Guaranteeing Europe's security?

Enlarging NATO again*

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Summits of heads of government and state can be grand and important affairs, where leaders meet to take and ratify important decisions. NATO will next hold such an event in November 2002 in Prague, where some or all of the nine applicant states in central and eastern Europe will be invited to join the alliance.[1] NATO summits generally see the announcement of grand initiatives. In Washington in 1999 the fiftieth birthday summit, although overshadowed by the war in Kosovo, nevertheless saw a number of initiatives, including a new strategic concept, the Defence Capabilities Initiative, and the Balkans Stability Pact. The Madrid summit in 1997 saw the formal invitation issued to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to join the alliance. Three years earlier, in Brussels, the heads launched the Partnership for Peace programme. At the 1991 summit, in Rome, both the New Strategic Concept and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council were inaugurated. In London in 1990 a 'Declaration' was issued, offering a 'hand of friendship' to the East. And so on. In short, summits mean commitments and agreements.

Much is expected of the Prague summit in terms of commitments to further enlargement. Of course, the alliance remains open to new members under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, and in the period up to the mid-1990s five countries had already acceded: Greece and Turkey in 1952, West Germany in 1955, Spain in 1982 and East Germany following the unification of the Germanies at the end of the Cold War. It was reasonable to expect, therefore, that once the Warsaw Pact had collapsed and NATO had survived, further discussion regarding enlargement would be on the agenda. The Brussels 1994 NATO summit document had noted that NATO leaders 'expect and would welcome NATO expansion'.[2]

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[1] The nine applicants for NATO membership are Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Macedonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

[2] Declaration of the heads of state and government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, 10–11 Jan. 1994, para. 13, in *NATO Handbook 1995* (Brussels: NATO, 1995).

Immediately following this, President Clinton promised in Warsaw that it was no longer a question of if NATO would expand, it was just a question of when.[3] Although the 1995 NATO *Study on Enlargement* did not give a clear answer to the 'when' question, it clarified the 'who' a little with its focus on states characterized by 'democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law'.[4] By this point, according to James Goldgeier's detailed study of the Clinton administration, the United States was driving the process of enlargement with some intensity.[5] At the 1997 Madrid summit, not only were the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland invited to join NATO but the alliance committed itself to revisit the issue of further enlargement at its next summit.[6] In the declaration issued at that next summit the NATO heads of state and government stated that 'Our Alliance remains open to all European democracies, regardless of geography, willing and able to meet the responsibilities of membership, and whose wider inclusion would enhance overall security and stability in Europe.'[7] Further, the Membership Action Plan (MAP) was inaugurated to assist applicants to prepare for admission.[8] Regardless of sets of arguments against further enlargement, there is no question that the process of widening the membership of the alliance is now a fundamental pillar of post-Cold War NATO policy. The US ambassador to NATO, Alexander Vershbow, stressed 'the continuity of the Alliance's enlargement policy' in the aftermath of the Washington summit. 'For the past five years, the gradual enlargement of NATO has been a strategic priority for the United States and for the Alliance as a whole.'[9]

A major theme for the alliance in 1999 was thus that enlargement was a process: one that began formally in 1994, and one that would continue. In this respect, the text of the Washington summit communiqué is of particular importance. Applicants were commended in an order that could have been interpreted as a reference to the level of support for their candidature within the alliance. At the top, the alliance 'recognise[d] and welcome[d] the continuing efforts and progress in both Romania and Slovenia'. Next, it 'also recognise[d]

[3] Bill Clinton, quoted in Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler and F. Stephen Larrabee, 'NATO expansion: the next steps', *Survival* 37: 1, Spring 1995, p. 7.

[4] Study on NATO Enlargement, 1 Sept. 1995, para. 70, <www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/enl-9501.htm>.

[5] James Goldgeier, *Not whether but when: the US decision to enlarge NATO* (Washington DC: Brookings, 1999).

[6] Paras 9 and 10, Madrid declaration on Euro-Atlantic security and cooperation issued by the heads of state and government, 8 July 1997: M-1(97)81 at <www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97–081e.htm>.

[7] The Washington declaration, issued by the heads of state and government participating in the North Atlantic Council meeting in Washington DC, 23–4 April 1999: <www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99–063e.htm>.

[8] Applicants must participate in the Partnership for Peace programme with NATO, and the MAP process helps to identify a series of activities under this heading from which applicants might choose. The MAP also requires applicants to submit an annual report on their preparations for membership, provides a structure for feedback and advice, and ensures that applicants' efforts can be measured against targets (although those targets do not add up to a checklist). Author's interviews, NATO headquarters, Feb. 2001; see Klaus-Peter Klaiber, 'The Membership Action Plan: keeping NATO's door open', *NATO Review* 47: 2, Summer 1999, pp. 23–5; see also the briefing document on enlargement and the MAP at <www.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/opendoor.htm>.

[9] Vershbow, quoted in 'US view of NATO enlargement and the Baltic states', *Security Issues Digest* no. 90, 7 May 1999, <usa.grmbl.com/s19990511n.html>.

and welcome[d] continuing efforts and progress in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania'. At the third level came reference to the 'positive developments' in both Bulgaria and Slovakia. Finally came the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to whom NATO was 'grateful for the co-operation' and Albania, whose cooperation was 'welcome'.[10] Such rhetoric further fuelled expectations that enlargement was not a one-off event but rather a process that would continue through subsequent waves.

Enlargement is a theme to which each foreign ministers' meeting of the North Atlantic Council has thus paid due deference. For example, in May 1998 in Luxembourg, after noting that 'the door remains open to NATO membership', the ministers pledged to 'continue our intensified dialogues on an active basis with those nations that aspire to NATO membership … we will keep the process under continual review'.[11] In Brussels in December 1999, the ministers stated that 'the Alliance expects to extend further invitations in coming years'.[12] By the meeting in Florence in May 2000, the ministers had become 'all the more convinced that our decision to enlarge was an important strategic choice … The three countries which joined in 1999 will not be the last'.[13] And in Budapest in May 2001, the pledge was renewed when we were told that 'The Alliance expects to extend further invitations in coming years … each being considered on its own merits.'[14] Thus, in June 2000, Ambassador Vershbow could state quite plainly that 'Continued NATO enlargement is an essential part of the Alliance's strategy for unifying and stabilizing Europe.'[15] In December 2000, outgoing Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told the North Atlantic Council that 'I am confident that … we will keep our pledge that the first new members will not be the last.'[16]

Is it, then, inevitable that more countries will be invited to join the alliance in Prague? In short, it is. The NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, declared in June 2001 that 'NATO hopes and expects, based on current and anticipated progress by the aspiring members, to launch the process of enlargement at the Prague summit in 2002. In other words, the so-called "zero option" is off the table.'[17] This followed President Bush's statement to the North Atlantic Council in which he had stated that at the Prague summit 'We should continue

[10] Washington summit communiqué, para. 7, <www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99–064e>.
[11] Final communiqué, ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in Luxembourg, 28 May 1998, para. 3: M-NAC(98)59, <www.nato.int/docu/pr/1998/p98–059e.htm>.
[12] Final communiqué, ministerial meeting of the NAC in Brussels, 15 Dec. 1999, para. 23: M-NAC2(99)166, <www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99–166e.htm>.
[13] Final communiqué, ministerial meeting of the NAC in Florence, 24 May 2000: M-NAC1(2000)52, para. 34, <www.nato.int/docu/pr/2000/p00–052e.htm>.
[14] Final communiqué, ministerial meeting of the NAC in Budapest, 29 May 2001: M-NAC1(2001)77, para. 50, <www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01–077e.htm>.
[15] Department of State, Washington, file; Ambassador Vershbow on NATO enlargement, ESDI, Krakow, 1 June 2000: <www.nato.int/usa/ambassadors/s20000607.htm>.
[16] Madeleine Albright, 'Intervention at the North Atlantic Council', 14 Dec. 2000, <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2000/s001214b.htm>.
[17] Lord Robertson, 'NATO: managing the challenges of today, and tomorrow', speech at the Mayflower Hotel, Washington DC, 20 June 2001: <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s010620a.htm>, p. 2.

to include new members able and willing to strengthen our Alliance. No state should be excluded on the basis of history or geography … And we should look ahead, beyond Prague, to our vision of a truly united Europe.'[18] In his widely reported speech in Warsaw, Bush said,

> I believe in NATO membership for all of Europe's democracies that seek it and are ready to share the responsibility … The question of 'when' may still be up for debate within NATO; the question of 'whether' should not be … [at the Prague summit] the United States will be prepared to make concrete, historic decisions with its allies to advance NATO enlargement. As we plan the Prague summit, we should not calculate how little we can get away with, but how much we can do to advance the cause of freedom.[19]

NATO enlargement, then, will happen at Prague. This article argues that such a step is problematic, not least because there are so many issues on the European agenda at present, such as the use of military force following the 11 September attacks in New York and Washington, that the 2002 timing is less than ideal. But the enlargement debate is being driven by summit timetables.

It is particularly important that Europeans take a clear and concerted line on the issue of NATO enlargement. The European Union is itself in a phase of intense development. The Helsinki headline goals designed to create a deployable EU military force must be achieved by 2003, and there is much work to do not only to ensure the realization of force levels, but also in terms of developing operational plans and scenarios. The EU is also embarked upon a process of enlargement, with a wave of entrants possibly arriving in time to participate in the 2004 European parliamentary elections.

This article argues that it is in the interests of the west Europeans to manage with great care the processes of enlargement that have been unleashed and that will be accelerated by the decisions and declarations made in Prague. By May 2002 the third round of NATO's Membership Action Plan assessments will be complete; without careful management, confused messages could damage trans-atlantic relations, disappoint the nine states that have expressed an enthusiasm to join the alliance, and enhance the feeling of exclusion felt in Moscow, and possibly also in Kyiv.

There are three key sets of reasons why the EU states (and the EU itself) should be in favour of managing NATO's further enlargement by devising a medium-term strategy. The first focuses on the interests of the EU itself. This is not to suggest an agenda in conflict with the non-EU members of NATO; rather, it is to argue that there are sets of commitments that have been entered into, and upon which the EU must deliver. Developing a security policy and achieving enlargement should be in the interests of all NATO members. Second, there are important military reasons, connected with the vitality of the

[18] George W. Bush, 'Excerpted remarks to the North Atlantic Council', 13 June 2001: <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s010613g.htm>.

[19] George W. Bush, 'Remarks at University Library, Warsaw', 16 June 2001: <www.allied.be/usa/president/s20010615b.htm>.

alliance itself, which dictate caution in the modalities of further enlargement. Third, in the wider European dimension, current policy needs to be relevant to a potentially growing pool of applicants, conceivably including Russia.

EU interests

Beginning a set of arguments concerning NATO enlargement with a section on EU interests might seem provocative. But it should not be seen as such. Europe is in the midst of crucial political developments and its own enlargement must come to fruition in the next few years. However, the enlargement of the two organizations has not been coordinated. That both NATO and the EU took decisions on enlargement in 1997 'was largely fortuitous. The decisions were taken within separate institutional frameworks, under distinct sets of pressures'.[20] Coordination is crucial, as is delivery. The next couple of years, moreover, will show whether the EU's Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) can be developed on the basis of a cooperative relationship with NATO, or whether it cannot. That is, a cooperative relationship, with at least tacit support for Europe's security pretensions from the Bush administration, is a prerequisite not for reaching the Helsinki goals, but for the European rapid reaction force to be usable in any significant way. If the construction of Europe is to develop in the security field, Europe has no alternative to working with Washington and NATO institutions. But the development of a CESDP could also be useful to NATO, in terms of levering reform in the alliance in such fields as defence planning, the status of European commanders and the treatment of non-allied Europeans in non-Article V operations. In short, the CESDP can also be about Europeanizing NATO.[21] This is particularly so as the strategic implications of the 11 September attacks are worked through. As the United States pursues its 'global war on terror', Europe's responsibilities on the continent will grow. Hence the EU and NATO must increasingly be seen as a pair.

The development of an EU security entity has developed fitfully over the past decade. The Maastricht Treaty of 1991 produced a delicate balance between a French view that sought to develop security policy in the Union through the European Commission and a British view that sought to enhance the Western European Union in order to strengthen NATO. The Petersberg Declaration, in June 1992, carried forward this delicate balancing act, limiting the scope of European defence to crisis management actions and recognizing that NATO would remain free and able to take on such tasks, while expressing

[20] Anthony Forster and Robin Niblett, 'Concepts of European order after the Cold War: in with the old, out with the new', in Robin Niblett and William Wallace, eds, *Rethinking European order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 49.

[21] At the EU capabilities commitment conference in November 2000, British defence secretary Geoff Hoon stated that 'What is being done is going to make NATO stronger, not weaker', and this was endorsed by German foreign minister Joschka Fischer: 'We need a strong European pillar [in NATO] … This is part of the European integration process.' See Jeffrey Ulbrich, 'EU pledges troops, gear for military force', *Washington Post*, 21 Nov. 2000.

the willingness to develop dual-purpose forces within NATO to allow for use under either type of command.

Why is the CESDP so reliant on NATO? Quite simply, because of the interplay of financial constraints and limited military capabilities. In the long run, it may (or may not) be desirable for the EU to develop a military force that is comparable with NATO, and that therefore duplicates NATO assets and structures. But a legitimate debate over whether this is desirable is premature at this stage. What is clear-cut is that it is not in Europe's interests to develop its CESDP in opposition to NATO—either in Washington or Brussels. Part of the problem is the assets that the Europeans lack. James Graff wittily but cruelly entitled his piece in *Time* on Europe's Helsinki goals 'Ready, aim … react'. He argued that CESDP explicitly followed 'Europe's widely lamented inability to project its will without American help in Bosnia and later in Kosovo'.[22] The EU's Headline Goal Task Force (HTF) 2000 Report identifies crucial gaps at the strategic level: in sea and air lift; in intelligence collection assets; and in command and control assets. These are supplemented by tactical level shortfalls in SEAD (suppression enemy air defence), air-to-air refuelling, CSAR (combat search and rescue), PGMs (precision-guided munitions), and cruise missiles. Despite the shock of 11 September, EU member states are not going to invest in the levels of resource required to meet these shortfalls over the next five years.[23] And although the EU is open to contributions from applicants, none of those possesses the necessary requirements either.[24]

In the foreseeable future, the EU force is not going to be able to engage in global missions without depending heavily on the United States. As a consequence, EU planners no longer concern themselves with scenarios that are defined by distance. Developing WEU work from 1996, EU planners examined scenarios based on operations 6,000 km, 4,000 km and 2,000 km from Brussels. The longer range incorporates much of Afghanistan and Central Asia, and a large portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The shorter distance will, if the projected enlargements take place, not reach the eastern border of the enlarged Union. But most significantly, the Union does not plan to engage in simple peacemaking. There is a belief that, to be a serious and useful military tool, it would have to be able to engage in the separation of parties by force (SOPF) as well as assistance to civilians (humanitarian and evacuation operations) and preventive deployment. SOPF operations, separate from NATO, would be impossible in a global context, and so EU planners consider that the CESDP would have its realm of action focused on areas 'in and around Europe'.[25] But

[22] James Graff, 'Ready, aim … react', *Time* (Europe) 156: 23, 4 Dec. 2000.
[23] Interviews, Brussels, Sept. 2001.
[24] At the capabilities commitment conference in November 2000 Turkey offered up to 6,000 troops, the Czechs offered chemical warfare specialists, commandos and transport helicopters, and Slovakia said it could provide 450 men; similar offers came from Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Malta. Iceland and Norway, in NATO but not the EU, also made offers. Russia did not. Ian Black, 'Turkey heads a scramble of EU hopefuls to bolster new force', *Guardian*, 22 Nov. 2000.
[25] Interviews in Brussels, Feb., April 2001.

even a SOPF operation in south-eastern Europe would not be possible in the foreseeable future for an EU force—without the risk of large casualties—in the absence of NATO support.

It is, therefore, manifestly in the interests of the EU that a cooperative relationship with NATO and Washington be developed. Only on that basis will a CESDP force be usable in the foreseeable future. This does not mean that the EU would always be militarily subservient to the United States and NATO. But it is the only way to have a CESDP with a rapid reaction force in the near term.

Three important implications follow from this conclusion. First, NATO planners should be involved in the preparations for any European operation. If an EU SOPF operation goes wrong, there should be little doubt that NATO would be called upon to put it right. Therefore it is reasonable that the organization's voice be heard at an early stage. Of course, this will cause discomfort in Paris and it must not affect the substance of Europe's choice. But the alternative is either to alienate the United States and consequently make the EU force non-deployable (it needing NATO assets), or massively to increase defence spending in the EU countries. It is clear that, far from leading to a significant increase in defence spending, CESDP is being thought about in terms of 'what can we do for the same money'.[26]

Second, it is important that the EU is serious when it talks about its military force. The EU is committed, at the highest level, to having a militarily operational force. To many in Washington, this is seen as being unrealistic, encapsulating everything that is wrong with ESDP in the dominance of political rhetoric over military reality. The lack of command and control, assessment and review processes will make it hard for the EU to mount an operation in the very short term unless that mission were to be led by one state—in which case it would not be an EU operation. In short, it pays to match rhetoric with reality, to build credibility, and to prepare the ground for any decision that needs to be taken about actual deployment.

Third, the importance of CESDP is raised further in the light of the implications of the 11 September attacks, and the consequent likelihood of Europeans taking greater responsibility for peacekeeping on the continent. NATO enlargement is likely to include states that will have little to contribute in military terms. The dilution of NATO—with the United States playing a more global role and new members able to contribute relatively little—adds further urgency to the requirement for a positive EU–NATO relationship.

These factors necessitate a political discipline in the CESDP debate so far manifestly lacking. They also require a focus and a serious decision. What needs to be achieved in the next three years in the EU's engagement with foreign and security policy? The development of a serious rapid reaction force, and the enlargement of the Union, must both be completed by early 2004 (thus allowing new members to participate in the 2004 European parliamentary

[26] Ibid.

elections). This is the crucial requirement for the Union. Debates over NATO enlargement are at best a distraction; at worst they threaten to provoke disunity within Europe and between Europe and the Bush administration. The fiasco that was the Madrid summit in 1997 should serve as a serious warning here. In the preparations for the summit, European agreement was notable by its absence. In an area of discussion critical to developing relations on the continent, the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy was at best an irrelevance. Argument raged over whether to invite Romania and Slovenia to join the alliance along with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. France supported the Romanian and Slovenian case. Germany tried to steer a course between France and Britain, which supported the American assertion that Romania and Slovenia had to be excluded. German support for Slovenia was more than matched by Italian support, although Rome was more lukewarm on Romania. Paris raised the stakes by linking its possible return to the integrated military command of NATO to the extension of membership to Romania and Slovenia plus the appointment of a European, rather than an American, commander of Allied Forces South (AFSOUTH). Other south European states supported Slovenia and Romania's case along with the French, but opposed Paris over the AFSOUTH command.[27] On some counts, the Romanians and Slovenians secured the support of nine states; but Europe's public disharmony was resolved simply, some might say as usual, by decision. Europe, and the alliance, looked divided at the very moment of what was supposed to be triumph. Such overt disharmony should not be repeated.

There is a greater possibility of more European unity in the 2002 round of NATO enlargement. In 1997 the historical symbolism of enlargement as the manifestation of the 'return to Europe' for the central Europeans was potent and the political stakes were high, revolving around the nature of the alliance itself. These matters do not weigh as heavily in 2002 as they did five years earlier.[28] But the history of NATO is littered with intra-European and transatlantic squabbling over far lighter matters than the extension of security guarantees, which remain at the core of the North Atlantic alliance.

Military constraints

NATO is by far the most powerful and dominant military organization in contemporary world politics. But that position has never obviated serious concern about the alliance's military coherence. There are two major dimensions to this concern: the question of the internal reform of the alliance (and the consequent contribution that new members could make organizationally); and

[27] For more on this, see Gale Mattox and Daniel Whiteneck, 'The ESDI, NATO and the new European security environment', in James Sperling, ed., *Europe in change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 132–3.

[28] For a very persuasive analysis of this point, see Jiri Sedivy, 'The puzzle of NATO enlargement', *Contemporary Security Policy* 22: 2, Aug. 2001, pp. 1–26.

the issue of the military effectiveness of NATO's forces, and how that might be enhanced by the addition of new members. Both issues will be considered in turn.

The internal reform of the alliance is not a new issue. In Rome in November 1991, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet and Warsaw Pact 'threat', the alliance issued a New Strategic Concept.[29] Although the political presentation emphasized the radical nature of this document, it was actually quite conservative; indeed, one of the central concerns for NATO planners at that time was the 'danger' of a possible reconstitution of Soviet/Russian military force over the next couple of years.[30] But strategic change was met by demands for political change, and notably the need to deliver a 'peace dividend' in the light of the collapse of Europe's Marxist–Leninist states.

These dimensions presented NATO planners with two challenges. Since 1994 NATO's long-term study on adaptation has struggled to define and conceptualize future security risks to which NATO would be able to respond (following Soviet collapse) while reducing the size of the integrated command structure (to save resources and deliver the peace dividend).[31] This work was carried out in a context of increasing demands and the usual alliance political in-fighting. On demands, in June 1992 NATO ministers decided that the alliance could be an actor in peace support operations.[32] At the January 1994 NATO summit, the principle of the Combined Joint Task Force concept was established, which required intensive work on operational elements to develop a command structure to support actual deployments.[33] On the politics of reform, it is clear that issues of political status and ambition for the nations concerned often act counter to purely military requirements in respect of the number of headquarters, their national location and the nationality of senior commanders. Hence, following the announcement of proposals for the reform of the command structure, Karl Feldmeyer argued that it did not represent the result of the objective demands of military efficiency, but rather had been an exercise in the redistribution of political influence among the allies.[34]

How might further enlargement play into this complex situation? First, the greater the expansion of the alliance, the greater the need for continued internal reform; and the history of the last few years makes it obvious that this will be a

[29] 'The alliance's New Strategic Concept', press communiqué S-1(91)85, 7 Nov. 1991: Brussels, NATO Press Service.

[30] For an analysis, see Stuart Croft, 'NATO and nuclear strategy', in Colin McInnes, ed., *Security and strategy in the new Europe* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[31] On this point, see e.g. Thomas-Durell Young, 'NATO's double expansion and the challenge of reforming NATO's military structures', in Sperling, ed., *Europe in change*, esp. pp. 103–11. For an 'official' account, see Anthony Cragg, 'Internal adaptation: reshaping NATO for the challenges of tomorrow', *NATO Review*, 45: 4, July–Aug. 1997, pp. 30–5.

[32] Final communiqué, North Atlantic Council, Oslo, 4 June 1992, M-NAC-1(92)51 (Brussels, NATO Press Service), para. 11.

[33] Press communiqué, NATO declaration of heads of government and state, Brussels, 11 Jan. 1994, M-1(94)3 (Brussels, NATO Press Service), para. 9.

[34] Karl Feldmeyer in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 Aug. 1996, cited in Young, 'NATO's double expansion', p. 106. Author's interviews, NATO headquarters, Sept. 1997.

highly political process. Consensus will be hard to reach as more players struggle to influence the number of headquarters, their national location and the nationality of senior commanders in their own national political interest. This is not primarily a problem of the new members' demands; it is a problem of the demands of existing members. Negotiations over which states should be invited to join the alliance in 1997 were completed in part after compromises in areas not directly linked to enlargement, notably the reorganization of NATO's command structure.[35] But there is the question of the organizational contribution of new members. Will larger numbers, in an alliance characterized by decisions reached through consensus, slow the machine simply by multiplying the diplomatic nuances?[36] And will a larger number of members change the character of the alliance in other ways? There have long been complaints about the free-rider problem in NATO, where states contribute in effect nothing of value to a particular goal, relying on the 'big' states. Will this tendency be enhanced? And what of the 'easy rider' problem, where new states contribute something, but too little to make a difference?[37] Some of the reassurance that might be secured on these points concerns the efforts made by states to align themselves with NATO and the United States in preparation for enlargement. Nevertheless, while Hungary agreed to raise its defence spending to 1.8 per cent of GDP by 2001 (well below the NATO median of 2.0 per cent), it actually achieved either 1.7 per cent (according to NATO) or just 1.3 per cent (using SIPRI data).[38] Even Poland did not escape criticism for its actual level of adjustment in 2001.[39]

It is fairly clear that the last round of enlargement produced some surprising results in terms of the additional work that still needs to be carried out in order to integrate those three states into the alliance—surprising, in that few believed that the process would be as difficult as it has turned out to be. Within a year of the new states joining the alliance, it was felt that 'Practical and political problems have overwhelmed the process. Nato's new armies in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are under-funded, badly equipped and often unready for action, blunting the appetite for more members.'[40] Binnendijk and Kugler argued that a failure to get this right would have a serious impact on the next enlargement debate.[41] James Sherr argued that 'More than three years after the Madrid summit, it would still be rash to say that these countries [the new members]

[35] See Thomas S. Szayna, *NATO enlargement 2000–2015* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), p. 19.

[36] On similar dilemmas in the EU, see Anand Menon, 'Bigger not better', *Guardian*, 30 July 2001. Menon argues that governments 'are going to have to be far more honest in acknowledging both the importance of the EU system and the threat that enlargement poses to it'. Much the same could be said in the NATO context.

[37] On these issues, see Joseph Lepgold, 'NATO's post-Cold War collective action problem', *International Security* 23: 1, Summer 1998, pp. 78–106; Joanne Wright, 'Trusting flexible friends: the dangers of flexibility in NATO and the Western European Union/European Union', *Contemporary Security Policy* 20: 1, April 1999, pp. 111–29.

[38] Cited by Szayna, *NATO enlargement*, p. 21, n. 30.

[39] Editorial, *Financial Times*, 14 May 2001.

[40] Christopher Lockwood and Tim Butcher, 'NATO puts plans for eastward enlargement on hold', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 2000.

[41] Hans Binnendijk and Richard Kugler, 'NATO after the first tranche: a strategic rationale for enlargement', *Strategic Forum* 149, National Defense University, Oct. 1998, esp. pp. 2–3.

possessed competent, self-confident and mature defence and security elites, let alone integrated defence and security systems.'[42] In 2000 Smith and Aldred described the result as 'enlargement becalmed'.[43] In February 2001 Lord Robertson made known the dissatisfaction of the NATO machine with Czech progress.[44] And this among the states that are the most developed and pro-NATO in central and eastern Europe. How much more difficult would the same process be with states whose reform process has not developed very fully, such as Romania?[45] To maintain the coherence and dynamism of the alliance, a concept of 'digestibility' of new members could to be considered. Digestibility depends not only upon an ability to reform defence structures and foreign and defence policies; it is also dependent upon the economic prospects, and the social and political cohesion, of the countries concerned—in respect of both the NATO option and the dynamics of negotiations over EU membership—the reality or otherwise of violence in the locality, and last but certainly not least, NATO's ability to integrate states into the functioning system of the alliance.

NATO is embarking upon its third round of assessments under the Membership Action Plan, with a view to producing a report in May 2002.[46] But it is not difficult at this point to make an evaluation in advance. Insufficiency would be the central theme. Insufficient reform of military structures on the part of the applicants would be evident. Insufficient investment in systems that would enable the applicants' forces to be able to communicate with those of NATO would be identified. And in some cases, insufficient political will to come to terms with the tasks involved would be noted. This is not a great insight. In his analysis of the first round of enlargement, that which included the most advanced states in the region, Jeffrey Simon concluded that political ambition was the key driver, with military modernization a mere 'derivative' of the process; that only 15 per cent of the new members' forces had been transformed into something recognizable to NATO; and that the application of NATO's standard agreements simply overwhelmed the capacities of the new members to cope.[47] So, incorporating the last round of new members was difficult; and, in short, none of the current applicants could be easily 'digested' by the alliance.

Care should be taken not to apportion blame generally from such an analysis. More has been done in the Baltic republics than in Romania, for example. Other states, such as Albania and Macedonia, have had more pressing security problems. It is also important not to underestimate the scale of the work

[42] James Sherr, 'NATO's new members: a model for Ukraine?' *Conflict Studies* research paper G86, Sept. 2000, p. 1.
[43] Martin A. Smith and Ken Aldred, 'NATO in south east Europe: enlargement by stealth?' *Global Security Studies* 1 (London: King's College London Centre for Defence Studies, May 2000).
[44] See Sedivy, 'The puzzle of NATO enlargement', p. 100.
[45] Interviews, Bucharest, March 2001.
[46] The NAC meets with senior members of each applicant's government in the spring, progress is reviewed, and a consolidated progress report is produced for the May ministerial meeting.
[47] Jeffrey Simon, 'Partnership for Peace: after the Washington summit and Kosovo', *Strategic Forum* 167, Aug. 1999, p. 3. See also Jeffrey Simon, 'The new NATO members: will they contribute?', *Strategic Forum* 160, April 1999.

involved. Even the newest members of the alliance might not pass the scrutiny of this test. But they had an advantage in the accession process over the current nine applicants—that of political digestibility.

The 1997 round of NATO enlargement arguably came too late, in a political sense. By the end of 1994 it was fairly clear to all that there would be an enlargement, and that Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary would almost certainly be the beneficiaries. From that point it took almost three years to ratify the decision—and even then ratification came about only because of a political assessment that these three states would fit into NATO decision-making structures, that necessary adjustments to their defence structures could be achieved with relative ease, and that it was important to demonstrate in concrete political terms that the alliance was relevant to the post-Cold War world, had a contribution to make and was open to new members. Few of those political calculations that made the first round of new entrants look digestible exist now.

The alliance has to face some tough questions. First, the Kosovo war showed just how limited NATO is as an alliance. Is a membership of 19 now too cumbersome? Does it hinder the effective use of military force?[48] Would an alliance of 20-plus exacerbate this problem further? The Americans conducted some 80 per cent of the air war despite NATO's European members spending around 60 per cent of the US total on defence, which represents some 20 per cent of global military expenditure. With the limited exception of the British and French, the output of this expenditure is entirely committed to Europe. There are 2.4 million people in NATO Europe's armed forces, 1 million more than in US NATO forces; but, as Kosovo showed, that expenditure represents poor value—certainly nothing like the value obtained by the United States.[49] And the resource is poorly deployed. In the German army, for example, capital spending per soldier (on equipment and firepower) is around 25 per cent of the US level.[50] More importantly, in the conflict with Serbia it was *American* plans that came into action, rather than those of NATO. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Kosovo war was an American operation under a NATO flag. That reality is very uncomfortable both for the United States and for European members of the alliance. Why should America have to commit so much to peace enforcement in Europe? It was also uncomfortable for the NATO organization, which was bypassed by American planners, and later 'supplemented' by British spin doctors to enhance the public presentation of its case.

Second, there is the difficult relationship with the EU. Or rather, there might be. There has been a vulnerability within the Union to the French desire to maintain as much distance as possible between the CESDP and NATO, for fear of a cultural infection of transatlanticism from NATO. Turkey has sought to prevent NATO expertise from being drawn upon by the EU, fearing that the

[48] See Sedivy, 'The puzzle of NATO enlargement', p. 6.

[49] François Heisbourg, 'European defence takes a leap forward', *NATO Review* 48: 1, Spring–Summer 2000, pp. 8–11.

[50] François Heisbourg, 'While Germany points the way to strong self-sufficiency', *International Herald Tribune*, 24 May 2000.

CESDP might be used in the eastern Mediterranean without Ankara having a formal role in any EU decisions on the matter.[51] Relations at a working level between the two organizations have nevertheless developed well since their inauguration in July 2000.[52] The meeting of EU defence ministers on 6 April 2001 decided to recognize the reality of the importance of the NATO relationship, formally approving the development of relations with the alliance ahead of those with other third parties, such as the UN and Russia. But thorny issues loom on the horizon: notably, the nature of the autonomy of the CESDP, and any interrelationship politically with the United States' National Missile Defense. The debate about autonomy—to which a commitment was made at St Malo—boils down to two positions.[53] Either it means an operation conducted entirely by the EU without recourse to other organizations such as NATO—which sets the demands for EU capabilities very high, and threatens political argument with Washington—or it could be seen as a political rather than a military concept, referring to the autonomy of the EU in *decision-making* over an operation, which could then be *conducted* with the support of other organizations and states. NMD threatens to be a political counterweight, with the Bush administration unwilling to accept the development of a CESDP under the first interpretation of autonomy alongside continued European criticism of NMD. Of course, there is an element of unreality about this. CESDP might not be delivered in practice, and NMD might prove to be technically unfeasible. But there is the potential for transatlantic argument here that has not been as strong and overt since the early 1980s.

Third, and related to the above, there is no clear idea of how to address decision-making structures in a new, further enlarged NATO. The alliance has always worked because the European members have allowed the Americans to make it work. But in the future there will be four categories of states in the alliance: the United States; EU members pursuing a CESDP that might not always seem compatible with NATO; new members who cannot be militarily integrated into the alliance, and who sit outside the EU awaiting membership; and states capable of causing great procedural complication, such as France traditionally, and Turkey more recently. There is no purpose in NATO expanding to look like the EU without learning the lesson that decision-making structures are important, and the United States should not be depended upon to sort them out on its own.

[51] On Turkish criticism of the EU force, see e.g. Michael R. Gordon, 'Turkey offers troops to new European force, with a proviso', *New York Times*, 22 Nov. 2000; Ian Black, 'Veto threat to EU force', *Guardian*, 21 June 2000.

[52] By May 2001 four meetings had taken place between the NAC and the EU Political and Security Committee: final communiqué, ministerial meeting of the NAC in Budapest, n. 14, para. 43.

[53] In the St Malo declaration, the two countries agreed that 'the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises': Franco-British summit, joint declaration on European defence, para. 2, <www.fco.gov.uk/textonly/news/newstext.asp?1795>. See also Paul J. Teunissen, 'Strengthening the defence dimension of the EU: an evaluation of concepts, recent initiatives and developments', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 4, 1999.

From a perspective of military effectiveness, then, enlargement should occur only if it does not undermine efficiency and decision-making. This is hardly a new insight: the 1995 NATO *Study on Enlargement* argued that the enlargement process should not lessen the 'Alliance's political or military capability to perform its core functions of common defence as well as to undertake peace-keeping and other new missions'.[54] But decisions and declarations that accelerated enlargement at Prague could do just that.

The wider Europe: Russia and the applicants

In many analyses of NATO enlargement the dilemma of managing the Russian reaction to any additional expansion is fairly explicit. Certainly Russian reaction to the Prague summit will need careful thought. Some significant analysts take the view that too much has already been given to Moscow. They argue that the inclusion of Russia in some aspects of alliance discussion—through the Permanent Joint Council—threatens the very essence of NATO.[55] Henry Kissinger, for example, holds that involving the Russians in deliberations, and conceding conditions to enlargement concerning the non-deployment of forces on the territory of the latest members, will bring about what he terms 'dilution' of the alliance.[56]

It is not necessary, though, to take such a fundamentalist position to suggest that Russian perceptions and policies should not be *determinants* of NATO policy. On three occasions in the past five years Russia has indicated its unwillingness to accept NATO or Western security policy in particular areas in the strongest possible diplomatic language. Dire threats of serious security repercussions, including the 'forward' deployment of military forces, were uttered. And yet, on each occasion, when the moment was appropriate, Russia accepted compromise. First, the extension of NATO membership to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland was seen to be the source of fundamental opposition; but that was eventually set aside in the Paris Agreement of 1997 establishing the Permanent Joint Council. Then NATO's involvement in conflict in Kosovo was deemed to be a fundamental turning-point in Russian–NATO security relations; but by the autumn of 2000 the NATO–Russian PJC was in operation as it had been before the conflict.[57] And then Russia objected fundamentally to President Bush's National Missile Defense system; only to agree, in July 2001 at the Genoa G8 summit, that actually it was an issue over which there could be negotiation. This is not to argue that there are no fundamentals in Russian

[54] Study on NATO enlargement, para. 4.

[55] The NATO–Russia Founding Act was signed in Paris on 27 May 1997. It established the Permanent Joint Council, a monthly meeting between NATO and Russia to consult, coordinate and, where possible, take joint action on 'issues of common interest', The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation (Brussels: NATO, 1997).

[56] Henry Kissinger, 'The dilution of NATO', *Washington Post*, 15 May 1997.

[57] Interviews, Brussels, May 2001. Lord Robertson and President Putin agreed to re-establish the Council at their meeting in Moscow in February 2000: see Ewen MacAskill, 'NATO strives for role after Cold War', *Guardian*, 14 March 2000.

security policy; but it is worth bearing in mind that sometimes issues that appear to be fundamentals are actually not that fundamental to Moscow. Reflecting this, President Bush has said clearly in relation to enlargement that 'no third state should have a veto'.[58]

However, even accepting this, it is clear that the course of relations among NATO, western Europe and Russia relations could be complicated by certain patterns of NATO enlargement that might be legitimized at Prague. An invitation to any or all of the Baltic republics to join the alliance at Prague would be difficult for Moscow. Diplomatic confrontation with Russia is thus an inherent part of NATO's continuing enlargement policy. But this, of course, conflicts with NATO's desire to develop a positive relationship with Russia. Avoiding exacerbating the Russian sense of exclusion must therefore be a key part of the enlargement strategy. The most likely way to achieve this balance is to stress NATO's political function over its military, and to announce as large an increase in NATO's membership as possible in Prague to avoid constantly returning to the issue thereafter. Following the attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September, and close US–Russian cooperation in their aftermath, some feared that the Baltic republics would pay the diplomatic price.[59] In fact, just the opposite seems likely. President Putin has announced that the impact of global terrorism is leading Russia to take 'an entirely new look' at NATO enlargement. He went on: 'If NATO takes on a different shade and is becoming a political organization … we would reconsider our position with regard to such expansion, if we are to feel involved in such processes.'[60] Thus the possibility of a Russian application for NATO membership re-emerges, although Prime Minister Blair's suggestion of a 'Russia/North Atlantic Council', made in November 2001, could be an alternative.[61]

There are, of course, many options from which a design for enlargement may be selected at Prague. Thomas Szayna produced a RAND study which considered the dimensions of the characteristics of those states that had applied for membership. He based the analysis on declared NATO criteria, extent of strategic exposure, severity of military problems and ability to address those problems, and quality of contribution to NATO operations. On these grounds, Szayna argued that the Slovenian case for entry is the strongest, closely followed by that of Slovakia. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania then emerge as medium- to longer- term candidates, followed by Bulgaria and Romania. Further behind lie Macedonia and, at the back, Albania.[62] This looks remarkably like the 'league table' enunciated in the Washington communiqué of 1999, with the exception

[58] George W. Bush, 'Excerpted remarks to the North Atlantic Council'.
[59] See e.g. J. Michael Lyons, 'Terrorist attacks could affect NATO expansion', *Baltic Times*, 20–26 Sept. 2001; interviews, Riga, Sept. 2001.
[60] Quoted in William Drozdiak, 'Putin eases stance on NATO enlargement', *Washington Post*, 4 Oct. 2001. See also Ian Black, 'Russian resolution', *Guardian*, 5 Oct. 2001.
[61] See e.g. Alexander Nicoll, 'Blair seeks closer links between Russia and NATO', *Financial Times*, 17 Nov. 2001.
[62] Szayna, *NATO enlargement*, pp. 49–145.

that Romania has fallen behind significantly. From this framework a pattern can be determined allowing for a series of waves of enlargement, perhaps four or even five, over a period of up to 15 years.

There is, however, an alternative to such a structured process of sequential enlargement. The applicant states met in Vilnius on 19 May 2000 and issued sets of principles focusing on the solidarity and cooperation that they would develop in their collective search for admission to NATO. That is, they seek admission *together* not in waves, but in a stream. This position was reiterated in Brussels in December 2000.[63] In May 2001 13 states from central and eastern Europe met to consider how to pursue the case for membership of the alliance collectively,[64] producing a torrent of supportive comments from NATO countries and their allies. The Czechs came out in support of Slovak entry, the Poles for the Slovenes, the Danes for the Latvians and other Baltic states; France has supported the Croatian case, and non-NATO Finland advocated membership for the Baltic republics.[65] Such enthusiasm is understandable, though it makes the response to these demands appear to be at best ad hoc. But it strengthens the position of the applicants' argument for a 'big bang' approach to NATO enlargement: that is, that all should be invited to join NATO at the Prague summit.[66]

The applicants for NATO membership have thus constructed a political debate in which they all seek a decision on speedy admission to the alliance. The articulation of the 'open door' policy by NATO and member governments has supported this approach. In a sense, given its rhetorical declarations, NATO has little alternative. Were any applicants to be left out, with what language would this be explained? Would it impact negatively upon reform processes? Yet there is no agreed rationale as to why NATO ought to expand this far. The commonly held line that in this fashion NATO exports stability and democracy has come under significant challenge.[67] NATO faces a process of continual enlargement; and, with Russia's apparent change of position, one with no readily apparent limits.

Conclusion

It is important to be clear as to the implications of this analysis. It is possible to draw the conclusion that NATO should not enlarge again—or at least, that if it

[63] See joint statement of the foreign ministers of Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, Brussels, 15 Dec. 2000: <www.nato.int/pfp/sk/statement121500.htm>.

[64] The nine applicants, plus the three central European new members of NATO, plus Croatia.

[65] See, respectively, the statements by President Havel, 11 May 2001 (BBC Monitoring, 14 May 2001); Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, 10 May 2001 (BBC Monitoring, 10 May 2001); Defence Minister Bronislaw Komorowski, 11 May 2001 (BBC Monitoring, 14 May 2001); Croatian Prime Minister Ivica Racan's report of a meeting with Prime Minister Jospin, 14 May 2001 (HINA News Agency, Zagreb, reported in BBC Monitoring, 14 May 2001); President Tarja Halonen on 10 May 2001 (BBC Monitoring, 10 May 2001). See also Breffni O'Rourke, 'NATO: politicians pushing for Baltic membership', Radio Free Liberty, <www.rferl.org>, 5 Sept. 2001.

[66] Some have sought to accept this as a framework, and then produce differentiation within it: see esp. Sedivy, 'The puzzle of NATO enlargement', pp. 18–20.

[67] See e.g. Dan Reiter, 'Why NATO enlargement does not spread democracy', *International Security* 25: 4, Spring 2001, pp. 41–67.

does, any expansion should be delayed into the far future. This option is simply off the political agenda. NATO is committed to a process of enlargement; and even if political leaders were to think about changing their minds, the prospect would do such damage to NATO's credibility that they would surely shy away from doing so. In short, it is important to engage in debate over the questions of *how* enlargement should happen.

A different perspective holds that the flaw lies not with an ongoing process of enlargement, but rather in the lack of strategy surrounding the management of the issue. NATO will be enlarged, probably to include all current applicants, and that list of applicants will probably grow beyond the current nine. But it should do so with an eye to three sets of processes: the enlargement of the European Union; the development of NATO–EU interaction on security matters; and, of course, the development of a structured interface between Russia and both NATO and the EU.[68] In an already overcrowded diplomatic agenda, this is a tall order.

Thus an enlargement strategy needs to be developed for Prague and beyond. It must, of course, be concerned with a focus on the invitation to particular states; but it must also take into account the impact upon other applicants, on Russia, on the reform of the alliance itself, and centrally on the processes of enlargement and defining a security identity within the EU. The conditions are not ideal for the identification and articulation of such a strategy. The time frame is too tight; particularly after the events of 11 September, other demands on the international agenda are too great. NATO has been allowed to fall into exactly the trap against which Karl-Heinz Kamp warned in 1998: too many expectations have been raised, in too many states, with criteria that are too loose; and as a consequence, NATO is entrapped in a continual process of enlargement regardless of the impact upon the organization's military and political effectiveness, the relationships with the EU and Russia, and a sense of overall purpose.[69] A key task, then, must be to begin to 'un-trap' NATO.

How might this be done? Perhaps through a series of stages, a medium-term strategy can be outlined at Prague that will assist with the management of the sets of difficult dilemmas that enlargement produces. First, who should be invited to join at Prague? Much must depend upon the military evaluation on the MAP, but it is likely to include at least seven of the nine applicants. When should they join the alliance? A three-year period of preparation does not seem unreasonable, looking to a summit in perhaps 2005 or even early 2006 for this purpose. What should be said about the other applicants? No commitments should be made for that 2005/6 summit, for fear that countries like Austria and Ukraine might feel under pressure to apply, but the 'open door' policy must be reaffirmed.

[68] See Stuart Croft, Jolyon Howorth, Terry Terriff and Mark Webber, 'NATO's triple challenge', *International Affairs* 76: 3, July 2000.

[69] Karl-Heinz Kamp, 'NATO entrapped: debating the next enlargement round', *Survival* 40: 3, Autumn 1998.

Moving the next set of decisions to 2005 is crucial. This is beyond the next wave of EU enlargement, and beyond the point when the EU's rapid reaction force must be operational. It also allows for a key debate to take place. Is it safe to bet on alliance mechanisms working as they do at present, with perhaps 28 members? Probably not. Some hold that American leadership is *the* key to NATO.[70] But regardless of opinion on that point, there needs to be an urgent review of the operations of alliance decision-making in the context of a larger membership. Were that to be inaugurated at Prague, it would represent a serious commitment to the furtherance of an enlargement strategy.

Prague is thus a crucial summit not only for the decisions that will be taken, but also for the discourse on enlargement. Decisions on this matter in Prague have largely been set up by the nature of the commitments given at the Washington summit and reinforced subsequently. The statements about the future made in Prague must therefore be very carefully crafted, to ensure that the process is manageable by the NATO organization and its members over the next few years.

[70] For an examination of this and other factors, see Celeste A. Wallander, 'NATO after the Cold War', *International Organization* 54: 4, Autumn 2000, pp. 705–35.