NATO Enlargement
and the Politics of Identity

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Daniel Braun

To my Mother, Father, and my brother David: thanks for your constant encouragement and support.

The Martello Papers

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Among the many changes NATO has undergone since the end of the Cold War, enlargement is sometimes said to be its one unalloyed triumph. The accession of three central European states in 1999 and seven more in 2004 extended the North Atlantic zone of peace and testified to the continuing attractive power of the world's most successful alliance. Exploring the official discourse surrounding enlargement, Daniel Braun takes the contrary view that it was not just a missed opportunity for reform, but has introduced new stresses into the alliance that will need to be addressed if it is to remain relevant.

Braun's point is not that enlargement should, or could, have been avoided. In itself it was a noble objective, and the process was well-managed. But it also served to mask continuing deficiencies in NATO's decision-making structures and processes, which remain essentially unaltered despite revisions to its strategic concept and transformation of its commands. From 1994 on, enlargement became a preoccupation which, in effect, made it easier for allies to put off dealing with the "identity crisis" induced, paradoxically, by its Cold-War victory over the Soviet Union. The very success of enlargement, moreover, has resulted in what Braun calls a "triadic" structure that highlights and perhaps exacerbates differences of interest among the western European, Eastern European and American allies. His

analysis of NATO-Russian relations during and after enlargement lays bare those intra-alliance differences.

This study provides evidence, if more were needed, of NATO's historical uniqueness among alliances. For any alliance, what sense of common identity its members have flows primarily from their perception of a shared threat and, hence, a shared strategic purpose. But NATO has always gone beyond that minimum standard, asserting a collective identity based on shared norms and practices embodied in each of its members (however imperfectly on occasion). The demise of its enemy in 1991 may not have been fatal, but it weakened the strategic pillar of NATO's identity, while enlargement, in Braun's view, threatens its normative base.

We are, as always, grateful to the Security and Defence Forum of the Department of National Defence, whose ongoing support enables the Centre to conduct and disseminate research on issues of importance to national and international security. As is the case with all *Martello Papers*, the views expressed here are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Centre or any of its supporting agencies.

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January 2007

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1. On Alliances and Identity

There are all kinds of devices invented for the protection and preservation of countries: defensive barriers, forts, trenches, and the like… But prudent minds have as a natural gift one safeguard which is the common possession of all, and this applies especially to the dealings of democracies. What is this safeguard? Skepticism. This you must preserve. This you must retain.

Demosthenes, *Second Philippic*

In terms of alliance longevity, NATO's survival into the 21ˢᵗ century and the organization's sixth decade, is remarkable. With the collapse of communism east of the Elbe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the alliance's original *raison d'être* of collective defence against that eastern threat no longer appeared to be relevant. Many critics, including some conservative realists, questioned NATO's continuing purpose. John Mearsheimer, for instance, called NATO "a relic of the Cold War" that had ceased to have significance (Katzenstein versus Mearsheimer, 2003, 7). The alliance, however, has survived. Moreover, with continuing enlargement in the post Cold War era and with new candidates clamouring for membership, its viability and relevance seem assured. Appearances, though, may be quite deceptive.

This work does not speak to the desirability of the alliance's survival or attempts to suggest a roadmap for assuring its efficacy. It does contend, however, that NATO, appearances to the contrary, is suffering from an identity crisis. *Though enlargement may be a sign of the continuing relevance of an alliance, in this case, it more likely masks and potentially exacerbates NATO's identity crisis and it could conceivably foreshadow a descent into irrelevance or even disintegration.*

Identity may be understood as a state of being that involves values, perceptions, symbols, and the distinctive character of an entity. In this chapter I will examine identity and the identity crisis in the alliance, and I will outline the methodology used in the analysis throughout this work. In the remaining chapters, I will assess the character of the discourse and the factors that have led to the crisis, the re-conceptualization of threats, the re-thinking and reform structures of alliance management, and attempts at adaptation, and finally, the signposts that inform us as to whether "bridges" or "walls" are being built in a quest to adapt or create a new sustainable alliance identity.

Identity Matters

Traditionally, many factors have been taken into account in explaining NATO's longevity. These range from continuing European security needs, shared threat perceptions among the allies (Calleo, 1987; Kaplan 1989) to arguments that the United States employed its "socializing power" within the alliance to establish and maintain its hegemony in Europe (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990, 283-315) or that the Europeans used NATO to "socialize" America (Risse-Kappen, 6-41; 188-91). What I would suggest has not been sufficiently emphasized as a factor in the multi-decade persistence of the alliance has been the binding force of NATO's "identity." It is the existence of this common alliance identity, one that was shaped by mutual socialization that at the same time enabled Europeans, for instance, to "socialize" the United States during the Cold War. Identities also matter because they involve interests in the sense that an entity's or individual's identity (by endogenizing the formation of interests) *implies* its or his interests (Hopf, 2002, 16-20). Further, identity is crucial in shaping one's understanding and classification of states as allies, adversaries, or something in between (Hopf, 1998, 172-73). Identity, therefore, is vitally important when strategic interests involve threats and opportunities, as is the case with defence alliances.

When it comes to individuals and, in most instances in the case of states, it is widely accepted that they do have clearly discernible identities. This becomes more problematic in the case of international organizations, and therefore it is reasonable to continue to ask whether NATO does indeed have a collective identity. Moreover, a collective alliance identity cannot be a mere conglomeration of individual member identities, or the identity of its dominant member, the US, writ large. It has to be at least reasonably

congruent with the definitional criteria for individual or state identity. This is why studies of state identity are useful here as a way to continue to evaluate the alliance's identity.

It may be assumed that identity is imagined and mobilized, and thus humanly constructed, or it may possibly be assumed to be primordial. In part, how identity is characterized is driven by the theoretical approach that is brought to the analysis. Neorealists, for instance, relying on what they contend to be universal laws of international politics, suggest that identity is shaped by the *reality* of the structure and thus there is also a kind of immutability that characterizes identity (Waltz, 1979). Constructivists, by contrast, emphasize the intersubjectively shared ideas, norms and values held by actors, and thus identities are a variable, likely to depend on social, political and historical context (Katzenstein, 1996; Wendt, 1999; Wendt, 1994, 384-96). This is not to say that constructivists suggest that identities are easily malleable. Identities can be hard to change because they are reinforced by practice.

Perhaps the best way to look at a common identity in light of these different theoretical approaches is to employ the flexibility suggested by Valerie Bunce in her examination of what constitutes a nation and its identity (1999, 12-13). She contends that the best way to deal with the debate among primordialists, constructivists and instrumentalists is to look primarily at "density of shared experiences" and the communities of common feelings (Bunce, 1999, 12). Using such an approach, it is possible, I believe, to demonstrate that NATO has a collective identity.

Risse-Kappen, in a study that situates the evaluation of alliance interaction within a larger examination of ontological and epistemological concerns in the study of world politics, argues that the alliance is a community which has "deeply affected *the collective identity* of its members" (emphasis added) (1995, 4, 13-37). He further argues that NATO provides a unique institutional framework whereby Europeans, as noted, have an opportunity to "socialize" the US and affect American policies (Risse-Kappen, 1995, 6-25). Such socialization, which involves norms and values and helps shape discussion and physical structures, speaks to collective identity and very much to the density of shared experiences. Further, such socializing is also part of a larger vision of a community of states with institutionalized and interdependent relationships that reflect liberal theories of international relations that link domestic political structures systematically to the foreign policy of states and, in more recent iterations, speak of a community of democratic nations (Adler, 1992, 287-326).

This collective identity and the density of shared experiences were made evident in multiple ways during the Cold War. It was not only the clarity of the external threat but also the shared fundamental goals, the jointly developed physical structures, and the nature and intensity of the internal discourse that pointed to collective identity. NATO was not an ad hoc organization meant to deal with a short term threat. Rather, from the very beginning, the members envisioned a long term association where interaction, reassurance, continual building of strength, and patience would be instrumental in making alliance deterrence effective over a prolonged period of time.

More specifically, several factors *conjunctively* do show, I suggest that NATO acquired a collective identity during the Cold War. First, from the very beginning NATO had multiple functions, including state building, management of internal alliance security by providing information that increased transparency, predictability and reassurance, and fostered a security community designed to make war among its members unthinkable (Katzenstein, 2003, 6). Throughout the Cold War moreover, the US recognized that despite its overwhelming power in the alliance, it needed to coordinate policy with its allies in order to be effective in Eastern Europe (Kovrig, 1991, 142-49). The alliance charter itself stipulated a collective approach by emphasizing *collective* defence planning (The North Atlantic Treaty). It is worth noting, though, that the alliance's primary emphasis throughout the Cold War was on collective defence rather than the political or economic goals and that this focus was vital in maintaining a deep consensus that helped underpin the concept and the policy of containment.

Second, containment, supported by collective defence, was *the consensus policy* of the alliance in dealing with the Soviet Union and its communist allies, the rhetoric of "rollback" and "liberation" notwithstanding (Kovrig, 1973). Containment as a concept was predicated on the long-term hemming in of the Soviet Union and its East European allies with the intent of depriving communism of the dynamism of expansion and waiting (so it was assumed) for the internal contradictions to undermine and ultimately to lead to the disintegration of the communist system. Washington coupled containment with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, the latter designed to speed European economic recovery and ensure political stability (Williams and Williams, 1974, 134-35). True, George Kennan, in proposing containment and envisioning a long-term ripening of contradictions, did not propose a military dimension to containment (Kovrig, 1973, 99-106). NATO's doctrine of collective defence, though, became that dimension.

Third, more than just a dimension, collective defence reflected the character of the alliance and a deep long-term consensus during the Cold War. A parsimonious doctrine, collective defence was in line with the goals of traditional alliances that provided for the security of the members of the "club" against threats from the outside. This stood in contrast to collective security which is a far more diffuse concept that emphasizes universalism, the power of moral suasion, an automatic reaction by the entire community of nations against a potential or actual aggressor and underpins the United Nations' approach to preventing and suffocating military threats and aggressions. Containment infused NATO's collective defence with the requirement of longevity. Collective defence in this case had to operate over several decades and it could only do so effectively if it was based on and continued to shape a deep and wide consensus in the alliance. Such a consensus, sooner rather than later, would involve collective identity and that in turn helped shape NATO's understanding and classification of non-member states as friends, adversaries, or something in between.

Fourth, such understanding and classification was not only in itself evidence of a collective identity, but reflected internal discourse and constant interaction, including intersubjectively shared ideas. This was evident as Risse-Kappen shows, in the ability of the West European countries to exercise significant influence over the US, indeed, to "socialize" America during such difficult times as the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, or the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) controversy in the late 1970s and 1980s (1995, 146-57, 188-91). The Western democracies also sought to socialize (with various degrees of success) member-states which had non-democratic governments, at times, into NATO's identity as a community of democracies. The extensive discourse across the Atlantic that reflected shared values and norms played a seminal role in mutual "socializing" not just during these events but throughout the Cold War and this density of shared experiences helped to shape a collective identity. The alliance, benefiting from such a consensus, developed dimensions that were similar in certain respects to political coalitions with high levels of interaction (Riker, 1962). Moreover, such consensus and a collective identity that reflected common foundational values helped the alliance survive French defiance in building her independent nuclear *force de frappe* and President de Gaulle's decision in 1966 to have France leave the integrated military structure of NATO (Williams and Williams, 1974, 24-27). France remained in the political structures of NATO because it shared the perception of a continuing Soviet threat. NATO moved its headquarters to Belgium and was able to build elaborate physical

structures throughout its existence reflecting wide and deep institutional growth (Sloan, 2001, 3-24).

Last, throughout the Cold War, the clarity of the external threat interacted positively with the above factors to help form and sustain a clear alliance identity that made NATO resilient in the face of internal and external crises. Even when there were policy disputes as to how best to confront the Soviet/communist threat, there still was a transatlantic consensus on the nature of the threat that reflected deep alliance understandings, norms and values. In disputes within the alliance, whether the French withdrawal from the military structure or divisions over the deployment of Pershings and cruise missiles, the member-states held together, the alliance survived, and the consensus regarding the external threat, though bruised, emerged basically intact (Risse-Kappen, 1995, 188-91; Williams and Williams, 1974, 24-27).

The Making of an Identity Crisis

For an organization where a shared threat perception was so crucial to maintaining consensus, where collective defence played such a pivotal role in making containment effective, and where the former played such a large part in shaping alliance identity, the tectonic shift induced by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in the East could have led to a major existential crisis. Though there were some concerns and not a few pessimists, most NATO leaders remained sanguine about the alliance. NATO has indeed persisted, there have been no defections, its institutions have continued to evolve and discursive patterns among the members, at least in the first post-communist decade, appeared largely unaltered. Some have suggested that NATO is in fact meeting what they call "the post-strategic condition" (Siedschlag, 1998). For others the building of a "pluralistic security community" seems uninterrupted (Adler, 287-326).

More than just surviving, even after its primary *raison d'être* after the Cold War disappeared, alliance enlargements in 1999 and 2004, and a strong commitment to continuing enlargement appear to signal that NATO was not just muddling through. Enlargement as energetic affirmation, with more countries eagerly seeking membership, seems to suggest that the organization has successfully adapted its identity to new conditions and has retained its relevance. Could such an adaptation of identity, one that would ensure that the alliance remained relevant, have been achieved? Relevance is crucial

since a new identity, for instance as a glorified "discussion club" would hardly justify the efforts, expense and commitments of membership, or satisfy the needs for security of at least some of the members. Such a remarkable adaptation would be difficult, if not impossible to achieve without shared threat perceptions, and most importantly, a deep and wide consensus of the type that collective defence and containment provided during the Cold War period. Without these, the density of shared experiences that Bunce referred to at the national level and that would be replicated within the alliance community would be hard to manage. So would the mutual socializing that Risse-Kappen so richly documented. And that mutual socializing is needed to form and shape the collective identity of the alliance members. Uni-directional socializing in the alliance (Calleo, 1997; Kaplan, 1989) even if emanating from a superpower, cannot replace the function of mutual socializing that has been so crucial in shaping alliance identity and preserving its relevance during the Cold War (Liska, 78-79). In assessing the persistence of the alliance into the post Cold War era, there is a need for balance. It is important to recognize the alliance's achievements, in surviving this long into the post Cold War period. It is also vital though to look at the density of shared experiences and mutual socializing in the post Cold War era to judge the health of the alliance and the status of its collective identity. It may be especially useful to illuminate this through the prism of some recent events to see whether enlargement may be masking and exacerbating (even though it is not the cause of) a dangerous identity crisis.

a. Striving to survive. For much of the post Cold War period, NATO has certainly managed to preserve an air of normalcy. Summits among leaders and discussions within NATO bodies continued unabated. President Clinton suggested that NATO had successfully transcended the Cold War and was an alliance that was renovating itself, "directed no longer against a hostile block of nations, but instead designed to advance the security of every democracy in Europe – NATO's old members, new members and non-members alike" (White House, 1997, 6). This was part of expanding the "zone of democracy" and the "zone of stability" eastward, seemingly reflecting the dynamic identity of an alliance that was successfully adapting to changed conditions.

NATO also appeared to be engaged in an evolutionary process of change in terms of its grand strategy. In 1991 it formulated a new Strategic Concept that focused on a more "generalized" enemy and recognized the need for far-reaching institutional changes (Siedschlag, 1998, 53-54). Later, in April 1999, with NATO's "humanitarian intervention" in Yugoslavia that

was designed to stop the ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo, underway, the alliance formulated a more updated Strategic Concept that was meant to make the alliance command structure more efficient and allow it to better conduct non-Article 5 crisis response operations (Strategic Concept, 1999). NATO thus seemingly was moving toward building a new consensus on coping with threats that were different from those in the Cold War era. It was also developing an ability and a consensus-based willingness to act "out-of-area."

NATO in the first post Cold War decade also moved to adjust its structures to deal with the new strategic environment, sought to make its forces more mobile and efficient by organizing Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs) and encouraged greater European participation (Rearden, 2001, 75-86). As well, the alliance began to modernize some of the central command structures in order to make them more streamlined so as to be better able to cope with new missions, including aid for democracy – a publicly declared goal (Jordan, 2001, 87-99).

Significantly, the alliance began to explore enlargement early on and throughout the first post Cold War decade invested an enormous amount of energy and prestige into the process. At its Rome summit in 1991 the alliance created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) as a framework for dialogue with the East and Central European states, in 1994 it formulated an outreach program, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) that quickly grew into a large and elaborate undertaking (Simon, 2001, 121-128) and in 1995 it put forth *The Study on Enlargement* which went beyond the "why" to the "how" and "when" of enlargement (Study on NATO Enlargement). In 1999 NATO launched the Membership Action Plan following the first post Cold War enlargement, to help aspiring NATO members focus their preparations for joining the alliance (MAP). NATO even reached out to Russia to reassure it about the alliance enlargement. In 1997 the alliance created the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (Founding Act; Khrushcheva, 2001, 236-41) and in 2002 upgraded this to a new NATO-Russia Council which essentially granted Russia a kind of "ante-chamber" in the alliance in order to enhance consultation (NATO Fact Sheets, 2002). Further vigorous debates among scholars and former policy makers, some favouring enlargement (Kugler, 1997; Larrabee, 1997) and others opposing it (Mandelbaum, 1996; Hyland, 1998; Eisenhower, 1998) not only reflected the concerns and the dilemmas of alliance members but seemed to suggest a healthy alliance discourse.

It would appear then that these alliance policies, processes, structural changes and discourses signalled a successful adaptation of identity. Yet, as recent events and the following chapters will show, alliance aspirations are not necessarily the same as reality. Even extensive discourse does not mean the absence of deep dissonance. This was made all too evident in the sharp disputes within the alliance over the war in Iraq.

b. Worlds clashing? During the fall of 2002 as Washington tried to rally support for the war in Iraq, difference with key West European allies transmogrified into truly harsh disputes. This stood in stark contrast not only to the seemingly smooth transformation of NATO into a viable post Cold War alliance that was able to act jointly and effectively in Yugoslavia, for instance, but also to the warm support for the US in Europe in the wake of 9/11. Following that attack, NATO invoked Article 5 of the alliance's charter, and the Europeans offered large-scale support against the war on terrorism – an offer that to the chagrin of its allies the US did not avail itself of (Cox, 2003, 527). Even when it went to war in Afghanistan, Washington emphasized instead self reliance and "a coalition of the willing." The dispute over Iraq, however, was not just a difference over one conflict. Rather, I believe, it involved a deep crisis that reflected if not an unravelling, then at least great problems with the processes that enabled and fostered mutual socializing within the alliance during the Cold War and played a vital role in creating the type of density of shared experiences that help create and sustain NATO's collective identity.

French President Jacques Chirac's decision to assume a leadership role, with German and Belgian support, to work against American efforts to gather support for war in Iraq in the UN's Security Council and elsewhere and Paris's opposition to Washington's plans to accede to Turkish requests in January 2003 to station Patriot anti-missile systems and other equipment (that Washington viewed as defensive) in Turkey in January 2003, generated a furious reaction from the US (Daalder, 2003, 147-57). France and Germany were equally enraged later by US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld's ruminations about "old Europe" (Germany and France, in particular), that he felt was of little use to Washington, versus "new Europe" (Italy, Spain, and the countries of Eastern Europe that were or would soon be members) as well as by his emphasis on "the coalition of the willing" (Smirnov, 2003, 60).

This was not, however, just a dispute of personalities and over-inflamed rhetoric. Differences between the US and its European allies were already

foreshadowed by America's unwillingness to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The depth of the differences is another matter. There are competing explanations as to causes and the motivations of various parties though that do shed considerable light on the character of the dispute. In terms of US motivations the more benign explanations have suggested certain Wilsonian motives and an attachment to universal principals (Gaddis, 2002, 56). Others have contended that much of the problem may be due to the diplomatic ineptitude of the Bush administration (Asmus, 2003, 22, 27). And given the Bush administration's emphasis on unilateralism and its ready disregard for European concerns, it is indeed not impossible to envision that it is pursuing the kind of *autistic power politics* that Christopher Hill wrote about – a foreign policy that is self-regarding and without concern for its impact on others (2003, 243). Still others have suggested that as Europe has gained in economic strength and as the integrative processes on the continent have intensified, it has developed a greater thirst for independence from America (Chernikov and Chernikova, 2003, 46-57). And French concerns about the US as an unmoored "hyper power" that endangers the interests of European democracies are a more extreme expression of this dimension (Albright, 2003, 8-9).

It is perhaps Robert Kagan who sees the sharpest divide between the US and Europe (2003). He argues that fundamental differences about the nature of power and the use of force, wide disparities in military strength among other factors have led to a kind of "Mars" and "Venus" transatlantic division. To him this indicates that the Europeans and Americans do not share a common view of the world, and thus, it would not be surprising in his view if Washington would give increasingly less weight to European pronouncements or concerns. The problem with Kagan's stark analysis is that it disregards vital commonalities of interests between the US and Europe (Asmus, 2003, 26-29), and does not sufficiently appreciate differences within Europe itself (especially in terms of threat perceptions between East European states and some key West European ones).

Ironically, Kagan did not foresee some of the deep divisions and uncertainties that would soon manifest themselves in Western Europe itself, ones that were so starkly revealed in the referenda on the EU constitution in May and June, 2005, in France and the Netherlands, respectively. The "No" votes which the political elites, just months before, thought inconceivable, revealed not only deep political fissures within each of the states, but also questions of identity that in the longer term are likely to affect the alliance.

For, as French analyst, Dominique Moisi said, "Europeans are asking themselves questions about their essence. The 'who are we?' question is now a very big one …" (Moisi, 2005). There is a risk thus in assuming monolithic responses. Yet, in ascribing to the Europeans (and Americans, for that matter) a monolithic character, Kagan's metaphor could be interpreted as a disincentive for the alliance to even try to find solutions. It follows, it seems, that if the differences are truly irreconcilable, then NATO, which is dependent on a common identity and a deeply shared consensus, is irredeemable.

   Yet, even if Kagan is fundamentally mistaken (and I would suggest that he is), the deep divisions within NATO cannot just be papered over. When Bush declared in September 2002 that "if other governments do not act, America will" (*New York Times*, 2002) this could be construed as a strong warning. In introducing a doctrine of pre-emption, though, and in asserting that, "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" and that "at some point we [the US] may be the only ones left. That's okay with me. We are America" (Albright, 2003, 3), Washington was articulating a view of the world that is very much in contrast to the multilateral, collective security vision and approach of France or Germany (at least Germany under Gerhard Schroeder. It remains to be seen what changes the new, pro-American Chancellor Angela Merkel, who heads a coalition government that includes Schroeder's SPD, will bring). Moreover, the Bush administration was also signalling that the US would not be influenced and constrained by Europeans when it came to what it perceived as vital national interest. In a sense then, the US was suggesting that it was rejecting external influence, and thus the kind of transatlantic socializing that Risse-Kappen had shown that the Europeans had successfully pursued during the Cold War. Further, in opting for unilateralism and in its preference for ad hoc "coalitions of the willing" the US might have been indicating as well that it was no longer particularly interested in "socializing" its NATO allies in Europe.

   For their part, the French also emphasized the deep division and different world views of Paris and Washington. In 2002, then French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin declared that "make no mistake about it: the choice for sure is between two visions of the world" (Albright, 2003, 2). This raised questions both about the ability and the willingness of the French, for example, to try to "socialize" the US within the alliance.

   There is an additional element, though, and that is the perception of the three Visegrad states that joined in 1999 and that of the seven other eastern

states that entered the alliance in April 2004. These countries sided strongly with the US in the dispute over Iraq and they have very much emphasized collective defence and their readiness to act jointly with Washington in "out-of-area" missions. Poland, for example, has been rewarded with a significant command in Iraq, and the other East European states have been eager to demonstrate their support. As the conflict in Iraq yields evermore casualties, however, popular support in these states may well flag, and some states have, or are in the process of withdrawing their forces. Nevertheless, the East European governments continue to support the overall American policy in Iraq and are extremely anxious to make certain that the US is tied tightly to the alliance. They (governments and populations alike) continue to view America as the most credible source for ensuring their security. There is then, with enlargement, an emerging interacting triangular or triadic relationship within NATO – the US, some key West European states and the East European members. There may also be some new irony in Lord Ismay's famous quip about the purpose of NATO – keeping the Russians out, the Germans down and the Americans in (Cox, 2003, 524). The East Europeans definitely wish to keep the Americans in, but there are some questions as to whether France and some other Europeans basically want to keep the Americans "down" in NATO.

What seems rather clear, I believe, is that the alliance is suffering from a deep crisis that affects its very identity. This is not to suggest that because of this identity crisis it is bound to fail. As Philip Gordon points out, structure is not destiny and discourse can be changed (2003, 72-73). Moreover, as noted, NATO had experienced and overcome other types of crises in the past. This crisis, however, is in key respects qualitatively different. Even such an optimist about NATO and one of the most avid proponents of enlargement as Ronald Asmus has concluded that the current rift in the alliance is "unprecedented in its scope, intensity and at times, pettiness" (2003, 20). Further, it is quite unlikely that this deep division and NATO's identity crisis began only in 2002 as the United States moved to war in Iraq. If the identity crisis was masked earlier, it was no less real. To fully understand the depth and nature of the identity crisis, the possibilities for resolution, and the role of various processes and developments, especially enlargement, there is then a need to examine the post Cold War past in more detail, including the enlargement debates and the discourse within the alliance, the re-conceptualization of threats, and the attempts at adaptation. And though enlargement here is again not viewed as the cause of the alliance's identity crisis, it is worth asking whether the preoccupation

with and the complexity of enlargement and the accentuating of the differences of views within the alliance as new countries join, have masked and exacerbated the alliance's identity crisis, and may pose further dangers in the future.

Methodology

Given that this work examines the alliance's identity crisis and the role of NATO enlargement primarily in terms of ideas, norms, and impact of discursive practices on identity and behaviour, the constructivist approach seems most promising. Constructivism holds a number of advantages, for it looks to the role of shared ideas as an ideational structure constraining as well as shaping behaviour. Constructivists, unlike rationalists, do not hold identities or interests constant so that there is every possibility of successful change and adaptation. Moreover, these ideational structures have constitutive and not just regulative effects on actors, which means that they can lead such actors to redefine their interests in the process of interacting (Wendt, 1999; 1994, 384-96). Though constructivism does not suggest that change is easy, it always holds open possibilities for change. Since structures are not reified objects, and they exist only through the reciprocal interaction of the actors, constructivism thus rejects the stultifying determinism of neo-realism (Waltz, 1979).

It is important though not to overstate the differences between social constructivists and rationalists. In each school there can be moderate and hard line approaches (Motyl, 2002, 233-50). Moderate constructivists do not insist that the issues are exclusively about ideas – ideas all the way down (Wendt, 1999). As Risse-Kappen points out as well, it would be a mistake to oversimplify and to suggest that the difference between the two approaches is that constructivists focus on words and norms, whereas rationalists stress deeds and behaviour (1995, 7). Further, as Ted Hopf has contended, despite the vital benefits that constructivism offers in terms of assessing discourse, it is also important to appreciate the limitations of the approach (1998, 171, 177; 2002, 288).

One of the areas where constructivism especially encounters problems is with future uncertainty. Uncertainty is part of the security dilemma faced by an alliance, even if it were to move from collective defence to collective security, or somewhere in between. Therefore, although I share the view that constructivism is a most significant improvement over neo-realism, I

remain concerned by some limitations. It does seem though that especially in light of the security dilemma, constructivism here could be supplemented productively by rationalism (and an examination of structures). As Peter Katzenstein shows, emphasizing ideas, norms, and ideational variables does not mean that one has to exclude national security interests (1996). He contends that looking at a set of constraints, certain kinds of interests, and the behaviour of actors as related to the constraining conditions is not entirely illegitimate – just inadequate by itself. Rather, he argues that since that identity and interest are constructed through a process of social interaction, this has to be at the center of the analysis (1996, 1-75). Therefore, physical structures and changes in them can still provide useful information. I will use realist and institutionalist theories (recognizing their limitations) as supplements to assess institutional changes and threats and threat perceptions. As Jeffrey Checkel shows, there may be routes for some productive bridging between constructivism and rationalism (1999, 83-114; 2003, 7-41) and this is worth pursuing here.

This work then will look not only at discursive practices within the alliance, but also at structures, strategies and policies. It will assess discursive practices as manifested in seminal scholarly debates on enlargement, in communications at the key 2002 Prague Summit, and in the interviews with the chief representatives to NATO of the seven new members in the months leading up to the 2004 enlargement. It will also evaluate past and ongoing structural changes, and attempts at re-conceptualization and adaptation. This study will draw on the rich documentation provided by NATO, including the agreements on enlargement and on structural changes, on military data provided by NATO and by independent sources, and on statements and policy formulations of various leaders that touch on enlargement and relations within the alliance and with neighbours. By assessing discourse and developments both prior to the crucial 2002 Prague Summit and since, by evaluating structural reform, and by employing some theoretical pluralism, it is the intent of this work to attempt to produce a 360 degree analysis of how enlargement affects the alliance's identity crisis.

2. The Enlargement Debate and Process

The alliance has been struggling to reinvent itself since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As NATO enlarges to 26 next year, I'm reminded of the Monty Python's "dead parrot" sketch. I feel a number of new members will be asking themselves whether they have bought into a dead organization. It seems clear that NATO will never fight another war. The Pentagon's experience was such that the idea of waging another campaign by a committee of 26 is out of the question. Moreover, Washington is unlikely to change its new doctrine whereby "the mission decides the coalition." NATO will not disappear overnight, but it is likely to continue withering away as it lacks both the glue to hold it together and an appropriate toolbox to tackle today's security threats.

Fraser Cameron, 2003

This profoundly bleak assessment of enlargement and NATO's future by Fraser Cameron, the Director of Studies at the European Policy Centre in Brussels was made in the context of his analysis of the problem and urgency of reconciling fundamental transatlantic differences (Cameron versus Moravcsik). It is probably overly pessimistic, but it does reflect a growing concern about the alliance's future and the impact of enlargement(s). It also ties in with the identity crisis highlighted in the previous chapter and raises questions about the role of enlargement in the possible resolution of this crisis – something that will be further dealt with in the subsequent chapters. The identity crisis was strikingly illuminated during the dispute within the alliance in the months leading up to the war in Iraq but I do not

suggest that enlargement is the cause of the alliance identity crisis – other factors are responsible for precipitating the crisis. Rather, one of my concerns here is that there was insufficient appreciation among scholars and policymakers of the opportunity, or need that the start of post Cold War enlargements created to resolve the identity crisis, or of how enlargement could possibly mask, complicate, or exacerbate the crisis.

Further, this work bridges the constructivist and rationalist approaches. The latter helps with the problem of future uncertainty and the security dilemma by looking at structures and processes. Therefore, this chapter will look both at discursive practices prior to 1999 and at the decisive Prague Summit in 2002 and structural changes that might have helped address the alliance's identity crisis.

The scholarly debate on enlargement could have acknowledged the existence of an alliance identity crisis and reflected both an awareness of such a crisis and attempts at better discursive practices that would help resolve this crisis through adaptation to changed internal (alliance) and external conditions. In addition, there could have been positive changes in discursive practices among alliance leaders following the first post Cold War enlargement as part of a "learning process." Had this occurred then, on the eve of the second enlargement, there would likely have been an acknowledgment of an alliance identity crisis and a determination to employ effective discursive practices to deal with such a major problem. Yet, even if there were a failure to sufficiently acknowledge the identity crisis or in the absence of a change in discursive practices to address it, it would still be conceivable that an alliance might make productive adjustments in its structures and procedures. An alliance could use any specific institutional assets for dealing with instability and mistrust that it may have, as well as general institutional assets (Wallander, 2000, 713-33) to try to adapt to new environments. Asset specificity, that is institutional physical-structural assets that are designed to deal with specific crises in an organization, is an especially important factor. This is not to suggest that physical-structural changes alone would be a substitute for changes in discursive practices. Rather, discourse and asset specificity as two independent mechanisms can help lead to the persistence of an alliance. If neither discourse nor asset specificity, however, is being used vigorously by an alliance to address a seminal issue such as the organization's identity crisis, this bodes ill for that alliance. And, if such relative inaction occurs while an alliance is expanding significantly, enlargement may, in fact, be masking and ultimately complicating the crisis.

On Crisis

NATO enlargement is not a new phenomenon. During the Cold War the alliance was enlarged in 1952, in 1955, and in 1982 (Simon, 1995, 2-3). The post Cold War enlargements, though, which saw three new post-communist states added in 1999 (not counting East Germany which joined via a reunified Germany) and seven more states in April 2004, represent a qualitative shift since NATO is facing a fundamentally altered international system and radically new challenges. True, these post Cold War enlargements, which are the focus of this work, reaffirmed NATO's openness to new members under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty (*The North Atlantic Treaty*) and reinforced the alliance creed that enlargement is a continuing process (Cahen, 2001, 53-58). Such a long-standing pattern of enlargement, however, should not be taken to mean that NATO represents an occasional congruence of interests and is just a temporary interstate organization, a kind of "flag of convenience" for its members. On the contrary, it is essential to appreciate that during the Cold War, the alliance developed a deep consensus that could weather major stresses and created the vast and elaborate command structures and sophisticated consultative mechanisms which both reflected and influenced ideational structures, all engaged in an extensive interactive process.

This points to identity, a concept essential to comprehending NATO. The alliance though, as noted in Chapter 1, is suffering from an identity crisis. There has been wide recognition from the beginning of the post Cold War period that there have to be changes. Fundamental regional and global shifts have indicated that NATO would need to reinvent itself if it were to be effective (Nelson, 2002, 61-65). NATO leaders such as the new secretary general, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, and Nicholas Burns, then U.S. Ambassador to NATO, have also stated that they recognize that NATO needs to "transform" and "reinvent" itself (*The New York Times,* 2003). This is positive but it should be appreciated that transformation and reinvention cannot be reduced to mere adjustment or fine tuning. The depth of the alliance identity crisis that was revealed during the disputes leading up to the war in Iraq belied such possibilities.

When France, Germany and Belgium in January 2003 opposed the request to support (alliance member) Turkey against a possible attack by Iraq through the deployment of NATO AWACS radar planes and Patriot anti-missile systems (viewed at this point by Turkey as defensive systems) in Turkish airspace and territory, it revealed a very deep identity crisis

(even though the deployment was later finessed) in the transatlantic alliance (Daalder, 2003, 147-57). For the United States especially, if a collective defence organization could not agree on "defensive measures" for the protection of a member, it raised fundamental questions about purpose and identity (Daalder, 2003, 155). Yet, this should not have come as a surprise. Earlier, in August 2002, when German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder ruled out the possibility of making German soldiers available for military action in Iraq, *even if this were to be specifically sanctioned* by the United Nations Security Council, this indicated that there was a basic alliance problem that was far deeper than the conflicting personalities of the German and American leaders (Larres, 2003, 23).

Thus, although Robert Kagan's somewhat melodramatic characterization of American and European identity differences as those between "Mars" and "Venus" was an oversimplification (2003, 3-4), the transatlantic divisions (as well as that among the continental members) are significant. NATO enlargement which was viewed so widely as an affirmation of the relevance of the alliance should have provided an opportunity to address this identity crisis. This is why scholarly debates, leadership discourse, and structural changes can tell us a good deal not only about past efforts at sustaining and managing the alliance, but also about some of the prospects.

The Scholarly Debate

The body of scholarly literature on post Cold War NATO enlargement is vast and much of it emanates from the United States. It is also the case that, especially in the instance of the first post Cold War enlargement, the support of the United States was decisive. Though the East European decision-making elites pushed relentlessly for enlargement and they enjoyed some European encouragement, especially in Germany, ultimately, it was the Clinton administration's support and its successful management of Congress that enabled enlargement to go forward. Further, many of those who engaged in the scholarly debate were not only influential scholars but in a number of cases, such as Lawrence Korb, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Ronald Asmus, had served or would serve in senior administrative positions. Therefore, this section will focus largely on the positions of the American writers to gauge the nature of the influential scholarly debate leading up to the opening of the doors to post Cold War enlargement.

Though the literature is varied, certain themes are evident in the debate between proponents and opponents of enlargement. For proponents, in

general, there was an emphasis on the idea of a historical opportunity, of building democracy, and extending the zone of stability and security. In that sense, the alliance was meant to serve as a vehicle for achieving these larger goals. In part, this was reflected in *The 1995 Study on NATO's Enlargement* which emphasized commitment to democratic norms and civilian control of the military, to economic liberty, and to the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes (*The 1995 Study,* Chapter 3).

Several of the proponents of enlargement strongly advocated similar themes and goals. Korb, for instance, offered the possibility to solidify democracy in central Europe as one of the key reasons for enlargement (Korb, 1998, 49-55). Asmus, one of the earliest proponents, characterized enlargement as a political, moral, and economic imperative for the democratic West (1997, 69-71). Brzezinski similarly stressed enhancement of democracy, among other benefits (1998, 13-17; 1995, 34-35). Stephen Larrabee also emphasized the consolidation of democracy in Eastern Europe and the need for a stable security framework (1993, 175-55). This was in addition to his other concerns such as a new transatlantic bargain that would enhance European defence contributions (and Europe's defence identity – though the latter is not the same as overall alliance identity) while reducing the American burden (Larrabee, 1993, 174; Asmus, Kugler and Larrabee, 1993, 2-14). Jeffrey Simon also emphasized support for democracy as a primary justification for enlargement though he did this through the narrower channel of stressing "effective" democratic control of the military and changes in civil military relations in Eastern Europe (Simon, 1995, 4, 45-67).

Other proponents focused more on the military dimensions such as possibilities for the better coordination of forces (Kelleher, 1995, 179-83). Some contended that the new members were not net consumers of security, that they would not become free-riders, and that the cost of their inclusion would not strain NATO's common budgets (Selden and Lis, 2002, 3, 10). Moreover, even among those who emphasized consolidation of democracy and the extension of the zone of stability, there were often narrower concerns which reflected leftover elements of a Cold War agenda. For instance, they stressed containing Russia, even if this was through a "special relationship" (Brzezinski, 1995, 34) or the need to move forward with enlargement lest the United States lose national prestige if it backed down on enlargement (Korb, 1998, 51). Further, as noted, American writers frequently emphasized the positive aspects in terms of the benefits for American interests and influence in NATO that would be derived from

enlargement (Korb, 1998, 51; Asmus, 1997, 61-72; Larrabee, 1993, 174-78).

Despite the wide-ranging justifications for enlargement that the proponents offered, they did not address in a meaningful way the issue of alliance identity, that in turn would ultimately determine how NATO operated and whether it remained relevant. The closest perhaps that we have is an indirect reference to the problem. It came from a European, Hans Jochen Peters, the Head of the Central and Eastern Europe and Liaison Section, Political Affairs Division at NATO, who wrote in 1995 that enlarging NATO would be an act of major political significance and that it differed from previous enlargements because those took place within the framework of a clearly and "rigorously defined European security architecture" (1995, 167, 173). Even Peters though did not elaborate on the need to address issues of alliance identity and how enlargement may relate to a NATO identity crisis.

If this latter omission was a failing of proponents, then it seems that opponents of enlargement did not do much better. Opponents or skeptics also focused on certain themes that may indeed be important but largely left out the essential issue of identity and what role enlargement may play in the case of an alliance identity crisis. Michael Mandelbaum, for instance, expressed his skepticism regarding NATO as an instrument that would help consolidate democracy in the East, suggested that domestic political motivations in the United States were a key but hidden determinant, and worried that enlargement would so poison relations with Russia in the longer term that overturning the post Cold War settlement could become a central aim of future Russian foreign policy (1996, 52-61). Ronald Steel argued that enlargement was driven by a fear in the United States that the alliance would become irrelevant and that American influence in NATO would diminish without Washington realizing that, ironically, expansion would contribute precisely to what America feared (1998, 243-51). In a similar vein, Charles Kupchan, who generally favoured helping the post-communist states in Eastern Europe, contended that enlarging NATO (and the EU), especially in the absence of an external threat to these states, would weaken the alliance (1997, 130-33). Others, such as Michael E. Brown, questioned the logic that enlargement was needed since in his view there was no direct threat to the alliance (1997, 123-25), while Philip Zelikow argued that an enlargement that was motivated by an attempt to save NATO made no sense since the alliance was not in trouble (1997, 84-85).

Both proponents and opponents then missed or did not adequately address the possibility, if not the reality, of an alliance identity crisis that

would emerge in light of the fundamental transformation of the Cold War system and the role that enlargement could play in ameliorating, masking, or complicating the problem. Though concerns about democratization, efficiency, relevance, and American influence may well have been justified, both opponents and proponents failed to assess enlargement in terms of the opportunity that it might present to help resolve an emerging or actual alliance identity crisis, to examine how important it would have been to resolve identity issues before enlargement, and to appreciate adequately how enlargement may complicate an alliance identity crisis. This is why it should be worthwhile to assess the discourse among alliance leaders as NATO embarked on its second (and much larger) post Cold War enlargement, and ascertain whether (following the experience of the first enlargement) they had developed a broader and deeper understanding of the relationship between the alliance identity crisis and enlargement.

The Leadership Discourse

At one level, the great gathering of NATO leaders in Prague in November 2002 was a celebration of apparent post Cold War success. They claimed that joint alliance action had stopped genocidal ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and they issued invitations to seven new members to join NATO (while three additional states, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Albania, eagerly awaited their turn to join). Though the breakthrough on enlargement came earlier, with President Bill Clinton declaring back in 1994 that NATO enlargement is "no longer a question of whether, but when and how" (Dobbs, 1995), the fact that so many states continued to seek membership seemed to suggest to the leaders in Prague an affirmation of the relevance and validity of the alliance. At another level, though, there was also an opportunity to express a vision of the alliance as it became ever larger and confronted new challenges, and a chance to communicate and interact among the leaders. Discounting the expected enthusiasm and boosterism, certain tendencies and directions did become apparent in the speeches of alliance leaders.

For the three former Warsaw Pact states that had joined the alliance in 1999, this was indeed a celebration of rejoining Europe. Moreover, they had pushed hard for further enlargement. They expressed no concern with any alliance identity crisis, but rather unequivocally viewed enlargement as an affirmation of NATO's legitimacy and relevance. The Hungarian prime

minister, for instance, stressed that the alliance remained solid and effective, and that it was engaged in a process of robust enlargement (Medgyessy, 2002). The president of the Czech Republic interpreted enlargement as a signal to the world of a new era where countries could no longer be forced into spheres of influence or where the strong could subjugate the weak – a strong allusion to the end of Soviet hegemony and the safeguarding of future East European security (Havel, 2002). Similarly, the president of Poland referred to the ending of the legacy of Yalta and Potsdam that had divided Europe, and related enlargement to consolidating democracy (Kwasniewski, 2002). In emphasizing the benefits of enlargement, these East European leaders essentially focused on the importance of maintaining security (even when speaking of democracy) through collective defence as a way of ensuring their new-found freedoms. Though they spoke of peaceful external relations, their primary concern was safeguarding the members of the alliance, and this meant that they would want American assurances since the United States had not only fully backed enlargement, but had the military means to protect it. This closeness to America, which was so evident during the alliance deliberations leading up to the war in Iraq, was enunciated in a particularly forceful fashion earlier by the Polish President, Aleksander Kwasniewski, when he declared that "if it is George Bush's view, then it is mine" (Rupnik, 2003, 69). President Bush, in a sense, reciprocated when he stated that he viewed Poland as America's "best friend" in Europe (Rupnik, 2003, 69).

In Prague, President Bush seemed confident in the alliance and enlargement. He merely referred to the desire to "refresh the spirit of this great democratic alliance" rather than suggest the existence of any identity crisis or other major problems (Bush, 2002b). In his radio address he reiterated his expectation that the alliance would work together with the United States regarding new threats (Bush, 2002a). The NATO Secretary General took a similarly positive view of the alliance. Though Lord Robertson dubbed the Prague meeting as "NATO's transformation Summit" (Robertson, 2002b), his assessment basically hinged on reinforcing the status quo when he declared that this round of enlargement "will maintain and increase NATO's strength, cohesion and vitality" (Robertson, 2002a).

Both the Italian prime minister and the Spanish president similarly expressed satisfaction with the alliance and emphasized enlargement as part of a process of maintaining strong links with the United States. President Aznar characterized enlargement as a political success and suggested that it would make for a more robust transatlantic link (Aznar, 2002). Prime

Minister Berlusconi praised the United States for the economic burden that it has borne in the alliance and declared that NATO was essential for the protection of democracies (Berlusconi, 2002).

It remained for the other leaders to indicate that there were significant issues that needed to be addressed. French President Jacques Chirac hewed to the standard line of the alliance that enlargement was positive and pointed out that it was testimony that the division of Europe had ended (Chirac, 2002). He did not take the opportunity to offer an alternate vision of the alliance to that of the United States. Conceivably French and American agreement on Security Council Resolution 1441 that demanded that Iraq account for weapons of mass destruction (Security Council, 2002) earlier in the month may have been a factor in Chirac's reticence to voice differences with Washington. Prime Minister Tony Blair, a staunch ally of the United States, however, did suggest the need for change in the alliance (Blair, 2002). In part, he focused on enhancing alliance military capabilities, including the NATO Response Force and the Prague Capabilities Commitment. These are rather narrow goals, but Blair also spoke of the new enlargement as "a unique opportunity to transform NATO" (Blair, 2002). Though he emphasized the transatlantic link, good relations with Russia and enhanced military capacity, Blair's call for transforming NATO may also be viewed as recognition of the need for deeper change and as a way of reaching out to France and Germany.

It was German Chancellor Schroeder who indicated just how deep some of the differences were in the alliance. His statement foreshadowed the more open dispute over Iraq that, in turn, was so revealing of the deep chasm within NATO. He declared that NATO must recognize that the threat of terrorism can only be dealt with effectively "through international cooperation in strong organizations which enjoy international legitimacy" and that defence against weapons of mass destruction should focus on "joint, multinational solution" (Schroeder, 2002). This stood in sharp contrast to American skepticism of the United Nations and other international organizations and Washington's penchant for unilateralism. Though not dismissing the military instrument, Schroeder rejected using "purely military means" and in a sense, laid down the gauntlet before Washington by expressing the German intent to push for the transformation of the alliance in a way that would reflect multilateralism and cooperation with international organizations (Schroeder, 2002). Thus, what Schroeder made evident was that despite the enormously positive impression that enlargement created regarding alliance relevance and effectiveness, and a dozen years into the

post Cold War era, there were vast differences among key members in the vision of what NATO was and what it ought to be.

Unfortunately though, the United States and Germany did not engage in the type of discourse that can change mindsets and build a new consensus. The type of positive discursive practices that Alexander Wendt, for instance, wrote about such as other-regarding approaches (Wendt, 1999, 249) that would be essential for change in this case, were not only absent but America and Germany seemed to be two solitudes that did not really communicate. Yet, spirals of hostility could be prevented, eliminated, or at least diminished by using better discursive practices which emphasize a commonality of interests among allies, willingness to compromise, and a strong commitment to building consensus. For example, during the difficult dispute within NATO over the deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles in Europe, the United States and West Germany were able to compromise. They emphasized consensus, and settled on a two-track approach that included the German desire to maintain constructive engagement with the Soviet Union by keeping the negotiation option open. Nevertheless, enlarging the alliance is such an important step that it should have and still could provide significant opportunities for NATO to restructure, if not entirely through better discursive and social practices, then partly via physical restructuring to meet the challenges it is confronting.

Structural Changes

Celeste Wallander, for instance, has argued that whether institutions adapt to change depends on having specific institutional assets for dealing with instability and mistrust, and general institutional assets to adapt to environments that have changed drastically (Wallander, 2000, 706-12). She suggested that alliances that have such institutional assets (and she suggests that NATO has some of these assets, Wallander, 2000, 723-31) could even adapt to situations that lack threats. Though this approach (that does acknowledge norms) may well understate ideational factors, it does point to certain *possibilities* for adaptation – including that of alliance identity – even if discursive practices have not changed sufficiently.

Some of the recent scholarly literature suggests further possibilities for exploring this alliance dimension. J. J. Suh, for example, looked at asset as well as discourse specificity, in part to broaden the theoretical approach to alliance identity and behaviour as compared to rationalistic theorizing (2003, 26-79). In his theoretical explanation of alliance persistence which he

defined as "a phenomenon characterized by an alliance which has outlived its original *raison d'être*" (2003, 30), he looked at the case of the U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance. This alliance, like NATO, has also enjoyed remarkable longevity and may have moved beyond its original *raison d'être* (although there are some important differences, including the fact that, although the conventional military capacity of North Korea has declined, its domestic political system remains unaltered, and it may have acquired nuclear weapons, thus continuing to pose at least some threat). There are important lessons to be learned from the role that asset specificity can play in changing identity. As Suh shows, identity can change as states interact with one another, international alliance practices change state identities (second image reversal) and further, "state identities so-changed have an impact on alliance practices" (2003, 26-27). Leaving aside (for this chapter) Suh's interesting argument that asset specificity is one of the factors that contributes to path dependency (2003, 75-79), he makes a persuasive case that asset specificity can play a strong role not only in binding the member states together, but also in transcending the security interests, for instance, for which the alliance was originally constructed (2003, 27). Therefore, even if discursive practices do not lead to a new identity that can cope effectively with a radically altered environment (or, if there is little discursive evidence of a new identity), structural and physical changes may possibly reflect and lead to a new identity (that is, may help resolve, or at least ameliorate, an identity crisis).

NATO has attempted significant structural and procedural changes, particularly in 1999 and following the Prague Summit in 2002. In certain respects structural changes in NATO could make a significant difference precisely because unlike other multinational military organizations, the alliance has a comprehensive command and control structure that is fully operational even in peace time (Vallance, 2003) and has a number of attached agencies and subordinate bodies including, for instance, an alliance pipeline system meant to ensure that its oil and lubricant needs can be met at all times (NATO Pipeline System, 2002). This speaks not only to alliance identity but also to the possibilities for successful adaptation.

It is essential though to define clearly what success means in this case. Even if existing asset specificity opens the potential for adaptation, and even if new assets emerge and the assets of an alliance do undergo a significant level of adaptation, this does not necessarily spell success. Wallander wrote about the problem in NATO of aspirations exceeding achievements (Wallander, 2000, 731). In the case of an identity crisis,

perhaps success should be defined as an adaptation that meets the alliance's vital needs. Therefore, the effectiveness of structural change has to be judged very much in terms of the challenges that the alliance confronts. And these range from enhancing the effectiveness of military procurement all the way to reconciling differences in fundamental visions on multilateralism, relations with international organizations, threat perceptions, and out-of-area operations. Again, the latter groups of challenges collectively create an identity crisis in an organization that was built on the notion of classical collective defence but now faces a push towards collective security (a far broader and fuzzier concept).

More specifically, there is a problem of reconciling the American vision (at least that of the Bush administration) of NATO as a global defence alliance with its missions frequently defined exclusively by Washington and that of European states like Germany and France which wish to see such key decisions first be taken before NATO. There, these European countries believe, they could then act as restraints if they deemed it necessary, and they could push more strongly for their preference of collective security (Donovan, 2003). It would be difficult to mesh such divergent goals under the best of circumstances, and especially hard to create physical structures and processes that would do so effectively. Matters are further complicated by enlargement as the number of members of NATO increases significantly to twenty six from ten in just five years. Additionally, as the European Union (EU) seeks to develop its military dimension, there is a problem of how to resolve the "complementarity" of NATO and EU developments (O'Rourke, 2003).

The alliance has in fact acted "out-of-area" not only in the former Yugoslavia, but now in Afghanistan, yet this has not entirely satisfied the Bush administration. Therefore, there is a concern not only about satisfying European states but also a worry whether the United States still views the alliance as strategically relevant and whether it remains committed to it. Add to this the large and complex task of promoting various partnership initiatives (an ongoing task together with maintaining the NATO-Russia Council) and of integrating three new members in 1999 and seven more in 2004, and it would seem that the prudent course would have been to make the structural changes that would try to reconcile the fundamental divisions in the alliance prior to or conjointly with such enlargements.

NATO did in fact embark on significant structural and procedural changes in 1999 and 2002. In April 1999, it launched the Membership Action Plan (MAP) designed to help countries which wished to join the alliance prepare

for possible membership (*Membership Action Plan*). It is meant to foster the compatibility of aspirants with NATO members in the political and economic, defence and military, resource, security, and legal realms. The problem is that in all these realms it is basically a matter of endorsing the status quo in NATO rather than developing a new vision that would generate the type of transatlantic consensus that would resolve the deep and dangerous chasm (an identity crisis) before the alliance becomes more preoccupied with and its decision-making process is further complicated by enlargement.

NATO did not adequately avail itself of such an opportunity with MAP. In 1999, for instance, it would have made sense at the very least to complement NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept by adding chapters to the plan that dealt with issues on which there was a possibility of transatlantic consensus (such as counter-terrorism) (Moroney, 2003, 24, 27-28). True, in 1999 the alliance did create the new Command Structure which was a significant improvement in efficiency (Vallance, 2003). Though it helped the alliance deal with an expanded range of missions, including peacekeeping, and was meant to facilitate the development of the European Security and Defence Identity (this was about making the European military contribution more effective, not a mandate to resolve the alliance's identity crisis), it did not deal with the fundamental political divisions.

Such a conclusion is reinforced by the fact that a mere three years later, at the Prague Summit, it was decided to create a new NATO Command Structure that would entail a significantly deeper change (*Restructuring NATO's Headquarters*). In terms of the military command, this latter attempt at restructuring did indeed involve major changes which use a functionally-based approach to elaborate on the Prague framework – which was intended to enable the alliance to be able to operate more effectively in the new security environment (Vallance, 2003). The new Command Structure strongly emphasized support for the NATO Response Force (NRF), sharply streamlined the command structure into six divisions (each headed by an Assistant Secretary General) plus the NATO Office of Security, all part of the process of functional rationalization (*Restructuring NATO Headquarters*; Vallance, 2003). This effort, however, as significant as it may be in terms of improving management of alliance resources, still fails to address the larger issues that involve political and grand strategic decision-making. That is, in broad political terms, the restructuring continues to be bound by narrow parameters. For instance, the new NATO division of Public Diplomacy (*Restructuring NATO Headquarters*) is

primarily concerned with improved public relations rather than altering alliance decision-making or helping reshape the discourse among NATO leaders.

Complicating matters further was the possibility, following the Prague Summit that France and Germany, dissatisfied with the direction of the alliance and their input in decision-making, would set up a separate EU military headquarters for operational planning (Lobjakas, 2003). This shows how the alliance, despite the seemingly positive affirmation of enlargement, risks becoming increasingly less relevant as key European members may be searching for an alternative. The gravity of the situation was made evident when Nicholas Burns, then U.S. Ambassador to NATO, warned that the French-German plan could cause a serious crisis within the alliance (Lobjakas, 2003a). Attempts to finesse such differences are likely to be made more difficult by enlargement since the new members, as noted, support the United States, insist on classical collective defence, and, perhaps ironically, several of them are also joined the EU in May 2004.

Thus, the structural changes following the first post Cold War enlargement and at the time the decision was made on the second, in 2002, though in part coordinated with alliance enlargement, did not resolve the fundamental issues. These physical-structural and procedural adjustments did not really transcend the original security interests, even though the regional and global security environment has changed profoundly. Despite some of the command restructuring, and despite moving forward on MAP and NRF, the alliance did not change the basic paradigm of a *collective defence* organization – even as *collective security* or at least a significantly altered collective defence (smart collective defence that will be dealt with in subsequent chapters) might have been more appropriate in light of internal and external changes. Put in another way, structural and procedural adjustments in NATO have been more a change in the vocabulary rather than the grammar of alliance processes. In such a situation, continuing enlargement was not used, even in 2002, as an opportunity to resolve the identity crisis. Enlargement may in fact then mask the latter, and it may well complicate matters so as to make future resolution even more difficult and unlikely.

Masking and Complicating

Some of the harsher critics of enlargement have suggested that the inclusion of the first three states from the East not only preserved an insecure

status quo but that it could have destabilizing external effects (Burant, 2001, 25). Others, such as the former American Secretary of State James Baker, have argued that the alliance committed a grave mistake by not making Russia eligible for membership (provided that it met the enlargement criteria) early on (2002, 95-103). Such criticisms (even if overly harsh), do not merely refer to some mismanagement of the enlargement process. Rather, they allude to the fact that the alliance did not use enlargement as an *opportunity* to address fundamental issues confronting it which, one could argue, should have included a key concern in this chapter – NATO's identity crisis.

U.S. Senator Richard Lugar, for instance, was emphatic that the second post Cold War NATO enlargement provided an opportunity not only to overcome the division of Europe but also to build a consensus on what he called the existential threats to democratic societies and security (2002, 8-9). And it is the lack of such consensus that is emblematic of the alliance identity crisis. Others, such as Lawrence Freedman, pointed to specific opportunities (that would ultimately relate to identity), such as addressing the September 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) which advocated pre-emption as an alternative (in many cases at least) to deterrence (*The National Security Strategy*; Freedman, 2003, 105-08). The NSS, a key policy document issued two months prior to the second eastern enlargement decision, should have been at the center of the discussions at the Prague Summit. The NSS was so much at variance with the strategic vision of much of Western Europe that there should have been a sense or urgency at the summit to rebuild alliance consensus. This was not the case in November 2002.

Perhaps these missed opportunities resulted from a lack of vision or inadequate understanding of the depth and significance of the identity crisis. They may also have been the result, however, of the preoccupation with enlargement and the enormous amount of attention and energy that such a complex process absorbed. Enlargement has been a vast undertaking. The Spanish President called enlargement one of the most significant decisions of the alliance (Aznar, 2002). Others have also referred to the magnitude of the task (Larrabee, 1993, 72-75; Kay, 106-08). Preoccupation with such a mammoth task in and of itself would tend to refocus attention from other alliance concerns. Combined with the momentum of enlargement and the positive image of a growing NATO eagerly courted by numerous applicants, this could, even unintentionally, mask deep

problems. When problems are masked it is less likely that they will be addressed.

There are others though who suggest that something more deliberate was at work. It is easier at times to create an impression of success by dealing with certain seemingly manageable issues rather than address the more difficult ones. Some analysts have concluded that enlargement in fact involved a deliberate diversion from tough alliance problems and the much needed direct discussion of such matters as vital interests, regional policies, and military readiness (Zelikow, 1997, 78, 88). Some have even suggested that the eagerness to enlarge was so great that it masked the severe lack of readiness and the inability to fulfill NATO's own criteria for membership on the part of the eastern states (Wallander, 2000, 5; Edmunds, 2003, 154-56).

Last, what may also not be adequately understood is how the process of enlargement itself and how the significantly increased number of members with divergent views have complicated the workings of the alliance and possibly inhibited or diminished its ability to address some of the extremely difficult issues that it confronts. Missed opportunities, a vast preoccupation with the decisions on and the process of enlargement, the masking of key issues and even of the shortcomings of candidates, ultimately, are likely to exacerbate seminal problems that are not addressed. Complication of the decision-making process adds another dimension and is likely to further inhibit the ability of the alliance to resolve such matters as its identity crisis. Sean Kay most likely overstates the problem when he proclaims that NATO "is already politically unmanageable, militarily dysfunctional and strategically irrelevant" but is quite persuasive in arguing that unless the process is rectified, enlargement may be dangerously complicating the workings of the alliance (2003, 108-12).

Facing a radically altered international system and the demise of its traditional enemy, NATO thus might have used enlargement as an opportunity to deal with an alliance identity crisis that was increasingly and painfully evident by the time America was mobilizing for the war in Iraq. There were warning signs but it seems that such signs were largely ignored. The scholarly debate on enlargement focused on a number of key issues but not on the alliance identity crisis and the role that enlargement might have played in ameliorating, masking, complicating, or exacerbating it. The second post Cold War enlargement decision presented fresh opportunities for a leadership dialogue that could have helped restore the deep consensus that had played such a large role in the alliance's longevity, and (in the

eyes of its members) its continued relevance. Instead, the second round was used mainly as a celebration of enlargement and as a rhetorical affirmation of NATO's validity, rather than a dialogue to bridge the sharply differing visions of the members regarding what the alliance was and ought to be. Further, structural changes that coincided with enlargement also failed to address key issues relating to the identity crisis. These lost opportunities meant that enlargement has tended to mask vital alliance problems rather than help resolve them. Moreover, continuing enlargement – a declared goal by NATO – may well complicate attempts at addressing the problem and perhaps exacerbate the alliance's identity crisis.

Yet, as enlargement continues, there may still be an opportunity to use it positively in this area. It will be essential though to first recognize that there is an alliance identity crisis. The important differences between the American vision on the one hand and the German/French ones on the other cannot just be papered over. Further, it would be both unrealistic and un-wise to expect that ten new members from the East, with over one hundred million people, are likely to remain silent, or at least compliant, (whatever President Chirac's preference may be). They are bound to insist on articu-lating their vision and ask for a genuine input. Given how identity shapes one's understanding of threats, the identity crisis therefore, should be con-fronted. Enlargement then perhaps could be viewed as an opportunity to build a new, sustainable consensus so the alliance as a whole could re-conceptualize threats to society and security in a way that effectively reflects the transatlantic community's interests

3. Re-conceptualizing Threats and the Search for Consensus

No alliance can function successfully in the absence of a common strategy, or in the presence of competing strategies.

Renewing the Atlantic Partnership, 2004, 10

Safeguarding citizens against external threats is one of the primary responsibilities of all governments. Traditionally, alliances have been a common means to help ensure such security. One of history's oldest power tools, an alliance is intended to strengthen a state by adding the power of allies to its own so that together they can more effectively confront common threats. During the Cold War, NATO, with its intricate structures and alliance consultative mechanisms, was largely successful in making certain that the members' key interests and threat perceptions remained compatible. It formed a common alliance identity which was influenced by external dangers, but this identity also shaped, as Ted Hopf suggested, NATO's understanding and classification of states as allies, adversaries or something in between (Hopf, 1998, 172-73). In other words, identity profoundly affected threat perception even as external threats helped shape alliance identity. It should not be surprising then that an alliance identity crisis would play a key role in helping to induce or, at the very least, widen diverging threat perceptions and risk assessments within the organization, just as new and different threats emerge in the international system.

Diverging threat perceptions in an alliance that has been characterized for decades by a deep consensus on grand strategy are not likely to produce

mild differences that could be easily overcome at summit meetings or, alternately, could be ignored while other important alliance functions operate normally. After all, identifying common threats, prioritizing them, and then using the hierarchy of threats to develop methods to deal with them has been traditionally the central function of NATO. Therefore, an inability to find common ground has a profoundly negative impact, only to be amplified as the alliance is undergoing a massive and open-ended enlargement process that within the short space of five years has increased membership to twenty six states. The new members have and are investing much of their hopes and aspirations, together with their desire for security, in the alliance. As Bronislav Geremek, the former minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland and a distinguished historian contended, for East Europeans, NATO is not only a military alliance but also "a community of values, a community of aspirations" (Atlantic Treaty Associations). There is thus a great deal to lose for these new members, especially if there were to be a breakdown in an alliance that in the past not only developed long-standing physical structures, but one that, because of common values and norms, and through discourse and shared ideas, created an ideational structure that reflected deep consensus and made the alliance effective.

This alliance consensus, however, is now breaking down or, at the very least, is under tremendous strain. A Council on Foreign Relations report by a twenty six member transatlantic task force (co-chaired by Lawrence H. Summers, former Secretary of the Treasury and now president of Harvard, and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger) that was released in March 2004 concluded that transatlantic relations were at a dangerously low ebb (Renewing the Atlantic Partnership, 2004). This chapter therefore, will examine the risks of diverging threat perceptions in NATO, and will assess the efforts at re-conceptualizing and finding a consensus. It is an assessment of the problems in transatlantic relations that recognizes the need to go beyond Robert Kagan's somewhat simplistic "Venus" versus "Mars" divisions (2003). There are at least three different worldviews that need to be and will be evaluated: that of the US; that of certain West European states; and that of the new East European members. The views of the latter perhaps have been the least well understood and the potential impact on the alliance has been inadequately appreciated. This chapter then will not only examine these three approaches but will have a special focus on Eastern Europe as NATO enlarges, and in particular, on the discursive practices as expressed in statements and interviews with the representatives of the newest members of NATO.

American Power and "Uniqueness"

During the Cold War, tactical and specific policy differences in NATO did not, as noted, derogate from a deep alliance consensus on grand strategy which, in turn, was predicated on a shared threat perception. This was a tremendous alliance asset. As the Council on Foreign Relations concluded, "No alliance can function successfully in the absence of a common strategy, or in the presence of competing strategies" (Renewing the Atlantic Partnership, 2004, 10). Yet, this is what a post Cold War, and especially, a post enlargement NATO is facing. The United States, with its overwhelming military power and preponderance within the alliance, has an especially large responsibility to address the issues of divergent threat perceptions and of rebuilding alliance consensus. How the United States views itself though and how others perceive it has an enormous impact not only on American threat perceptions but also on Washington policies and actions within the alliance and beyond.

John Ikenberry has contended that in the post Cold War era, the United States "dominates the world as no state ever has" (2004). Such unprecedented power in a seemingly unipolar world not only affects threat perceptions but can also lead to the kind of oversimplification that inhibits a more nuanced understanding of issues and dangers. During the presidency of George W. Bush, with its rather limited international relations literacy, fears of American unilateralism have magnified within the alliance. Many elites in Europe, especially, began to compare the United States to an empire – often, Rome (Bender, 2003, 145-59). Some have viewed this new "American empire" as benign or even beneficial (Ferguson, 2004), while others see it as dangerous to the world, as one that puts too great a stress on the use of force, or even exhibits hyperactive militarism (Mann, 2003). Still others worry about a rise in personal hedonism and decline in values in the United States that could lead to an imperial descent similar to that suffered by other empires (Brzezinski, 1997, 212).

This fascination with America as an "empire" does reflect the enormous weight of the United States in the international system and it points to opportunities and risks which affect American and international threat perceptions. Nevertheless, it does not adequately explain, it seems, the complexity of the interplay of physical structural changes in the international system, ideas and alliance discourse in shaping threat perceptions, including those in the United States. Moreover, in characterizing the United States as an empire (which in certain respect may be correct), there is a

risk of underestimating or misunderstanding the fears that a seemingly all powerful state may have. Changes in the structure of the international system can deeply affect the perceptions of even the most dominant powers.

Major structural changes have been taking place in the international system for some time and the contours were clear by the time of NATO's latest enlargements. Paul Bracken, for instance, has referred to a new era, the "the second nuclear age" (2003, 399-412). In contrast to the first nuclear age which he characterizes as a contest of "two internationalisms" – democracy and communism – one that involved a bilateral nuclear contest (despite the British and French nuclear arsenals which, in his view, did not change the Cold War dynamics), the new era, he contends, is that of an *n-player game* (2003, 403-06). Such an n-player game, which involves multiple-player situations, creates both greater complexity and far more uncertainty. New nuclear powers, countries seeking to gain nuclear weapons, and militant groups possibly attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD), all interacting in such an n-player game situation would make planning more difficult and less predictable. Some analysts such as Tomas Valasek, therefore have argued that even though the existential threat that characterized the Cold War is gone, today's challenges may be even greater, precisely because of such uncertainties (Ortega versus Valasek, 2003).

American threat perceptions have been significantly affected by these uncertainties though such perceptions have also been filtered by how the United States has seen itself and by the ideological motivations of particular American governments. Structural changes in the post Cold War period, if anything, have reinforced the American sense of primacy. This was evident even in the Clinton administration which viewed the United States as the "indispensable power" (Albright, 2003, 2-9). Nevertheless, even under Clinton the United States feared the new instability, or at least unpredictability, of the evolving international system and sought to find means to protect American global interests and to ensure international stability.

Whatever the merits of democratic peace theory (Levy, 1989, 88-90; Layne, 1994, 5-49), the Clinton administration seemed to be influenced by the central premise of the theory that democracies do not go to war against one another. This was part of its liberal approach to international relations in which it sought to enlarge what it viewed as the zone of democracy – as a key way to deal with international threats. It was strongly in favour of expanding NATO. In certain circumstances the Clinton administration,

however, was also willing to use American military power. It demonstrated this when it cajoled and persuaded its NATO allies to embark on humanitarian military intervention in Kosovo in 1999.

The Kosovo intervention may be viewed as an example of "offensive liberalism" (Kim, 2003, 725-26) but it was still shaped by the tenets of liberalism which emphasize consensus. Therefore, the Clinton administration sought to maximize the use of soft power, the ability to inspire consensus and to co-opt (Nye, 1990) in order to gain NATO agreement. It resorted to hard power, the ability to coerce and command, only when it concluded that it was absolutely necessary. The Clinton administration then, emphasized consensus even though it was concerned by new international threats and uncertainties. This in turn afforded the European countries an opportunity to continue to "socialize" the United States during the Clinton years, as they did during the Cold War era (Risse-Kappen, 1995, 6-41; 188-91). And under Clinton, as in the Cold War era (Gaddis, 1997b) there was thus at least a possibility that the United States would modify its own positions when its efforts at persuading allies failed.

The Bush administration that succeeded it, by contrast, saw the United States not only as indispensable and unique but also as a global power that should be unfettered in dealing with threats in an unpredictable international system. Consequently, it has been considerably more unilateralist and militarist than the previous administration. This is not simply the result of the Bush administration's attachment to a realist approach. Rather, with the structure of the international system changing following the Cold War the Bush administration has apparently settled on a particular form of "offensive realism" (Mearsheimer, 2001, 19-20). It has viewed American international supremacy as so vital that it has deemed any challenge to that supremacy to be a threat in itself. Therefore, part of the Bush military build-up is meant to convince any potential adversaries of the hopelessness of trying to challenge American international supremacy. In a sense, this is then an "all horizons" threat formulation that heavily emphasizes hard power, with its reliance on the military instrument. The Bush administration, in light of such an approach to the identification of threats, has shifted its strategic emphasis away from Western Europe and downplayed the need for alliance consensus.

This shift was already evident in the Bush administration's "Quadrennial Defence Review Report" which was finalized in September 2001 (Flanagan, 2002). Though the new US defence concept referred to the need to deter aggression and to reassure allies, it broadly enlarged the scope of

threats, both geographically and in terms of character. Though it did not give up on deterrence either as dissuasion or denial (Yost, 2003), it showed considerable impatience and frustration with the traditional strategies of containment and constructive engagement. By June 2002 President Bush, for instance, declared that "deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend… containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies" (Kim, 2003, 732).

More changes were forthcoming in Washington. During the Cold War the United States had rejected the notions of "preventive" or "pre-emptive" war (*NSC*, 68). Under the belief that the United States was facing nihilistic adversaries who in many cases could not be deterred by traditional means, the Bush administration, as a result of the way in which it categorized threats, moved to a strategy of pre-emption. Moreover, it appeared to blur the distinction between a pre-emptive attack, which consists of prompt actions on the basis of evidence that an enemy is about to strike and the preventive war which involves military operations undertaken to avert plausible risks in the future (Yost, 2003).

In September 2002 the United States introduced the new *National Security Strategy* which declared that "traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness. The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMDs compels us to action" (*The National Security Strategy*; Yost, 2003). Crucially, such an approach differed not only with previous American interpretations of threats and policies to address them, but also with the policies and perceptions of a number of key West European states such as France and Germany. The United States elevated pre-emptive action to the status of a doctrine and the shock of 9/11 seems to have helped persuade the Bush administration to enforce this doctrine regardless of the views of any of its allies. This inflexible approach, I would suggest, has had three major problematic effects that should have been foreseen and addressed at the Prague Summit.

First, given the way that the United States has defined the threats and formulated its strategy of response, it has signalled its NATO allies that it will not be constrained if it believes that its vital national interests are at stake. Therefore, the United States is essentially jettisoning one of the key

binding factors in the alliance during the Cold War, namely, the ability of the European allies to socialize and persuade Washington.

Second, the United States seems to be losing interest in NATO, at least in terms of its role as a traditional alliance. The notion of the "coalition of the willing" that the US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, has spoken of so frequently indicates that Washington is attaching considerably less importance to the alliance as a whole. There are increasing fears that the United States may view NATO as a "military 'chop shop' needed for spare parts that are to be cobbled into a US military operation" whenever needed (Flanagan, 2002). Though such fears may well be overstated, the cavalier attitude in Washington towards NATO, especially as expressed by Secretary Rumsfeld, has not been reassuring. For instance, in February 2004, despite the deep divisions in the alliance and the organization's identity crisis, he declared that he believed that the health of the alliance was good, as were the relations between the United States and the European countries (Rumsfeld, 2004). Moreover, he emphasized that seventeen of the twenty six of the NATO and invitees' countries have forces in Iraq as evidence of this "good alliance health," even though much of this allied presence is post-conflict and is largely symbolic.

Third, though it may be ironic that the United States, with its unmatched global power, has concluded that in so many cases containment, deterrence and constructive engagement cannot work, Washington's emphasis on hard power and the military instrument combined with its "all horizons" threat perception, is so starkly at odds with that of some of its key NATO allies that it may make reconciliation within the alliance difficult. More than that though, the American response to perceived threats can cause alarm among allies and there is a risk that some may view American perceptions and responses as themselves constituting threats to the security and interests of the alliance or to that of particular members. Consequently, if the alliance is to resolve the deep divisions, there is a need to appreciate the concerns of all allies, including those of key West European members that have differed with the United States.

Western European Perceptions: A Case of Double Containment?

It is hardly the case that West European NATO allies, including Germany and France which opposed the war in Iraq, do not see a grave threat from international terrorism and WMDs. In fact, these states have had to deal with terrorism long before the US has and have worked assiduously to

limit the proliferation of WMDs. Moreover, as NATO's new Secretary General is fond of repeating, NATO invoked Article 5 in the wake of 9/11 and West European aircraft flew across the Atlantic to help protect American air space against potential new terrorist attacks (de Hoop Scheffer, 2004a). Further, West European allies have been willing to deal with out-of-area threats. France and Germany have fought jointly with NATO forces to stop the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians in 1999 and have provided peacekeeping troops for Kosovo. They are also making major contributions to the NATO force that took command in Afghanistan in the summer of 2003 – the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) – and that is attempting to bring peace to Afghanistan province by province (Lobjakas, 2004d). Finally, West European allies, including Germany, the Netherlands, France and Italy are even pursuing shorter-range missile defences and France and Italy plan to deploy the first ground-based versions of the Aster system sometimes in 2005 (Yost, 2003).

On the surface at least then, it does not appear that there are fundamental differences in threat perceptions between the United States on the one hand and some of its key West European allies on the other. Yet a more detailed examination of threat perceptions shows that differences, in fact, are deep. This in turn influences the policies of key West European states in coping with international dangers and in dealing with the United States and with other European nations, especially the new alliance members. France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg (and with the Zapatero government in Spain), and even some of the European states that supported the war in Iraq, clearly do not see the threat from terrorism and WMDs in the same way as the United States does. For instance, whereas the United States has defined the threat of international terrorism and WMDs as potentially catastrophic, made ever more dangerous, as noted, because (in Washington's view) it is nihilistic and geographically unlimited, key West European states view these threats as dangerous but containable and geographically limited (Ortega versus Valasek, 2003).

Since in the eyes of West European states such as France and Germany the threats are more limited and containable, they have looked to different policies and solutions. It is not only that France and Germany in particular have a more regional perspective than the US. These European states seem to have concluded that the threats of terrorism and WMDs can be contained, since they believe that the sources of terrorism can be discerned, and that collective measures can be used for prevention of violence rather

than in engaging in pre-emptive strikes (Flanagan, 2002). The new Angela Merkel government may wish to move closer to the US stance, but since the Chancellor leads a fragile coalition with the rival SPD, there may be rather limited change in the German stance on this issue. These approaches tie in with the European emphasis on the use of soft power and thus a preference for employing discourse and constructive engagement to moderate the behaviour of threatening or unstable regimes. This is also congruent with grand European programs such as the gradual extension of international law and institutions to the global community modeled on the successes in post war Western Europe (Renewing the Atlantic Partnership, 13). Therefore, for key West European states, both containment and traditional deterrence are feasible.

In light of this, many Europeans have viewed America's militarized and what they contend is a unilateralist approach to the threats of terrorism and WMDs, as wrong-headed at best and dangerous at worst. Though they support a whole range of measures against terrorism, especially those that are focused on policing, many Europeans have called the war in Iraq "a mistake," one that in their eyes has magnified the danger of terrorism (Knowlton, 2004). That the United States proceeded with military responses backed by only ad hoc coalitions within the alliance, and in spite of the objections of vital partners such as France and Germany, led the latter to conclude that the American actions left them marginalized, without any significant influence over US policy. The harshest European interpretations of 9/11 and other terrorist threats went so far as to suggest that terrorism was basically an American problem brought on by Washington's aggressive use of military force and misguided foreign policies (Flanagan, 2002). Some European scholars, such as France's Emmanuel Todd (a best-selling author and former advisor to Jacques Chirac), hold such a negative view of the United States that they have elevated America to the top of international threats, characterizing it as a global economic predator led by an unhinged militaristic ruling class that needs to be (and will be in his assessment) counterbalanced by European and other powers (2003).

Even moderate West European leaders, though, are deeply concerned about the American use of military power, and this in turn affects their threat perceptions. Markus Meckel, the past head of Germany's NATO delegation, for instance, has argued that the US needs to treat the European Union as an equal power if the alliance is to be effective (Lobjakas, 2004b). West European NATO members have even looked on Washington's

Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI) that is designed to bring democracy to the region, with some trepidation since they are concerned that NATO could be relegated to some relatively insignificant supporting role with little influence over Washington (Lobjakas, 2004d).

Not unexpectedly, with the disappearance of the perceived Soviet threat, the West European states do not any longer unquestioningly accept the legitimacy of American leadership or the use of American power (Csongos, 2004). Therefore, even European moderates can view US actions that marginalize them, that indicate an American rejection of European input and influence, as threats themselves that need to be contained. Hence, alliance members such as France and Germany may be addressing threats through a system of *double containment* – containing the threats of terrorism and WMDs on the one hand, and containing a unilateralist United States on the other.

Containing the United States though presents special problems for states such as France and Germany both in the way they relate to NATO and in how they handle alliance enlargement. For instance, if they are to build a counterweight to the United States, is it better to do it within NATO or outside the alliance? EU attempts to build a rapid reaction force cannot, at least in the foreseeable future, create a credible military alternative to NATO. Even inchoate attempts though may complicate relations with the alliance (RFE/RL Press Release, 2004), and this will be more fully explored in the next chapter. Attempts by France to create a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) have been ineffective (CSIS Conference). France and others could try to create a new identity for NATO in the future as the alliance engages in such out-of-area operations as Afghanistan (Sciolino, 2004) but the organization's success there has been rather limited, and not much of a foundation to build on. West European attempts to make NATO into more of a political organization that emphasizes collective security, and especially soft power, have also been greeted with great skepticism by proponents of a militarily strong NATO and of enlargement. For instance, Ronald Asmus declared that "a 'political' NATO is a halfway house for the alliance's demise" (Asmus versus Grant, 2002).

In light of such problems, should the West Europeans attempt to use NATO itself as a means of containing the US, enlargement can only make matters more difficult. It is little wonder that France has been a less than enthusiastic supporter of enlargement (CSIS Conference). For Germany too enlargement would complicate its goal of turning the alliance into more

of a political cooperation society, given East European insistence on American hard security guarantees. Thus, enlargement might very well inhibit French and German attempts to contain the American "threat." French and German differences with the new members from Eastern Europe, moreover, make it more difficult to reconcile different general global and specific area threat perceptions in the alliance. It is not surprising then that one of the first tasks that the new Secretary General of NATO undertook in 2004 was to embark on a tour of old and new member states in order to, in his words, "build bridges" within the alliance (Lobjakas, 2004c).

The East European Search for Security

Washington could have hardly asked for more loyal supporters in its war on terrorism and in its war in Iraq than the three East European states that joined NATO in 1999 and the seven that joined in 2004. These ten states stood with the United States in the months leading up to the war in Iraq and in its immediate aftermath. They (or at least their governments) seem to wholly share America's threat perceptions and for the first two post-Iraq war years, stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States, with no light between them. Yet, this apparent unshakeable solidarity may belie a more complex and nuanced relationship with the United States and with Western Europe, as well as differences between East European and US threat perceptions.

Despite pledges of support and even the provision of military personnel by the East European states, there are differences among states in the region on the nature of the threats that they confront as well as discrepancies between elite and popular perceptions. For instance, in Poland, possibly America's strongest East European supporter, opinion polls by July 2003 showed that only about 40 percent favoured a Polish stabilization force in Iraq whereas 55 percent opposed sending Polish forces (Taras, 2004, 9-10). In some of the Baltic States even the leadership expressed some skepticism of the American decision to go to war in Iraq and Washington's contention that it was responding to an immediate threat. The Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski himself on 18 March 2004 declared that Poland had been misled about the existence of WMDs in Iraq – a primary reason why Poland had been one of the signatories of "The Letter of Eight" in January 2003 supporting the United States, and a stated reason why Warsaw went to war (CNN, 2004b; Taras, 2004, 7).

Nevertheless, these East European states continued to strongly support the United States, its interpretations of threats and its decisions to respond in Afghanistan and Iraq. Just a day after his statement that Poland had been misled about WMDs in Iraq, the Polish president reassured President Bush that Polish troops in Iraq (which are in command of an entire sector) would stay "as long as needed, plus one day longer" (Fisher, 2004). The new Polish President Lech Kaczynski may possibly carry out the previous government's commitment to pull Polish forces out of Iraq but he has indicated his whole-hearted support for America's policy in Iraq, and his intention to give close relations with the US the highest priority (*The New York Times,* 2005a; Dempsey, 2005). Thus even when these states (whether in the case of the elites or the population) do not entirely share America's threat perceptions, they seem eager to stand with Washington. There may be a number of reasons for this.

First, given the historical experiences of Russian and later Soviet conquest or hegemony, several of the East European states continue to be concerned about Russia. For example, Russia's adamant opposition to the deployment of NATO forces in the Baltics following enlargement and rumours that Moscow might be moving sophisticated air-defence systems further west in Belarus (Mite, 2004) could only reinforce historic fears in the Baltic States and drive them closer to the United States as the preponderant world military power and (in their eyes) the only credible protector. It is little wonder that Balkan leaders such as the Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga have repeatedly stressed that cooperation between Europe and North America is vital in order to deal with international threats (RFE/ RL Reports, 2004).

Second, the East Europeans may be concerned about Russia's ambiguous transition to democracy, the general fragility of its political order, and the potential for chaos that could then spill over its borders – rather than just a direct military threat. Recent developments in Russia, which have seen the selective prosecution of oligarchs, a highly flawed presidential election, and the strengthening of the influence of the security forces in government (Guriev, 2004; Chhor, 2004) have been hardly reassuring for the East European states. Petr Pithart, president of the Senate of the Czech Republic, encapsulated East European concerns well, "Why do we care about solidarity between Europe and the United States? It's the experience of two totalitarian regimes – the Nazis and the Communists. *We're conscious of the fragility of democracy*" (emphasis added) (Darnton, 2004). It is not surprising therefore that the Bulgarian president, the Czech president,

and the Czech prime minister want insurance and have all stressed the security provided by NATO membership and the need to maintain firm and functional transatlantic ties (RFE/RL, Newsline a and b, 2004).

Third, staying close to the United States may be a matter of pragmatism. The East Europeans understand that as they are joining the EU, their strongest economic ties will be in Europe but that the security assurances that they seek could only be provided by the United States – at least in the near future. Adam Michnik, the Editor-in-Chief of Poland's most influential newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza,* and one of Poland's leading public intellectuals, contended that "Poland's future is in the EU, but its security is in the United States" (Kuzio, 2003).

Fourth, the East European states may also be reacting to perceived West European slights, humiliations and to disappointed expectations. West European states have not been particularly generous or sensitive with their East European partners. France and Germany have opposed giving Poland a larger voting weight (as agreed to previously in the Nice Treaty) in the European Parliament, have put the East Europeans through humiliating negotiations in their efforts to join the EU, greatly limited their access to agricultural subsidies for ten years after joining and imposed restrictions to keep eastern workers out for several years (Darnton, 2004; Cowell, 2004; Taras, 2004, 14-15). Further, French President Jacques Chirac in criticizing Poland for sending troops to Iraq denounced its "immaturity," while various European commentators labelled Poland as "America's Trojan horse" (Taras, 2004, 12).

Last, there are differences between East Europeans and West Europeans in terms of the strategy for dealing with threats that the former perceive. For East Europeans, continuing to enlarge NATO eastward is imperative because in their eyes expansion builds a buffer zone of democracy. Bronislav Geremek, for instance, has argued that Poland should be a "carrier of freedom" by bringing early NATO enlargement to Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova (Atlantic Treaty Association). The West Europeans by contrast are unenthusiastic about further enlargement. Olivier Duhamel, for example, suggested in March 2004 that in France people are concerned with French identity and consequently fear enlargement (Darnton, 2004). It is to the Americans then that the East Europeans need to go in order to gain support for enlargement, despite the significance of economic ties that they will have in the EU. The East Europeans therefore are very concerned about American abandonment and transatlantic divisions. Michnik, for example, warned that "we don't want an anti-American EU" (Darnton, 2004).

East European Expectations in NATO

East European threat perceptions, the impact of NATO enlargement, and their expectations of the alliance have been perhaps most clearly enunciated in a series of formal interviews with the heads of mission of the seven new states joining in 2004. The interviews were arranged and conducted by NATO. Each head of mission was specifically asked about his or her country's expectations of NATO as well as the contributions each wished to make and the type of influence each hoped to exert. Coming within months of enlargement, these extensive interviews revealed a rich picture of considerable diversity but also remarkable consensus on a number of key issues.

First, most of the interviewees made a special point of emphasizing that they viewed NATO foremost as a collective defence organization (Sinkovec, 2004; Liegis, 2004; Slobodnik, 2004; Valev, 2003). For example, Ambassador Imants Liegis of Latvia was quite specific when he responded that "essentially our expectations in receiving the invitation and becoming full members of the alliance really relate to the basis on which NATO was established back in 1949 and it was established as we know as a collective defence organization" (Liegis, 2004).

Second, the Heads of Mission of the new members also made it clear that they were looking for hard power support, and in this sense they were very much in line with American strategies in dealing with threats (Sinkovec, 2004; Damusis, 2004; Valev, 2003; Mazuru, 2004; Tiido, 2003). The representatives from the Baltic States which had only recently regained their independence following several decades of Soviet annexation were especially keen on such hard power or hard security guarantees. Estonia's Ambassador declared that "NATO is definitely the only hard security guarantee available" (Tiido, 2003). Ginte Damusis similarly saw NATO enlargement as providing such assurances when she stated that "we see this as the reinforcement of our national security interest, namely that we'll be receiving the hard security guarantees that we've worked for so long" (Damusis, 2004).

Other new members which had been formally independent of the Soviet Union (though members of the Socialist bloc) also insisted on hard security guarantees. Romania's Ambassador, Bogdan Mazuru, for example, contended that "NATO has been the most relevant, the most effective organization, the most successful alliance in the past 55 years. And the fact that Europe has been a free and prosperous area for so long is the merit of

NATO. We want NATO to remain what it is – this kind of pillar for defence and security in Europe" (Mazuru, 2004). The President of Romania, Traian Basescu, reinforced this interpretation when he declared that "The Washington-London-Bucharest axis will be a foreign policy priority for Romania's president" (Tomiuc, 2004b). He also demonstrated his insistence on hard security guarantees by finalizing negotiations for a US military base in Romania (RFE/RL Features, 2005a). Thus, the East European states in speaking to their West European allies (and the world) were (and are) arguing for traditional collective defence rather than collective security in order to deal with the threats that they perceive. And they made it abundantly clear that they expected hard power guarantees.

   Third, the interviewees were also very keen to address the transatlantic divisions and to make it known how badly they wanted to make sure that American power remained committed to the alliance. Slovenia's Ambassador, Matjaz Sinkovec, started by saying that "security, especially in view of the new asymmetric threats, can best be provided for by an appropriate international organization. It had been demonstrated in the recent past that NATO is the only body that can successfully deal with such threats" (Sinkovec, 2004). Then he added, very pointedly that "We are strong supporters of the transatlantic link and hope that the United States will not reduce their commitment to Europe. As shown in recent history their involvement in the security of Europe is of utmost importance" (Sinkovec, 2004). In other words, Ambassador Sinkovec was suggesting that American hard power and commitment to collective defence is a *sine qua non* for effective alliance defence and a meaningful commitment to its members.

   That the United States had to remain a member of the alliance was just as strongly emphasized by the other interviewees. Ambassador Emil Valev of Bulgaria went out of his way to stress the importance of the transatlantic link and reminded his audience that, "The security guarantees, embodied in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty bring together Europe and North America in upholding common values and fighting common threats" (Valev, 2003). For, as the Slovak Ambassador, Igor Slobodnik, declared, threats do not just disappear, "the feel-safe factor could be treacherous, as peoples of Central Europe know only too well" (Slobodnik, 2004). He added later, "… we will strive, therefore, to cultivate strong transatlantic links within the alliance" (Slobodnik, 2004). Romania's ambassador, Mazuru, was also absolutely insistent about the necessity of America's participation and military commitment to making NATO the effective collective defensive organization that his country expected it to be. He declared that " … the

presence of America in the security and defence of Europe in the past 55 years made NATO and Europe stronger and we believe that the relationship between NATO and the EU is very important" (Mazuru, 2004). Latvia's ambassador, Liegis, warned the EU about any attempts to supplant NATO. He stated that "we regard the success of European defence as being important, but not in competition to NATO" and restated Latvia's goal of making certain that the United States remained fully engaged in the alliance (Liegis, 2004).

The East Europeans thus made it clear that far from worrying about American power, one of their paramount concerns was keeping a strong and committed United States in NATO. They indicated that they perceived any attempt to alienate or detach the United States from NATO as a very real threat to their security. They were and remain resolute in their insistence that NATO should remain a collective defence organization, that it must provide hard security guarantees, and that the United States, with its ability to project hard power, kept in the alliance through strong transatlantic links, remained indispensable for delivering on these expected hard security guarantees.

It is not that these new members rejected strong links with Western Europe – several of the East European states have joined the EU and others are hoping to gain membership soon. Security goals and expectations of NATO were also very much in line with that of the three East European States that joined the alliance in 1999. Together these ten members with over 100 million people comprise an important portion of the European part of the alliance. It is not suggested that they form a bloc or are homogeneous either in terms of elites or their populations on a wide range of political views and goals. Nevertheless, these new members did reveal deep differences with the threat perceptions and strategies of key West European states such as France and Germany that neither discursive practices nor policies have so far resolved.

Ultimately all these divisions also affect NATO's identity and thus enlargement is making the resolution of that identity so much more complicated and difficult. This is not to suggest that the East European states will necessarily be "Trojan horses" for the United States, working to undermine European integration and unity. It is also premature to conclude that "socialization" of Eastern Europe by West European states could not succeed in the long term in reconciling East and West European threat perceptions and differing views of the alliance. So far though, attempts at conciliation through better discursive practices do not seem to have been

more successful between the West Europeans and the East European on the one hand than between the Americans and key West European states on the other. For example, in October 2005, Poland's newly-elected President, Lech Kaczynski, indicated that he would take a harder line on relations with Germany and toward the EU (*The New York Times,* 2005). As security relations between Poland and Russia have worsened during the past year, Warsaw has been especially unhappy about a German-Russian plan to build a gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea that will bypass Poland (ibid.) President Kaczynski also indicated that he intended to take a tough line on Russia (in contrast to Germany and France) and that he would place top priority on strengthening transatlantic friendship with the United States (ibid; Dempsey, 2005). Therefore, with two post Cold War enlargements, and with the increasing complexity of managing an alliance with such diversity of views and such a large number of members, it is worthwhile to look at physical-structural, and procedural changes that might help rebuild consensus and alleviate the alliance's identity crisis.

4. Rethinking Institutions and Attempts at Adaptation After the Prague Summit

Whether an institution adapts to change depends on whether its assets – its norms, rules, and procedures – are specific or general, and on whether its mix of assets matches the kinds of security problems faces by its members.

Wallander, 2000, 706

With the alliance's 2002 decision to embark on its greatest enlargement in the post Cold War era, NATO also concluded that it had to urgently address a number of key issues facing the organization. Therefore, the allies decided at the 2002 Prague Summit that they would "transform and adapt NATO" and institute a transformation agenda (Prague Summit Declaration). Though progress on altering discursive practices to resolve NATO's identity crisis has been inadequate, as we have seen, there has been a possibility to bring about institutional changes since then, that in contrast to the very limited efforts prior to 2002, could help the alliance adapt to the profound changes in the international system and to continuing enlargement.

Institutions play a vital role in a successful alliance. Those alliances that persist over a long period of time tend to benefit from a type of institutional wisdom that helps with continuity and gives them resiliency. Moreover, alliances, as Celeste Wallander and J. J. Suh have shown, can persist for a long time under great stress and even after they have outlived their original *raison d' être* provided that their institutions can meet certain conditions (Wallander, 2000, 706-12 and 723-31; Suh, 2003, 26-30). For

Wallander, as noted in Chapter 2, successful alliances that persist, possess specific institutional assets for dealing with instability and mistrust, and general assets that are capable of adapting to new environments (2000, 705-35). Suh, in turn, argues that asset specificity can play a strong role not only in binding the member states together but also in transcending the original security interests which bound the allies together (2003, 27). I have also argued, though, that prior to 2002 attempts at institutional adaptation in NATO were inadequate. The strong commitment that NATO made in 2002, concomitant with its decision to enlarge further, and concerted alliance efforts at institutional change however, hold out new hope that transformation and adaptation of institutions may achieve at least in part what discursive practices since the Prague Summit have not.

In fact, some analysts, such as Andrew Vallance quickly attributed a major "curative" effect to the alliance's institutional reforms (2003) – not unlike the official NATO view. Indeed, attempts by the alliance at transformation and adaptation of institutions and some processes do appear vigorous. Nevertheless, they bear closer examination, especially in light of the dissonance in discursive practices, even years after the Prague Summit. Therefore, I will examine in some detail and evaluate three areas of transformation and adaptation undertaken in 2002: revising the command structure; establishing the NATO Response Force (NRF); and addressing the capabilities gap. In addition, I will examine NATO institutional reform in terms of alliance relations with the EU particularly in light of doctrinal differences and attempts by the EU, to develop a Union military identity.

Restructuring Command

NATO has followed up on the Prague Summit goal of streamlining the military command arrangements. At their June 2003 meeting, the alliance defence ministers agreed to reduce the two operational strategic commands to one, the below strategic command levels from the five operational regional commands to two Joint Force Commands and a Joint Headquarters, and to streamline the thirteen operational support commands to only six – that is, a total reduction of 20 command headquarters to just 11 (New NATO Command Structure). These moves would help clear up some confusion in command such as that which occurred during NATO operations in Bosnia in 1995. Back then operations were controlled directly from Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium. The new arrangements are designed to create greater efficiencies.

Supporters of this reorganization may be right that this was significant "functional rationalization" (Vallance, 2003). What does the streamlining mean, though, in terms of the larger issues of adaptation, and in light of the aspirations of key West European members? The creation of one command may certainly be more efficient, but the Allied Command Operations (ACO) continues to be headed by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), and SACEUR has always been and is to remain an American officer. This hardly satisfies the desire of some of the West European states to have a larger input. Furthermore, the most vital decisions will continue to be made by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the processes in that body have remained unchanged. As well, even though the Allied Command Atlantic (SACLANT) in Norfolk, Virginia has been eliminated, it has been replaced by a new command – Allied Command Transformation (in Norfolk, Virginia) – designed to oversee the transformation of NATO's military capabilities.

Consequently, although it is not unreasonable to assume that once the alliance decides on a certain military action, this will be carried out more cost-effectively and operationally more efficiently, this streamlining of the command structure does not address the central decision-making issues for West European allies – input and influence. The reference to "functional rationalization," alluding to the Bauhaus architectural doctrine of "form follows function" in fact begs the question of what the "function" is in this case. The key battle is over what the function of the alliance is to be. Changing the command structure does not resolve the problem of determining more clearly and making equitable the *function* of the alliance. That is, the desired function is one that is determined by alliance consensus and is effective in addressing evolving threats, competing threat perceptions, and an alliance identity crisis.

The NATO Response Force (NRF)

NATO's decision to create a rapid reaction force, the other major institution reform, is congruent with the "Prague Capabilities Commitment" and the alliance's transformation agenda (Prague Summit Declaration). More than just adding flexibility and further capability to the alliance, the NRF is designed to be a "joint multinational force package" (The NATO Response Force I). When fully operational by the fall of 2006, it should have up to 21,000 troops, should be ready to deploy in five days, and should be able to sustain itself for 30 days (The NATO Response Force II). The

multinational approach is important here because it differs conceptually from the traditional NATO drawing of resources from individual states, as needed. By contrast, this multinational entity is expected to be at a high state of readiness, to be fully trained and certified, and to be capable of a wide spectrum of missions, including power projection. Command of the force moreover would rotate among NATO members. In October 2003 a British general was put in charge of the NRF as the force moved towards Initial Operational Capability by 2004, and Full Operational Capability by the fall of 2006 (SHAPE News, 2003).

Despite these multinational trappings, though, the NRF is less than it seems. First, even at its full complement of 21,000, this will be a limited force compared to what the United States employed in various interventions, including Kosovo, and especially Iraq. Second, there have been no basic changes in the decision-making process in NATO that would be used to authorize the NRF to act. That is, the NRF will still go through the ACO and the ultimate decision will be made by the NAC, thereby involving the complex decision-making process of national negotiations and restrictions. In fact, even when an NRF operation is given the go-ahead, individual countries can impose national caveats on how the forces that they contribute may be used. Consequently, although the form appears to be multinational, the substance is basically national. Yet, as Wallander, for example, has contended, for effective transformation, NATO would need to do far more to bring about a multinationality of commands and forces, that is, if the institutional assets are to be truly adaptable (2000, 731).

Third, although the NRF was supposed to be fully compatible and mutually reinforcing with the EU's Headline Goal Force – the body designed to gauge progress toward the goal of building the European rapid deployment force (The NATO Response Force I) – this may turn out to be more a matter of aspiration than of practical reality. Given the limited military resources that West European allies possess, and in view of the history of various rapid reaction forces that have been created in the past, there is reason to fear that, just as in the past, when the various "joint" corps drew on the very same troops, the NRF and the EU rapid forces will follow this pattern. Some skeptics of the NRF concept, such as Tim Ripley from the Center for Defence and International Security Studies at Lancaster University in Britain, have already voiced their concern that the EU is, in fact assigning the same troops to the NRF as to its own rapid reaction force (Hill, 2003). Thus, the NRF's function in terms of adaptation may be limited both by the basically unaltered decision-making structures and

processes in the alliance as well as the limited military capabilities of the alliance members, especially those in Europe. Even an article in *NATO Review* that speaks favourably of alliance transformation could only claim as late as spring 2005 that the NATO Response Force will "*soon* provide transformed military assets …" (emphasis added) (Joyce, 2005).

Capabilities Matter

Allied worries over capabilities are not new. Throughout the Cold War there were severe concerns within the alliance over disparities in military capabilities. For decades there was a sense in the United States that there was insufficient burden-sharing by the increasingly prosperous West Europeans and that at least some Europeans were "free riders." Given the perceived magnitude of the Soviet threat these were significant issues and the allies expended a great deal of effort in order to make NATO forces more combat ready and better coordinated. Nevertheless, progress was difficult and concern persisted throughout the Cold War. It would seem almost anticlimactic then that with the demise of the Soviet threat and with the largest enlargements in NATO's history, in 1999 and 2004, concern over the capabilities gap now seems to be greater and more urgent.

   James Appathurai attributes this urgency to the fact that during the Cold War, despite the disputes within the transatlantic community, the alliance was confronted with a focused and an existential threat that ensured that the allies had little choice but to share the same strategic goals and methods (2002). The military situation is more acute today in key respects, he suggests, given that in practical terms NATO forces need to function together in complex and difficult situations where the enormous lead in US military technology makes it extremely difficult for forces with different levels of capability to work together. This problem was manifestly evident during NATO's humanitarian intervention in Kosovo in 1999. In a rather humiliating illustration of the capabilities gap NATO allies found themselves highly dependent on the United States for lift capacity, surveillance assets, precision strike capability, and even high end command and control systems (Appathurai, 2002). The seriousness of the continuing capabilities difficulties was confirmed by the new Secretary General. When he came into office in January 2004 he declared that the alliance was at a "crucial moment" (Lobjakas, 2004c). Moreover, these disparities have created not only operational problems but have also impaired military effectiveness

(Jane's Defence Weekly, 2004b). And the actual and perceived gaps in capabilities have generated a great deal of friction and frustration within the alliance on both sides of the Atlantic.

Further, the gap in capabilities has widened. As Appathurai shows, the decline in military expenditures by non-US NATO states was quite precipitous in the decade that followed the end of the Cold War. European countries cut defence spending by more than 16 percent – that led to an average of defence expenditures below 2 percent of their GDP – and they dropped major equipment procurement budgets at more than twice the rate of that of the United States (Appathurai, 2002). Some wealthy NATO states such as Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands in particular reduced their expenditures to below 2 percent – though they and other allies have now committed themselves to some increases (*The Military Balance*, 2003, 37-75, 248-51; Richburg, 2002). Moreover, these low military expenditures by non-US NATO states forced them to purchase a much more limited range of weapon systems and engage in far less military research and development than the United States. American military expenditures have been virtually double of all of the non-NATO members combined (*The Military Balance*, 2003, 241, 248-49; SIPRI, 2005). Even without the war in Iraq, US defence expenditures were scheduled to surpass the $400 billion mark by 2005 (*The Military Balance*, 2003, 241). In fact, the American Fiscal Year 2005 defence budget came in at $420.7 billion, and for Fiscal Year 2006 it is $441.6 billion (comprised of the Defence Department budget and the funding for nuclear weapons activity of the Department of Energy) (*Global Issues*, 2005). These are well above 3 percent of the American GDP (CIA – US – 2005). This compares with a defence spending of only about 1.5 percent of the GDP by Germany which has Europe's largest economy (CIA – Germany – 2005).

By contrast to most of the West European allies (France, though, has been increasing its defence expenditures significantly), the new and aspiring members of NATO have been increasing their spending and the acquisition of weapons and systems (*The Military Balance,* 2003, 248-251; SIPRI, 2005). It is true that one should treat this cautiously since the East European states have such low GDPs and have such limited budgets to begin with, given the paucity of their resources, that simple comparisons can be misleading. It has been rightfully pointed out by various analysts that, for example, Poland with a population similar to that of Spain spends well over 2 percent of its GDP on defence as compared to Spain's 1.27 percent but because of the enormous disparity in their GDPs, Polish

expenditures on defence are actually less than half of those of Spain (Cottey, Edmunds and Forster, 2002).

Still, trends and attitudes are of significance in assessing capabilities. The East European states have been eager to cooperate with the United States and to demonstrate that they are assets to a collective defence alliance that provides hard security guarantees. At times, they have been perhaps overly eager to please Washington while resenting the condescension with which they have been treated by West European allies (Taras, 2003, 7-9). Whatever the combination of motives, the East Europeans, in practical terms, have been willing to undertake post-conflict tasks that West European allies might have rejected as being mere "housekeeping" – cleaning up after the American forces accomplished their mission. Further, the East European states have also sought to specialize – and thereby maximize their strengths – as in the case of the Czechs who have emphasized their counter-biological and chemical weapons capabilities (de Hoop Scheffer, 2004b).

Most importantly, in using capabilities and in adapting NATO institutions to new conditions, the East European states have tried hard, at the very least, to create the impression that they share American perceptions and goals, and are eager to increase, what Valerie Bunce called the "density of shared experience" (1999, 12), with the United States. In other words, the East Europeans are trying to make the best of their limited capabilities in attempting to embrace the American vision of threats and responses. By strengthening transatlantic ties, they are seeking to ensure that Washington, as the main guarantor of their security, remains committed to the alliance. Thus, capabilities and intent are very much interrelated in NATO.

Capabilities and Conciliation

In Western Europe the military capability gap is greatly complicated by the inability of the United States and key West European allies to bridge the differences in their world visions. That is, making the most of the military capacity that the West Europeans have may be inhibited within NATO by the alliance's identity crisis and the breakdown of a shared vision. For, as Thomas Friedman has observed, the alliance is not only no longer united by a common threat but it has failed to develop a common vision of where to go on many of the global issues that it is facing (2003).

Though these differences in vision greatly complicate gaps in capabilities, they do not rise to the level of a breakdown of a common ideology (in this case democracy). The risk, then, is not that there will be an alliance breakdown precipitated by ideological factors (Walt, 1987, 35-39). Nevertheless, significant differences in vision especially combined with frustrations engendered by capability gaps do speak to an identity crisis that can create very major risks for the alliance. Further, attempts to "unbundle" alliance military capabilities (and as some fear France's goal of creating a "pan-European" military force via the EU might do), that is to use some forces for non-alliance purposes, as a means to address alternate visions and gaps in capabilities can quickly and sharply magnify fissures. More specifically, moves by some West European states to create EU military forces and headquarters that are, or at the very least, are perceived as an alternative to NATO, can generate such risks.

It is true that the proponents of the common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) which was launched in June 1999, in the wake of NATO's military campaign against Yugoslavia (Rontoyanni, 2002, 813-15), did not view or intend this as a challenge to NATO. Rather they envisioned ESDP a means to enhance European defence. Similarly, the 1999 Headline Goal which set out a requirement for the creation of a force of 50,000 to 60,000 troops that would be able to act rapidly on the authority of the Union was not meant as a challenge to NATO (Clarke and Cornish, 2002, 784-85). Further, proposals by France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg in 2003 to create an EU military headquarters in Tervuren, Belgium were presented by the proponents as a means of establishing greater military efficiency rather than as an alternative to NATO. Last, it is also worth noting that the so-called "Berlin-Plus" arrangements whereby Europeans can draw on NATO forces, have allowed certain new military missions to function without basically stepping on NATO toes (Robertson, 2003).

Most of these steps, but particularly the attempts to establish a European rapid deployment force and an EU military headquarters, however, have caused considerable concern in the United States (*The Economist,* 2003). The United States, which has long advocated an improvement in European military capabilities, nevertheless has been alarmed if a change in capabilities threatens NATO cohesion and viability – or more cynically, the US leadership of the alliance (Tagliabue, 2003; Lobjakas, 2003b; Renewing the Atlantic Partnership, 2004).

Yet, for the time being, these disputes appear to be contained. The primary reason for this, perhaps ironically, seems to be the lack of West

European success in building an independent European military capability. The European rapid reaction force is very much at an inchoate stage and France and Germany have largely abandoned their plans for a core defence (Grant, 2003). In terms of the proposed headquarters, the British now seem to acknowledge the possibility that the EU may need to do some of its own operational planning (which could evolve into a real headquarters) but this could be done only if everybody agreed to it (Grant, 2003). Thus the failure or at the very least the very slow development of alternate European capabilities have allowed the United States and key West European allies that are seeking an independent European military capacity (as well as NATO and the EU as organizations) to achieve a temporary *modus vivendi*. Combine this with the failure of the referendum on the EU constitution in France in May 2005, which significantly fuelled France's own identity crisis, and the defeat in the fall 2005 German elections of Jacques Chirac's partner, Gerhard Schroeder, thoroughly damaging the vaunted *moteur Franco-Allemand*, and the French challenge to NATO may be diminished for quite some time, though this is of course only part of the larger picture of the alliance's attempts to adept to the needs of the 21st Century.

Confronting the New Obstacles

Wallander has shown that NATO has developed general assets for political consultation and decision-making and specific assets for coping with instability and mistrust (2000, 723-33). She also demonstrated that these institutional assets have undergone considerable adaptation in the post Cold War period (especially, 2000, 731-33). Adaptation, however, needs to be measured in terms of the need for an alliance to be able to persist. Suh rightly points out that, for instance, asset specificity would need to play a very strong role not only in binding the member states together but also in transcending the original security interests which bound the allies together if there is to be persistence (2003, 27). The obstacles that NATO institutions face in order to achieve the latter are monumental as illustrated by the attempts at reform in the past few years and the limited success that these yielded.

   The restructuring of NATO command and the creation of the NRF may appear to be major undertakings and large changes when compared to past NATO reforms, especially during the Cold War. They need to be measured,

though, against the need to adapt to multiple and more complex international threats, greater disparities in capabilities within the alliance, and the complications of enlargement. Physical asset specificity, therefore, could only play a pivotal role in adaptation and in allowing an alliance to transcend the original security interests that brought the members together if it is able to address adequately the new issues confronting the organization. Moreover, institutions that may have had the capacity to adapt in one epoch do not necessarily retain that capacity in another. The disappearance of the existential threat posed by the Soviet Union and its allies to NATO has yielded to more complex and urgent concerns, as Apparthurai has suggested, and these paradoxically may require far deeper institutional changes, or even the replacement of key bodies within NATO, as well as different decision-making processes.

There have been suggestions for greater institutional changes in NATO. For instance, Sean Kay has argued that NATO enlargement could present an opportunity for the Bush administration to develop a comprehensive strategy to redesign Europe's security institutions (in order to combat terrorism) and it could review the alliance's decision-making procedures (2003, 111-12). Such profound changes could involve adaptation of institutions that would induce successful transcendence. Given current divergent threat perceptions and discursive practices, however, it is highly unrealistic, it seems, to expect that the alliance could develop (even with a possible diminution of French dissent), at least in the near term, the type of deep consensus that would be needed in order to bring about such a fundamental institutional and procedural transformation.

Further, the prospects for adaptation have been greatly complicated by the largest enlargement in NATO history. This enlargement is producing, as we have seen, a new *interactive triadic relationship*. Though the focus has been on divisions between the United States on the one hand, and key West European allies on the other, there are two other relationships that are of growing importance in the alliance. American relations with the East European states and East European relations with the West European proponents of a NATO that is based much more on collective security, are not only important in terms of each dyad, but are increasingly defining the very environment within which institutional adaptation in NATO is occurring.

This triadic relationship has not only increased complexity but can greatly accentuate institutional failures to sufficiently adapt to new challenges and differences in capabilities and intent. An institutional design that was

successful in another era, may not only not be adequate in another but at a certain stage in the new era may be deemed unreformable and therefore, in need of replacement. Otherwise even reformed old institutions may generate increasing frustration and cynicism and, as forums for constant disputes, may have the perverse effect over time of undermining the very foundations of the alliance. That is, because of contradictions between what they appear to be and what they ought to be, they could become the kind of "subversive institutions" that according to Bunce played a pivotal role in the collapse of communism (especially 1999, 20-76). The institutional reforms that NATO has attempted in the past few years not only have not adequately addressed the central issues confronting the alliance, but this failing, in light of enlargement which accentuates differences, may make these even reformed institutions, sources of ever greater frustration and division – especially as reforms continue to raise expectations.

Seemingly major institutional reforms in NATO thus have done little to address the problems of the alliance's identity crisis, of responding effectively to external threats and internal divisions, of resolving the capabilities gaps and of dealing with the new triadic relationship that enlargement is creating. Enlargement cannot long hide the fact that NATO is an increasingly dysfunctional alliance (even if some of the frictions diminish for the time being). With both structures and discourse so much at variance with needs, inadequate institutions, again, could later well become subversive institutions. This is not to suggest that the alliance is necessarily doomed, for the allies may find many reasons why they need each other and could conceivably come to a deep consensus that will lead to fundamentally changed discursive practices and institutions. The *modus vivendi* of the moment perhaps will buy some time for the alliance but it would be an error to think that, especially given the pressures of the current enlargement and demands for future ones, this will be a very long period. In a sense then, the alliance's institutional changes in the past few years, far from resolving NATO's basic problems, illuminate instead the need to do much more.

5. *Implications and Conclusions*

My normally contentious colleagues seem to be in uncharacteristic agreement: it is that the NATO expansion initiative is ill-conceived, ill-timed, and above all, ill-suited to the realities of the post Cold War world … Indeed I can recall no other moment in my own experience as a practicing historian, at which there was in our community greater unanimity against, which is to say less support for, an official foreign policy proposition.

John Lewis Gaddis, 1997a

In 2004, as one watched the broadcasts of the magnificent and stirring ceremonies in Washington and Brussels welcoming the seven new members of NATO (CNN, 2004) it seemed hard to question the alliance's success. With several more states eagerly awaiting membership, this is an organization, moreover, whose unusual longevity and continued attraction suggest an unprecedented ability to cope with internal strains and external threats. This study, however, has raised questions about the alliance's viability. It is not suggested here that the alliance is facing imminent collapse. Nevertheless, in the post Cold War period NATO is facing major problems that not only remain unresolved, but have been masked, complicated and are likely to be further exacerbated. NATO has been preoccupied with enlargements and the latter has complicated the alliance's ability to address problems, thereby putting the alliance at greater future risk.

Wallander and Suh (Wallander, 2002, 706-12 and 723-31; Suh, 2003, 26-30) are right to point out that an alliance can persist for a considerable time, even after it has outlived its original *raison d' être* but it cannot do so

indefinitely without adapting to new environments. "Muddling through" is not only an ineffective long term strategy for any alliance but in the case of NATO, enlargement has introduced factors that make this unattractive even as a short or medium term option. As we have seen enlargement has created an interactive triangular or triadic relationship. There are major differences not only between the United States and key West European allies but also between the East European members and important West European allies. All three interact in a way that can quickly magnify differences and problems.

NATO's identity crisis should have been evident with the end of the Cold War and enlargement has been a process that has been worked out over many years. Thus there should have been ample time to think through enlargement in terms of its impact on the alliance's identity crisis. Enlargement then could have been used as an opportunity rather than allowing it to become a complication or an obstacle to the kind of transformation and adaptation that would be needed to resolve the alliance's identity crisis. There was a possibility of building the kind of "bridges" within the alliance that the new NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer spoke about, but these are yet to be more clearly defined (Lobjakas, 2004c). Internal "bridges" could rebuild a deep consensus and a sense of common destiny that would be needed to successfully address the alliance's identity crisis.

Using a constructivist approach I assessed discursive practices to ascertain how these affected the alliance's identity crisis. Evaluating the scholarly debates leading up to the first enlargement, the discourse at the Prague Summit in 2002 where the next enlargement was decided upon, and of the responses in interviews of NATO heads of mission as the seven new members were about to join in 2004, I have had to conclude that NATO has failed to adequately address the central issue of the alliance's identity crisis.

Subsequent NATO meetings may have ameliorated somewhat the sharper edges of discursive differences among Allies, but have hardly resolved the substantive problems. At NATO's 17th Summit in Istanbul in June 2004, shortly after the last round of enlargement, the 26 allies tried hard to create an impression of consensus and of a new pragmatism. In a sense, Istanbul was meant to indicate progress on the transformation process that had been outlined at the Prague Summit. With a lowering of divisive rhetoric, some suggested considerable success, especially in light of an agreement to enhance existing partnerships, the invitation of the seven countries

participating in the alliance's Mediterranean Dialogue to intensify relations, and the launching of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative in the Middle East (Aybet, 2004). Though this was an improvement in atmospherics and one might argue that NATO was moving towards becoming more of a political alliance (Joyce, 2005), the Summit did not really address the continuing East European concerns about hard security guarantees or the American desire for greater help in Iraq. Thus, somewhat improved discursive practices should not be mistaken with ones that would address the substantive divisions and help create a deep and sustainable alliance consensus.

This was evident in subsequent alliance dialogues and meetings. The American government tried hard to paper over differences, even though French and German support for the US enterprise in Iraq remained minimal (RFE/RL Features, 2004a). At the February 2005 summit at NATO headquarters in Brussels, President Bush praised all the Allies and tried to create an impression that the differences had been transcended (Lobjakas, 2005). A week earlier US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld also called for increased cooperation and jokingly dismissed his characterization of France and Germany as part of "Old Europe" by saying "that was old Rumsfeld" (*The New York Times,* 2005b). This, however, covered up deep differences, perhaps best exemplified by Chancellor Schroeder's written comments – delivered by his Defence Minister Peter Strück – at the NATO international security conference earlier in February 2005 in Munich. Schroeder declared "NATO is no longer the primary place where transatlantic partners consult and coordinate their strategic ideas" (Eggleston, 2005). Both Rumsfeld and Bush felt the need to at least indirectly repudiate this attack on the credibility and relevance of NATO (*The New York Times,* 2005b; Lobjakas, 2005). In fact, it seems that the text that emerged from the Brussels summit was watered down due to German and French pressure so that NATO was described as just "a forum" for consultation and coordination among allies rather then the *principal* venue. It may also be worth noting that in practical terms, in answer to calls for unity at the summit, France pledged the grand total of $660,000 to an alliance fund for military and police training in Iraq and assigned a single French officer to the training mission at headquarters in Belgium (Sciolino, 2005).

In light of the security dilemmas that an alliance faces and the problems of future uncertainty, I also supplemented the constructivist approach with realist and institutionalist theories to examine threats and threat perceptions. Realism, though, presents its own problems in assessing issues of

identity transformation and adaptation in an alliance such as NATO. Realists tend to assume that international institutions are merely intervening variables affecting security outcomes (Mearsheimer, 1995, 332-376). Institutions though are crucial because, in addition to rules, norms and principles, they also involve decision-making procedures (Keohane, 1989, 3-5). Moreover, as Charles Kupchan has shown, institutions are highly relevant since, among other things, they increase the likelihood of issue linkages and further interstate socialization (1994, 50-51). And, as noted in the previous chapters, Risse-Kappen has shown persuasively that the ability of the West Europeans to "socialize" the United States during the Cold War was an important element both in creating an alliance identity and in preserving NATO.

Further, general and specific assets that Wallander and Suh referred to in assessing the prospects for alliance persistence could not be adequately appreciated without looking at institutional structures and attempts at adaptation within NATO. Enlargement emphasized the urgency to deal with the fundamental problems. I have found, though, that despite some considerable efforts, the institutional changes in NATO in the past few years rather than resolving these problems, instead highlighted the need to do far more. So far institutional reforms have dealt with the symptoms of dysfunction that have been part of the alliance's identity crisis rather than address the basic problems and construct the kind of "bridges" within the alliance that would allow members to reconstruct the vital consensus, the deeply shared experiences, and the mutual socializing that were NATO's great strengths during the Cold War. This failure was made starkly evident when the alliance could not reach a consensus on how to deal with Iraq. The internal "bridges" that shaped and reflected an alliance identity that allowed NATO to maintain a broad and deep consensus during the Cold War, were no longer in place as the members faced the crisis in Iraq.

In addition to internal "bridges," however, NATO might have been able to improve its situation, in part, by constructing external "bridges." It may then be possible to learn further about the problems and prospects of resolving the alliance's identity crisis by looking at a specific NATO attempt to build such bridges, particularly to Russia. NATO's relationship with Russia remains vital. Although it is radically different from the Cold War interaction with the Soviet Union, it is something of a litmus test. It is a relationship that in certain respects is both symptomatic of the identity crisis and the divisions within the alliance, and may be also reinforcing these divisions. Moreover, NATO enlargements and continuing commitment to further expansion have forced the alliance to focus on this relationship.

I will therefore assess the institutional aspects of NATO-Russia relations as well as Russian and NATO perceptions. In the case of perceptions I will especially focus on the period involving the latest alliance enlargement.

NATO-Russia Institutional Developments

It is no mere coincidence that the two most significant institutional developments in NATO-Russia relations occurred at the time that the alliance embarked on enlargements in 1997 and in 2002. Certainly, NATO had sought to build institutional links with Russia earlier but these were more modest efforts. For instance, the alliance created the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC) at the Rome Summit in 1991 (Kay, 1998, 65-67). It was meant to afford Russia (and the East European states) a potentially significant consultative forum. In terms of Russian goals though, it proved to be of little use both because the NACC had no decision-making function and it had no institutional framework to recognize Russia as a Great Power (MacFarlane, 2001, 287). NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, which in January 1994 supplemented the NACC, suffered from the same shortcomings in that it failed to provide a special status for Russia. Therefore, if NATO were to co-opt Russia into the alliance structures when it made the formal decision to enlarge the alliance in 1997, it had to devise a new institutional framework.

a. Founding Act and the Permanent Joint Council. In May 1997 NATO and Russia signed the Founding Act on Mutual Relations which set up the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) (Founding Act, 287-89). NATO thus signed the Founding Act just a few months before it invited Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into the alliance (Schake, 2001, 41). The PJC fulfilled the requirement for a bilateral institution that reflected Russia's important status. Further, the Founding Act suggested that NATO would not forward-deploy alliance nuclear and conventional capabilities in new-member states. Russia would also have an opportunity to consult on important issues. The PJC thus appeared to go a long way toward meeting Russian aspirations. It even stimulated some concern among hawks in NATO that Russia might have significant "blocking" influence in alliance decision-making and that Moscow might be able to weaken the organization from within.

Such fears of a Russian "blocking" role in the alliance proved to be unfounded. NATO had not *legally* bound itself to first consult Russia and was not *legally* prevented from deploying forces on the territories of the

new states (Brzezinski and Lake, 1997). The PJC, though, certainly raised expectations in Russia but in fact NATO had not intended to give Moscow a veto or to fully involve it in its decisions. As an alliance that had yet to resolve its identity crisis NATO consequently searched for some middle ground in dealing with new challenges rather than take bold steps. It was not prepared to even contemplate Russian membership yet wanted to build a bridge that would allay Russian concerns and fears without disrupting alliance decision-making.

The PJC ultimately proved to be a recipe for frustration. It could not satisfy Russian aspirations and concerns, even though a weak Russia had no choice but to acquiesce to NATO enlargement. Events in Kosovo in 1999 sharply highlighted the PJC's failure. As Neil MacFarlane observed, "by the time of the Kosovo crisis, the PJC had slipped into formalistic irrelevance" (2001, 288). Consequently, as NATO moved toward the decision to embark on a second enlargement in 2002, it again had to address the concerns of a frustrated, but now slowly strengthening Russia.

b. The NATO-Russia Council. Again, just months before its formal announcement to invite seven new members, NATO decided to create a new institutional link with Russia. At the 28 May 2002 Summit in Rome, NATO and Russia established the NATO-Russia Council to replace the PJC (NATO Fact Sheets, 2002). The Council was intended to provide a far more effective mechanism for consultation and consensus than the PJC. In contrast to the PJC where the nineteen allies could present Russia with a *fait accompli* of pre-coordinated decisions, the Council provided for extensive consultation and consensus in important areas such as terrorism, crisis management, and confidence building measures. It stipulated a series of meetings: monthly meetings (at least) at the level of ambassadors and military representatives; twice yearly at the level of foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of staff; and summits of heads of government where possible (NATO Fact Sheets, 2002).

On the surface, these institutional changes appeared to create "bridges" and should have been reassuring both to Russia and to NATO members. The reassurance could have been particularly useful to the new alliance members and it should have facilitated constructing a new NATO strategic consensus that in turn would make the resolution of the alliance's identity crisis easier. In fact, there have been positive signs since 2002. For instance, then NATO Secretary General Robertson worked assiduously to expand NATO-Russia cooperation (RFE/RL Reports, 2003). NATO and Russia held unprecedented joint computer missile defence simulation in

2004 (NATO Update, 2004). Russia's new Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, participated in the NATO-Russia Council session on 2 April 2004 following the latest enlargement, and chose not to repeat Moscow's objections to alliance expansion (RFE/RL Newsline, 2004d). Robertson's successor, moreover, has also sought to improve NATO-Russia relations (Bransten, 2004).

Yet, such cooperation has been more form than substance. Consultations have led to a toning down of the harshest rhetoric on both sides but have not resolved the basic differences. NATO has kept expanding eastward despite Russian unhappiness, and the United States and most of its NATO allies have intervened in Iraq despite Moscow's objections. As more East European states join NATO, in the absence of even a possibility for Russian membership it is difficult for Moscow to avoid the impression that the alliance is building walls rather than bridges. Not unexpectedly then, as Timothy Garden, the former Assistant Chief of the British Defence Staff has observed, even after two years of operation, the Council has few concrete results to advertise (Bransten, 2004). Moreover, as Garden has noted, Russia itself has not assigned a significant role to the Council and has not posted top-flight diplomats and military commanders to Brussels. At best, the Council has been useful for dialogue but unfortunately not for genuine consultation (Lobjakas, 2004e).

Russian skepticism and frustration are not surprising because what NATO has been able to offer via the Council is so limited. Again, an alliance that continues to suffer from an identity crisis and one that is preoccupied with an exclusionary expansion is not likely to be able to undertake bold attempts to build real bridges to Russia. Therefore, Russia has gone through the motions of cooperation, and has sought to avoid open confrontation, even on contentious issues such as Iraq. At best though, Moscow has sent mixed signals regarding enlargement, including a warning by its Defence minister in April 2004 that enlargement could lead to a "Cold Peace" (Page, 2004). Its reactions (as those of NATO), however, have been conditioned not only the realities on the ground but also by its perceptions of possible threats from the alliance. Russian and NATO perceptions of each other thus remain key issues.

Perceptions and the Risks of Misperceptions

a. Russian fears. The range of Russian reactions to the latest NATO enlargement reveals some disturbing aspects of Russian perceptions of NATO.

Though neither Russian elite nor popular perceptions are monolithic, in both instances there is widespread and profound concern about NATO intentions. In the case of decision-making elites, President Putin at his meeting with NATO's Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, in April 2004, sharply disparaged NATO enlargement: "Life has shown that this mechanical expansion does not make it possible to counter effectively the situation in Afghanistan" (Page, 2004). His defence minister, Sergei Ivanov, was even harsher and complained that whereas Russia would like to enjoy a partnership with the West, Moscow is too often asked to ignore developments that are unfavourable to its interests (RFE/RL Feature, 2004). And the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Vladimir Chizhov, characterized the latest enlargement as "a big strategic mistake" (*RIA Novosti,* 2004). Russian leaders thus did voice their profound disquiet over the latest NATO enlargement but in terms of the NATO-Russian discourse, it seems to have had little effect on the alliance decision to embed enlargement as a long-term NATO policy.

Not surprisingly, Russia's unhappiness over enlargement has not only persisted but, with the possibility of future NATO expansion, it has grown. In 2005 President Putin reiterated strongly his dissatisfaction with the inclusion of the Baltic States in the alliance when he declared that, "I don't see in what way enlarging to our Baltic neighbours, for instance, can improve the security of the world" (*Boston Globe,* 2005). He was considerably harsher when he warned against membership for Ukraine, "if there were a NATO military presence in Ukraine, I wouldn't maintain our technology and sensitive armaments … Ukraine could have problems" (ibid.). The Russian leader seemed to be reacting both to Ukrainian and Georgian eagerness to join NATO (RFE/RL, Features 2005b; RFE/RL, Newsline 2005a; RFE/RL, Features 2005c) and to what Moscow perceived as interference by Poland and Lithuania, under a NATO umbrella, to help defeat Moscow's favourite in the December 2004 rerun of the Ukrainian presidential elections (Chivers, 2004).

Public opinion in Russia also appears beset by widespread concern over enlargement. A poll by Ekho Moskvy radio showed that 71 percent of its listeners viewed NATO expansion as a threat (Page, 2004). A broader sampling of Russian society suggested that the percentage of people worried about NATO enlargement was smaller but still very significant. A survey by the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion found that a strong plurality of 44 percent of the respondents perceived enlargement as a threat to Russia (RFE/RL Newsline 2004d). There is also a possible effect

that opinion polls may not track clearly. As NATO's enlargement is seen by the Russian public as something that is pursued by the democratic West to the detriment of Russian national security interests, this helps create a negative impression of all democrats, including Russia's own and likely contributes to an undermining of domestic democracy.

Russians, moreover, often perceive NATO actions in a way that the Allies do not always adequately appreciate. The differences between Russian and NATO perceptions were illustrated, for instance, in the sharply varied interpretations of NATO's decision at the end of March 2004 to deploy four Belgian F-16 fighters in Lithuania – together with about one hundred Belgian, Danish, and Norwegian ground support troops at a former Soviet air base in Lithuania (Myers, 2004). For NATO this minute deployment of four aircraft to police the skies over the three Baltic States was merely a symbol of commitment to the new members – a very low key attempt at reassurance. For Russia it was symptomatic of the risks of division and encirclement by NATO that it believes that it faces. The deployment even fuelled the suspicion in Moscow that the alliance, denials to the contrary, might be planning major troop deployments in the Baltics (Jane's Defence Weekly, 2004a).

Russia consequently reacted strongly to this deployment of NATO aircraft in Lithuania. As a none-too-subtle hint, in April 2004 Russian warships began to practice amphibious landings near the shores of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and the Russian air force held joint drills with Ukraine and Belarus – just as NATO's Secretary-General was visiting Moscow (Page, 2004). Even more disturbingly, Russia's Defence minister suggested that Moscow might revise its defence policy unless the alliance revised its own military doctrine (CNN, 2004a). Further, Moscow raised its concerns about the fact that four of the new NATO states did not ratify the amended version of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, which limits the number of troops and weapons that can be stationed in certain geographical areas, and hinted that Russia would further drag its feet on pulling out its forces from Georgia and Moldova (Bransten, 2004).

b. Alliance concerns. NATO perceptions of Russia and Russian policies are quite varied within the alliance. But at times these are no more sanguine than those that Moscow has of NATO. Alliance perceptions are shaped in part by what in Soviet days was called "objective reality" and by historical experience and political expediency. Objectively, Russia has had a difficult and uncertain transition from communism. The loss of empire and superpower status has been traumatic and Russia has had to deal with

its own identity crisis (MacFarlane, 2001, 284). Some, including Grigorii Yavlinskii, the leader of the democratic bloc *Yabloko,* have a very pessimistic view of Russia's progress towards democracy. Yavlinskii refused to participate in the March 2004 presidential race contending that Russia lacks the basic elements of democratic elections, including reliable courts, independent media, and independent financial sources (RFE/RL Newsline, 2004a).

Somewhat less pessimistically, others have suggested that Russia has become a "managed democracy" where society is in the middle (between the political extremes), with the population acquiescing to live with a quasi-democratic and quasi-autocratic order (Colton and McFaul, 2003, 12-21). Such a status though is hardly reassuring to the East European democracies that have joined NATO. These new NATO members tend to see strong links between successful democratic transformation and a peaceful foreign policy. Unfortunately, even the more optimistic assessments, which suggest that Russia is a normal middle-income country that is making progress and may soon join the ranks of "poor developed states like Hungary and Poland" (Shleifer and Treisman, 2004), are not entirely encouraging given some of the current negative trends in Russia's political institutions and civic freedoms. The proponents of the view of Russia as a "normal middle-income country" admit that such trends under Putin are worrying and could deteriorate further (Shleifer and Treisman, 2004).

There are, in fact, good reasons why there should be concerns about the state of Russian "democracy." The prosecution and imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, one of the leading Russian oligarchs, could only have gone ahead with the direct approval of the Kremlin. This application of selective justice represented not only a negation of the rule of law but had a clear scent of political expediency and of settling of scores (*The Economist,* 2005). Economic authoritarianism and mismanagement are also making a democratic transformation more difficult in Russia. One of President Putin's key advisors, Andrei Illarionov, in 2005 condemned Russian re-nationalization of some vital companies and argued that "today, by our own decisions, we have done what is now regrettably clear to the outside world – we opted for the Third World" (Arvedlund, 2005). And President Putin's statement in 2005 that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was a historical catastrophe (CNN.com, 2005), was the kind of antidemocratic nostalgia that could hardly be comforting to the new democracies in Europe.

In assessing these developments in Russia in terms of potential threats or disruptions, the West and East Europeans come with considerable

historical baggage. For West Europeans it has been a history of containment, and in the last decades of the Cold War, also one of "constructive engagement" with Russia. By contrast, for the East Europeans the historical experience has been that of Soviet conquest. West European states, therefore, are less likely to see a threat from slow or difficult Russian democratization than the East European victims of Soviet control, and are more apt to see possibilities for productive engagement. Germany and France, for instance, have developed extensive economic and warm political ties with Russia. All three strongly, and at times jointly, opposed American military actions in Iraq. Germany has been consistently Russia's main economic partner and Russia is Germany's primary supplier of energy in the post Cold War era (Lambroschini, 2003). France has been especially eager to build strong political relations with Russia. During his April 2004 visit to Moscow, for instance, President Jacques Chirac chose to tone down significantly his criticism of Russia's military actions in Chechnya (RFE/RL Newsline, 2004d).

Russia, for its part, has seemed eager to use its good relations with France and Germany, not only for economic benefits and as a way to play a larger international role but also to try to "leapfrog" and outflank the East European states in Europe. It is a way for Moscow to attempt to minimize the weight that the East European states may gain in NATO (and in the European Union). Such Russian attempts at marginalizing the East European states though, could become a significant, divisive factor in an enlarged NATO where the Eastern Europeans hold more than one third of the membership.

Russian manipulation would increase East European suspicions. East European insistence on close military ties to the US is explained in part by worries over Russia. The East European states may have been encouraged by influential American neo-conservatives to support American actions in Iraq and to line up closely with American policies in general (Barry, 2004) but these former communist states also have long-standing concerns about Russia. Slow Russian democratization, harsh Russian reactions to enlargement and attempts at manipulation in NATO therefore have and are likely to magnify these concerns.

Specifically, new NATO members are quite worried about continued Russian refusal to withdraw troops and armaments from Moldova and Georgia (Lobjakos, 2004c). And given their geographical proximity to Russia, the East European states are also more concerned than their Western counterparts with the problems of implementing the CFE Treaty. Further,

in the Baltics, the new NATO members are fearful of possible Russian involvement with and manipulation of the large Russian ethnic minorities that continue to reside in these states (Lobjakos, 2004a). Last, in 2004 both Lithuania and Estonia complained about Russian spying on NATO activities and decided to expel several Russian diplomats for espionage (Myers, 2004).

Unlike Eastern Europe, the United States has not been concerned about a Russian threat but it has shown little sensitivity regarding Russian fears over NATO enlargement and scarce patience for Russian democratization. Both the Clinton and the Bush administrations have been eager to provide reassurance to the East Europeans but have not done much to build alliance bridges to Russia. The Bush administration has been particularly insensitive in its dealings with Russia, as manifested in Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and in its overall discursive practices. For instance, in January 2004, even a seasoned diplomat like the US Secretary of State Colin Powell employed a hectoring and patronizing tone in criticizing Russian progress in democratization (Weisman, 2004), a "lecture" that Moscow found particularly offensive.

At the Bratislava Summit with President Putin, George Bush tried to improve relations with Russia, but just days earlier the American President declared that "the Russian government must renew a commitment to democracy and the rule of law" (RFE/RL Features, 2005d). The American Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, was also harshly critical in April 2005 of the state of democracy in Russia and lectured Russia that it should not fear democracy (Weisman, 2005). President Putin did not take such lectures kindly. He countered by criticizing the electoral system in the US (CNN.com, 2005) and declared that Russia intended to pursue democracy independently and in its own way (Chivers, 2005).

Thus, NATO's interaction with Russia, in the instance of the US and the East European States, in a sense mirrors its inability to build bridges within NATO. The alliance identity crisis, the triadic relationship, the differing preferences for soft or hard power, for containment and constructive engagement or for deterrence, have all worked to shape different threat perceptions within NATO and have made it in turn difficult to build bridges to Russia. Further, enlargement is not only likely to complicate such efforts in the future but in fuelling suspicions in Russia. And in inducing Russian reactions that reinforce in Eastern Europe traditional fears of Moscow, NATO expansion may be creating a damaging negative cycle of action and reaction. In other words, despite French and German efforts

to strengthen relations with Russia, there is a risk that Russia will view continuing enlargement as building walls and in turn, may then try strenuously to encourage divisions within NATO in order to weaken an alliance that it perceives as threatening.

Conclusion

Timothy Garden observed recently that it is rather paradoxical that just as NATO has been downgraded as a fighting organization it is at the same time more in demand than it ever has been in its history (Bransten, 2004). He pointed out that in addition to operating in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, NATO is facing continuing requests to help in Iraq. Leaving aside for the moment the fact that the magnitude of the single military mission that NATO had in defending its members against a possible Soviet/Warsaw Pact threat may be equivalent to or even more important than the current multiple demands for alliance participation (that is, NATO traditionally has had a great deal of capacity as well as relevance), there is little doubt that there remain important functions that NATO can and could perform in the post Cold War period. Moreover, these current demands on NATO together with continuing enlargement do help to create an aura of legitimacy and relevance.

Some analysts even see certain tasks that NATO is or should be performing as a means of resolving the alliance's internal problems. For instance, Elaine Sciolino has contended that NATO, by taking command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in the summer of 2003, resolved the identity crisis that it was facing (Sciolino, 2004). Such "an out of area" mission beyond Europe was a major development for the alliance but given all of NATO's other internal problems, some of which are illustrated by the alliance's inability to reach a consensus on Iraq, it is fair to conclude, I believe, that ISAF has not resolved the organization's identity crisis. After his re-election, President Bush has tried to reach out to the alliance and there has been further improvement in the cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Nevertheless, his insistence on American primacy in the crucial areas of alliance decision-making and in the way the American administration has formulated alliance task-sharing, some of the West European states in particular have been left with the impression that they are asked to play basically secondary roles (Joyce, 2005). Further, even though NATO Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer has pushed for a more political alliance, this has not resulted in truly changed

discursive practices that could help create real consensus and successfully address major identity problems. It is not possible then, to resolve NATO's identity crisis without fundamental changes, formal and informal, in the alliance's decision-making structures and processes. A wider alliance geographical engagement and greater allied participation, though important changes, thus cannot substitute for the deep transformation that is necessary to successfully address NATO's identity crisis.

Alliance enlargements, however, presented opportunities for fundamental change. In each instance, there was a chance not only to lay down criteria for membership and try to enlarge the zone of democracy; with the monumental step of bringing in former communist states and with a commitment to continuing enlargement, it was also a propitious time to re-examine, and if need be, to reorganize the alliance. A new historical era (following the collapse of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union) and with three, and later seven more members joining NATO this meant not just that there was an opportunity to address issues of identity; it would have been extremely wise to deal promptly and realistically with the alliance's identity crisis.

NATO did not avail itself of such opportunities. Though one can hardly begrudge the alliance the celebrations over bringing in former enemies as allies and the happiness of the East European states in rejoining Europe, sadly for NATO, such celebrations have merely masked the alliance's identity crisis. More than just masking the problem, enlargement has complicated matters and perhaps has significantly exacerbated the situation. Enlargement, in creating an interactive triadic relationship, as we have seen, has complicated alliance discourse and quite possibly further undermined alliance institutions.

In terms of alliance discourse, enlargement has done little to improve matters. In some cases it has made things worse. Discursive practices involving the United States on the one hand and some key West European allies on the other, have resembled two solitudes where the parties talk past rather than to each other, even as two enlargements presented opportunities for substantive dialogue and consensus building. Attempts at mutual socialization that were so important to the alliance during the Cold War have broken down. Similar problems with discursive practices have been manifested in the relationship between the East European states on the one hand and West European members, such as France and Germany, on the other. At the same time, the East European members want to strengthen their relationship with America and the US commitment in Europe, while some West European states have tried to limit America's preponderant

influence in the alliance and to restrict Washington's ability to use the East European states as proxies in NATO.

In such circumstances, institutional changes would have been especially useful as alternate or supplemental remedies but recent reforms have not addressed the fundamental issues. Enlargement, in fact, has shed a harsh light on NATO's institutional shortcomings and timid reforms. There is a risk therefore, as noted, that inadequately transformed or adapted institutions, confronting more complex tasks (in part because of enlargement) in a changed international environment, could become "subversive institutions" (Bunce, 1999) that would undermine the alliance. Further, NATO has not been able to build the kind of "bridges" within the alliance that would help it restore the deep consensus and the densely shared experiences that made for such a resilient alliance identity during the Cold War. Moreover, the inability to successfully build bridges within, as enlargement has proceeded, has also inhibited NATO's ability to build bridges with a crucial neighbour – Russia. That, in turn, is complicating not only NATO-Russia relations, but has the unintended consequence of working to make the resolution of alliance identity more difficult.

Ironically, enlargement, which was meant to provide greater reassurance to NATO members, may now be more deeply embedding and magnifying divisions within the alliance. Attempts at future enlargement may further complicate matters. Debates regarding hard power versus soft power are likely to be intensified as are divisions between the goals of collective defence of some of the members and of collective security of others. Attempts at "double containment" by key West European states, the East European quest for a special relation with the United States, the Bush doctrine of pre-emption and the administration's preference for a "coalition of the willing" (with strong support from the new members) have made the middle ground between collective defence and collective security not just uncomfortable but less tenable and consequently the alliance identity crisis more difficult to resolve. Again, this is not to suggest that NATO is about to disintegrate. With so much hope and treasure invested in the alliance, it is likely to persist in the near future. The main problem, though, is that having failed to use the opportunities presented by enlargement, and now needing to deal with the consequences of expansion, NATO risks becoming increasingly less relevant. A vast organization with a huge and costly bureaucracy, NATO could well deteriorate into an expensive discussion club where a seemingly imposing form bears little resemblance to the vital functions of what would constitute an effective alliance.

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