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NATO Review

In the wake of Iraq

Contents

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*NATO member countries with the exception of Turkey recognise the Republic of Macedonia as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Rebuilding relationships

Tim Garden examines the political impact of the Iraq campaign and ways forward for all institutions involved.

The rapid military victory by American, Australian and British forces, with limited support from a few other nations, has left a wider reconstruction task than just rebuilding Iraq. The diplomatic damage in the run-up to the war has caused deep divisions between old allies. These rifts were reinforced as nations decided whether to give tangible support to the military operation. Now in the post-conflict phase, disagreements have simmered over the role of international institutions in nation-building in Iraq.

From war to peace: Even in victory, disagreements remain over the role of international institutions in post- war Iraq (© Crown Copyright)

Yet the need for a coherent international approach has rarely been more important. The threat from al-Qaida-linked terrorism has not gone away. The Middle East is still an area of potential conflict. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains a problem, particularly as North Korea abandons international restraints to develop its own nuclear capability. In looking for paths to renewed cooperation between old allies, the European Union and the United Nations both have critical roles to play in helping mend fences. And NATO can take a lead in engaging the key national players as they seek greater security in the world.

United Nations

When historians look back at the past year, they may conclude that the tactical success in bringing the United Nations into the debate over a war in Iraq was a strategic mistake. The diplomatic process, which eventually achieved a unanimous Security Council vote for UNSCR 1441, encouraged many to believe that the United Nations was in the driving seat for policy towards Iraq. But US President George Bush had also made it clear that he believed: "The world must move deliberately, decisively to hold Iraq to account. We will work with the UN Security Council for the necessary resolutions. But the purposes of the United States should not be doubted."

The United States was impatient for decisive action; the United Kingdom wanted UN authority for military action; France and Germany led the call for more time for the inspection process. The attempt to achieve a further resolution to give explicit authority for military action was unsuccessful. Hard bargaining by the United States failed to achieve the necessary nine votes, and, in any event, France made it clear that, if necessary, it would exercise its veto. The United Kingdom and the United States opted to use UNSCR 1441, and previous resolutions on Iraq, as their authority for military action.

This failure of diplomacy has had a series of unfortunate consequences. In the United States, antipathy towards the United Nations has increased. In answer to President Bush's question on the future of the United Nations, many in his administration had their beliefs in its irrelevance confirmed. Although unexpectedly countries like Canada and Mexico had taken a tough stand in the Security Council, the anger was directed at France and Germany. Both American and British politicians chose to use anti-French feelings in the run-up to the conflict as a way to deflect public interest from the issue of whether military action was legitimate. Russia has also remained unconvinced by the rush to war. Moreover, questions about the legitimacy of the intervention refuse to go away as the search for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction has failed to yield the proverbial "smoking gun".

The United Nations, nevertheless, has a major role to play in legitimising whatever form of government emerges in Iraq. It must eventually verify that weapons of mass destruction are no longer there. It can draw on its expertise for dealing with humanitarian needs, making the battlefields safe, and encouraging the involvement of non-governmental organisations. Selling Iraqi oil to provide for the people will need UN endorsement. The near unanimous agreement by the Security Council on UNSCR 1483 on 22 May 2003 is perhaps the first sign that the international community

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is ready to move forward together in a more coherent way over Iraq, whatever the previous differences.

European Union

While world leaders were publicly falling out at the United Nations in New York, the dispute within the European Union was rather more refined. The Greek Presidency, Foreign Policy High Representative Javier Solana and External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten had all expressed the European Union's preference for a diplomatic rather than an early military solution to Iraq. Yet the embryonic common foreign and security policy mechanism could do little to paper over the wide division among EU members. Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom eagerly backed the US push for military action. At the end of January, their leaders, together with those of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, signed a joint letter published in *The Wall Street Journal* expressing that support. Belgium, France and Germany strongly opposed the rush to war.

In a more complex set of divisions, the prospective new members of the European Union were brought into the dispute. The declared coalition of 44 countries supporting military action comprised Afghanistan, Angola, Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,* Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan. This gave rise to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's unfortunate characterisation of a division between "Old Europe", represented by France and Germany, and "New Europe" drawn from grateful Eastern European states. French President Jacques Chirac added fuel to the flames by suggesting that pro-US candidate countries were "badly brought up", and hinting that their EU membership applications might need reviewing.

EU optimists hope that the crisis over Iraq policy will promote a greater push towards coherent European foreign policy positions. Some small hopeful signs emerged even during this turbulent period. The European Union took over the modest but important stabilising mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* from NATO on 1 April 2003. If this goes well, there is an expectation in the longer term that the European Union will progressively take on greater responsibility for peacekeeping in the Balkans. Despite the megaphone diplomacy between London and Paris over Iraq, some reinforcement of their joint push for a more serious European defence capability could be seen during the meeting between UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Chirac at Le Touquet, France, in early February.

EU pessimists point to the lack of progress in providing the military capabilities which Europe needs. After initial enthusiasm to allocate standing forces to meet the Helsinki Headline Goal — that is to be able to deploy, within 60 days, a force of up to 60,000 troops for humanitarian, crisis-management, peacekeeping and peace-making operations — little seems to have happened to provide extra funds for the missing enabling capabilities. The latest agreement to proceed with procuring 180 A400M transport aircraft is but a small step. Iraq has also taken its toll in highlighting the divisions over a key foreign and security policy issue. At the end of April, Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg held an exclusive summit to look at how they might develop the EU defence capability. Their proposal for an independent planning headquarters deepened suspicions that this was an initiative designed to separate European countries from NATO.

It is too early to judge how important these different strands will be in the longer term. The European Union has an opportunity to use the Convention on the future of Europe to move defence and security policy forward. However, few analysts believe that progress will be rapid or coherent. Despite rhetorical support from many European countries for the US strategy in Iraq, only Poland and the United Kingdom provided any military capability of significance. For the operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, the overwhelming fighting capability was provided by the United States. There is a danger that many European nations may decide that they can get by in any future coalition operations with support on a level with Micronesia and the Solomon Islands. This will not be good for the future of the European Union.

NATO

The diplomatic machinations over Iraq were also bruising for NATO, even though the Alliance was not directly involved in the campaign. Divisions among Allies led to virtual paralysis within NATO on the issue of authorisation for planning for the defence of Turkey in the event of a conflict in Iraq. The diplomatic temperature rose as Belgium, France and Germany saw themselves being pressured into giving a stamp of approval for early US moves on Iraq. To general surprise, Turkey eventually chose not to allow ground operations to be launched against Iraq from its territory and, in the event, there were no attacks by Iraq on Turkey. Nevertheless, the concern in NATO was real and the public name-calling between members damaging.

While injured feelings will doubtless heal with time, Iraq reinforced questions about NATO's future. The Alliance has achieved remarkable successes during the past decade in ending conflict and helping bring stability to Southeastern Europe. And NATO enlargement has helped bring greater stability to Europe. Yet NATO is still working to its 1999 Strategic Concept, which appears increasingly dated in the light of recent events. The United States published a new national security strategy in September 2002 in the light of the new threats from terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. But few relish the thought of the arguments that would arise in any attempt to update the Alliance's Strategic Concept.

As tempers cool, leaders will need to work at rebuilding key international institutions

At last year's Prague Summit, the commitments by member states to a new NATO Response Force seemed to be accepting that the Alliance needed to be able to spearhead high-intensity operations in distant parts at short notice. NATO is already working well beyond its traditional area of focus. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan has drawn on NATO support since Germany and the Netherlands took command of its operations. Despite differences over Iraq, NATO members have agreed that the Alliance should take responsibility for ISAF for the longer term. Afghanistan remains a problem and a force of 5,000 in Kabul is inadequate to promote the rule of law throughout the country. This could be a task for a much-enlarged NATO peacekeeping force in the longer term. As Poland looks for backers to join the United Kingdom and the United States in providing security within Iraq, the obvious solution is to draw on NATO capabilities and expertise. There is more than enough to do in post-conflict stabilisation tasks.

There remains a tension between the practice of deploying NATO on post-conflict tasks, and the rhetoric of successive Alliance summits, which look for the most modern war-fighting capabilities. Some analysts suspect that the United States sees NATO as a useful forum to encourage individual members to update capabilities. This then allows coalitions of the willing to be built through bilateral arrangements. The NATO role becomes little more than setting equipment standards and sharing military doctrine. Lessons drawn from the Iraq campaign itself will undoubtedly reinforce the importance of precision weaponry and network-centric warfare. Yet investment in these capabilities may be at the expense of the troops that are so vital to winning the peace after the fighting is over.

Future paths

As tempers cool, political leaders will need to work at rebuilding these key international institutions. The United Nations plays many roles and has survived previous quarrels among key members. It will have to become re-engaged in Iraq. The European Union also has more to bind it together than just foreign and security policy. It has much work to do on its own programme of enlargement. Yet it cannot put off forever the development of a coherent approach to international affairs. Only as a regional actor can it expect to be taken seriously by the United States. What the European Union still has to decide is whether it wants to work at the hard power end of the spectrum. At the meeting of EU foreign ministers on Rhodes, Greece, on 2 May 2003, the idea that High Representative Solana should begin developing a security doctrine received broad support.

Without new strategic thinking, collective EU defence efforts will at best remain focused on the so-called Petersberg Tasks, that is on humanitarian, rescue, peacekeeping and crisis-management tasks. Some nations will continue to want to be able to project military power independently or as contributors to transitory coalitions. NATO may then have greater difficulty with its own role. If it is not needed for intervention operations like Afghanistan or Iraq, then initiatives to generate modern war-fighting capabilities will seem less urgent. After its successes in Southeastern Europe, its future may come to be seen as more concerned with post-conflict security work than with the tasks appropriate to a NATO Response Force.

Many fear such a division of labour across the Atlantic, which would broadly find Europe cleaning up after US interventions. Without serious strategic thinking by the European Union and NATO, this may be the outcome. The United States with a few allies would produce the hard war-fighting capability when needed (and preferably when sanctioned by the United Nations); NATO would provide a peace-enforcement force for immediate post-conflict problems; and the European Union would be left to police and rebuild shattered societies. A more balanced sharing of global security responsibilities must be a better route. If the European Union develops its new strategic concept to include the use of hard power, then it can work with NATO to ensure that the United States is not left to police the world on its own. ■

*Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Rethinking NATO

Tom Donnelly assesses the impact of the Iraq campaign on NATO from a US perspective.

Desert deployment: The Iraq war revealed the unprecedented military power of combined forces trained to NATO standards (© Crown Copyright)

The Iraq war proved short with a minimum of casualties among both Coalition forces and the Iraqi people. Despite this, it inflicted great damage on the institutions that helped stabilise the world during the Cold War, including history's most successful alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

The diplomacy that preceded the Iraq war and the campaign itself revealed fundamental differences of political views among the Alliance's pillars, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. It also exposed deep differences among the European powers and between the larger and smaller European countries. These differences will not soon be mended.

The Iraq war also revealed the unprecedented military power of combined forces trained to NATO standards. The battlefield performance of Coalition forces in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* was nothing less than stunning. They operated almost seamlessly in combat and transitioned easily to post-combat stabilisation operations. Indeed, both sorts of operations were conducted simultaneously. Smaller Coalition contingents, such as those from Australia and Poland, were slotted into important supporting roles without the mishaps that historically have plagued combined military operations. But for years of training within NATO, the Coalition could never have succeeded in defeating the Iraqi army and removing the regime of Saddam Hussein in less than one month.

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In the aftermath of the Iraq war, Washington is beginning to understand that even the world's sole super power needs help. Institutionalising the current *Pax Americana* – or whatever name best suits today's international order – is unavoidable. Guaranteeing the global order "unilaterally" is not a realistic option. The question, for Americans, therefore, is whether and how to adapt NATO to fit new strategic circumstances.

The question before the Alliance is whether the current geopolitical differences will destroy NATO's abilities to provide the military basis for future coalition operations. There is a multitude of possible answers. The political differences may yet be solved, or at least be better managed. The value of the Alliance as a "force provider" may be so great that the political differences can be ignored. Conversely, the growing capabilities gap between the United States and the rest of the Alliance may exacerbate the political differences.

The answer will, in large measure, depend upon US policies and programmes in the next few years. Change is coming, and the United States and its closest partners within the Alliance will either lead the reforms that enable NATO to adapt to the "post-Cold-War" world to become a partner in the *Pax Americana,* or the Alliance will wither. If Washington allows NATO to wither, it will have to create some other institutional basis to underpin future "coalitions of the willing". No matter how good the US military has become, it remains a small force. Indeed, one consequence of the "capabilities gap" is that the burden of securing today's liberal international order falls more heavily on the United States, increasing the likelihood of military overstretch.

Divisive issues

Mending the geopolitical rift between the United States and "Europe" – meaning primarily France, Germany and continental public opinion – will take time. Two issues divide us: how to deal with the problems of the Islamic world and the circumstances in which military force can appropriately be used.

Many Europeans, like some Americans, have had trouble keeping up with the change in US policy and strategy since 11 September 2001. Since then, President George W. Bush has articulated a new sense of national mission, that has gradually matured into a formal "Bush Doctrine", best regarded as a renewed sense of purpose for US power in the world. After a decade of drift and uncertainty, the Bush Doctrine represents a fundamental fork in the road of US policy and it will not be easy for future presidents to backtrack. The United States is now committed to an active form of global leadership and has embarked on an ambitious endeavour to remake the political order in the Middle East, that will be impossible to renounce without conceding defeat.

> **The Iraq war also revealed the unprecedented military power of combined forces trained to NATO standards**

Many Europeans are still far from sharing this emerging US sense of mission or from formulating any European corollary to the Bush Doctrine. The pace of events – or perhaps more accurately, the pace of change in international politics – has at times seemed dizzying to European leaders and general publics alike. The resolution and clarity of President Bush's leadership, so comforting to Americans in a time of crisis, is disturbing to many Europeans.

Moreover, the ease of the two military victories in Afghanistan – the "graveyard of empires" – and in Iraq has been yet another reminder of the strengths of US military forces and, by contrast, the relative weaknesses of European arms. "America", wrote British scholar Timothy Garton Ash after Afghanistan, "has too much power for anyone's good, including its own." In Iraq and in the Middle East, observed François Heisbourg, perhaps France's foremost expert in security matters and generally sympathetic to US concerns, "The French, like most Europeans, don't want to give carte blanche to the Americans."

The connections made by President Bush – and accepted by most Americans – between terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and political turmoil in the Islamic world are lost on many Europeans. For France, Germany and many other Western European states, terrorism is a crime more than an act of war, and stability in the Islamic world is to be found in nuanced diplomacy and support for the current crop of Arab governments, despite their repressive nature. Saddam Hussein's regime was to be contained, not removed from power.

Many Europeans fear that if they take an active role in realising the Bush Doctrine's prescription to bolster democracy in the Middle East, they will become more frequent targets for terrorists, their carefully cultivated relations with Islamic leaders will degenerate and their economic interests and strategies will be placed at risk. Nevertheless, Europeans are beginning to understand that policies aimed at maintaining stability by supporting authoritarian leaders in the region have essentially collapsed. Certainly, they have not been spared inclusion on Osama bin Laden's "enemies' list".

The future of the transatlantic strategic partnership is an open question. In broad terms, and even after the war in Iraq, many Europeans still inhabit a "pre-9/11" and "pre-Bush Doctrine" world. They trust that international institutions or legal arrangements can sustain a peaceful, prosperous and liberal world — a view that was until recently also widespread among Americans. And they remain reluctant to use military force, particularly in pursuit of expansive goals like those now being pursued by the United States in the Middle East.

Atlantic mission

Yet it is also true that, for the United Kingdom and others, especially the recently oppressed peoples of "new Europe", the United States' new mission is an Atlantic mission. They wish to keep the United States fully engaged in Europe. They are wary of a European Union dominated by France and Germany. And they are increasingly willing to be engaged elsewhere in the world together with the United States. Now enjoying their first taste of the US-led liberal international order, the *Pax Americana*, they have no interest in creating a European "counterweight".

From a strictly US point of view, even this fractured geopolitical basis is enough to make NATO a useful tool of US statecraft and strategy, as long as the Alliance can reform its military structures to overcome Europe's military weakness.

Although Europe's aggregate economy rivals that of the United States, European spending on military power is less than half that of the United States. Moreover, though that amount is still a lot of money – approximately 140 billion Euros – it buys little of value to the new power-projection missions of greatest interest to the United States. Nor has there been any organised effort to transform European militaries for these new missions or to exploit the technologies that are at the heart of the revolution in military affairs. "Mighty Europe", observed Lord Robertson, "remains a military pygmy."

In combination, these many smaller relative weaknesses combine to create an enormous gap in capabilities between US forces and even the most modern other NATO forces. This is a problem that has its roots in the very structure of the Alliance, in NATO's military response to the Cold War and the threat of Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Put simply, for the United States and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom, NATO was a power-projection mission, while for continental Europe and Germany in particular, it was an issue of homeland defence. The military requirement for the United States was to defend West Germany at its eastern border, 3,500 miles from Washington, to deploy "10 divisions in 10 days" and defend the north Atlantic sea lines of communication – even while responding globally to other Soviet probes. The military requirement for West Germany was to defend West Germany.

This inherent structural problem was exacerbated during the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the Reagan Administration began to implement plans for a serious conventional defence of NATO and to rely less on nuclear deterrence. The Reagan build-up, designed not only to fight a strictly defensive war but also to project naval power directly against the Soviet Union and to develop air and land forces capable of counter-attacking deep into Warsaw Pact territory, created not only a "strategic capabilities gap" between US and other NATO forces but also a "tactical and operational capabilities gap". The military history of the past decade – from the first Gulf War through the Balkan interventions and Afghanistan to Operation *Iraqi Freedom* – is in part the story of how great these gaps have become.

The geopolitical differences and the wide and widening gap in military capabilities between NATO forces have created an undeniable crack in the core of what was, through five decades of Cold War, a central pillar of US national security strategy. Lord Robertson, who admits to being a "paid optimist and an advocate for NATO", argued in February that the Iraq war was not "a make-or-break crisis" for the Alliance, rightly recalling the past debates over "Suez, Vietnam, the INF deployments or the early days of Bosnia". But the question is now fundamentally different. What possible role can NATO play in addressing what President Bush has defined as America's new strategic priority: the roll-back of radical Islam?

Way forward

Of late, some analysts have described the Alliance disparagingly as a "talking shop". Ironically, in an era of great geopolitical uncertainty and disagreement, there has never been a greater need for a transatlantic talking shop. If France and Germany are to accept the worldview of the Bush Doctrine; if there is to be a positive role in international security affairs for the European Union; if the newly liberated states of Central and Eastern Europe are to be integrated permanently into the West; and if the Atlantic community is to be seen as a set of principles rather than a finite geographic area, then there are profound reasons to continue talking.

Second, NATO must continue to reform its bureaucratic processes. The structures that served the Alliance well in the past are now liabilities to change. Achieving consensus within an expanding coalition in particular is proving extremely difficult.

Third, the primary purpose of bureaucratic reform should be to ensure that NATO maintains its role as a "force provider". As the US armed services have their primary mission to provide trained and ready forces to US commanders, and now US Joint Forces Command has the responsibility to ensure that soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are competent to conduct multi-service joint operations, NATO will be the principal vehicle through which Americans learn the evolving craft of combined or coalition warfare and stability operations.

Fourth, and intimately tied to its continuing relevance as a force provider, NATO must be the agent for defence reform in Europe. The process of military transformation promises to make the capabilities gap between US (and UK) forces on the one hand, and even the very modern militaries of France and Germany, on the other, all but unbridgeable. New information technologies, in particular, are creating new concepts of military operations and demanding novel organisations. The simple fact is that, as demonstrated in Operation *Desert Storm*, the Balkans and Afghanistan, and as a matter of strict combat capacity, the United States finds it easier to act unilaterally when the missions are more challenging.

Fifth, NATO must realign itself by shifting to the south and to the east in a strategic movement to connect with the security problems of the Middle East. Forces must be based in new locations. Training must be done in new ways and in new venues. Exercises must be conducted with new partners. And symbolically but importantly, NATO would do well to move its headquarters from Brussels, possibly by expanding the Alliance's Southern Command in Naples, Italy, or by relocating entirely, perhaps to Istanbul, Turkey.

These proposals are not meant to be exhaustive or comprehensive. Though they are ambitious, they are hardly beyond the scope of what is possible for the Alliance. Indeed, the post-Cold-War years have already seen a remarkable transformation. The narrow understanding of the Alliance as an anti-Soviet coalition has been confounded repeatedly. Many analysts warned of the dangers of including a reunified Germany and then expanding NATO to include former members of the Warsaw Pact because of the potential impact on relations with Russia. Now former Soviet republics have been invited to join the Alliance. The NATO-Russia Council brings Moscow itself into the inner chambers of Western security policy-making. And, if anything, the relationship with Russia will prove an additional force for European engagement in stabilising the Islamic world, where Russia has legitimate security concerns.

Some in Europe think that a "small" NATO – not small in size but in ambition – is all the Alliance is capable of. This is a vision of an organisation devoted entirely to providing security within Europe. But beyond the Balkans and a few other modest scenarios, this is a recipe for continued military decline. There is no reason for any member state to build a modern or transformed force to carry out such missions.

At the other end of the ambition spectrum, other analysts think the only way to keep the Alliance alive and vital is to embrace the new missions in the Middle East and elsewhere without reservation. "NATO must go out of area or it will go out of business," it has often been said, meaning that the only validation of the Alliance is by a full, "Article 5" embrace of the US project to reshape the politics of the Islamic world. But with deep geopolitical divisions among major Alliance members, this is a recipe for ever greater confrontation over policy, further restricting the ability of the United States and its willing European partners to act in crises.

The utility of NATO as a war-fighting alliance will be further diminished as it expands. Larger coalitions are always more cumbersome when it comes to making decisions in wartime. Therefore, even as NATO struggles to reshape its decision-making processes to make it a more nimble coalition capable of tackling the security challenges of our time, its immediate military future is in its role as a force provider. This is a fundamental change in how the United States and other members view NATO. The Alliance's "Atlantic community" is now not one defined by geographic boundaries but by the propensity to structure, train and equip forces capable of interoperability with US forces and a willingness to join an institutional "coalition of the willing". ■

This article is adapted from a forthcoming report prepared for the Project for the New American Century and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

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The road to Kabul

Diego A. Ruiz Palmer analyses the significance of NATO's seminal decision to take responsibility for peacekeeping in Afghanistan.

Before NATO's Prague Summit last November, the notion that the Alliance would take responsibility, starting this summer, for the command, coordination and planning of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan would have been dismissed as virtually unthinkable. Yet that is precisely what the North Atlantic Council (NAC) agreed in mid-April, launching the Alliance into its first extra-European military mission.

On patrol in Kabul: The presence of peacekeepers is a tangible expression of international commitment to Afghanistan (© Crown Copyright)

As groundbreaking a development as it is, however, NATO's decision to assume the leadership of ISAF was embedded in the decisions taken by Alliance leaders at Prague calling for NATO to be prepared to support or lead operations and deploy forces, wherever the Alliance decides. Moreover, it reflects a new readiness by the Alliance to use its planning experience and expertise to support non-NATO coalition operations led by individual Allies, as is already the case for the current ISAF III contingent led jointly by Germany and the Netherlands

In effect, NATO's precedent-setting support of ISAF III was the point of departure for two major developments in Alliance policy which have occurred since Prague. The first concerns the Alliance itself assuming the strategic leadership of multinational operations that were initiated as non-NATO operations, as will be the case for ISAF. The second regards the contribution, on a case-by-case basis, of specialised Alliance know-how and capabilities to multinational operations that are not led by NATO. Based on the precedent of NATO's support for ISAF III at the request of Germany and the Netherlands, Poland sought NATO assistance in May for planning its participation in the US-led international force being assembled to stabilise Iraq.

Both developments point to a further consolidation of NATO's distinct role, on behalf of the international community, as an architect in the planning, organisation, generation and sustainment of complex multinational peace-support operations, combining forces from NATO, Partner and other non-NATO nations. They represent yet another step on the way to fulfilling the vision set out by NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson in a speech he gave in London in January 2002, in which he stated that: "NATO has a vital role – in my view, the vital role – to play in multinational crisis prevention and crisis management."

ISAF origins and mandate

The concept of a UN-mandated international force to assist the newly established Afghan Transitional Authority create a secure environment in and around Kabul and support the reconstruction of Afghanistan was embodied in the agreements reached at the Bonn Conference in December 2001. These agreements paved the way for the creation of a three-way partnership between the Afghan Transitional Authority, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and ISAF aiming to lead Afghanistan out of nearly four decades of authoritarian rule, foreign occupation and civil war.

The original ISAF (ISAF I) was established by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1386 of 20 December 2001. Its mandate was and remains to assist the Afghan Transitional Authority in maintaining security in and around Kabul, so that the Afghan Transitional Authority and UN personnel are able to operate in a safe environment. In addition, ISAF may assist the Afghan Transitional Authority in developing and training Afghan security structures and forces and in civil reconstruction.

ISAF I was led by the United Kingdom and included forces and assets from 18 other nations. Of these, 12

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— Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Turkey — were NATO members. Another five — Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Romania and Sweden — were members of the Partnership for Peace. New Zealand was and remains the only non-European contributor. The predominant contribution of NATO nations to ISAF has been a distinctive feature of this operation from its start and helps explain the expanding support role which the Alliance has been playing since Germany and the Netherlands took over command of ISAF III in February of this year.

NATO's decision to assume the leadership of ISAF was embedded in the decisions taken by Alliance leaders at the Prague Summit

ISAF was structured into three main components: ISAF headquarters, the Kabul Multinational Brigade and the Kabul International Airport task force. The Kabul Multinational Brigade is ISAF's tactical headquarters, responsible for the planning and conduct of patrolling and civil-military cooperation operations on a day-to-day basis. The United Kingdom provided the core of ISAF's three components until it turned over the leadership of the Kabul Multinational Brigade to Germany in March 2002. These three components have endured through the successive ISAF rotations to this day.

Liaisons were rapidly established with the US Central Command 's subordinate headquarters for Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan, located at Bagram airbase north of Kabul, and US Central Command's Regional Air Movements Coordination Centre in Qatar. In this way, ISAF was able to draw clear lines between the two missions and coordinate logistical flights into and out of Kabul International Airport with other air activity in and around Afghanistan. ISAF and Operation *Enduring Freedom* are wholly distinct in nature and purpose.

By February 2002, ISAF was well on its way to reaching its full complement and had started patrolling the streets of the Afghan capital. In addition, ISAF I initiated the rehabilitation of Kabul International Airport and hundreds of civil-military reconstruction and humanitarian aid projects, which have been continued and expanded during successive ISAF rotations. Because of ISAF's dual success in bringing a sense of security to a city that had experienced almost none for decades and in restoring essential services, ISAF has enjoyed growing support among the local population.

Leadership challenge

From the beginning, the United Kingdom indicated that it was prepared to lead ISAF for no longer than six months. This raised the prospect that as soon as a nation had taken command of ISAF, the search would have to start for a successor. In the event, Turkey volunteered to take over the leadership of ISAF at the expiration of that period and in June 2002, on the basis of UNSCR 1413, it assumed command of the force. Contributions remained relatively stable. Belgium and Portugal ceased their participation because of competing commitments to NATO-led operations in the Balkans, but five additional Partner nations joined the force: Albania, Azerbaijan, Ireland, Lithuania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.*

Approval of UNSCR 1444 in November 2002 opened the way for Germany and the Netherlands jointly to take command of ISAF III in February of this year, after Turkey had agreed to extend its leadership of ISAF II for two additional months. The number of nations contributing forces increased again, this time by seven. Among NATO nations, Belgium returned to ISAF and Hungary and Iceland made their debut. Four additional Partner countries also joined the force: Croatia, Estonia, Latvia and Switzerland.

The headquarters of the 1 (German/Netherlands) Corps was selected to form the core of the ISAF III headquarters. The commitment of this headquarters represented an innovation in several regards. Since September 2002, the 1(GE/NL) Corps headquarters has been a high-readiness force headquarters, within the new NATO Force Structure, placed in peacetime under the operational command of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR). Its manning was multinational, comprising personnel from several other NATO nations, in addition to Germany and the Netherlands. Further, the headquarters was fully deployable and equipped with state-of the-art communications and information systems.

By comparison with the United Kingdom and Turkey, which had had to rely on a nationally manned, division-size headquarters to form the core of HQ ISAF, use of the 1(GE/NL) Corps headquarters brought several advantages to Germany and the Netherlands. The joint composition of the corps, the larger size of a corps headquarters staff and its multinational manning enabled the two lead nations to share and more easily

assume the burden of leading ISAF and manning the ISAF headquarters.

Not all burdens and constraints had been removed, however. The strategic direction, planning and multinational force generation of ISAF, plus the provision of essential operational capabilities, such as intelligence and communications and information systems support, still fell upon the lead nations.

This meant, for instance, that the ISAF operation headquarters and international coordination centre had to be relocated at every rotation — from the UK Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood, near London, to the Turkish General Staff in Ankara, and then again to the Bundeswehr Operational Command at Potsdam, near Berlin — and that the lead nation had to assume the burden of hosting them. Responsibility for scheduling and conducting complex force-generation and force-balancing conferences represents an additional challenge. Lastly, the deployment and redeployment of a headquarters to Kabul every six months is a major logistical undertaking for the lead nations, with attendant resource implications.

NATO support to ISAF III

In the light of these challenges, Germany and the Netherlands turned to NATO in autumn 2002 with a request for support in the planning and execution of ISAF III. Specifically, they requested assistance in the areas of force generation, intelligence, coordination and information sharing, and communications. On 17 October 2002, the NAC approved the request. The following month the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, hosted a force-generation conference for ISAF III. A SHAPE liaison element was posted at the Bundeswehr Operational Command in Potsdam to facilitate coordination and information sharing among ISAF contributing nations which, with the exception of New Zealand, are all members of either NATO or the Partnership for Peace with permanent representations at SHAPE. The ISAF III headquarters was given access to NATO intelligence and communications networks. And SHAPE established for the first time a close working relationship with the European Airlift Coordination Cell at Eindhoven, the Netherlands, to coordinate ISAF's air transportation requirements, breaking new ground in the cooperation between NATO and European multinational staffs.

For the two lead nations, NATO assistance meant being able to draw on the Alliance's wealth of experience and expertise in planning and supporting multinational operations and access to highly specialised capabilities. But while this support alleviated the burdens placed on Germany and the Netherlands, it did not resolve the longer-term challenge of sustaining ISAF beyond ISAF III. From the perspective of operational effectiveness and efficiency, the rotation of a new headquarters to Kabul every six months was not conducive to mission continuity. Further, the six-month horizon of each rotation undermined the Afghan Transitional Authority's confidence in the international commitment to Afghanistan. Lastly, the option of tying down for nearly 18 months — six months each for mission preparation, ISAF rotation and reconstitution — a combat-capable high-readiness force headquarters to perform a relatively low-intensity, peace-support operation, did not represent a wise employment of a high-value NATO asset. These considerations militated for a longer-term alternative to the six-month approach to sustaining the ISAF commitment followed since ISAF I.

NATO leadership of ISAF

Upon taking command of ISAF III in February, Germany and the Netherlands, together with Canada who had volunteered to take over command of the Kabul Multinational Brigade from Germany at the end of the ISAF III rotation, initiated consultations within the NAC with the aim of expanding NATO's support to ISAF. As a result, the NAC decided on 16 April to enhance NATO's support to ISAF by taking on the command, coordination and planning of the operation, while keeping the same name, banner and mission.

The NAC will provide political direction to the operation, in close consultation with non-NATO force contributors, following well-established practice derived from the experience of the Alliance's peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. SHAPE will assume the strategic responsibility of operation headquarters and host the ISAF international coordination cell, while Headquarters, Allied Forces North Europe (AFNORTH) in Brunssum, the Netherlands, will act as the operational-level Joint Force Command headquarters between SHAPE and ISAF headquarters in Kabul.

In order to end the six-month rotation of ISAF headquarters and bring greater stability to the mission, NATO will provide a composite headquarters to form the permanent core of the ISAF headquarters. This composite headquarters will draw on personnel and equipment from AFNORTH's subordinate commands. Joint Command Centre headquartered at Heidelberg, Germany, will provide the next ISAF commander and the initial nucleus of the composite headquarters. The establishment of a Multinational Joint Logistics Centre within ISAF will also enhance and rationalise mutual logistical support among participating nations.

Enhanced NATO support for ISAF will break new ground by giving the next ISAF commander access to the vast pool of staff expertise available in Heidelberg, Brunssum and Mons. Through this "reach-back" capability, the ISAF commander will be able to draw on specialised assets in such areas as strategic planning, without having to deploy these assets into Afghanistan. As a result, without a larger force on the ground and with only a small NATO footprint in Kabul, ISAF will have an enhanced capability to plan and conduct operations. This may allow the Alliance, in due course and in consultation with the United Nations, to consider expanding ISAF's tasks beyond the current mandate. The assumption by NATO of the responsibility of operating the ISAF headquarters will also make it easier for Allies who would have found it difficult to play the role of lead nation to make a strong contribution to ISAF. This will, for example, be the case of Canada when it takes over leadership of the Kabul Multinational Brigade. Lastly, mission continuity will be enhanced by rotating headquarters personnel into and out of Kabul in a staggered way, rather than in large, six-month increments, and by making the basic structure of the ISAF headquarters permanent.

Way forward

Over the past 18 months, under the successive leaderships of the United Kingdom, Turkey and Germany and the Netherlands, ISAF has gone a long way to fulfilling its mandate. By its mere presence, as a tangible expression of international commitment to the emergence of a self-reliant, stable and prosperous Afghanistan, ISAF has contributed to strengthening the Afghan Transitional Authority in Kabul, while providing a security blanket to UN agencies and non-governmental organisations engaged in humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.

ISAF has also contributed to the progressive consolidation of national Afghan institutions, notably by helping train the first units of the new Afghan National Army and national police. Now, ISAF and the Afghan National Army routinely conduct joint patrols in the streets of Kabul, projecting a positive image of teamwork and partnership. In addition, hundreds of civil-military projects have continued apace, in the areas of local administration, infrastructure reconstruction, rehabilitation of schools and medical facilities, restoration of the water supply, health, education, and agricultural technical assistance, instilling a new sense of hope among the civilian population in and around Kabul.

These results have been achieved in spite of enduring risks and constraints. The terrorist threat to ISAF remains a major source of concern, heightened by the June attack in which four German soldiers lost their lives. Persistent Taliban and *al-Qaida* activity in southern and south-eastern Afghanistan and random factional in-fighting in the country's northern provinces also interfere with ISAF's mission by creating a climate of uncertainty. The drug trade, organised crime and the poor state of the local infrastructure remain longer-term challenges.

In the shorter term, the Afghan Transitional Authority and UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan will have responsibility for managing two key events that will help shape Afghanistan's future in critical ways: the convening of a constitutional Loya Jirga, a grand council peculiar to Afghanistan, in October and the holding of national elections in June 2004. Both events will test ISAF's ability to maintain a secure environment. However, as NATO prepares to assume the leadership of ISAF in August, the Alliance can confidently look forward to building upon the achievements of the earlier contingents, to tackle the tasks ahead. ■

For more information on ISAF, see www.isafkabul.org

* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

Mind games

Lieutenant-Colonel Steven Collins assesses the Coalition's perception-management operations before, during and after Operation Iraqi Freedom and their implications for NATO.

In the coming months and years, analysts will no doubt examine every aspect of the 27-day period from the attempt to decapitate the Iraqi regime on 20 March to the fall of Tikrit on 15 April to draw as many lessons from it as possible. One area worthy of attention with clear implications for NATO is the way in which the Coalition sought to influence the attitudes and reasoning of foreign audiences and especially those in Iraq in the run-up to, during and after Operation *Iraqi Freedom.*

Straight talk: More than 40 million leaflets were dropped on Iraq before Operation Iraqi Freedom and as many during the campaign

Both Operation *Iraqi Freedom* and NATO's own experiences in the Balkans have shown the importance of so-called "Perception Management". They have highlighted the necessity of developing the means to exploit this aspect of power, while taking measures to protect against its use by the enemy and other asymmetric political and military capabilities. As NATO re-organises its military structure and takes on missions beyond its traditional areas, such capabilities are becoming increasingly important to Alliance operations.

Perception management includes all actions used to influence the attitudes and objective reasoning of foreign audiences and consists of Public Diplomacy, Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), Public Information, Deception and Covert Action. Of special interest in the case of Operation *Iraqi Freedom* are public diplomacy, the deliberate attempt to persuade foreign audiences of the content and wisdom of one's policies, intentions and actions, and PSYOPS, the use of activities, predominantly media, to influence and persuade foreign audiences.

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Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the United States has sought to revamp its public-diplomacy capabilities. These had been allowed to atrophy during the 1990s as Washington had not felt the same need to explain its policies globally and build up international good will as it had during the Cold War. Today, the White House Office of Global Communications provides top-level direction for efforts designed to create an overall positive perception of US policy and defence activities. And the US National Security Council Policy Group coordinates the policies and messages developed by the White House between it, the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy and the Pentagon. Together, these bodies have put in place the most coordinated, best-funded, US strategic perception-management structure since the 1980s. It is focused on the Islamic world and has funding of more than US$750 million for the Middle East alone.

Despite this massive effort, there was little demonstrated success in US public-diplomacy efforts prior to Operation *Iraqi Freedom.* US Secretary of State Colin Powell's 78-minute speech to the UN Security Council broadcast live around the world on 5 February failed to convince representatives from the key nations on the Security Council — France, Germany, and Russia — that military action needed to be taken immediately against Iraq. By contrast, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin's subsequent speech before the United Nations, casting doubt on every aspect of Secretary Powell's presentation, was greeted with cheers and wild applause. As a result, the United Kingdom and United States made little headway in gaining support among their traditional allies, and a second UN Security Council Resolution authorising military action against Iraq was never put to a vote, as it was obvious it would fail to garner the required support.

Within the Islamic world, US public-diplomacy activities have to date failed to generate much return. Immediate, positive results may be impossible to achieve. Effective public diplomacy takes a sustained effort and a long-term view. For the foreseeable future, as Osama Sibliani, the publisher of *Arab American News* noted: "The United States could have the Prophet Muhammad doing public relations and it wouldn't help." One instrument with a great deal of promise for the future could be *Radio Sawa* (Radio Together), a

US Congress-funded station covering the Arab world and featuring both Arab and Western pop music, interspersed with news from a US perspective. Within months of its debut in 2002, *Radio Sawa*'s advocates announced that it was one of the most popular radio stations among young Arabs.

During the conduct of the military campaign, the Coalition attempted favourably to shape the world-wide perception of the conflict by a variety of measures, including that of "embedding" reporters with military units scheduled to deploy. Although initially controversial, the decision to embed was, in retrospect, a brilliant move for several reasons. First, reporters who wanted to be embedded were forced to undergo a mandatory mini-boot camp, which gave many their first appreciation of the challenges faced by the average soldier. Second, embedding created an inevitable bond between reporters and the units they covered. And third, embedding made sense because it ensured the safety of the reporters and gave the world its first "real-time coverage" of a battlefield. Because of the fluid nature of *Iraqi Freedom,* many more reporters would likely have been killed and captured had they been allowed to roam the battlefield freely.

One factor undermining efforts to have an effect on world opinion today is the proliferation of news sources. In particular, the increase in the number of satellite television news services and internet connections makes it ever more difficult to influence opinions and attitudes globally, or even regionally. The explosion in the number of news providers allows viewers to read or see the news that reinforces their own prejudices and fixed opinions. An Arab viewer who finds the reporting on CNN to be contrary to his own news bias can switch to *al Jazeera*, the Arabic satellite news channel, and see a perspective of the world perhaps more consistent with his own.

Reportedly, during the conflict, the Iraqi Information Agency recognised the power of *al Jazeera* and went so far as to infiltrate that organisation with its agents in order to help slant the coverage to be more pro-Iraqi. Likewise, the Coalition attempted to take Iraqi television news service off the air through both bombing and electronic jamming – as much, if not more, for the impact it was having outside Iraq than for the impact it was having within the country.

The increase in the number of satellite television news services and internet connections makes it ever more difficult to influence opinions globally

PSYOPS

While public diplomacy at the strategic level generated mixed results at best, the employment of PSYOPS within Iraq at the military operational and tactical level was more successful. The use of mass media like radio, leaflets, and targeted media like e-mails against key decision-makers, and loudspeakers during ground operations, seems to have had an important impact.

More than 40 million leaflets were dropped on Iraq before the first attack on 20 March, and another 40 million plus were dropped during the campaign. Some leaflets threatened to destroy any military formation that stood and fought, while others encouraged the Iraqi populace and military to ignore the directives of the Baath Party leadership. In retrospect, they did seem to have the effect intended. The problem, as with all PSYOPS actions, is the difficulty in determining the causal link of an action during a war. Did the Iraqi military melt away in the face of the Coalition military primarily as a result of PSYOPS, or as a result of bombing by Coalition aircraft, or as a result of a lack of logistical support – or as a result of a combination of all three? Quantifying the part PSYOPS played in swaying Iraqi attitudes and behaviour in a manner favourable to the Coalition remains an important variable to determine.

Certainly the Coalition did not see the level of Iraqi surrenders during the 1991 Gulf War, which reached 70,000. Although 250 Iraqis surrendered the first day during the seizure of Umm Qasr, this initial trickle did not turn into a flood. During the first days of the conflict, the manner in which the Coalition approached the entire military campaign was arguably psychological — the hope that the use of overwhelming force and precision munitions would "shock and awe" and the Iraqi regime would collapse like a house of cards. The failure of "shock and awe" forced the conventional US military forces to change their approach — and no doubt also caused the PSYOPS forces to re-examine their themes and messages — to one relying more upon steady activity and pressure from one hoping a single knockout blow could do the job.

In addition to leafleting, the other PSYOPS mass medium used heavily by the Coalition was radio. Broadcasting from fixed transmission towers as well as from the flying airborne broadcast platform, the

EC-130E aircraft Commando Solo, the Coalition used a similar format to *Radio Sawa* with a great deal of popular music interlaced with news and a few announcements. The name for this Iraq-wide station was the rather uninspiring Information Radio. Local PSYOPS radio stations were also set up outside of major population centres – one being the UK PSYOPS radio station, *Radio Nahrain* (Two Rivers), an FM radio station established on the outskirts of Basra. In addition to setting up its own radio transmitters, the Coalition attempted electronically to jam Iraqi radio stations, in order to gain a monopoly on the information available to the Iraqi people through this medium.

The PSYOPS tactics described to date are all examples of so-called "White PSYOPS", which openly and accurately declares who is sponsoring the product. During the Iraqi conflict, so-called "Black PSYOPS" — PSYOPS that purportedly is produced by one source, but is actually created by someone else — was also deployed. The US Central Intelligence Agency reportedly set up Black PSYOPS stations as early as February 2003. One such station, *Radio Tikrit*, tried to build up its credibility by claiming to be managed by loyal Iraqis in the Tikrit area and by maintaining an editorial line slavishly supportive of Saddam Hussein. Within a few weeks, however, the tone changed and the station became increasingly critical of Saddam. The hope of Black PSYOPS is that the target audience does not see through the ruse and believes the information is coming from the wrongly attributed source, which it sees as more credible. The risk, of course, is that if the ruse is discovered, the trustworthiness of the entire PSYOPS effort, both White and Black, is damaged.

One of the more innovative means used by Coalition PSYOPS in the build-up to *Iraqi Freedom* was the use of mobile phone text messaging and e-mails sent directly to key decision-makers in the Iraqi regime. At the start of 2003, there were only 60 internet cafes in Iraq, and the connection fee of US $25 per home was beyond the means of most ordinary Iraqis. Also, the Iraqi regime was wary of allowing access to the internet throughout Iraq. So, while many ordinary Iraqis did not have access to the internet, most of the Baath Party leadership did, and the Coalition used this means specifically to outline to each the cost of their continued support for Saddam both for Iraq collectively and for themselves personally.

Tactical PSYOPS elements — PSYOPS troops with a loudspeaker vehicle and a translator attached directly to army and marine units — were also active. As in past conflicts, these units proved their worth by helping to persuade isolated Iraqi elements to surrender, helping to maintain control of Iraqi prisoners, and even conducting deception operations against Iraqi military elements by playing sound effects of tanks and helicopters through loudspeakers.

Strangely, it appears that the *Iraqi Freedom* military planners gave little thought to developing a post-conflict PSYOPS capability in advance. As a result, Iranian agents, especially in southern Iraq, were in some instances able to fill the information vacuum, and the United States contracted companies to put virtually anything on the air rapidly to fill the void. This has led to some unintentionally amusing moments as the attention of the US media turned away from Iraq and contracted companies beamed parochial US news stories to bemused Iraqis.

Preliminary conclusions

The effort to win hearts and minds by all sides continues unabated in Iraq today, and will continue for years to come. Indeed, it is in part the outcome of this struggle that will ultimately determine whether the conflict was worth the effort in the first instance. Some preliminary conclusions can, nevertheless, already be drawn from Coalition perception-management operations during *Iraqi Freedom*. NATO should study these lessons carefully and determine if changes should be made as to how NATO plans and resources its own perception-management efforts. Conversely, there are lessons the United States and United Kingdom could learn from NATO's experience in post-conflict perception management.

• Public diplomacy is difficult and results may take years to realise

Public diplomacy does not generate overnight results. Even when large sums of money are allocated to the task and skilled personnel recruited, as in the United States during the past couple of years, positive achievements may be scanty. But this does not mean that public diplomacy should be ignored. Changing ingrained attitudes takes sustained effort over an extremely long time.

• There is a PSYOPS gap and it is growing

There is a gap growing between NATO and its member nations with respect to the attention and resources devoted to PSYOPS. The United States is spending impressive amounts of money to strengthen its PSYOPS capability. Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom are also bolstering their PSYOPS capabilities. Meanwhile, while NATO nations are making commitments to PSYOPS, NATO headquarters and the NATO Strategic Military Commands have done little to bolster their PSYOPS capabilities within their staffs. PSYOPS is an

activity NATO could and should become better at, but it needs to make the commitment.

• PSYOPS can shine in the post-conflict phase

PSYOPS must not be forgotten in the post-conflict phase. Since there is often an informational gap to be filled and people psychologically need reassurance and comforting, this is where PSYOPS can make a great difference. This is also an area where the United Kingdom and United States can learn from NATO. NATO's experience in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo give it considerable post-conflict PSYOPS expertise. Moreover, the posts in the PSYOPS branches at SFOR and KFOR headquarters are filled by individuals who have become skilled in this field, which can differ greatly from PSYOPS conducted during conflict. The United Kingdom and United States would do well to study NATO's experience with perception management in the Balkans and apply it to their current activities in Iraq.

• It's alright to use the "P" word

It was surprising, even to PSYOPS practitioners, how often the term "PSYOPS" was used in military briefings and by the press during *Iraqi Freedom*. In recent military operations, there has been a tendency to blur connotations and meanings by using fuzzier terminology, avoiding terms like psychological operations and opting for what is deemed by some to be more acceptable expressions like "Information Operations" (INFO OPS). While the term "INFO OPS" might not have the hard edge, semantically, of the term PSYOPS, its increased use over the past five to six years and the vague interpretations of the term have sown the seeds of confusion within the ranks of military planners, to the point where the terms PSYOPS and INFO OPS seem synonymous. This can lead to embarrassing consequences. Because of its ambiguous nature, INFO OPS has become a convenient expression to characterise military functions that have hitherto defied attempts to pigeonhole them. Placing PSYOPS under the rubric of INFO OPS often leads to a reduction of PSYOPS's importance. This undermines the direct access that PSYOPS practitioners need to the commander they are supporting to be effective.

Of greater concern is that the press and the public have caught on to this word game, expressing concern about how the use of the term INFO OPS seems to be a deliberate attempt to allow PSYOPS to be used by politicians in order to manipulate domestic audiences to support weak, unpopular policies. This may be a case of military terminology being too clever by half. Critically, there is no connection between PSYOPS and public information activities aimed at global public opinion and home audiences, which seek to provide an accurate and truthful account of events. Recent activities in Iraq have shown that the public will accept PSYOPS activities being called PSYOPS, as long as it is directed, as intended, towards audiences in combat zones or in those countries affected by crisis-management operations. Using politically correct terminology, like INFO OPS, may brief well, but the use of watered-down terms of this nature add little except confusion and misunderstanding.

Given that the Alliance can expect to operate for an extended period in areas where sophisticated, indigenous media will compete with NATO for influence over the perceptions of local and international audiences, the importance of public diplomacy and PSYOPS has risen dramatically. Both are relatively inexpensive capabilities but can provide extraordinary results. Incorporating lessons learned from *Iraqi Freedom* into the ongoing restructuring of the NATO military organisation offers a unique opportunity to strengthen NATO perception-management capabilities and prevent these same aspects from being used effectively against the Alliance by future adversaries.

How effective a tool is pre-emption in addressing WMD proliferation?

Max Boot VERSUS Harald Müller

Max Boot is Olin senior fellow for national security studies at The Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

Harald Müller is director of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.

Dear Harald,

It's a pleasure to participate in this debate with you. The question of using pre-emption to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is certainly a timely one — all the more so because the debate over Iraq has heated up. As of the time of this writing, not much evidence of Saddam Hussein's WMD programmes has been found, beyond two suspected bio-weapons trailers. This has, of course, led many to suggest that the Iraq War was a needless one and that the doctrine of pre-emption has been discredited.

I disagree. In my view, our inability so far to find WMD discredits not the pre-emptive war, but the policy of inspections that its opponents pushed as an alternative. If we can't find WMD in liberated Iraq what chance would 100, or even 1,000 inspectors, have had in a country still controlled by a totalitarian regime? Of course it's possible that there was nothing to find, that Saddam had genuinely destroyed all his WMD stockpiles — or, more alarmingly, moved them out of the country. But, to my mind, the state of his current stockpile is less important than his capabilities to manufacture more and his willingness to use what he created. On both scores, Saddam was a pretty scary fellow. We know that he used poison gas against the Iranians and Kurds. We know that he kept WMD after he was supposed to give them up under UN resolutions. There is no doubt that, even if he got rid of his stockpile at the last minute, he maintained a vast infrastructure that could manufacture more germs and gases on demand. And we know that he was working to acquire nuclear weapons, although it's still unclear how far along he was.

Given all that, I think toppling him from power was the right move, not only morally, but also strategically. We have removed someone with a long track record of criminality, who, if allowed to remain in power, would undoubtedly have committed far more heinous crimes in the future — not only against his own people but also against his neighbours. We tried other approaches to corralling Saddam, ranging from cooperating with him (prior to 1990) to weapons inspections (1992-1998, 2003) to deterrence/containment (1991-2003). You can argue that the latest coerced inspections, backed up by the threat of force, did contain Saddam temporarily, and this may be right, but there is little chance that the United Kingdom and the United States could have maintained hundreds of thousands of troops on Iraq's borders indefinitely. The pressure could not be kept up forever and Saddam could wait out the international community as he has in the past. That option has now been foreclosed by decisive military action, and I think the world is better off with him gone. Don't you?

The question now is how to deal with other tyrannical regimes that are acquiring weapons of mass destruction like Iran and North Korea. Once again we face the familiar options — negotiation or pre-emption. I would argue for pre-emption but pre-emption broadly defined to mean not just military options but all sorts

of pressure — diplomatic, economic and moral — to change the nature of these regimes. I think the basic problem in all these cases is the type of regime not the possession of WMD *per se*. WMD in the hands of liberal democratic governments, like France or Israel, are not a big concern. The problem is when tyrants who are unaccountable to their own people get their hands on very powerful weapons.

I don't have a lot of confidence that regimes that abuse their own people will deal fairly with the outside world. Sure, they're happy to cut deals, but then they violate them. North Korea is Exhibit A: Pyongyang signed the Agreed Framework in 1994 but then went right on developing nuclear weapons anyway. I don't think there's anything we can offer Kim Jong Il that will make him stop this programme.

In the past, pretty much all the non-proliferation success has been due to regime change. When governments in places like Brazil, Argentina and South Africa became more liberal, they no longer saw the need for nuclear weapons programmes. You can argue that their willingness to give up nukes was due to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but I think that was of incidental importance; what counted was the nature of the regime.

So I think our focus should be on helping the people of North Korea, the people of Iran and of other rogue regimes to overthrow their tyrants and install more accountable regimes. Safety for the West lies in spreading liberal democracy, not in signing more treaties like the NPT that aren't enforced.

I imagine you have a different view. I look forward to continuing our exchange.

Yours,
Max

Dear Max,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. It seems that an American neo-conservative and a German peace researcher can agree on something quite fundamental, namely that the use of force is the ultimate sanction for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I have said so for at least a dozen years and the UN Security Council expressed the same principle in its declaration of 31 January 1992, defining the spread of WMD as "a threat to peace and security", the very formula that can trigger sanctions, including military action, under the UN Charter.

But here I depart from your position. The use of force must be bound by law. Where WMD are concerned, international law is already extensive. It includes the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, as well as the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Contrary to what you appear to believe, the NPT is more than empty words. Of the 36 states that seriously considered or enacted nuclear weapons programmes, the vast majority did so before the NPT was negotiated, and of the 25 states that stopped such activities, the vast majority (21) did so after the NPT was opened for signature. The majority of those who stopped were democracies or countries in transition, but there were authoritarian countries as well, including Egypt, Indonesia and Yugoslavia, who terminated nuclear research for military purposes after the international norm was established. The NPT was thus quite successful in persuading countries to renounce the military option, and it is an exaggeration to state that "all the non-proliferation success has been due to regime change".

Legal norms and military enforcement should not be viewed as competing but as complementary policies. Enforcement should serve to uphold agreed norms but on the basis of due procedure. Pre-emption outside a recognised legal context breeds fear, resentment and resistance, and ultimately feeds the very anarchy it is meant to address.

Due procedure requires proper presentation of the available evidence, proper debate on its merits and thorough, collective decision-making concerning the most appropriate strategy to deal with the threat. In the case of Iraq, such requirements were not met. The process of collecting and evaluating evidence by UNMOVIC was interrupted. Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation of evidence to the United Nations on 5 February was sketchy, based on dubious sources and not properly discussed or analysed. Moreover, given the Iraqi performance in the war, the lack of use of chemical or biological weapons, and the failure so far even to find traces of WMD, let alone evidence of large-scale WMD programmes, it seems increasingly clear that UNSCOM had done a good job. Indeed, it appears that even an absence of four years was not enough for Iraq to reconstitute its programmes. Containment and deterrence worked well and would likely have continued to work for some time in the future.

The decision to go to war should never be taken lightly since innocent civilians will always be killed – as they were in the Iraqi campaign. Such a decision should therefore only be made out of necessity, as a last resort when every other approach has been exhausted. In

the case of Iraq, this point had not been reached. And it should not be left to the government of any one country to take such a decision.

The world is a mix of cultures and systems of government in which democratic rule is clearly preferable. Coming from a country that experienced two dictatorships in the last century, I count myself fortunate to have been spared membership of either the Hitler youth or the "young pioneers", its communist alternative. However, I believe that pre-emption for the sake of regime change sets the wrong priorities. Dictators are susceptible to deterrence. Indeed, the greatest democratic triumph in history, the end of the Cold War, was won by patience, perseverance and a prudent combination of containment, deterrence and détente.

The use of force must be reserved for self-defence, the prevention of genocide and the pre-emption of a clear and imminent deadly threat that cannot be averted otherwise. Meanwhile, it should be the West's policy patiently to shape and expand international law and to marshal the strength to enforce it where necessary. The rule of law is one of the great strengths of democracy and provides the best international environment to help its spread.

One final remark. I am happy that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power. I am also happy that the Soviet Empire disintegrated and would have preferred it to disappear earlier. Yet I am equally happy that the US government chose not to follow the advice of General Curtis LeMay, head of Strategic Air Command in the 1950s, namely to launch a pre-emptive attack on the Soviet Union before it developed the capability to destroy the United States with nuclear weapons. Had such advice been followed, I might have been one of the innocent victims of the ensuing war.

Yours,
Harald

Dear Harald,

I'm glad to see we agree in principle on the importance of using force to enforce international law. I agree with you that "Legal norms and military enforcement should not be viewed as competing but as complementary policies." My concern is that you — along with other Europeans — will never find an actual case where you conclude that diplomatic remedies have been exhausted.

"In the case of Iraq," you write, "such requirements were not met." Really??? What about the fact that Saddam Hussein had violated 17 UN resolutions? What about the fact that Hans Blix and the UN inspectors consistently reported that he never provided the full cooperation required by Resolution 1441? Saddam Hussein was one of the world's most brutal dictators with a long record of committing genocide, invading his neighbours and violating international laws. If this wasn't a case that justified military action, it's hard to imagine what would be.

The failure to find WMD so far makes my case even stronger. It means that the weapons inspectors would never have found Saddam's WMD stockpiles (which all Western intelligence agencies — including that of Germany — agree existed). Then they would have given him a clean bill of health, while leaving him with the capacity to manufacture more WMD in the future and probably to acquire nuclear weapons. (And don't forget — also leaving him free to rape, brutalise and murder thousands of his own citizens!) Thankfully, that danger has now been foreclosed by Anglo-American military action.

I am glad that you invoke the example of your own country that was ravaged by the twin dictatorships of Nazism and Communism. That, to my mind, is the most powerful argument in the world against deterrence and for regime change. The West tried to deter Hitler in the 1930s — and failed. The result was six million dead Jews and the worst war in history. The West tried to deter the Soviet Union after the Second World War — and succeeded. But at great cost. Leaving aside the millions who perished in wars of Communist aggression (Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, etc.), there is also the fact that the people of East Germany and Eastern Europe were kept under totalitarian oppression for more than 40 years. Is this really your optimal solution?

Granted, I don't think we had any choice in the case of the Soviet Union. It was so powerful that pre-emption wasn't an option — except in the non-military sense that we used all of our might to undermine the Soviet Empire from within (by backing movements like Solidarity and dissidents like Andrei Sakharov). Attacking the Soviet Union, as General LeMay advocated, would have been madness. But it's hardly madness to attack an evil — and much weaker — regime like Saddam Hussein's Iraq. In that case, we have brought freedom to more than 20 million people, at fairly low cost in lives on both sides.

War is not always the worst option — living with aggressive totalitarian dictatorships is often worse. I

wish that France and the United Kingdom had waged a pre-emptive war on Hitler's Germany in the 1930s, instead of waiting to be attacked. Don't you?

Yours,
Max

Dear Max,

So Europeans will never go to war to enforce international law? Funny that, I was under the impression that German special forces deployed alongside Americans and Brits in Afghanistan and that France was the largest single contributor to the Afghan air campaign behind the United States.

Anyway, I find your claim that the absence of WMD in Iraq proved the futility of the inspection process unconvincing. To date, Washington has provided three explanations for the failure to uncover WMD. These are: (a) that Iraq destroyed the weapons immediately before the war; (b) that Iraq moved the weapons abroad; and (c) that the WMD have been looted. None is convincing and the last amounts to an admission of failure, if the objective was to prevent Iraq's WMD falling into the hands of terrorists. Moreover, the multiplicity of explanations will not enhance US credibility the next time Washington tries to make the case for pre-emption.

There is another possibility, namely that Iraq did not possess WMD to speak of, nor the means to produce them in relevant quantities. Much of the information concerning Iraq's bioweapons programme, which has been widely quoted, came from Iraqi defector Kemal Hussein who fled to Jordan in 1995. But another of Hussein's claims, one that did not receive much publicity, was that Iraq stopped producing such weapons in 1991 and destroyed them before UNSCOM began its work. We were never sure about this, but it may have been true.

What could extended and strengthened inspections have accomplished? Inspectors found some empty shells meant for chemical agents and they supervised the destruction of the *Al Samoud* missiles. They were frustrated by the level of cooperation, but reported that this was improving as the inspections proceeded. With more interrogations, rapid and timely inspections and the best Western intelligence, they would, in time, have found more remnants of the old programmes and, most likely, traces of major reconstitution efforts — if there were any. Moreover, UNMOVIC could have been followed up by a long-term, on-going supervision regime, accompanied by smart sanctions. Such instruments, combined with the threat of military action in case of non-compliance, would probably have contained Iraq for the foreseeable future.

What concerns me about your arguments is what I consider a cavalier attitude towards war. War takes innocent lives. That is its nature, no matter how great the efforts to minimise civilian casualties. The decision to go to war should not be taken simply on the certainty of victory. Rather, it should only be based on clear evidence of its inevitability, on the solid expectation that the number of victims will be lower than they would have been had the war not been fought, and in the likelihood that the post-war situation will not be worse than it was before (which was very much the case in 1938!). I remain unconvinced that war was inevitable in the Iraqi case. Meanwhile, the jury is still out on the other two criteria, though I whole-heartedly hope that, with help, the Iraqi people can rebuild their country. That said, it is not easy to impose democracy from the outside. Conditions vary from country to country and the German and Japanese experiences after the Second World War are not necessarily models to be applied elsewhere. Only time will tell.

One final point. We are not talking about *pre-emption* (acting to forestall an imminent attack) here. We are talking about *prevention*, the destruction of a risk before it emerges into a threat that could turn into an attack. On prevention, until very recently, international lawyers were in agreement that it was patently unlawful.

Yours,
Harald

Dear Harald,

I think that when it comes to Iraqi WMD, we'll have to agree to disagree. I only note in passing that it wasn't just the US government that was convinced Saddam had WMD — so were all the other governments, including European governments, that had any intelligence operations in Iraq. So, for that matter, were UN inspectors.

I also take exception to your claim that a "long-term" inspections regime would have worked. I find it hard to see why Saddam wouldn't have stopped cooperating with inspectors as he did in 1998. Would France and Germany have volunteered to attack Iraq if he did? They didn't in 1998.

What really troubles me, however, is your cavalier attitude toward totalitarian regimes. You write: "War takes innocent lives." Well so do evil regimes. In fact

during the 20th century totalitarian regimes probably claimed more lives than wars did. Add up the death toll from Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and, yes, Saddam Hussein. That's more than 100 million corpses. Saddam's own contribution was relatively modest — a few hundred thousand victims. But the war that toppled him resulted in only a few thousand civilian casualties. It is certain that the war saved the lives of many Iraqis.

And the jury is *not* still out on whether Iraq is better off without Saddam. Even if Iraq doesn't become a perfect democracy, it has already ceased being a country where women are raped and children tortured as an instrument of politics. By any reasonable moral calculus, the war in Iraq was amply justified.

Regarding your final point: I don't place much faith in international lawyers and what they say. If I did, I would still be waiting for the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact (which outlawed war as an instrument of national policy) to be enforced. I place my trust in American power, which has delivered Europe and Asia from great evil in the 20th century and is now doing the same in the Middle East. "International law" didn't win the Second World War or the Cold War. America and its allies did.

Yours,
Max

Dear Max,

Situations may arise when we must take up weapons to defend against WMD threats — if, for example, Saddam had been found by the UN Security Council to be in severe breach of UNSCR 1441 — or to prevent genocide by ruthless dictators. No cavalier attitude on this matter from my side. But powerful countries must not have a monopoly on taking decisions of such magnitude. Working legal procedures are available for the international community to achieve this. Indeed, using them, the United Nations developed new principles of humanitarian intervention during the 1990s and, in 1998, established the norm that host governments are responsible for transnational terrorism on their territory. In this way in 2001, the UN Security Council conferred the right of self-defence for states attacked by terrorists against those states hosting them. Later, in UNSCR 1441, the Security Council opened up a promising approach to dealing with the WMD threat, which it was not given the time to develop.

You place your trust in American power, because you believe — as your government does — that America is (always?) right. Outside the United States, however, there is a growing impression that Washington has developed a feeling of infallibility and that it has no need to take account of the views of others — unless they echo US policy. Moreover, not everybody believes that Washington is the font of all wisdom. US peace-building in Iraq, for example, betrays a considerable ability to accumulate mistakes. For this reason, I am afraid, the jury is still out.

The world is becoming an ever smaller place. As a result, the consequences of decisions taken by Washington affect us all and it is extremely frustrating when they are taken outside of international legal procedures. Decisions that affect people but in which they have no say breed resentment, resistance and, ultimately, violence.

In the 18th century, King George III of England decided that he needed to tax his subjects on another continent. He thought that he had good grounds for such a policy since he was incurring costs to protect these same people against the "savages". These people were, however, upset, since they were never consulted on this decision, but were severely affected by its consequences. Americans know better than anyone the consequences that their wrath engendered.

Yours,
Harald

For more information on the Council on Foreign Relations, see www.cfr.org, and on the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, see www.hsfk.de

Revolutionary writing

James Appathurai reviews two books examining the revolution in military affairs and its impact on the future of warfare.

Ten days into the US-led invasion of Iraq, the first hints of panic were starting to show. Iraqi resistance didn't seem to be collapsing as promised by proponents of the campaign. Supply lines appeared stretched and exposed, without enough troops to guard them as the fighting forces raced ahead. And the battle for Baghdad – where US technological advantages would be dramatically reduced – loomed.

Armchair analysts were quick to offer critiques. The US-led forces were too light, in armour and in number, to ensure victory. The speed of the US advance was dangerous. More seriously still, the critics argued that US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and military commander General Tommy Franks were gambling soldiers' lives, and military success, in a reckless test of revolutionary theories of warfare. Indeed, by the third week of the war there were rumblings that Rumsfeld's future and with it his vision of conflict were resting on thin ice in the Iraqi desert.

Within days, however, this prediction was proven spectacularly wrong. The Iraqi military either fled or, where it resisted, was destroyed in short order. Baghdad fell after only a few days, and the Baathist regime was brought to an end. The military victory was swift and total, and with remarkably few casualties on all sides.

To casual observers, this success was seen as largely the result of the weakness of the Iraqi military and the lack of support among Iraqis for the Saddam regime. The military campaign itself, however, seemed nothing very new – surprising perhaps for the speed of the main invasion force, and a little lighter than expected, but otherwise un-noteworthy.

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In this case, however, the casual observers have drawn the wrong lessons. The Iraq campaign was not more of the same. It was, instead, the first major conflict to illustrate the implications of what has been called the "revolution in military affairs" or RMA.

The RMA is at the core of the transformation of US forces being promoted by Secretary Rumsfeld. As it is adopted, it will fundamentally transform the way that US forces are structured, equipped, trained and employed. It will have a direct effect on the ability of America's Allies to work with US forces. And it will influence America's political relationship with countries around the world. For all these reasons, those who are interested in the future of military operations must come to grips with the RMA.

Elinor Sloan's book, *The Revolution in Military Affairs* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), is a good primer. Sloan spent many years as a respected defence analyst in Canada's Department of National Defence. She has recently taken up a post as assistant professor of political science at Carleton University in Ottawa. If her book is anything to go by, her students are benefiting from a strong pedagogical talent.

For the beginner wanting to understand the RMA, the book's structure is ideal. It begins with a simple question: What is the RMA? Her answer is equally clear. The central tenet of an RMA is that advances in technology must lead to significant changes in how military forces are organised, trained and equipped for war, thereby reshaping the way in which wars are fought.

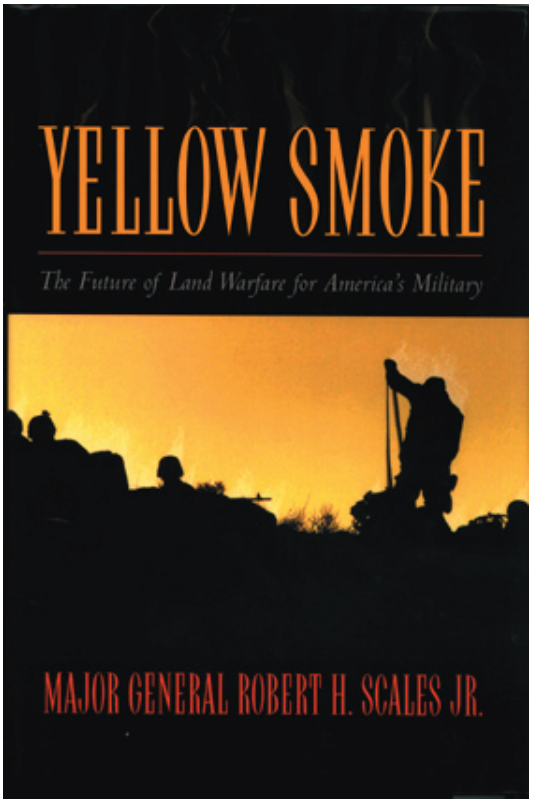
Sloan covers many of the technologies in areas that are commonly identified as driving a modern RMA: precision force and precision-guided munitions; force projection; stealth; battlespace awareness and control.

She also sets out how these technologies are affecting air, land, naval and joint doctrine in the United States, the country that is most clearly embracing the RMA.

The book then broadens its scope to examine what, and how, America's principal Allies are doing to keep up with RMA-driven changes in the United States, focusing on key US partners and NATO in particular. The chapter on NATO is accurate and complete, but also, inevitably, dated. At its November 2002 Summit in Prague, the Alliance adopted major initiatives to update NATO's military capabilities, including the Prague Capabilities Commitment and the NATO Response Force. Sloan's book was published too early to cover the Summit and the changes it programmed to Alliance forces and capabilities.

The book goes on to examine the implications of the RMA for peace-support operations and for countering asymmetric threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is in these chapters where the book loses focus.

Sloan's book neither discriminates nor provokes. The approach is extremely broad – it leaves no major issue out, and explains each clearly and comprehensively. It condenses what is already well known to those familiar with the topic, and synthesises it into a form digestible by those who are not. But it does not attempt to go beyond factual description to profound analysis. It does not, for example, assess the various technological advances or doctrinal changes for their relative value to modern requirements. Instead, it lays out, simply and effectively, a comprehensive menu of what could be on tap.



The text also fails to discriminate sufficiently between modern capabilities and revolutionary capabilities. Strategic lift, while important for power projection, has been a standard requirement for militaries since the days of Hannibal (who preferred the heavy, wide-body variant). Efforts to acquire more of it may be increasingly important, and will have implications for overseas basing arrangements, but the link to the RMA is not clear – or at least not clearly enough made. Similarly, important modern requirements, such as Homeland Defence in the United States, are given extensive coverage, but seem to have only a superficial link to the RMA.

Sloan's book is also a good example of why it is wrong to judge a book by its cover. The grim, blood-red gas mask on the jacket implies a drama and a focus that the book neither seeks nor delivers. This is a highly useful, entry-level look at the RMA. A more appropriate cover might be the familiar yellow and black, with the words "RMA for Dummies".

Major-General Robert Scales Jr.'s book, *Yellow Smoke* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), is of a different calibre and focus altogether. This is an analysis of the future of land warfare, written not by an analyst expert in military issues, but by a military man proficient at analysis. And the difference shows.

General Scales spent 30 years in the US Army, ending his tour as Commandant of the US Army War College. Between 1995 and 1997, he played a key role in the *Army After Next* project, an exercise to map out a truly visionary future for the US Army – which, as integration becomes ever more important, has had implications for the entire US Armed Forces.

Scales' book is guided by his belief that the United States is developing a distinctly American style of war. The new American style will accentuate getting to the crisis quickly, with lighter but still lethal forces, in order to win victory in the early stages of conflict; to leverage the enormous firepower available to US forces to get an advantage in manoeuvre on the ground; to establish a distinctive speed advantage over the enemy in theatre, particularly through the use of tactical helicopters, and thereby to get inside the enemy's decision cycle, giving them no time to react effectively; to get a dominant ability to track the movement of enemy forces, in order to compensate for the enemy's superior numbers; and to emphasise a defensive posture for close combat, letting supporting fire do the killing.

In one particularly succinct page, Scales sets out a vision of how future US land battles will take place.

Using total battlespace awareness, US forces will know exactly where enemy forces are dispersed. Using its tactical mobility, US forces will go where the enemy is not. The use of a tactical internet will obviate the need for US forces to stay within "sight" of each other in mass formations; instead, they can flow, in small units, throughout the battlefield, and then use their dominant battlespace awareness and advanced command and control to direct fire precisely, wherever needed, from multiple locations and multiple theatres (air, land, sea, space, cyberspace). By moving in this way, and at a dramatically higher pace than the enemy, they will quickly overwhelm its forces and its ability to control them.

This scenario offers insights in the recent Iraq conflict. This was a land-focused conflict, unlike the earlier Kosovo campaign. It emphasised speed, battlespace awareness, and precision strike to unprecedented degrees and in new ways. It got inside the decision cycle of the Iraqi command, making effective opposition impossible. It was, in a real sense, a "Yellow Smoke" battle. It was also a vindication of those who have been promoting transformation within the US military, including Secretary Rumsfeld. And it posed a direct threat to future coalition operations, because fewer and fewer US Allies will have the technology, the doctrine or the soldiers to keep up.

Yellow Smoke does have its weaknesses. It would have benefited from more rigorous editing – there are only so many times that one needs to be told that infantry soldiers do the bulk of the dying in combat. It is also far too technical for the lay reader, most of whom will not be familiar with "control zones" and "aerial manoeuvre systems".

That said, it is a substantial and satisfying read. It gives the reader true insight into the military transformation that is currently underway, and explains how this translates into reality on the battlefield. It focuses, unflinchingly, on the true business of armies: victory on the battlefield. As General George S. Patton said: "No poor bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making other bastards die for their country." *Yellow Smoke* offers a pithy vision of how that will happen.

There are surprisingly few good books on the RMA available, even though the internet is flooded with articles on the subject. Sloan's *The Revolution in Military Affairs* and Scales' *Yellow Smoke* are two of the better examples. In an era where the RMA is moving out of the think tanks and onto the battlefield, both are recommended reading – one for the layman, the other for the professional. ■

Admiral Forbes: Last SACLANT

Admiral Ian Forbes was acting Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT) between October 2002 and June this year and deputy SACLANT for the ten months before that. As acting SACLANT he oversaw the transformation of the Allied Command Atlantic, the only NATO command in North America, into the Allied CommandTransformation (ACT). In a distinguished 38-year career in the Royal Navy, Admiral Forbes was engaged in active operations off Iceland, the Falklands, in the Gulf and in the Adriatic, including both NATO's air campaigns over Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999. He also served as Chief of Staff to Carl Bildt at the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo in 1996 and 1997.

NATO REVIEW: One of the greatest changes to NATO's command structure has been the creation of a Strategic Command for Transformation in place of the Supreme Allied Command, Atlantic (SACLANT). What is the significance of this change and how will the new command be structured?

ADMIRAL FORBES: A transformational process akin to that which has been taking place in the United States is essential to modernise the Alliance's capabilities and ensure that they stay consistent with US military thinking and development. This process should result in a leaner and more efficient command structure enabling us to provide more futuristic and more creative solutions to the new security challenges that we face and, in particular, those emanating from beyond our traditional area of operations. Underpinning this process is the establishment of the NATO Response Force (NRF). This is the platform for delivering the necessary military capabilities. We in the Allied Command Transformation (ACT), as SACLANT is going to be called, will provide support to the NRF, providing the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), General James Jones, with the future capabilities that he will need to ensure that it can operate in a fully joint, integrated and coordinated way, either independently or in the context of a coalition of the willing. The ACT is to be a headquarters devoted to the constant study of the future and of change, which, given the pace of technological progress, is crucial to war fighting. Similar structures already exist in the United States and we would hope to replicate their transformational mentality and become a forcing agent for change in all Allied militaries.

NR: Some Europeans were alarmed when they learned of the imminent demise of SACLANT, since it has traditionally been seen as a physical representation of the transatlantic link. Is this justified?

AF: "Alarmed" is a strong word. Losing the one NATO headquarters on US soil, which is a profound expression of the transatlantic link, was certainly concerning. However, any examination of SACLANT's contribution to the Alliance in the new security environment would have raised questions about its utility, unless it could be used to help the Alliance move beyond its traditional area of operations. Transformation is a very powerful rationale for a strategic headquarters and a critical process for the Alliance. In my view, the ACT will in the future be an extremely powerful organ for strengthening the transatlantic link, which is in itself critical to transatlantic security. Europeans have no need to be alarmed. Setting up the ACT to work more closely with US transformational thinking is a real opportunity. Indeed, the ACT should become a more influential command as a result of the structure that we're putting in place than SACLANT was during the past decade.

NR: Military transformation is a complex concept. What do you understand by it?

AF: Transformation means different things to different people. I believe that it is, above all, about true jointness at the front line, where land, sea and air capabilities are totally integrated, allowing for operations involving simultaneous rather than sequential activities to produce a rapid war-winning effect. We got a vivid indication of this in practice in Iraq and with it some idea of where US military thinking has moved in recent years in terms of vision, precision and lethality, all deployed in a truly networked way. It made for the very high tempo campaign we saw in Iraq, redefining the way operations will be conducted in the future. Transformation is also everything that underpins joint and integrated operations, including education, training and acquisitions' programmes. It is managing the future in a joint and combined way that cuts intellectually, culturally and practically across the entire spectrum. It's an ongoing process designed

Admiral Forbes spoke with NATO Review Editor Christopher Bennett while still acting SACLANT.

to enable us to operate faster, quicker and with more effect on the battlefield. Very much what we saw in Iraq. And very much what the NRF will have to put in place.

NR: How will NATO's Transformational and Operational Commands work together in practice?

AF: The rationale behind the creation of the ACT is that it is a supporting command to both SACEUR and SHAPE, the operational command. Together with SACEUR, we will be responsible for ensuring that NATO has a pool of forces in the form of the NRF that are readily deployable, sustainable and able to undertake missions beyond NATO's traditional area of operations to deal with threats wherever they arise. We've already been working on this for the past 10 to 12 months and our interaction with SHAPE has been a very positive experience enabling us to agree who should do what and how. We will be able to bring to SHAPE new ideas and new technologies as well as command element training, products that are going to be essential for the NRF to function effectively and intelligently.

NR: Given the differences in military spending between the United States and its NATO Allies, is it possible to bridge the capabilities gap? And, if it is, how will the new Allied Command Transformation seek to achieve this?

AF: This is the $64,000 dollar question. Most people view the capabilities gap exclusively in terms of equipment. While, undoubtedly, this is a large element of the gap, capability also embraces other matters, such as education, doctrine, training and innovative and imaginative thinking. For instance, at the Qatar Command Centre for the Iraq War, none of the technology was older than six months, illustrating the sort of change that is demanded of such operations in today's world. What is key here is a common thought process. We need to be able to think in the same way to be able to be educated together, train together and ultimately fight together. Indeed, that is going to be an early focus of the ACT. From June through to December, we will be introducing a new doctrinal process to ensure that we are thinking in the same way, which will be facilitated by war-gaming and education. Concerning acquisitions, we're going to be looking at fast-tracking capability packages in line with the Prague Capabilities Commitment to bring rapidly on stream emerging technologies and ideas that are going to be crucial to the NRF.

NR: Traditionally, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic and the Commander-in-Chief of the US Joint Forces Command have been one and the same person. How will the future Allied Command Transformation interact with the US Joint Forces Command?

AF: A key element of the ACT will be its relationship with the US Joint Forces Command, which is also the US agent for transformational change. We have a longstanding, close and deepening relationship with US Joint Forces Command and with the change of command in June, the personal link with the Commander of the US Joint Forces Command will be re-established. This link will be crucial to ensuring that both commands generate new ideas and identify new ways of operating to underpin interoperability as the NRF is taken forward on both sides of the Atlantic.

NR: The recent Iraq war was one of the most spectacular military campaigns ever fought. What are the immediate military implications of this campaign for NATO and for the Allied Command Transformation?

AF: Both the United States and the United Kingdom are currently analysing the campaign to learn as much as possible from it. Although it is too early to draw final conclusions, preliminary research would appear to vindicate NATO's Prague Capabilities Commitment, that is the importance of investing in areas such as strategic airlift, tanker support, precision weapons, ground surveillance, and chemical and biological defence. The fields of special focus identified at the Prague Summit were absolutely spot on. The other preliminary conclusion concerns the intellectual gap that needs to be bridged. Iraq involved new and innovative approaches in all areas, a faster speed of action, extremely quick targeting in an integrated battle space as well as tremendous strategic lift and movement. All of these elements are going to be crucial for the NRF in the future. Bracketing the ACT together with the US Joint Forces Command, which is very much the United States' lessons-learned command, is going to be extremely valuable to the Alliance. We will be delivering an initial capability in June and will be taking immediate steps to ensure that via war gaming and seminars the lessons of Iraq are rapidly brought home by our prospective NRF commanders.

NR: Seven Central and East European countries were invited to begin NATO accession talks in Prague. How will the Allied Command Transformation help these countries reform their militaries?

AF: SHAPE and SACEUR will obviously take the lead here. But we will be providing a supporting function to ensure that transformational ideas are brought into the reform process early. This includes issues such as command, control, communications and computing, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4 ISR), as well as a more expeditionary approach and improvements in integrating forces. We will effectively be helping them buy into a transformational process early, which is critical to interoperability.

NR: How best can NATO contribute to the war on terror?
AF: Collectively, the Alliance has been working on this issue for the past twelve months, though obviously it goes beyond the ACT. Agreement to operate out of area and the fact that NATO is now taking on a fundamental role in Afghanistan is a significant symbol of the Alliance's commitment to combat terrorism beyond its traditional area. We are also putting in place other aspects, such as improving the exchange of information and enhancing capabilities to contribute to consequence management. All of these have been bracketed together in a new counter-terrorism concept that the Alliance has embraced where deterrence, disruption, defence and protection are the key principles. That was unveiled at the Prague Summit and work has been on-going since then. The key expression of this will be the NRF, and how and where we deploy it.

NR: The year in which you have been acting SACLANT has been one of the most eventful and traumatic in the Alliance's history. What have you learned from this experience and how does it bode for NATO's future?
AF: Today's strategic environment is very different from that before 9/11. That is a statement of the obvious, but one that is worth repeating. In the United States, the change can be seen in all areas of policy-making, and especially in military matters and homeland defence. A dynamic transformational process is under way to adapt to deal with new security threats and the United States is clearly well advanced in this approach particularly in the field of military capabilities. Iraq showed us that. But NATO leaders collectively recognised the need for similar change at Prague and both the decision to move beyond NATO's traditional area and to modernise capabilities are crucial for the Alliance's future. Prague mandated new capabilities: the Prague Capabilities Commitment; the NRF; and the reform of the Command Structure. The ACT is a critical piece of the new command structure and will be up and running with an initial capability in June. Achieving this has virtually required a transformational process in itself, but we are ready to deliver and I have every confidence we can play a big part in bringing a transformational mentality to the Alliance. In turn, this will underpin NRF capability and credibility, providing us with an Alliance better able to meet the threats and challenges of the 21st century. ■

Great expectations

Ronald D. Asmus examines the challenges facing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as they enter the European Union and NATO.

The past decade or so has been good for Central and Eastern Europe. Communism collapsed, the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union disintegrated. Countries from the Baltic to the Black Sea regained their independence and succeeded in establishing new democratic and market-based political and economic systems. With the exception of the former Yugoslavia, the region largely avoided the return of authoritarian nationalism that many commentators feared would rear its ugly head in the wake of communism's demise.

In foreign policy terms, these countries were equally successful. Former dissidents turned diplomats and statesmen negotiated a soft landing on the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the peaceful demise of the Warsaw Pact. They then set their sights on a goal that at the time seemed visionary, highly desirable but largely unreachable: to rejoin a West, from which they had been artificially separated for nearly half a century, by joining the European Union and NATO. They wanted to secure their newly won independence through these institutions and achieve the same degree of security many in the Western half of the continent took for granted.

Signing NATO's accession protocols: The ink had barely dried when the Alliance found itself in a fundamental crisis (© NATO)

These goals have now been achieved. With the "Big Bang" rounds of EU and NATO enlargement set in train at the Copenhagen and Prague summits, Central and Eastern Europe is being firmly anchored in the West. The historical dilemma of being weak nations caught between Germany and Russia has been resolved. These countries will now be part of those Western structures in which Germany itself is firmly embedded; and the same structures will now allow these countries to deal with their Eastern neighbour in a spirit of partnership but from a position of strength. Underpinning it all lies a security guarantee from the most powerful country in the world, the United States.

At times, it almost seems like an Alice-in-Wonderland story. In a region where history has tended to be cruel and the good guys have all too often lost, they have for once triumphed. In the early 1990s, a US newspaper carried a cartoon whose caption read: "Eastern Europe — Isn't that where the wars start?" Today, there are no wars in sight and the region is arguably more democratic and less threatened than at any point in recent memory. The centre of gravity of the West has shifted several hundred kilometres eastward, a fact reflected in the language we now use to describe the region. Whereas a decade ago we still used the phrase "Eastern Europe", now these countries are referred to as Central and Eastern Europe and the phrase Eastern Europe is used to refer to Ukraine.

Against this backdrop, one can hardly blame Central and Eastern Europeans for wanting to kick back and savour these accomplishments by perhaps smoking a cigar and enjoying a glass of wine from one of the region's modernised and upgraded vineyards. But just as the region appears poised to realise this historical triumph, new and dark clouds have appeared on the horizon. The paradox is that just as Central and Eastern Europeans arrive at their destination in the West, the Western Alliance they have worked so hard to join increasingly appears in disarray. In the wake of a transatlantic train wreck over differing attitudes to the threat presented by Iraq, fissures have appeared in the foundations of those key institutions that Central and Eastern Europeans believed would shape and guarantee their future — the European Union and NATO. Core institutions that many assumed were more or less permanent elements of a new post-Cold War security order suddenly appear in danger of unravelling.

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Whether they can or will be repaired once the dust has settled on Iraq, or whether the fissures are just the beginning of a more fundamental transatlantic and European realignment is still unclear. What is clear is that the West is headed into more uncertain and turbulent waters. The new threats of the 21st century have moved from the abstract realm of theory to reality. And to date the West has failed to come up with a common response to meet them. For once, Central and Eastern Europe is not at the epicentre of this new geopolitical turbulence. But its effect on the region and on the institutions to which it has entrusted its future prosperity and security is likely to be profound. Looking ahead, three major challenges can be identified in the coming decade. The first lies across the Atlantic; the second within Europe; and the third at home.

Atlantic challenge

The first challenge facing Central and Eastern Europe is the Atlantic one. Having lived in a rough geopolitical neighbourhood in the 20th century, the incentives to join NATO were self-evident to most Central and Eastern Europeans. Alliance membership would provide defence against a residual Russian threat as well as the security umbrella under which these countries could integrate and recover from forty years of communism. It brought with it a security guarantee from the United States, a country that was trusted because it harboured no alternative agenda in the region. NATO's engagement in the region was seen by many as a precondition for solving a broad set of problems ranging from bilateral relations with Germany, regional rivalries and, perhaps most important, facilitating the normalisation of relations with Russia.

Yet the ink had barely dried on the protocols of accession for the second round of NATO enlargement when the Alliance found itself in a fundamental crisis sparked by disagreement over Iraq. To be sure, this was not the first transatlantic crisis and was arguably avoidable — the result of mistakes by nearly all the key players. The fact that the West's attempt to deal with a totalitarian dictator ended up badly fracturing NATO, the European Union as well as the United Nations is hardly a testimony to anyone's diplomatic acumen.

But beyond the specifics of Iraq, the past few months have revealed deeper differences within and across the Atlantic that are likely to reverberate for some time. And the debate over why we had this train wreck is one pregnant with policy consequences.

At one end of the spectrum is what one might call a "structuralist" school of analysts who argue that the growing asymmetry of power is fundamentally reshaping American and European views of the world. Many in this school contend that a break-up was increasingly likely, if not inevitable. The opposing view is that this conflict was not inevitable and is largely attributable to the different impact 9/11 had on American and European thinking, compounded by the mistakes of leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. In other words, the real problem is the lack of a shared sense of strategic purpose.

Such different analyses lead to different policy prescriptions for the way forward. If the problem is rooted in a deep, growing and immutable asymmetry in power and outlook, then there is little prospect of fixing it in the short-run, if at all. The implications of this train of thought for the transatlantic relationship are clear — and ominous. Europe has ceased to be the grand strategic problem it was in the 20th century and will not be an important strategic partner of the United States in the future. And NATO will not be a central institution as Washington confronts the challenges of the future because differences in worldview, priorities and the use of power are unlikely to be bridgeable.

A second school is less extreme. It wants to preserve NATO but avoid the kind of fractious debates that nearly tore the Alliance apart in recent months. Its motto is "damage limitation". Its proponents will argue that NATO needs to be maintained to preserve a transatlantic link and sustain a pool of military forces that can be tapped into on an *ad hoc* basis, if and when needed to form coalitions of the willing. At the same time, such advocates will shy away from overtly pushing it to assume significant new missions beyond Europe where the danger of deep differences paralysing the Alliance is too great. Rather than count on Europe as a whole acting through NATO, the United States should accept the fact that it can only look to a subset of Allies. In a bigger and looser Europe, Washington should focus less on institutions and more on rebuilding bilateral ties with those countries that share its views and priorities.

A third school of thought draws yet another conclusion, namely that the Alliance can only be saved through a radical reform that reharmonises strategic perspectives on both sides of the Atlantic. Once the dust has settled in Iraq, it would advocate a "pick-up-the-pieces" strategy to put the transatlantic relationship back together again, focused on dealing with these new threats. It argues that the best way to heal the wounds left by the Iraq crisis is to get on with new projects that will demonstrate NATO's ability to turn the page and coalesce around the need to handle new challenges. It would invoke the legacy and spirit of the Alliance's founding fathers to push for a renaissance of transatlantic cooperation.

For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it is clear that the Alliance that they are joining is not the well-oiled machine they thought it was. On the contrary, they are entering an Alliance in the midst of its own increasingly fractious debate over its future purpose and strategic direction — a debate they will be expected to participate in immediately.

At the core of this debate is the issue of NATO's purpose in a post-communist world in which peace in Europe is increasingly assured but new threats from beyond Europe are on the rise. And the central question facing all Allies, both new and old, is whether they want to tackle the new threats of the 21st century on a transatlantic basis and whether the Alliance can and should be transformed into the framework to organise such efforts.

These are not easy questions for Central and Eastern European countries. In an ideal world, many in this region would probably have been content for NATO to remain more or less as it was when they set out on their quest to become members. To the degree that they want NATO to take on new missions, they would like to see it focus on their "near abroad" and concentrate on finishing the job in the Balkans, stabilising Ukraine, democratising Belarus, perhaps reaching out to Central Asia and the Caucasus and keep chipping away at the enormous project of trying to transform Russia into a normal, democratic European country.

But they know that those priorities are not necessarily shared, not least by the United States. From an American perspective, the question of war and peace on the continent had largely been solved and the most pressing strategic challenges now come from beyond Europe. If NATO is going to remain central to American foreign policy, it has to address those challenges that are central to American and broader Western security. For Central and Eastern Europe, this means that if they want the United States to remain fully engaged in Europe, then they must join Washington in pushing for this broader transformation of the Alliance — even if it means that the Alliance goes in a direction that some Central and Eastern European countries may not find easy either politically or militarily.

In some ways, many leaders from Central and Eastern Europe, perhaps unburdened by the internal Alliance debates from the Cold War, have had fewer inhibitions and have been more ready to support NATO acting "out of area". The first round of new members faced the test of going to war in Kosovo; the second round has faced the same issue in supporting Washington on Iraq. In both cases, leaders from the region have drawn on their own history to make a strong and eloquent case on the need for the West to use its might to stand up to dictators. During the Iraq crisis, Americans have been pleased to see Central and Eastern European leaders standing up and invoking their own historical experience with totalitarian rule. It confirms the long-held American hope that these countries could bring fresh blood, vigour and enthusiasm into the Alliance.

But Central and Eastern European support also has limits. The capabilities of these new Allies are still modest, especially when it comes to future expeditionary missions. While the elites remain strongly Atlanticist, the depth of such feeling in the societies of the region may be a different matter. Support for NATO dropped significantly in the region following the Kosovo campaign and popular opposition to the Iraq war in the wider public was almost as strong as in some Western European countries. It may be that the recent experiences with dictatorship has made these societies more willing to stand up and defend freedom than some countries in Western Europe. But does the average Slovak or Romanian really understand the issues of Afghanistan, Iraq or the Middle East better than his French or German counterpart? Politically, will these countries be able to sustain support for Washington over the opposition of major European powers?

Many Americans are clearly hoping that all of Central and Eastern Europe will evolve into a set of solid Allies like Poland today — strongly Atlanticist, willing to fulfil its NATO obligations and more capable of doing so as their economies grow stronger. Many Western Europeans, on the other hand, seem to consider the Atlanticist leanings of these countries to be a temporary and passing phenomenon. Which way Central and Eastern Europe will go over time is a key question the leaders of this region will have to answer for themselves.

European challenge

The second challenge facing Central and Eastern Europe lies in Europe. It centres on the future of the European Union and European integration more generally. That future may in some ways be as uncertain as that of the transatlantic relationship. For a while it has been the row across the Atlantic over Iraq that has received the most attention in recent months, a second set of fissures has emerged across the continent among EU members, both current and prospective. To some degree, those cracks are attributable to the same differences on Iraq that have divided NATO. But, as in NATO, they also mask a deeper divide about what the European Union is about, who speaks for Europe and how to shape relations with the United States.

As an American who believes that a strong Europe is in America's interest and wishes to see the European Union evolve into a more coherent and unified actor, I cannot help but wonder whether it is not also headed into increasingly difficult waters. There are, of course, the well-known list of problems and unresolved issues already on the European Union's plate: stagnant economic growth, structural reform, budget woes and a constitutional convention. And in the wake of the Iraq crisis, we can add to the list a growing divide among the European Union's major powers over who can speak for Europe and how to shape relations with the United States. As France and Germany moved to oppose Washington on Iraq and wrap themselves in the mantle of Europe in doing so, they elicited an unprecedented backlash to their claim to speak for the European governmental mainstream.

Nowhere was this clearer than in the so-called "Letter of Eight". Issued in response to the Franco-German Elysée Treaty anniversary declaration on Iraq, it was designed first and foremost to counter what these countries saw as a drift towards anti-Americanism. But it was also intended as a warning shot across the bow of Paris and Berlin that the old rules of the game whereby France and Germany could simply meet and issue a statement in the name of Europe were no longer acceptable. If one looks closely at the motives of countries like Italy and Spain and even Poland, they were laying down a marker that they were no longer prepared to have their views and interest ignored by Paris and Berlin, and certainly not on an issue as important as the future of the transatlantic relationship.

To be sure, many French and German commentators downplay the significance of the Letter of Eight as well as the subsequent Letter by the Vilnius 10, as aberrations with few if any longer-term consequences. In private, they suggest that UK Prime Minister Tony Blair is going to lose his gamble on Iraq, Spanish Prime Minister José-Maria Aznar will soon leave office, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is not serious and the Central and Eastern Europeans will become more acquiescent once they realise the price they will pay for their behaviour.

In London and Madrid, one hears the opposite scenario. There the expectation is that Blair will not only end up being proven right on the war in Iraq but that he is prepared to continue the fight and further challenge the Franco-German duopoly by laying down a stronger claim to British leadership in Europe. In private, some British officials suggest that it is time that the role and stature of countries like Italy and Spain as well as the new EU members from Central and Eastern Europe be upgraded to provide a more representative European face to the outside world. This issue is not likely to go away soon, irrespective of the outcome of the Iraq crisis.

Proponents of European integration remain confident that the European Union has seen similar crises before and has always emerged stronger. They believe that these are simply small hiccups on the grand scale of history and that the broader trend is that European integration is all but unstoppable. To Central and Eastern Europeans used to hearing official mantra about success being preordained, such arguments do not necessarily sound reassuring. But leaving that aside, if there is one lesson that should have become clear in recent months, it is that the future health and vitality of the European Union and NATO are inherently and inevitably intertwined. The assumption that if NATO falters the European Union will step in to pick up the slack or take over the mission of security and defence is facile. If anything, the last few months have shown that when NATO is in trouble the European Union usually is as well — and vice versa.

For this reason, any attempt to exploit Washington's unilateralist tendencies to reshape the European Union into a counterweight to the United States is potentially dangerous. While an unholy alliance of US unilateralists and anti-American Europeans may succeed in further damaging the Atlantic Alliance, the consequence is not likely to be a stronger Europe but a more fragmented and weaker one.

A "return to Europe" was one of Central and Eastern Europe's leitmotifs throughout the 1990s, an engine that drove the countries of the region to work so hard to try to catch up with Western Europe. Yet, once again they find themselves about to achieve their dream of joining a key Western institution which they believed would help guarantee their future only to find it divided, dysfunctional in some areas and potentially in crisis. Here, too, they will take their seat at the EU table and be expected to take sides in these contentious discussions from day one.

The instincts of many of these countries will be to side with the United Kingdom — on issues ranging from how Europe should be organised and run to relations across the Atlantic. Central and Eastern Europe views American power and influence as an opportunity to be exploited, not as a problem to be countered. As small and medium-sized countries, their instincts on how Europe should be structured and governed will tend not to be federalist but inter-governmental. Having just joined the European Union, they will be reluctant immediately to embrace far-reaching, integrationist

schemes that force them to cede more sovereignty to Brussels. Above all, they will want to maintain an American presence and influence in European affairs. Many of them still want more America in Europe, not less.

Yet these countries will also be careful not to antagonise the two key continental powers, France and Germany, whose political and economic clout they are well aware of. It is one thing to stand up to Paris and Berlin on occasion and on a specific issue. It is quite another to pursue a course that pits them against these two countries across a wider range of issues — especially if their own public opinion is lukewarm, as in the case of Iraq. To be sure, the initial point of departure for Central and Eastern Europeans will be to not want to choose. As in a dysfunctional family, they simply want mother and father to make up, bury their differences and get along again. But life is not always that simple. In reality, they will quickly have to learn to fend for themselves in the rough and tumble of EU politics.

Domestic challenge

The third challenge facing Central and Eastern Europe lies at home. It is the ability of these countries to continue the process of political and economic reform and the rebuilding of their societies started in 1989. To be sure, an extraordinary amount has already been accomplished. Indeed, one of the keys to Central and Eastern Europe's success in the 1990s was its ability to reform further and faster than many in the West believed possible. That said, today one also has a more sober assessment of just how much damage four decades of communism did to the countries and how far behind the West they still lag and are likely to lag for a long time to come.

Moreover, the signs of reform fatigue in societies that have been pushed hard to change over the past decade are everywhere apparent. The results of reform are mixed and the fruits of progress unevenly distributed. Younger Central and Eastern Europeans have job and career prospects that their parents could never have imagined. Yet others have been left behind or have found it hard to adapt to the requirements of a new political and economic system. Widespread corruption undercuts the appeal of capitalism and the uneven benefits of the market economy continue to feed nostalgia for the security of state socialism, at least in some circles.

Just as Central and Eastern Europeans arrive at their destination in the West, the Western Alliance they have worked so hard to join increasingly appears in disarray

An initial wave of pro-Western reformist leaders is gradually retiring, many exhausted by the struggles of the past decade. Their successors contain both a younger generation of equally committed reformers as well as populist politicians seeking to exploit the resentment that exists within these societies. For much of the past decade, the pressure to meet the requirements of the European Union exerted an extraordinary discipline on governments to do the right thing, even in the face of popular opposition. And once these countries join the European Union, they will be locked into a set of rules and requirements that will help keep them on track.

At the same time, one cannot help but see certain warning signs of political fragmentation, economic slowdown and, in some cases, nationalist and/or populist temptations. Many if not all of these countries have seen a rapid turnover in ruling governments and the collapse of old and the formation of new political parties. Whether this is simply a reflection of the inevitable sorting out and eventual stabilisation of the political spectrum as some suggest or a sign of longer-term political turbulence and volatility remains to be seen. Economically, one wonders whether the pressures to sustain economic reforms might fall off after these countries succeed in joining the European Union.

The ability of the governments of these countries to manage this challenge is, of course, not unrelated to the other two challenges discussed above. The stronger these countries are politically and economically at home, the better equipped they will be to play a constructive role in dealing with foreign policy challenges in Europe and across the Atlantic. Similarly, a strong and vibrant European and transatlantic framework helps reinforce and further consolidate progress at home. The 1990s contain many good examples where progress in one area in these countries reinforced and fuelled progress in the other.

But the opposite is also true. The danger today is that the opposite starts to occur, namely that a weakening of performance at home combines with a growing crisis in European and transatlantic structures, thereby creating precisely the wrong dynamic at the wrong time. In recent months, both sides of the Atlantic have behaved in ways that have sent all the wrong signals to

the region. The rise of Europhobia in Washington and anti-Americanism in Western Europe can inadvertently validate and legitimate anti-Western and anti-reform forces in these countries as well. While such forces are on the defensive, they are not yet fully destroyed.

Central and Eastern Europeans will have their work cut out in the coming years. In many ways, however, the challenges that lie ahead seem daunting but are no more so than the ones they successfully tackled in the 1990s. And this time Central and Eastern Europeans are in a stronger position to face them for several reasons.

Firstly, Central and Eastern Europe is no longer at the epicentre of the new instability and emerging risks that the West is trying to cope with. If one examines the new threats to transatlantic or European security over the next decade, one cannot help but conclude that cities like Brussels, London and Washington are more at risk than Prague, Sofia, Warsaw or Vilnius. Rather than asking whether Americans, British or French are willing to die for Gdansk, the question may be whether Central and Eastern Europeans will be willing to share the risks of the war on terrorism, radical Islam and weapons of mass destruction in the Greater Middle East and elsewhere.

Secondly, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will be seated at the key decision-making tables where the decisions affecting future Western security, including their own, will be made. Never again will decisions about them be made without them. The key question is how these countries will use that opportunity and whether they will be up to the challenge of revitalising European integration and transatlantic cooperation.

For a small Central and Eastern European country, taking part in this broader debate over the future of the European Union and NATO will no doubt be daunting. Yet, if there is one lesson from the past decade that can serve as a compass for the future, it is that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are much better off when they proactively take their future into their own hands, when they work together as a region and when they dare to be bold. Although history never repeats itself, one can only hope that over the next decade they will enjoy the same calibre of gutsy leadership they have consistently produced since 1989. We will all be better off if they do.

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Looking forward to a Balkan Big MAC

Nano Ruzin analyses how Macedonia has benefited from its relationship with NATO and other international organisations during the past two years.*

Macedonia has come a long way since 2001 when the country appeared on the brink of civil war. Indeed, although Macedonia was disappointed not to be invited to join NATO at last year's Prague Summit, the experience of working together with the Alliance and other international organisations to defuse tensions in the country and rebuild stability has been extremely positive. As a result, Macedonia aspires to joining the Alliance, together with Albania and Croatia, at its next summit, which after Prague's Big Bang could be a Balkan Big MAC.

Historic harvest: The number of weapons collected by NATO soldiers exceeded expectations (© NATO)

Macedonia's brush with disaster has been a sobering experience, shattering the casual optimism that had earlier characterised Macedonian attitudes to their country's security, stability and economic prospects. Indeed, during the first decade of their country's independence, Macedonians of all ethnicities were probably complacent about the dangers lurking beneath the surface. In part, the lavish praise of foreigners, who variously described Macedonia as an "oasis of peace", a "multiethnic miracle" and the "only former Yugoslav republic whose sovereignty did not bear the scars of an armed conflict", contributed to this false sense of security. The 2001 crisis brought both Macedonians and their leaders back to reality with a bump.

The reasons behind the Albanian revolt that brought Macedonia to the brink of civil war are many and complex. They include social factors, such as high unemployment among Albanians, low participation in state institutions and minimal welfare provision; demographic factors, such as an extremely high Albanian birth rate and increasing immigration from neighbouring countries; sociological factors, such as the structure of the traditional Albanian family, mutual distrust and lack of contact between communities as a result of cultural and linguistic differences; institutional and educational factors, such as constitutional grievances and unsatisfied higher educational aspirations; and political and cultural factors, in particular the issue of Albanian identity, which came to the fore in the wake of NATO's intervention in Kosovo and the withdrawal of Serbian forces from that region. Taken together, it is easy to understand why interethnic relations were degenerating in early 2001.

By May 2001, it had become increasingly clear that the conflict was spiralling beyond the control of the country's security forces. The magnitude and the intensity of the clashes indicated that the country could easily disintegrate into civil war, with consequences that had the potential to destabilise not just Macedonia but the wider region. The options were stark: armed conflict, civil war and self-destruction, on the one hand, or peace through compromise, on the other.

Skopje chose the path of compromise and solicited international assistance to facilitate a stabilisation process. In this way, the Macedonian government worked closely together with representatives of the European Union, NATO and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to create the necessary conditions for a return to peace. That said, the international involvement in Macedonia was very different to that in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, since it was primarily political. Macedonia was both a NATO Partner aspiring to Alliance membership and a sovereign state. For this reason, any action by the Alliance and other international bodies required the support of both the country's president and government, which in response to the crisis had been reconstituted with the addition of representatives of the opposition.

NATO assistance

On 14 June 2001, Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski requested NATO assistance to oversee the disarming of the extremists. In parallel, the European Union and the United States sent envoys -- François Léotard and James Pardew respectively -- to Macedonia to help facilitate dialogue between the country's political parties. Meanwhile, crisis management in the field was entrusted to Pieter Feith, a pragmatic and flexible NATO diplomat, whose shuttle diplomacy helped carve out an

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opening for communicating with the rebels (see article *Back from the brink* by Mihai Carp in the winter 2002 issue of *NATO Review*).

Against the odds, a cease-fire was brokered and the belligerents committed themselves to the political process. This was a huge achievement, but media on all sides were dubious about the merit of the negotiations and hostile to the international involvement. Moreover, NATO, in particular, suffered from an especially negative image in many Macedonian eyes. For this reason, at President Trajkovski's request, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson tasked his Special Adviser Mark Laity to work with the president's cabinet to put together an effective public information campaign (see article *Battling the media* by Mark Laity in the winter 2002 issue of *NATO Review*).

Macedonian military experts determined that the NATO mission in Macedonia had to be limited in scope, objectives and duration. On the political level, NATO had to persuade the Albanian extremists to respect the cease-fire and hand over their weapons. Meanwhile, the Macedonian coalition government, which contained both hard-liners and moderates, committed itself to controlling and preventing the use of heavy weapons by the state's security forces. In parallel to those efforts, the country's parliamentary political parties had to commit themselves to four measures: adopting the general political agreement; creating an appropriate legal framework for the presence of NATO forces leading the peace-building process; presenting a plan for the terms and details of handing over weapons for adoption by the Macedonian government and NATO; and ensuring a sustainable cease-fire.

Following several weeks of intensive talks and once all conditions had been fulfilled, a framework for peace was signed in Ohrid on 13 July 2001. This cleared the way for the deployment on 27 August 2001 of NATO troops in Operation *Essential Harvest*, the purpose of which was to collect and destroy the weapons handed over. The operation involved 4,800 soldiers from 13 countries in a multinational brigade under the command of the United Kingdom, which itself contributed more than 1,700 soldiers. In the 30-day, hand-over period that ended on 26 September 2001, the mission collected and destroyed some 3,875 weapons. In October of the same year, the rebel army was disbanded, changes to the Macedonian constitution were adopted soon after and an amnesty was granted to the Albanian rebels so that the Ohrid Agreement could begin to be implemented.

As Operation *Essential Harvest* drew to a close, President Trajkovski requested an extension of the international presence to underwrite what had already been achieved. A new German-led NATO mission, Operation *Amber Fox*, with some 700 soldiers took over to ensure the security of 280 EU and OSCE civilian observers until 15 December 2001. That mission was followed by Operation *Allied Harmony*, which came to an end in April 2003, at which time NATO handed responsibility for the operation to the European Union, thereby enabling it to launch its first mission, Operation *Concordia*.

The modest ceremony that took place just outside Skopje to mark the hand-over of command in Macedonia and the formal establishment of the first EU mission was not just the celebration of the beginning of a new stage in European security; it also confirmed the enduring ties between transatlantic partners. Indeed, it is in part a result of Macedonia's positive evolution since the 2001 crisis that it has been possible, in spite of great obstacles, for NATO and the European Union to come together and agree formal working relations.

Shared lessons

Both the international community — that is the European Union, NATO and the OSCE — and Macedonia learned important lessons from the experience of the past two years, including the following:

- While various international organisations and NATO in particular played an important role in resolving the crisis, it is Macedonia, its people and leaders who deserve most credit. The government had to prevail over hard-liners who were hostile to the international community, rejected compromise and preferred to seek military solutions to the crisis. Moreover, even though the number of casualties remained comparatively low, Macedonians and Albanians have had to overcome deep prejudices to begin to forge new relations.

- The fact that Macedonia has been a NATO Partner since 1995, that it has aspired to join the Alliance for nearly as long and that to this end it has been participating in the Membership Action Plan (MAP) since 1999 facilitated good relations between Skopje and the various international actors and contributed to a swift resolution of the crisis.

- The existing presence of NATO forces in the region, including a KFOR logistical base in Skopje, and NATO's earlier experience in crisis management elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia contributed greatly to the success of NATO operations. The Alliance's missions were extremely effective and the number of weapons collected exceeded expectations. Moreover, NATO operated within a limited mandate in a particularly flexible way, alternating between exerting political pressure and using force. To harmonise its strategy, NATO stayed in constant contact with both the Macedonian government in Skopje and the rebels.

• The international community reacted in a timely manner and collaborated closely with the Macedonian authorities, who understood that they could not allow a large-scale civil war to erupt in their country and risk massive destruction, loss of human life, crime, refugees and destabilisation of the entire region. In spite of some reservations, the Macedonian authorities chose to cooperate fully with the international community. In this way, Skopje took a series of unpopular measures that ran counter to prevailing attitudes among the public.

• In the beginning, the Alliance underestimated the level of hostility that it faced in local media. To put this right, improve its image and counter the conspiracy theories that were gaining ground, it dispatched a team of media experts to Macedonia to work with the local authorities and explain the nature of its work.

• International collaboration and cooperation on crisis management in Macedonia were exemplary. Each international organisation contributed in its own way to strengthening the peace missions. The European Union and the United States facilitated the talks, while frequent visits by the NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson — who conducted 19 visits to Macedonia in 19 months — EU High Representative Javier Solana and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Mircea Geoana lent political importance to resolving the crisis.

• Ongoing monitoring of the situation in the post-conflict period has proved a highly effective means of stabilising the country. The signing of the Ohrid Agreement was in fact just one step in the peace process. Subsequent phases have involved the return of security forces to crisis areas, proper application of the amnesty law, the holding of free, legal parliamentary elections in September 2002, the organisation of a census and the promulgation of a series of other laws.

• In addition to seeking to improve relations between communities within Macedonia, Skopje has to focus in the coming years on building better relations both with Albania and with the political leadership in Kosovo. Only by working closely together with the neighbours will it be possible to build long-term security.

• Border management and security in the fight against organised crime and closer cooperation with neighbours are critical to the stability of the region. For this reason, it is in the interest of both the international community and the region that the conclusions adopted at the May 2003 Ohrid Conference on Border Security and Management are implemented.

• The 2001 crisis demonstrated clearly the shortcomings of the Macedonian Armed Forces when confronted by asymmetric threats. Macedonia is currently undergoing a far-ranging defence review with an aim to rationalise both the armed forces and procurement practices. The experience of two years ago must now serve as a spur to more ambitious military reforms to equip the country to deal with asymmetric enemies, criminal groups and terrorists.

• Re-building confidence is a long-term process requiring expertise, wisdom, patience, tolerance and energy. The actors in the crisis as well as the international community have understood this.

Two years after the crisis and following parliamentary elections, former adversaries sit side by side and work together both in the Skopje parliament and in the coalition that governs the country. That is the best guarantee for preserving peace and stabilising the country. Indeed, today Macedonia is no longer a destabilising factor in the region. Rather, it is a potential role model for other countries. Moreover, Macedonia continues to work towards becoming a NATO member and to play its part in the war on terror.

The differences in preparedness between the Prague invitees and the remaining aspirants are no greater than two or perhaps three MAP cycles

While the 2001 crisis undermined Macedonia's chances of becoming a full NATO member at the Prague Summit, Alliance membership remains a key foreign policy goal. The country is committed to following the MAP process and has initiated trilateral cooperation with Albania and Croatia along similar lines to those successfully pursued by the Baltic Republics. An Adriatic Charter was signed in May by all three countries in the presence of US Secretary of State Colin Powell and the message from the trio is clear: the differences in preparedness between the Prague invitees and the remaining aspirants are no greater than two or perhaps three MAP cycles. Who is to say that a Balkan Big MAC won't be on the menu in Istanbul next year? ■

* NATO members with the exception of Turkey recognise the Republic of Macedonia as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.