increased appetite for military deployments. Rapidly deployable units of 1,500 troops each are being created, the first of which is expected to be ready sometime in 2005 with up to 13 units operational by 2007. Four EU countries – France,

Italy, Britain and Spain – will each have units with their own national troops, and other member states will contribute troops to multinational units.<sup>9</sup> The EU deployed troops to Congo and Macedonia in early 2003, as well as recently assuming control from NATO over operations in Bosnia. Still, these operations have all been at the lower end of the spectrum of military operations, and by host nation invitation only. According to an EU council source, the goal is to be able to carry out operations such as humanitarian tasks, rescue missions, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement operations.<sup>10</sup> Limiting the focus to these types of missions will keep the full burden of response on the United States and/or NATO for higher end missions in hotspots around the world, if action is to be taken at all.

NATO's future is therefore inextricably linked to the growing power of the EU, as the EU's new constitution clearly dictates. Article 40 of the constitution starkly states that, "until such time" as the common defense policy materializes, "the participating Member States shall work in close cooperation with NATO." No provision is made for cooperation after that time. As a whole, the constitution makes clear that NATO is ultimately superfluous to EU security policy.<sup>11</sup> If the United States is to remain relevant on the European continent, it must identify new means in which to do so.

While the EU continues to grow, it is still an immature and somewhat uneasy alliance that the United States may be able to manipulate to achieve its strategic goals. Washington's strong relations with dual EU/NATO members Poland, Denmark and the United Kingdom may also provide the United States with further leverage against EU opposition to NATO policies. As long as Washington maintains strong relationships with these allies, NATO's future and relevance seems secure.

US strategic interests: The demise of the Soviet Union left the United States as the world's lone superpower, thrusting global leadership upon her whether she chose to accept this new role or not. The United States has adjusted nicely to its new niche and seems determined to retain global military and economic supremacy for the foreseeable future. To accomplish this, Washington must keep the former great powers of Western Europe, as well as Japan, firmly within the constraints of the US-created postwar system by providing what some might call "adult supervision."<sup>12</sup> By continuing to cultivate NATO, the United States maintains a vehicle through which to maintain relevance and dominance in European affairs, as well as a strategic counter to the growing influence of the EU. Hidden by all the lofty (and misleading) rhetoric about NATO and transatlantic partnership is a simple fact: US policy in Europe aims not to counter others' bids for hegemony but to perpetuate America's own supremacy.<sup>13</sup>

*Impact of NATO military commitments:* Although NATO was created to serve as a deterrent to military aggression, it is increasingly being used for preemptive, offensive purposes. In 1995, NATO deployed 50,000 peacekeeping troops to Bosnia to help enforce the Dayton Peace Accords, the first true military deployment in NATO's history. Shortly thereafter, the air war in Kosovo in the spring of 1999 created a new role for the alliance as it transformed from a purely defensive alliance into one with an offensive capability. This new role now tends to support intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states whose domestic policies offend NATO's values – even when such states pose no security threat to the alliance's partners.<sup>14</sup>

This “policy” was applied again during the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, as well as in operations against the Taliban in Afghanistan. In both cases, it was reasoned, NATO's members were threatened, thus justifying preemptive military action. Iraq's suspected possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the increasingly destructive Al Qaeda terrorist network in Afghanistan triggered the response. These out-of-area operations have thus created a new military role for NATO.

On October 15, 2003, the NATO Response Force (NRF) was inaugurated in the Netherlands. The NRF, which has now reached initial operational capability, combines elite land, air, sea and special operations units into a single force that can be deployed anywhere in the world in five days and sustain itself for up to a month on a wide range of missions.<sup>15</sup> This force will number 21,000 once fully operational and will provide NATO with a tool to confront threats from international terrorism, hostile dictatorial regimes and rogue states. NATO's main mission of protecting the nations that comprise the Alliance will remain, but will now be focused against these new threats rather than the old enemy of the Cold War, Russia.<sup>16</sup>

But the NRF is not designed or equipped to handle every NATO mission. Recent operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan require much larger member commitments. The challenge for the United States is to convince its NATO partners to commit military forces commensurate with each of their capabilities in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). NATO's twenty six members have five million men in arms to draw upon but have not shown an inclination to commit them in any strength to any of NATO's ongoing missions. While many NATO members have been critical of operations in Iraq and refuse to provide military support (85% of the thirty one nations' troops are American; Britain and Poland provide the bulk of the rest), they have been almost equally indifferent in supporting operations in Afghanistan, which NATO has supported from the outset. At best, NATO will have 8,400 troops under its command in Afghanistan in the fall of 2004, or about a fifth of the number it dispatched to tiny

Kosovo in 1999. The United States has some 18,000 troops in the country, but none are under NATO's command.<sup>17</sup>

NATO introduced the Partnership for Peace program in 1994, designed to assist member nations in restructuring their military forces to contribute to NATO and the world's needs. While hailed as a great success in facilitating the joint training and cooperation exercised with the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Kosovo Force (KFOR), it cannot overcome the political reluctance of many of NATO's members to contribute troops today.

*NATO-Russian relations:* The NATO-Russia Founding Act of May 1997 provides Moscow with a "voice but not a veto," and ensures that Russia will enjoy consultation on the key European security issues outside NATO territory.<sup>18</sup> But the alliance's new eastern European members may still also harbor anti-Russian sentiments and view NATO's true mission in historical terms: to deter a Russian military attack. Some Poles, for instance, believe that President Putin's goal is to consolidate his power in Russia, then recreate the USSR and impose his domination over Eastern Europe, as Russian leaders have done for centuries. For them, joining NATO was the only way for Poland to protect itself from this danger.<sup>19</sup> Russia, however, is equally skeptical of NATO's true intentions. Although Moscow's relatively muted response to the 2004 NATO expansion is in stark contrast to her vocal opposition in 1999, NATO's methodical eastward expansion has created new levels of mistrust and suspicion.

Russian insecurity is accompanied by growing domestic uncertainty. Despite her massive size and natural resources, Russia has major economic problems, as well as her own terrorism concerns in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on a Beslan school in early September 2004. Whatever her strategic goals, these events might actually serve to push Russia towards improved relations with NATO and the West as a means to address these concerns. But while the United States and NATO may no longer view Russia as an adversary, neither do its member nations see her yet as a friend and thus are not eager to expand again to include her.

*Political will:* The survival of NATO hinges on its member nations and prospective members sustaining the political will to both support its continued existence and reach consensus on events which merit military action. The ten additions to the alliance since 1999 certainly have this will, given that all only recently emerged from behind the Iron Curtain and Soviet subordination. Clearly, these nations are quite eager to reap the benefits afforded by both NATO and the EU and six have already joined both organizations.

The true measure of political will is that which emanates from NATO's core members: France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. While other partners will exert some influence, the cornerstone of any debate over NATO's future will revolve around these



four members. Because America's central preoccupation -- the war on terror -- is not widely shared, it tends to isolate the United States, a country whose power is now so overwhelming as to invite dissent and countervailing currents.<sup>20</sup> This places even greater emphasis on Washington's long-standing warm and cordial relationship with London, which has tended to support American global policies, sometimes at the risk of its own isolation. The United States must exercise great care in nurturing this special relationship with the British and use it judiciously as leverage against EU policies which oppose the United States and/or NATO.

## **OPTIONS**

Given these factors, the United States is faced with three potential courses of action:

### **EXPAND NATO MEMBERSHIP**

NATO has created the Membership Action Plan (MAP) to assist aspiring members for potential membership within the alliance. Although MAP involvement does not in any way assure future membership, this "probation" provides a clear indicator of each participating nations' interest and commitment to joining NATO. There are currently three countries participating in the MAP: Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. Any discussion of NATO expansion must begin with these three nations.

Albania and Macedonia joined seven other nations in becoming MAP candidates in 1999. When NATO expanded in 2004, they were the only two of the nine nations not offered membership. While both are making significant strides to meet the selection criteria, it is clear that neither currently has sufficient resources (as measured by GDP per capita – see Figure 3) to devote towards NATO integration to merit serious consideration. Albania spends a paltry \$56 million on defense and has a GDP per capita of only \$4,500. Macedonia spends slightly more for defense, \$200 million with per capita GDP of \$6,700.<sup>21</sup> Both nations have recently offered to deploy small numbers of troops to Bosnia and Afghanistan as a means of demonstrating their resolve and willingness to contribute to ongoing NATO operations. Neither of these nations, however, nor other prospects such as Malta and Cyprus, offer the same benefits as recent additions. For instance, Poland (1999) has contributed more troops to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan than any other nation, except for the United States, Great Britain and Italy. In an era in which the United States feels that some allies are not doing enough, the "new kids" from the previous two expansions have all contributed measurably.

The third MAP candidate, however, would bring much to the table right now. With a per capita GDP of \$10,600, Croatia already surpasses that of many current NATO members, including recent additions Bulgaria and Romania, as well as longstanding member Turkey. Its

military budget of \$520 million surpasses that of every NATO 2004 inductee with the exception of Romania. Croatia also offers plentiful manpower in the form of 874,000 males fit for military service and its strategic location along the Adriatic Sea and bordering NATO members Slovenia and Hungary make it a very attractive candidate. Croatia has also applied for EU membership, yet another reason the United States should place added significance on Croatian membership in NATO.

| Country   | Per Capita GDP | Annual Military Spending    | Military Manpower |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Russia    | \$8,900        | Not available               | 30,600,000        |
| Ukraine   | \$5,400        | \$618 million (1.4% of GDP) | 9,565,000         |
| Belarus   | \$6,100        | \$176 million (1.4% of GDP) | 2,164,000         |
| Croatia   | \$10,600       | \$520 million (2.4% of GDP) | 874,000           |
| Albania   | \$4,500        | \$56 million (1.5% of GDP)  | 775,000           |
| Macedonia | \$6,700        | \$200 million (6% of GDP)   | 448,000           |
| Malta     | \$17,700       | \$33 million (0.7% of GDP)  | 79,000            |
| Algeria   | \$6,000        | \$2.2 billion (3.5% of GDP) | 5,675,000         |
| Morocco   | \$4,000        | \$2.3 billion (4.8% of GDP) | 5,529,000         |

*Source – CIA: The World Factbook, 2004*

FIGURE 3 – PROSPECTIVE NATO MEMBERS

But Croatia has not been extended membership to the EU for the same reason NATO remains out of its reach: failure to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In most parts of the former Yugoslavia, there is limited public support for war crimes prosecutions against members of the ethnic majority. Police assistance to war crimes prosecutors and investigative judges remains half-hearted at best, in part because police officers are often themselves implicated in the commission of war crimes.<sup>22</sup>

The Croatian government has recently shown a willingness to finally step up and apprehend war criminals, recognizing that its failure to do so is costing it membership in both the EU and NATO. But compliance is subjective and it is uncertain that the EU and NATO have the same ICTY compliance standards for Croatia. Croatia's recent actions make EU membership increasingly likely, perhaps as soon as 2008. Should Croatia be admitted to the EU and not offered membership in NATO, a potentially valuable new ally might fully devote its national resources and interests to EU integration, rather than NATO. In such an event, the

United States should be prepared to compromise its ICTY principles, if need be, to avoid this dilemma and actively facilitate Croatian membership into NATO.

Russia is also a potential, albeit unlikely candidate for membership. But recent events have strained Russian relations with the West and provided fresh evidence that a sizeable gap still remains between Moscow and Washington. The terrorist school attack in September 2004 led President Putin to tighten the government's grip on Russian policies. These policies have resulted in new limits on civil liberties and threaten to derail, or at least slow, Russia's slow advance towards democracy. But failure to extend membership to Russia results in other unintended consequences. It draws new lines of division in Europe, alienates those left out and weakens Russians most inclined towards liberal democracy and a market economy. In the process, it also pushes Russia towards China instead of drawing it towards Europe and America.<sup>23</sup>

A stable and democratic Russia, integrated as a contributing member of the Euro-Atlantic community, is clearly in the United States' best interests. But ideological differences still remain. The NSS states, "Russia's uneven commitment to the basic values of free-market democracy and dubious record in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain matters of great concern."<sup>24</sup> Regardless, inviting Russia to join NATO might serve as incentive for Russia to improve on its past human rights record and thereby further speed its transformation to democracy.

Russian membership might also actually bolster US leverage within the alliance and in particular, against growing EU influence. American diplomatic efforts to engage and embrace Russia could lead to a powerful partnership between Moscow and Washington that if harmonious, could dominate both NATO and EU policies. Furthermore, adding Russia to NATO would also neutralize Russian nationalist arguments and agendas that view NATO enlargement as humiliating and an affront to Russian sovereignty.

But there are risks associated with this plan as well. It is not clear that any of NATO's current members want to add Russia to the alliance. Former Soviet satellites, including Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, as well as the Baltic states, would almost certainly oppose it, given their long-standing (and historically justified) fear of Russian expansionist intentions. It is also unclear whether NATO's core members, including Great Britain, France and Germany, would support such a move, since Russian membership would include an economic cost and EU nations might be reluctant to spend any capital or yield global power to a nation that has proven so menacing and distrustful throughout its history.

From an American perspective, the advantages of Russian membership are overshadowed by a hidden cost. As mentioned earlier, the United States dominates NATO policies and the alliance in general and is not a member of the EU. As such, Washington uses NATO as a vehicle to wield power and influence in Europe and increasingly, the world. While it might be tempting to add Russian military might and manpower to the pool of available resources for the GWOT and other NATO-sanctioned military missions, it is not clear that Russia would be any more supportive of NATO's military commitments than many current members (i.e., Germany and France). In fact, from a Russian perspective, it seems more likely that they would seek to marginalize US influence and oppose any US-led positions as a means to do so. As a result, the trade-offs gained through membership (Russian democratization and stability) might be offset somewhat by reduced American influence in NATO and thereby seriously undermine US policy goals and objectives around the world.

Ukraine is another attractive possibility for NATO and merits close attention. The presidential election of pro-NATO candidate Viktor Yushchenko in December 2004 places Ukraine on the path towards the West and away from Russian influence. The United States and NATO should be willing to reach out to Ukrainian overtures and not yield to Russian threats and rhetoric. NATO membership should be considered a mere formality, since Ukraine is already contributing militarily to operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, unlike many other current NATO members.

But adding Ukraine to NATO, with its growing military power and lengthy geographic border with Russia, would almost certainly galvanize new Russian opposition. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov recently said his government would be worried by any United States and NATO attempts to further expand their influence into the former Soviet sphere and added that Russia sees no sense in further NATO enlargement.<sup>25</sup> The timing of his remarks seems clearly influenced by the Ukrainian election results. Still, the advantages of a pro-western Ukraine are far greater than the risks associated with Russian opposition and therefore, NATO should seek to extend membership to Ukraine as soon as practical.

Belarus is situated directly north of Ukraine. Like Ukraine, it shares an eastern border with Russia. It also shares a history of fraudulent elections. President Alexander Lukashenko has established a de facto dictatorship of rigged elections, state-controlled media and persecution of opponents and next year his country, already dependent on Russian subsidies, is to adopt the ruble as its national currency.<sup>26</sup> The United States State Department and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) both declared the 2001 election undemocratic and continue to fail to recognize the Lukashenko regime. The impact of this

western isolation has been to push Belarus even closer to Russia. Should NATO move to include Ukraine as a member, it might trigger further resentment from Belarus as its fourth neighbor joins the alliance (Latvia, Lithuania and Poland are the other three).

Despite this risk, Belarus is simply not a viable candidate without free and fair elections with recognizable results. Clearly a nation that cannot adhere to the will of its people cannot be considered worthy of NATO membership. Further, like Albania and Macedonia, it offers little in the form of economic or military means to justify inclusion.

Expansion of NATO is not just limited to Europe. The alliance should also look to the south as well and evaluate the potential of nations along Africa's northern rim, specifically Algeria and Morocco. Although neither is ready now for NATO membership, both exhibit strong potential for the future and their geographic locations along the Mediterranean Sea make them even more attractive. Both have cooperated with NATO recently and show a willingness to join, or expand their roles, in the global war on terror.

Algeria has agreed to begin training and other programs with NATO as part of a process to ensure interoperability and common language. NATO also recently designated Algeria as its most promising partner in the Middle East region.<sup>27</sup> As coalition forces chase terrorists from within Iraq and Afghanistan, their next destination may well be Africa. But Algeria already has a long history of combating terrorism from within and may offer new insights into successful techniques employed in the past that might prove successful against Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

Although Algeria is a promising potential partner with military resources and spending that dwarfs most current NATO members, it is not a serious candidate now for NATO membership, nor has it given any evidence that it seeks to become one. Algeria opposes many of NATO's policies, as well as the US-led military presence in Iraq. But even if Algeria never joins NATO, it might be a willing partner in the GWOT, which ultimately serves American strategic interests and objectives.

Morocco is another potential new ally. President George W. Bush recognized Morocco as a major non-NATO US ally last June, acknowledging the country's support in the US-led war on terror. Moroccan authorities have arrested about 2,000 people in cases linked to terrorism since it was hit by a suicide attack in Casablanca last May.<sup>28</sup> Its key strategic location, opposite Spain across the Strait of Gibraltar and bordering both the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean provide additional incentives to membership. But some current NATO members might take a dim view of the aggressive measures the Moroccan government has implemented in combating

terrorism. Human rights groups have consistently complained that these measures have gone too far and that the rule of law must be honored and followed in all instances.

At this point, therefore, Morocco and Algeria seem better designed to serve as non-NATO American allies in the GWOT rather than NATO partners. In this capacity, their ongoing actions in fighting terrorism will likely continue to prove extremely valuable to the global war on terror.

#### CONTRACT NATO OR MAINTAIN STATUS QUO – NO NEW ADDITIONS

In light of NATO's recent expansions, contraction is not politically feasible at this point. None of NATO's current members have given any indication that they wish to withdraw from the alliance and the prospect of "voting out" existing members is counterproductive and would serve no political or strategic purpose. The real question is whether maintaining a status quo of twenty six members will help NATO survive or result in it being outflanked by the EU.

Whether it knows it or not, NATO currently finds itself in a race for new members with the EU, over Croatia in particular. For now, only Croatia has aspirations to join both organizations, but with the increased benefits afforded by globalization, it is inevitable that other nations will pursue the same course. Resisting further expansion, therefore, could eventually hasten NATO's irrelevance, as emerging candidates shunned by NATO direct their attention instead to the open arms of the EU.

The obvious advantage for current members in maintaining the status quo is that they maintain their political base of power within the alliance. Each new member gains a voting interest in the alliance and therefore its own "piece of the pie." Old Europe members such as France and Germany rightly view any new members as potential competitors for prestige within the alliance and given their stated views and positions on the future of the EU, will certainly prefer expansion of the EU (which both currently dominate), especially if it serves a dual purpose of thwarting NATO.

It is therefore imperative that the United States and its non-EU NATO partners (including Canada, Norway and Turkey) continue to explore new ways for NATO to maintain its relevance and not serve as a billpayer for EU ambitions. Clearly, maintaining the status quo is a recipe for irrelevance and if adopted, the United States and NATO are likely to watch the EU overtake its position in Europe and the world.

#### DISSOLVE THE ALLIANCE AND/OR CREATE A REPLACEMENT FOR IT

Dissolving NATO, favored by many, would mitigate the risk associated with NATO enlargement and quickly ease Russian concerns. The rise in prominence of the EU would make it ideally suited to fill the vacuum generated by the death of the alliance and it seems

increasingly likely that most nations in Europe would embrace a future free of US interference and intervention in Europe's affairs. A more balanced relationship between the United States and Europe, and a European security order that is more European and less Atlantic, holds out the best hope for preserving a cohesive transatlantic community. As the twenty first century progresses, America must become Europe's partner, no longer its pacifier.<sup>29</sup>

Although the EU seems resigned to accept NATO's continued existence for now, it is unlikely that the EU will be able to fully replace NATO's military capabilities anytime soon. The EU's military capability is limited to support of small scale missions, like Macedonia and Bosnia and the EU possesses neither sufficient military enablers (i.e., logistics, strategic lift capacity, intelligence) nor the political will and consensus necessary to take on missions of a larger scale. Even NATO's harshest critics must acknowledge its military utility for the foreseeable future, in support of the GWOT, in general, and out-of-area missions such as Afghanistan, in particular.

A new alliance of like-minded nations with common values may be more applicable to today's needs. The GWOT provides the mission and purpose: defeat radical fundamentalists worldwide. A new alliance would be suitable, at least from an American perspective. A GWOT-focused alliance could begin with all of NATO's current members, then quickly extend membership to Ukraine, Russia, and any other nation around the world that is committed to defeating terrorism. Such an alliance would be relevant to today's needs and therefore completely acceptable to the United States. It would also provide a vehicle through which other like-minded nations could channel their efforts to defeat terrorism, in the form of its extended new membership.

But such an organization might result in a twenty first century version of the UN. The UN would certainly oppose it and rightly see such a new, global alliance as a threat to its own existence. Any new alliance would face the same challenges as NATO currently does, namely gaining consensus and garnering UN support before any action can be taken. Further, the addition of Russia to either a new alliance or NATO itself would provide Moscow with power similar to what it enjoys on the UN Security Council, where Russian aims are frequently achieved via its veto authority.

From an American perspective, the United States would sacrifice significant power and control over European and global affairs by dissolving NATO or replacing it with a new alliance. It is clear that Washington sees NATO enlargement as a mechanism to exert even greater influence overseas and in particular, as a tool to stifle Russian ambition and influence. Given the GWOT's focus and open-ended commitment, the United States seems destined to rely even

more heavily on NATO for offensive military operations in the future. Therefore, dissolving or replacing NATO is not currently acceptable to American interests abroad.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

NATO is still relevant, from an American perspective, enabling Washington to continue to dominate European affairs and remain an active player in Europe. Furthermore, continued expansion is prudent and beneficial to most of its members, the United States in particular.

Ukraine, under President-elect Yushchenko, should be extended NATO membership as soon as it applies. NATO should also extend membership to Croatia once its government adheres to the principles of the ICTY or when the EU extends a membership offer, whichever occurs first. Croatia combines a strong military, growing economy, strategic location and commitment to NATO's core principles that are virtually impossible to overlook. The reluctance of many current NATO members to contribute to the GWOT makes the addition of both nations even more appealing. Both also have the resources and political will to contribute to NATO immediately. Although extending Ukraine membership risks further antagonizing Russia, the potential benefits far outweigh these risks. In fact, NATO's continuing eastward expansion might provide sufficient pressure to convince Russia to return to the path of democratic reforms, a prerequisite for consideration of Russia as a potential NATO partner.

Current American policy centers on the defeat of global terrorism and as such, the United States should aggressively engage Russia through diplomacy as a partner in this endeavor. The terrorist school attack last month has resulted in Russia now being added to the growing list of nations victimized by terrorism. The time is ripe for the United States and Russia to join forces in fighting terror around the world, although Russia so far has refused to cooperate with such overtures.

As NATO continues to grow, it should expand further to include other like-minded nations that are committed to battling terrorism. But in seeking new partners in the GWOT, America should set aside the idealistic notion that all nations must share her values. Promotion of human rights and the advancement of democracy are noble causes for the United States but it must not naively insist that every nation be a mirror image of itself. Encouraging Russian behavioral changes through incentives such as the World Trade Organization, NATO and the EU is good strategy but today's threats make it more important for the United States to have allies that share its national security policies than its democratic goals and ideals.

The United States needs NATO – for now. Although NATO's mission is no longer to deter Soviet aggression, and Russia is no longer a legitimate threat to European peace and



prosperity, Washington's influence continues to ensure that NATO's focus closely parallels her own strategic interests. Expanding NATO to include nations who will stand by America against acts of terrorism is not just feasible, acceptable and suitable, it is absolutely necessary to ensure the United States remains relevant in global affairs and retains its status as the world's predominant power.

WORD COUNT= 5,995

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>2</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karns, *The United Nations in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Charles M. Kuyk, NATO's *Evolution: Maintaining Relevance*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 10 April 2001), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ernest R. May, *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1993), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, "Europe Takes Charge; Sure NATO is relevant. But the real transatlantic work is being done over at the European Union," *Newsweek*, 5 July 2004, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Marc Champion and John Carreyrou, "Europe Surveys Its Options After Bush's Victory," *Wall Street Journal*, 4 November 2004, sec. A, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Cybercast News Service, "European Union Agrees on Rapid Reaction Force," *CNSNews.com* [journal on-line], available from <<http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewForeignBureaus.asp?Page=%5CForeignBureaus%5Carchive%5C200411%5CFOR20041125a.html>>, Internet, accessed 27 January 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey L. Cimbalo, "Saving NATO From Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 83 (November/December 2004) 114.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Schwarz and Christopher Layne, "NATO: At 50, it's time to quit," *The Nation*, 10 May 1999, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>15</sup> NATO Update, "Response Force Ready For Missions," *NATO Update* [journal on-line]; available from <<http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/10-October/e1013a.htm>>; Internet; accessed 16 December 2004.

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<sup>17</sup> Jackson Diehl, "NATO's 'Myth' in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, 5 July 2004, sec. A, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> Paul E. Gallis, NATO Enlargement: Pro and Con Arguments (Library of Congress: Congressional Research Service, 1998), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Is NATO in Trouble?" *Contemporary Review*, March 2003, 152.

<sup>20</sup> Roger Cohen, "Much of World Views U.S. As Chest-Thumper," *Startribune.com*. Available from <<http://startribune.com/stories/484/5131406.html>>. Internet. Accessed 12 December 2004.

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<sup>24</sup> Bush, 27.

<sup>25</sup> Bakutoday.net, "Russian Defense Minister: Moscow Wants No Further NATO Expansion," *Bakutoday.net* [journal on-line]; available from <<http://www.bakutoday.net/view.php?d=11995>>; Internet; accessed 14 January 2005.

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<sup>27</sup> WorldTribune.com, "NATO Cites Algeria as Model Partner," *WorldTribune.com* [journal on-line]; available from <[http://216.26.163.62/2004/eu\\_algeria\\_11\\_30.html](http://216.26.163.62/2004/eu_algeria_11_30.html)>; Internet; accessed 16 December 2004.

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<sup>29</sup> Kupchan, 147.

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