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# NATO After 11 September

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Philip H. Gordon

On the evening of 12 September 2001, just over 24 hours after the terrorist attacks on the United States, the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization invoked the treaty's mutual defence guarantee for the first time in the alliance's 52 years. When Article 5 was drafted – pledging that an attack on one ally would be treated as an attack on all – not a single signatory could have imagined that its first invocation would involve Europeans coming to the aid of the United States rather than the other way around. Yet that is precisely what happened, and NATO will never be the same again.

The notion that mutual defence could be a two-way street, and that NATO might use its military power to deal with international terrorism – in Central Asia no less – are just some of the ways that the attacks have begun to transform the world's largest and longest-standing defence alliance. It is probably too soon to say with certainty whether the campaign against terrorism will become the 'new paradigm' for international relations to the same degree as the Cold War. What seems certain, however, is that it will have significant impact on practically every aspect of NATO and the context in which it operates – the future of transatlantic solidarity, alliance military structures, enlargement, NATO–Russia relations, the European Security and Defence Policy, and NATO's future organisation, roles and missions.

In one sense, it could be argued that 11 September has only revealed NATO's irrelevance, the Article 5 pledge being a primarily symbolic gesture while the United States conducts a military operation largely alone with support from the British. In fact, while the anti-terrorism campaign changes NATO's character and carries many risks, it also demonstrates NATO's continued utility and provides an opportunity to renovate and give new life to an alliance whose future was uncertain. While NATO's formal military role was necessarily very limited in the first weeks of the military campaign, the alliance's political solidarity was highly significant, as is the military interoperability that will allow some allies to participate in later stages of the campaign. By reminding Russia of its common interests with the West, moreover, the terrorist attack may help to transform long-hostile NATO–Russia relations and promote peace across the continent. This would in turn make it

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easier for NATO to fulfil its pledge to expand its membership in the coming years, allowing more new democracies of Central Europe to join the Western security community while building strong relations with Russia at the same time. In the 1990s, NATO proved sceptics wrong by adapting to new threats, helping to stop the wars in the Balkans, and reaching out to former enemies. It must now continue that adaptation process and further develop the means to meet the post-11 September challenge. Prior to 11 September, many Americans and Europeans alike regarded mutual defence guarantees, if not the Atlantic alliance itself, as largely anachronistic. Since then, the benefits of having close allies with similar interests and values – and the tools to defend them – are all too clear.

### **Transforming Transatlantic Relations**

Before 11 September, there were serious doubts about the health and future of the Atlantic alliance. With the Cold War over, the most difficult parts of the NATO military mission in the Balkans largely completed (or so it was hoped), and the European Union finally coming together, analysts had begun to wonder whether the Atlantic alliance, and NATO specifically, could endure.<sup>1</sup> First, it was argued, a transatlantic ‘values gap’ was beginning to emerge, with major differences over issues such as the death penalty, the environment, abortion, religion and gun control increasingly dividing allies no longer held together by a common threat. This argument was in fact largely exaggerated, in part a misleading extrapolation of the very narrow electoral victory of the conservative George W. Bush over the more ‘European’ Al Gore. But there was something to it, and it was certainly widely perceived, at least in Europe.<sup>2</sup> A second factor was American ‘unilateralism,’ exemplified by the Bush administration’s rejection or dilution of a wide range of international treaties and agreements – the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention verification protocol, the International Criminal Court and a United Nations agreement on the trade in small arms. The impression given was that the world’s ‘sole superpower’ no longer felt it had to take its allies’ views into account.<sup>3</sup>

The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, and the transatlantic solidarity they provoked, have pushed these debates aside, or at least put them into perspective. Indeed, by reminding Europeans of their common values and interests with the United States (at least relative to much of the rest of the world), and reminding Americans of their enduring need for allies, the explosions in New York and Washington also demolished the myth that the alliance between Europe and America was no longer necessary or possible. In retrospect, the fact that the major transatlantic debates of the late 1990s were about issues like the death penalty or the environment – rather than core political or strategic issues – were signs of the depth and health of the overall transatlantic relationship, rather than of its weakness.<sup>4</sup>

European sympathy and support for the Americans in the wake of the attacks has been impressive, with leaders from across the continent

expressing their 'unequivocal support' for the United States.<sup>5</sup> In Britain, Prime Minister Tony Blair immediately seized the moment and made clear that there would be no distance at all between his country and the United States as it prepared to lead the anti-terrorism campaign.<sup>6</sup> In Germany, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder announced his 'unlimited solidarity' with Washington and spoke of a 'new conception of German foreign policy' that would end the post-war pattern of standing on the sidelines and avoiding military risks.<sup>7</sup> Germany's Foreign Minister, leader of the Greens, supported his country's offer of troops for use in Central Asia, and the left-dominated Bundestag – which had only recently shown its reluctance to support a minor military operation in Macedonia – voted 565–40 to make German military facilities available to the United States for its response.<sup>8</sup> In France, the newspaper *Le Monde*, not known for reflexive Atlanticism, was the first in Europe to declare that 'We are all Americans' and even began publishing a daily full-page analysis in English from the *New York Times*.<sup>9</sup> President Jacques Chirac, the first foreign leader to visit Washington and New York after the strikes, expressed his 'total support' for the United States and did not hesitate to offer French troops.<sup>10</sup>

To be sure, there was also dissent in Europe, and accusations from a range of sources that US policy was to blame for the climate in which the attacks occurred.<sup>11</sup> In early October, demonstrations against the American use of force took place in London, Berlin and several other European capitals. On the whole, however, not only European governments but public opinion as well was strongly supportive of the American response to terrorism including the use of military force. In polls taken in the week following the attacks, 79% of the British, 73% of the French, 66% of the Italians, 58% of the Spanish and 53% of the Germans not only supported the principle of US anti-terrorist military actions, but said their country should take part in them too.<sup>12</sup> A month later, after military action had begun, public support remained strong; in some cases, it had even risen. In Germany in mid-October 2001, some 65% of those surveyed said they supported Chancellor Schröder's call for greater German military participation, including possible German troops in Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> And in France, nearly 70% of the public supported those strikes, and more than half of the French wanted France to play a more prominent military role.<sup>14</sup>

### **The New Meaning of Article 5**

For its first 52 years, NATO never really had to define its central commitment, the Article 5 defence guarantee. Article 5 clearly states that an attack on one ally 'shall be considered an attack against them all.' But the authors of the North Atlantic Treaty never had to contemplate that such an attack might come from halfway around the world, that the victim would be the United States, or that it would be carried out by a terrorist group rather than a state.<sup>15</sup> The meaning of Article 5 was debated briefly during the 1990 Gulf War, when some Europeans questioned whether the commitment would apply to an Iraqi attack on NATO member Turkey in response to coalition air-strikes from Turkish territory. But the question was never formally answered because the attack on Turkey never took place.

Nor was it perfectly clear what the commitment to collective defence entailed. For while the Washington Treaty commits each ally to considering an attack on one an attack on all, it commits them only to taking 'such action as [they deem] necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area'. This somewhat diluted engagement was written in at the insistence of the Americans, who in 1949 wanted to preserve some flexibility in their defence commitment to Europe. Thus, while the original idea may have been that any invocation of Article 5 would necessarily trigger a military operation planned by NATO planners and carried out under the authority of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), there was no automatic or legal obligation to do so.

NATO's response to the 11 September attacks has resolved some of these uncertainties. At the suggestion of Secretary General George Robertson, allies agreed as early as 12 September that the collective defence clause did indeed apply to a terrorist attack on the United States: 'If it is determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States', the allies declared, 'it shall be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty'.<sup>16</sup> With very little public or official debate, NATO had now interpreted Article 5 to include a terrorist attack on a member state.

The question of whether the use of Article 5 implied a collective military response under the North Atlantic Council and SACEUR took only a little more time to answer. In the days following the attacks, it became clear that while the United States appreciated the allies' declaration of solidarity (and interpreted it to imply some military support), Washington had no intention of asking NATO to lead or even be closely involved in the eventual military response. Indeed, at the first high-level briefing provided by Washington to NATO defence ministers, US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz made clear that not only was the United States not interested in using NATO structures (such as the North Atlantic Council or Supreme Headquarters Allied Planning Europe), but it was not planning to rely heavily on European forces either. Wolfowitz instead made clear that the effort 'would be made up of many different coalitions in different parts of the world'.<sup>17</sup> As another senior US official commented, 'I think it's safe to say that we won't be asking SACEUR to put together a battle plan for Afghanistan'.<sup>18</sup>

Wolfowitz's presentation reflected a longstanding mindset in the Pentagon and much of the Republican Party that saw US leadership as essential and European allied support as politically useful but not particularly significant militarily. In this case it was reinforced by what many Americans saw as a key 'lesson' of Kosovo. Whereas many in Europe saw the Kosovo air campaign as excessively dominated by the United States and American generals, most Americans – particularly within the military – saw just the opposite: excessive European meddling, with French politicians and European lawyers interfering with efficient targeting and bombing runs, and compromising operational security.<sup>19</sup> This time, the Bush team determined, would be different. Indeed – and in ironic contrast to previous conflicts like the Gulf War, Bosnia and Kosovo – as the Afghanistan campaign began, the United States actually faced a

situation in which the NATO allies were offering more troops and equipment than the Pentagon, for military and political reasons, wanted to use.<sup>20</sup>

While the Americans did not want to run the Afghanistan campaign as a NATO operation, however, they did want to make more of Article 5 than a symbolic commitment, and in early October the United States presented the allies with a request that they take eight specific measures, individually and collectively, to support the American campaign. On October 4, after having been presented with credible proof from US officials that the attacks were indeed sponsored from abroad, NATO allies agreed to the US request. The measures included:

- enhanced intelligence sharing, both bilaterally and within NATO;
- blanket overflight clearances for US and other NATO aircraft;
- assistance to allies and other states that might be subject to terrorist threats as a result of their cooperation with the United States;
- measures to provide increased security for US facilities in Europe;
- backfilling certain allied assets in the NATO area that might be required elsewhere for the campaign against terrorism;
- access for the United States and other allies to ports and airfields on NATO territory;
- the deployment of standing NATO naval forces to the Eastern Mediterranean; and
- the deployment of NATO airborne early warning-and-control systems (AWACS) to US airspace so that American AWACS could be used abroad.<sup>21</sup>

This was far from a SACEUR-led military operation under the authority of the North Atlantic Council, but it was nonetheless a good demonstration of the value of political commitment and integrated and interoperable military forces. On October 9, the first NATO AWACS, manned by a mostly German crew, arrived to patrol US airspace.

Some may regret the new meaning given to Article 5, either because it was invoked in a case of terrorism or because it was invoked without putting NATO structures to use.<sup>22</sup> And it is true that NATO has now set a precedent that some allies could seek to exploit for their own struggles with terrorism, expanding the original meaning of Article 5. But there were good reasons to invoke the collective defence guarantee in the case of an armed aggression that may have killed more Americans in a single day than any previous 'battle' in American history; not to do so would have left many Americans wondering what NATO was for. And there were also good reasons not to turn to NATO structures: the need for tactical surprise, the need for operational security; the fact that only a few of the NATO countries would actually be providing forces; and the fact that only the United States (and to a much lesser degree Britain) had the types of forces – including cruise missiles, stealth bombers with all-weather and night-flying capabilities, electronic jammers and certain types of precision guided-munitions – that would be useful in the early stage of the campaign. Over time, it will be important for the United States to involve willing allies militarily, both to



take advantage of the capabilities they have to offer (including special forces, supply units, air and materiel support, training, medical and evacuation units, forward base protection, or even ground combat troops) and to anchor their political support. In the short run, however, the Americans and their alliance partners seem to have got the Article 5 issue about right.

### **The Allies and the 'War on Terrorism'**

Even as they express their solidarity with the United States, European leaders have made clear that their commitment to the alliance – even after the invocation of Article 5 – does not mean a 'blank cheque' for Washington.<sup>23</sup> They have views on how the campaign should be prosecuted, and they expect to be 'consulted in advance about the objectives and modalities of action'.<sup>24</sup> While there are obvious differences among and within European countries – and in particular between the British and some on the continent – five main points characterise the general European view of how the campaign against international terrorism should be waged.

First, Europeans emphasise that the response to the 11 September attacks should not primarily be a military one. As French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine has put it, any response must 'not only be punitive but preventative ... to fight against terrorism you must fight against its sources: finances, fanatical and destructive ideologies, situations and crises that provide militants to the terrorists'.<sup>25</sup> Thus, even while agreeing with the need for a military riposte, European leaders foresee a campaign that will primarily involve diplomacy, law enforcement and international intelligence cooperation. European public opinion seemed instinctively to support this view, with a poll done a few days after the attack showing large majorities in Spain (86%), Germany (77%), Britain (75%), Italy (71%) and France (67%) – but only 30% of Americans – preferring 'extradition of the terrorists' to 'military attacks on the countries where the terrorists are based'.<sup>26</sup> This emphasis on the non-military components of the campaign perhaps explains European leaders' initial reluctance to use the word 'war', with its military connotations, to describe the anti-terrorism campaign.<sup>27</sup>

Second, to the extent that Europeans accept that a military response is necessary, they believe it should be limited as much as possible to Afghanistan, and even then as much as possible to precise terrorist targets. 'You can't strike blindly', Chirac warned while on an official visit to Washington, while Joschka Fischer, Lionel Jospin and Alain Richard all emphasised the need for strikes to be 'proportional'.<sup>28</sup> For Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, holder of the rotating EU presidency, the US retaliation had 'to be focussed on terrorist organizations ... It is evident that we will never take part in a wider world conflict'.<sup>29</sup> Whereas many Americans were calling for 'regime change' in Iraq well before 11 September, senior European diplomats warn that a US attack on Iraq would have 'damaging effects on the cohesion of the grand coalition'.<sup>30</sup> Even British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose support for the US effort has been unwavering, has told reporters that there would have to be 'absolute evidence' of Iraqi complicity with al-Qaeda before Britain would support military action against it, and that such evidence did not yet exist.<sup>31</sup> Barring new and

concrete evidence of direct involvement by Iraq, Iran or Syria, Europeans seem highly reluctant to extend the military campaign to any of those countries.

A third and related European point is the need to avoid 'falling into the diabolical trap that the terrorists wanted to set, that of a 'clash of civilizations,' as Védérine put it'.<sup>32</sup> With more than 15 million Muslims resident in EU countries, and given their own painful experiences with Islamic extremist terrorism, Europeans are particularly concerned to stress, as Schröder did in his Bundestag speech, that the West was 'not in a war against the Islamic world'.<sup>33</sup> Tony Blair went on the Arabic TV network al-Jazeera to make this point.<sup>34</sup> Many Europeans thus reacted with dismay when President Bush used the word 'crusade' to describe the American-led campaign, and were reassured by his subsequent efforts, when visiting a Mosque and in his 20 September speech to Congress, to stress that the American adversary was terrorism, and not Islam. The desire to avoid alienating the Muslim world could also help explain Europeans' preference for narrowly defined military objectives: Large majorities in Italy (86%), Spain (84%), Germany (84%), Britain (84%) and France (84%), but only 56% of Americans, have said that military strikes should involve only military, as opposed to civilian, targets.<sup>35</sup>

Fourth, many Europeans stress the need for 'legitimacy' for the response to 11 September, which they believe comes from as broad an international coalition as possible and the approval and involvement of the United Nations. France, for example, went to the UN Security Council as early as 12 September to propose a resolution condemning the attacks and having them declared a 'threat to international peace and security' under the Charter's Chapter VII concerning the use of force. The EU's special 21 September summit also called for 'the broadest possible global coalition against terrorism, under United Nations aegis'.<sup>36</sup> A few weeks later, a British strategy document leaked to the press made clear that even the UK would only take military action that was 'compatible with international law and legitimate self-defence'.<sup>37</sup> This is not a surprising position for Europeans, who had already, during the 1999 debates over the Kosovo War and NATO's new Strategic Concept, stressed the overwhelming importance of the United Nations in legitimising military action. For Védérine and many other Europeans, the Security Council is 'the most legitimate body for defining the world's general counter-terrorism policy'.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Europeans stress the importance of renewed engagement to resolve regional problems – such as Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – if terrorism is to be eliminated. Already before 11 September, European leaders were concerned about the deterioration of the Middle East peace process and calling on the United States to get more involved.<sup>39</sup> This pressure will only increase now, not least because of the European conviction that, while not directly responsible for the attacks, the anger built up throughout the Arab world as a consequence of the suffering of Iraqis and Palestinians contributes to creating a breeding ground for terrorism. Thus, while agreeing on the need for short-term diplomatic, economic and military measures to combat terrorism, the Europeans are also focussed on what they see as its 'root causes'.



While stressing that 'such barbarous acts cannot be justified by any world disorder', French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin probably spoke for many in Europe when he talked about the need for 'more solidarity' in the world and noted that 'in many places, tension, frustration and radicalism are linked to inequality'.<sup>40</sup> As former French Prime Minister Alain Juppé expressed it, 'If we don't make progress toward the solution of these conflicts – and I am mainly thinking of the conflict in the Middle East – we will not be able to permanently eradicate the violence'.<sup>41</sup>

On most of these issues, European leaders are broadly satisfied with the Bush administration's initial response. Many even have the impression – perhaps erroneously – of a new American emphasis on multilateralism, one that contrasts sharply with the unilateralism that marked the administration's first nine months.<sup>42</sup> European support for American policy will be tested in the coming months as the campaign goes on and there is obvious potential for dissent, particularly if the humanitarian situation deteriorates dramatically, casualties begin to mount and the United States takes the campaign beyond Afghanistan. What was striking about the initial phase of the effort, however, was not the degree of dissent but the cooperation among allies who were said to be drifting apart when the terrorist attacks took place. The new situation, in fact, was remarkable: the United States was now undertaking, under NATO's Article 5, a major military action in Central Asia, and the Europeans' main objection was not that they were opposed to the action or to being dragged in, but that they were not themselves more involved.

### **The Impact on NATO Enlargement**

The decision on whether and how to expand NATO membership – one of the main controversies of the mid- to late-1990s – has also been placed in a dramatically new context by the 11 September attacks. Prior to those attacks, there were strong indications that the Bush administration was planning to support a wide enlargement, notwithstanding strong opposition from Russia and from longstanding domestic opponents of the process. In a major speech in Warsaw, Poland on 15 June 2001, Bush asserted that 'all of Europe's new democracies' from the Baltics to the Black Sea should have an equal chance to join Western institutions. He suggested that the failure to allow them to do so would amount to the moral equivalent of 'Yalta' or 'Munich', and appealed to NATO leaders to take a forward-leaning approach to enlargement at their November 2002 summit in Prague.<sup>43</sup> At American urging, alliance leaders agreed to allow NATO Secretary General George Robertson to take the 'zero option' off the table, saying that NATO 'expected' to launch the next round of enlargement at the Prague Summit in 2002.<sup>44</sup>

In the wake of the terrorist attacks, opponents of NATO enlargement will now argue even more forcefully that it should be put off or stopped altogether, particularly since Russian cooperation in the war on terrorism is so important. In fact, the case for enlargement is probably now stronger than before. The NATO allies' solidarity in the campaign against terrorism underlines the importance of having strong, stable partners who can contribute

to common goals. And while cooperation with Russia on terrorism is also critically important, the 11 September attacks have served to remind Russians of the common interests they have with the United States and Europe. This changes Moscow's own calculations about its interests, and already there are signs from Russian leaders that even NATO membership for the Baltic states would not lead to the crisis long predicted by opponents.<sup>45</sup>

Russia's reaction to the new momentum behind NATO enlargement has not, in fact, been as hostile as many expected. Just 24 hours after Bush's Warsaw speech, Russian President Vladimir Putin warmly embraced the American president at a summit in Bled, Slovenia, strongly implying that he did not intend to let enlargement undermine the potential for US–Russia cooperation. Later in the summer, Putin took a further step toward acknowledging the inevitability of enlargement by expressing the view that Russia might itself want to be included in NATO, as a second-best solution to his preferred option of seeing it disappear.<sup>46</sup> Putin went even further in October 2001, as Russian–American cooperation on terrorism was moving forward, saying that if NATO were to continue 'becoming more political than military' Russia might reconsider its opposition to enlargement.<sup>47</sup> This was hardly an expression of Russian support for enlargement (still opposed by the vast majority of Russians), but it was the strongest signal yet that Moscow wants to find a way to accommodate a development that it knows it cannot stop.

None of this, of course, answers the difficult question of just who should get in at NATO's November 2002 summit in Prague, or how the process of accession should be handled. Nor, however, does it provide any reason why NATO should not stick to its declared policy of keeping the door open to all European democracies that are prepared to contribute to European security and meet the obligations of membership. In particular, it would be a mistake to reject the candidacies of the Baltic states – which have made significant economic and political progress and have satisfied the concerns of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe about minorities and human rights. Baltic membership in NATO would pose no threat to Russia, would help consolidate democracy and stability in northern Europe, and most of all would be a strong expression of support for principles and values, at a time when the principled defence of common values seems even more important than when the enlargement debate began.

NATO should also remain open to the idea of Russia itself as a candidate for membership, should Moscow express interest in being considered. Russia is not ready for (and not interested in) NATO membership today, and its long border with China and Central Asia would require NATO to adopt special provisions, such as a geographically limited defence guarantee, before full membership could even be considered. But being unready for membership today is very different from being rejected as a potential candidate for all time. The symbolic message of a NATO open to Russia would, at a minimum, underscore the point that NATO has been trying to make for a long time, and that in the wake of the terrorist attacks may finally be sinking in – that NATO and Russia both need to get beyond the Cold War mindset and work together for peace across the continent.

In the run-up to Prague, NATO needs to hold all its candidates for membership to the highest standard and to decline for now those that do not share the values of the rest of the alliance or that are unwilling to make a potential military contribution proportionate to their size and economic weight. But the current NATO allies' solidarity in the campaign against terrorism – broad political commitment and *ad hoc* military contributions – has underlined the importance of having strong allies who can contribute to common goals.

### Implications for European Defence

The European Union's efforts to develop a credible, autonomous European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – another of the big issues for NATO prior to 11 September – must also be seen in a new light in the wake of the terrorist attacks. Launched at the Franco-British summit at St Malo, France in December 1998, ESDP has been the top defence policy priority for many European members of NATO for the past several years. New, EU-based security organisations – a Political and Security Committee, a European Military Committee and a European Military Staff – have been set up in Brussels, and the Union is developing its 'headline goal' force of 60,000 troops, capable of being deployed with 60 days notice and sustained on mission for at least a year.<sup>48</sup>

On one level, ESDP – not yet fully operational and initially intended for relatively minor humanitarian or peacekeeping missions in or near Europe – would not seem to be very relevant to a major, US-led operation conducted halfway around the globe. In fact, 11 September has at least two important implications for ESDP.

First, because the demands on US forces will require a partial and possibly even total withdrawal of American troops from the Balkans, European military capabilities – possibly even under EU authority – might be called into action a lot sooner than ever envisaged. Just after the Afghanistan operation began on 7 October, the US announced its intention to redeploy ships from the eastern Mediterranean, which the Europeans agreed to replace as part of the Article 5 commitment. Washington also let it be known that it might need to draw down other units involved in the Balkan operation – such as specialised medical units in Kosovo, drones and other surveillance aircraft, and counter-terrorism forces – for use in the Central Asian theatre.<sup>49</sup> More significantly, it was clear that if more American combat troops or other types of forces or equipment were required in Afghanistan (or some other Middle Eastern operation in a later stage of the campaign), the Americans might withdraw from the Balkan operations altogether, leaving Europeans in charge. Senior Pentagon officials had, in fact, already sought to turn NATO's Macedonia operation over to the EU, but the plan was shelved after opposition from Europeans.<sup>50</sup>

A sudden and total American disengagement from the Balkans is both unlikely and undesirable. As leading US military officers in the region have pointed out, at present only the United States has the deterrent credibility to ensure continued peace in the region.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the US military – designed to be able to fight and win two major wars at once – should be able to conduct the Central Asia campaign without the 8,500 troops it currently has in Bosnia

and Kosovo. To the extent that the United States would still be expected to get involved again if there were renewed fighting, via an 'over-the-horizon' air capability for example, it would not make sense to exclude Washington from the political and strategic control of the operation, which would result from its formal transfer from NATO's North Atlantic Council to the European Union. Far better to continue to 'Europeanise' the Balkan missions, possibly even to include turning over part of it to European forces acting under the EU, but keeping an overall NATO umbrella for the Balkans.

Transferring the whole Balkans operation to the ESDP, however, is no longer just a theoretical possibility. After all, a 'new division of labour' in which the United States deals with major contingencies and the Europeans undertake peacekeeping in Europe is not only the goal of the Pentagon, but was exactly what George W. Bush and his senior foreign policy advisors called for in the 2000 electoral campaign.<sup>52</sup> It also reflects the view of many on Capitol Hill, where support for long-term American involvement in the Balkans has never been high. As one US official recently put it, reflecting a widespread view in Washington, 'What is the point of a European Security and Defence Policy if it cannot manage a situation like Bosnia?'.<sup>53</sup> At a minimum, Europeans will need to be prepared to take on more of the burden of Balkan peacekeeping than they were bearing before 11 September. Under certain circumstances, they might be asked to take it over altogether.

The second main implication of the terrorist attacks for ESDP concerns European defence capabilities. One of the main criticisms of ESDP in its early stages – heard as much from Europeans as from their American allies – was that, because of non-defence budgetary priorities, the project risked emphasising institutions rather than actual military capabilities. While Europeans were conscious of the issue and pledged to address it, falling or stagnant military budgets in many EU member states was cause for concern. In this context, the 11 September attacks provided a tragic reminder that the world is still a very dangerous place, and that distant and high intensity military operations are not merely the stuff of American fantasies. Europeans will have to take this into account as they proceed with the development of ESDP.

Already before 11 September, EU defence ministers had made good progress in identifying their most critical military deficiencies. These included strategic airlift and sealift; in-air refuelling (among EU members, only the UK and France have a significant number of in-air refuelling tankers); precision-guided munitions (not just laser-guided but especially Global Positioning System-guided, which can work in bad weather); reconnaissance planes and satellites; long-range cruise missiles (presently only available to Britain with a French–British programme underway); a dedicated capability for Suppression of Enemy Air Defences (SEAD), such as the American high-speed anti-radiation (HARM) missile; mobile target acquisition; aircraft carriers; and a capability for secure, classified communications.<sup>54</sup> These priorities – especially those needed for force projection, high-intensity combat and improved interoperability with the Americans – will need to be reviewed and reconsidered, and even more importantly, fulfilled in the wake of 11 September.

Previously, it may have seemed acceptable for Europeans to maintain their relative emphasis on peacekeeping while relying on the Americans to provide the strategic lift and high-technology forces, but that approach now seems less viable. Whether to take over from NATO in the Balkans, to better contribute to the US anti-terrorist campaign abroad, or to do some other, unforeseen mission that the United States is now even less likely to be able to deal with, European military capabilities will need to be better funded and more diverse than under current plans.

## Conclusion

Throughout its history, NATO has shown an impressive ability to adapt to changes in its geopolitical environment. In the 1990s in particular, the alliance reached out to former enemies via enlargement and the Partnership for Peace, took on new and important missions in the Balkans, and adapted its internal organisation – through command structure reform, the adoption of Combined Joint Task Forces for ‘coalitions of the willing’, and new relationships with European forces either via the former Western European Union or now with ESDP. And just as previous developments have obliged the alliance to adapt, 11 September and the conflict that has followed it will require NATO leaders to think boldly and creatively about how to keep the alliance relevant to the most critical missions of the day. The eleventh of September, in fact, does not require a radical transformation of the alliance’s mission or purpose, but it does imply the need for some significant new emphases and rapid acceleration of an adaptation process that in some ways was already underway.

First, NATO needs to re-emphasise that new threats such as international terrorism are a central concern to member states and their populations – with implications for defence planning, political solidarity and allied action. NATO leaders had already recognised in the 1991 Strategic Concept that ‘alliance security must also take account of the global context’ and that ‘alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disruption of the flow of vital resources and actions of terrorism and sabotage’.<sup>55</sup> NATO made essentially the same point in the 1999 Strategic Concept, this time moving ‘acts of terrorism’ to the top of the list of ‘other risks’.<sup>56</sup> This is not to say that any act of terrorism or threat to energy supplies can or should be treated as an Article 5 contingency for which all allies are obliged to contribute troops. In past decades, whenever one NATO member tried to invoke mutual solidarity for what it perceived to be global interests – the French in Indochina and Algeria in the 1950s or the Americans in Vietnam in the 1960s – the result was only tension and resentment within the alliance. It does mean, however, that all allies recognise that their common interests and values can be threatened by global developments, a point made dramatically clear by the attacks on Washington and New York. Even if invocations of Article 5 will no longer necessarily mean a formal NATO operation under NATO command, the concept that ‘an armed attack’ from abroad must trigger solidarity among the member states is an important development that must be maintained and reinforced.

Second, NATO members must accelerate the process of adapting their military capabilities for new missions. At NATO's April 1999 summit, the allies adopted a Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) designed to improve allied forces' deployability, mobility, sustainability, survivability and effectiveness.<sup>57</sup> The DCI process identified some 58 areas in which allies were asked to make concrete improvements in their forces to fill specific gaps in allied capabilities. But the DCI process never really had political visibility and many of the projects became bogged down at the bureaucratic level. In Europe, far more attention was paid to the EU's own Capabilities Commitment Conference process, but even that process had uncertain political support. In the wake of 11 September, both processes need to be accelerated, given political impetus and better integrated with each other. Not only do the Europeans need to make the improvements in capabilities mentioned above if they want to join effectively with the United States in the anti-terrorism campaign, but the EU process needs to be integrated fully with NATO's. Otherwise the current problems with interoperability – resulting from an incipient transatlantic 'technology gap' – will get even worse.<sup>58</sup> Europeans have had legitimate complaints about not being fully involved in the first stages of the military operations in Afghanistan, but such involvement will only become more difficult in the future if American and European military capabilities continue to diverge.

Third, NATO needs to develop its capacity to deal with the specific issue of terrorism, a process long resisted by European allies who worried about giving the alliance too great a 'global' or 'political' role. In fact, there are great limitations on the role NATO can and should play in this area – issues of law enforcement, immigration, financial control and domestic intelligence are all well beyond NATO's areas of competence and should be handled in other channels, notably those between the United States and the EU (which have been strengthened since 11 September). There are several areas, however, in which NATO anti-terrorism capabilities can and should be strengthened. While there will always be severe limitations on the degree to which allies with good intelligence will be willing to share it with large groups of others, the NATO Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Centre – set up in 1999 – can be used as a useful clearing house for information about nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, as well as ballistic missile programmes. Civil defence and consequence-management planning – which NATO has done for years – also fall into the area of those tasks which need additional focus. And NATO needs to look at ways better to coordinate the various member-state special forces, whose role in the anti-terrorism campaign will be critical. During the Cold War, few could have imagined the need for American and European special forces to travel halfway around the world and execute coordinated attacks, but that is now a very real requirement. Special forces will have to play a greater role in future NATO military exercises, and the more experienced allies can contribute to the development of the special forces of smaller and less experienced ones.

Finally, the post-11 September era calls for far greater cooperation between NATO and Russia. As noted above, significant progress is already



being made in this regard, as seen in Putin's apparently new attitude toward NATO enlargement and his agreement with Secretary General Robertson to set up a new forum to expand NATO–Russia cooperation.<sup>59</sup> In another sharp break with the recent past, Moscow has also agreed to get NATO's help in restructuring its armed forces, long resisted by Russia's conservative defence establishment, but an area where NATO has much to offer as it has one with other former Soviet bloc states.<sup>60</sup>

NATO should seek to build on this new momentum and propose more far-reaching cooperation that could transform Russia's relationship with the West. This could include exchanges of information on civil defence cooperation (both sides have much to learn from each other), cooperation and training among NATO-member and Russian special forces, Russian involvement in collaborative armaments programmes, and other NATO–Russia joint military exercises. Given extensive Russian knowledge about weapons of mass destruction (not least because of its own extensive biological and nuclear weapons programmes), Moscow could perhaps even be associated with the NATO WMD Centre, where NATO members and Russians would share relevant information about common WMD threats. Over time, and in particular if the once-divisive Balkans remain stable, the NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council could provide a forum for genuine Russian involvement in NATO decision-making, and meetings among the key NATO countries and Russia could start to become an informal 'security council' that would make Moscow feel more fully involved. In the wake of the tragedies of 11 September, the prospect that Russia could feel that it is part of the West – rather than threatened by it – is an opportunity that should not be missed.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For a good discussion, see Ivo H. Daalder, 'Are the United States and Europe Heading for Divorce?', *International Affairs* 77, 3 (Summer 2001) pp. 553–67.
- <sup>2</sup> See, for example, Dominique Moïsi, 'The Real Crisis Over the Atlantic', *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 4 (July/August 2001), pp. 149–53; and William Wallace, 'Europe: the Necessary Partner', *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 3, (May/June 2001) pp. 16–34. For a good rebuttal, see Antony J. Blinken, 'The False Crisis Over the Atlantic', *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 3 (May/June 2001), pp. 35–48.
- <sup>3</sup> See Wallace, 'Europe: the Necessary Partner'; Jessica Matthews, 'Estranged Partners', *Foreign Policy* (November–December 2001), pp. 48–53; and the discussion in Daalder, pp. 560–63.
- <sup>4</sup> See this argument in Karsten D. Voigt, 'The Labor Pains of a New Atlanticism', *Transatlantic Internationale Politik* 2/2000, pp. 3–10.
- <sup>5</sup> See European Union, *Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001*, EU, Brussels, 21 September 2001; Warren Hoge, 'Outpouring of Grief and Sympathy for Americans is Seen Throughout Europe and Elsewhere', *New York Times*, 14 September 2001; and William Drozdiak, 'EU Leaders Back Attacks on Afghanistan', *Washington Post*, 20 October 2001.
- <sup>6</sup> See T.R. Ried, 'Blair Embraces a New Role As a Chief of War on Terror', *Washington Post*, 9 October 2001.
- <sup>7</sup> See Peter Finn, 'Germany Sheds Its Backseat Military Role', *International Herald Tribune*, 12 October 2001.
- <sup>8</sup> See John Vinocur, 'Schroeder Urges Europe to Stand Against Foes', *International Herald Tribune*, September 20, 2001; 'Germany 'Rules Out No Option'', *International Herald Tribune*, 20 September 2001; and Schröder's Bundestag speech, 'Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder', Berlin, 19 September 2001.
- <sup>9</sup> See Jean-Marie Colombani, 'Nous sommes tous américains', *Le Monde*, 12 September 2001.
- <sup>10</sup> See 'Jacques Chirac annonce la participation des forces françaises', *Le Monde*, 7 October 2001.
- <sup>11</sup> See, for example, Marie-José Mondzain, 'Je ne me sens pas américaine', *Le Monde*, 18 September 2001; Ignacio Ramonet, 'Guerre Totale Contre un Péril Diffus', *Le Monde Diplomatique* (October 2001), p. 1; and the discussion in Steven Erlanger, 'In Europe, Some Say the Attacks Stemmed from American Failings', *New York Times*, 22 September 2001.
- <sup>12</sup> See the 14–15 September Gallup poll, 'L'opinion publique internationale et la riposte américaine aux attentats du 11 septembre', [www.sofres.com](http://www.sofres.com).
- <sup>13</sup> Thirty percent of Germans were opposed. See the poll taken by the ZDF television station, 'Oktober-Politbarometer im Detail', [www.zdf.de/politik/politbarometer/54283/index.html](http://www.zdf.de/politik/politbarometer/54283/index.html).
- <sup>14</sup> See '55% des Français pour un engagement national accru', *Le Figaro*, 15 October 2001.
- <sup>15</sup> See Antony J. Blinken and Philip H. Gordon, 'NATO is ready to Play a Central Role', *International Herald Tribune*, 18 September 2001.
- <sup>16</sup> See 'Statement by the North Atlantic Council', NATO Press Release, 12 September 2001; and Suzanne Daley, 'For First Time, NATO Invokes Joint Defence Pact with US', *New York Times*, 12 September 2001.
- <sup>17</sup> See Judy Dempsey, et. al., 'White House Avoids Seeking NATO-Wide Aid', *Financial Times*, 27 September 2001.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> See, for example, Dana Priest, 'The Commanders' War: Bombing by Committee; France Balked at NATO

- Targets', *Washington Post*, 20 September 1999; and General Michael C. Short, interview with *Frontline*, available at [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/short.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/short.html), February 1998. Also see Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), p. 220–23; and the general discussion in General Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).
- <sup>20</sup> As the US bombing began in early October, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and several other European countries were offering a range of aircraft, ships and troops, most of which were not incorporated into the American attack plan—often to the frustration of the European governments offering them. Interviews with European defence and foreign policy officials, October 2001. On some of the specific offers, see Suzanne Daley, 'Europeans Pledge Troops, if Necessary', *New York Times*, 9 October 2001; and Alexander Nicoll, Robert Graham, Judy Dempsey and Hugh Williamson, 'Allies firm up military roles', *Financial Times*, 4 October 2001.
- <sup>21</sup> Interviews with NATO member government sources, October 2001.
- <sup>22</sup> See the NATO diplomats cited in Judy Dempsey, 'EU doubts grow over 'switch' in Nato role', *Financial Times*, 19 September 2001; and Charles Grant, 'Does this War Show that NATO No Longer Has a Serious Military Role?', *The Independent*, 16 October 2001.
- <sup>23</sup> The words of Tony Blair's press spokesman cited in Suzanne Daley, 'A Pause to Ponder Washington's Tough Talk', *New York Times*, 15 September 2001.
- <sup>24</sup> Jacques Chirac's words after his 18 September White House meeting, cited in Patrick Jarreau and Raphaëlle Bacqué, 'Jacques Chirac réaffirme à Washington l'offre de coopération de la France', *Le Monde*, 19 September 2001.
- <sup>25</sup> See the interview with Védérine published as 'Le monde entier reconnaîtra que les Etats-Unis sont en situation de légitime défense', *Le Monde*, 18 September 2001.
- <sup>26</sup> See the 14–15 September Gallup poll, 'L'opinion publique internationale et la riposte américaine aux attentats du 11 septembre', [www.sofres.com](http://www.sofres.com).
- <sup>27</sup> For Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel (holding the EU presidency), the European Union was 'on watch' and 'mobilized' but it 'was not at war.' French Defence Minister Richard also went out of his way in the days following the attack to avoid using the word, as did Jacques Chirac at his 18 September visit to the White House. See Suzanne Daley, 'A Pause to Ponder Washington's Tough Talk', *New York Times*, 16 September 2001; and John Vinocur, 'Crisis Gives Chirac and Schroeder a Political Lift', *International Herald Tribune*, 19 September 2001.
- <sup>28</sup> See Patrick Jarreau and Raphaëlle Bacqué, 'Jacques Chirac réaffirme à Washington l'offre de coopération de la France', *Le Monde*, 20 September 2001. For Jospin see Daniel Vernet, 'Matignon est plus prudent que l'Elysée sur un éventuel engagement militaire; Solidarité totale, mais pas de cheque en blanc, tel est la position prise par les deux têtes de l'exécutif', *Le Monde*, 26 September 2001. For Fischer and Richard, see Niall Ferguson, 'America's Struggle Will Be Long', *International Herald Tribune*, 21 September 2001.
- <sup>29</sup> Television interview cited in Paul Hofheinz and Yaroslav Trofimov, 'Remarks from Europe Suggest Support for US-Led Bombing May be Slipping', *Wall Street Journal*, 18 October 2001.

- <sup>30</sup> Cited in Karen DeYoung, 'Allies are Cautious on 'Bush Doctrine', *Washington Post*, 16 October 2001.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> See 'Le monde entier reconnaîtra que les Etats-Unis sont en situation de légitime défense', *Le Monde*, 18 September 2001.
- <sup>33</sup> John Vinocur, 'Schroeder Urges Europe to Stand Against Foes', *International Herald Tribune*, 20 September 2001.
- <sup>34</sup> See Alan Cowell, 'Blair, Using Arabic TV, Says War is Not on Islam', *New York Times*, 9 October 2001.
- <sup>35</sup> See 'L'opinion publique internationale et la riposte américaine aux attentats du 11 septembre', [www.sofres.com](http://www.sofres.com).
- <sup>36</sup> 'Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001', EU, Brussels, 21 September 2001.
- <sup>37</sup> See Karen DeYoung, 'Allies are Cautious on 'Bush Doctrine', *Washington Post*.
- <sup>38</sup> See 'Le monde entier reconnaîtra que les Etats-Unis sont en situation de légitime défense'.
- <sup>39</sup> See 'Hubert Védrine: 'L'attentisme des Etats-Unis les fait ressembler à des Ponce Pilate'', *Le Figaro*, 30 August 2001.
- <sup>40</sup> See Pascale Robert-Diard, 'Lionel Jospin: 'Aucun désordre mondial ne peut justifier la barbarie de tels actes'', *Le Monde*, 28 September 2001.
- <sup>41</sup> Juppé cited in Raphaëlle Bacqué, 'Droite et gauche refusent un engagement sans condition derrière les Etats-Unis', *Le Monde*, 17 September 2001.
- <sup>42</sup> Discussions with various European officials. Also see Védrine's comments that in the White House meetings with Chirac and the French delegation, 'George Bush and Colin Powell no longer spoke in a unilateralist manner', in Claire Tréan and Daniel Vernet, 'Dans un entretien au Monde, le chef de la diplomatie française revient sur son voyage à Washington', *Le Monde*, 22 September 2001.
- <sup>43</sup> See 'Remarks by the President in Address to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University', Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland, 15 June 2001; and Frank Bruni, 'President Urging Expansion of NATO to Russia's Border', *New York Times*, 16 June 2001.
- <sup>44</sup> See 'Statement to the Press by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson', NATO, Brussels, 13 June 2001.
- <sup>45</sup> See Philip H. Gordon and James B. Steinberg, *NATO Enlargement: Moving Forward after September 11*, Brookings Policy Brief, forthcoming.
- <sup>46</sup> See Peter Baker, 'Putin Offers West Reassurances and Ideas on NATO', *Washington Post*, 18 July 2001.
- <sup>47</sup> See Gareth Jones, 'Putin Softens Opposition to NATO Expansion', Reuters, 3 October 2001.
- <sup>48</sup> For background, see Gilles Andréani, Christoph Bertram, and Charles Grant, *Europe's Military Revolution* (London: Centre for European Reform, March 2001); and Michael Quinlan, *European Defence Cooperation: Asset or Threat to NATO?*, Wilson Forum (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001).
- <sup>49</sup> See Keith B. Richburg and DeNeen L. Brown, 'Radar Planes From NATO To Patrol US Coast', *Washington Post*, 9 October 2001.
- <sup>50</sup> Interviews with administration officials.
- <sup>51</sup> See the American commanders cited in James Dao, 'Americans Plead to Remain in Bosnia', *New York Times*, 22 October 2001.
- <sup>52</sup> See the call for a 'new division of labor' by campaign foreign policy adviser and now National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice: 'The United States is the only power that can handle a showdown in the gulf, mount the kind of force that is needed

to protect Saudi Arabia and deter a crisis in the Taiwan Straits. And extended peacekeeping detracts from our readiness for these kinds of global missions.' Cited in Michael R. Gordon, 'Bush Would Stop US Peacekeeping in Balkan Fights', *New York Times*, 21 October 2000.

<sup>53</sup> Unnamed US official cited in Charles Grant, 'Does this war show that Nato no longer has a serious military role?'

<sup>54</sup> Discussions with European defence officials. Also see David S. Yost, 'The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union', *Survival* vol. 42, no. 4 (Winter 2000–01), pp. 97–128; and Ministère de la Défense, *Les Enseignements du Kosovo* (Paris: Délégation à l'information et à la Communication de la Défense, November 1999).

<sup>55</sup> See *The Alliance's New Strategic Concept*, North Atlantic Council in

Rome, 7–8 November 1991 (Brussels: NATO), para. 12.

<sup>56</sup> See *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*, Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington DC on 23–24 April 1999, Press Communiqué NAC-S(99)65 (Brussels: NATO), para. 24.

<sup>57</sup> See Washington Summit Communiqué, Press Communiqué NAC-S(99)64, Brussels, 24 April 1999, para. 11.

<sup>58</sup> For some examples of the costs of the technology gap, see Yost, 'The NATO Capabilities Gap', pp. 97–128.

<sup>59</sup> See Gareth Jones, 'Putin Softens Opposition to NATO Expansion', Reuters, 3 October 2001.

<sup>60</sup> See Judy Dempsey, 'Moscow asks Nato for help in restructuring,' *Financial Times*, 26 October 2001.