

Foreign Policy
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**Alliance History and
the Future NATO:
What the Last 500 Years of
Alliance Behavior Tells Us
about NATO's Path Forward**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the significant changes in the global security environment over the last 20 years, NATO now finds itself mired in divisive debates concerning identification of threats and the expenditure of resources to deter or defend against them.

Because of the Alliance's debilitating activities many opine that it is on the road to divergence and ultimate dissolution. Yet despite these frictions and criticisms, NATO continues to attract new members and missions – indicating there may be more value to be found in this 61-year-old organization.

This paper attempts to identify a path forward for NATO by first examining the history of alliances – why they are formed and what makes them disband – and then, using insights gained from history, evaluates NATO's state against these objective rationales. It goes on to examine the base purposes of military alliances, and how these apply, if at all, to NATO today. Lastly, this paper identifies decisions that member nation leaderships should consider in determining the next state for the Alliance.

Examination of military alliances from the last 500 years finds that collective defense alliances disband soon after their threat, for which they originally banded together to deter or defeat, disappears. Specifically, 47 of the 63 major military alliances from the last 500 years disbanded. Of those that dissolved, the greatest number of them – 40 total, included collective defense as one of their core purposes. And two-thirds of the alliances formed around a collective defense promise dissolved due to the elimination of the threat (or being vanquished by it). Consequently, with the loss of NATO's principal threat, the Warsaw Pact, and with no new like threat of that scale emerging to take its place, NATO's role as a collective defense alliance is largely voided. Hence, history predicts that the Alliance is likely to meet the same ill fate as the other collective defense alliances from the last five centuries.

However, notwithstanding NATO's challenge to satisfactorily identify something to defend against, there continue to be significant roles that NATO can play to sustain and improve security for its members. For the last 20 years the NATO alliance has performed a myriad of security activities ranging from humanitarian assistance to peace and stability operations. While these activities did not directly support the direct collective defense of any NATO member, they have buttressed NATO's ideological precepts of promoting democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Furthermore, benefit can be found in

NATO's continuing to sponsor the stabilization of its struggling neighbors in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

For NATO to continue as a security alliance, it must reassess its purpose given the realities of the 21st century security environment and then amend its policies, structures, and capabilities to address them. Only when its purpose is feasible and shared will the Alliance be able to avoid the divisive behaviors and lack of trust that stem from trying to apply 20th century state-on-state defense systems against the unconventional and often non-military risks of the 21st century.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

At its origins, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in 1949 to solidify and organize political and military support between the United States and a group of historically fractious European nations in order to deter and, if necessary, defeat a conventional attack by a single threat – the Soviet Union and, later, the Warsaw Pact. To the Alliance’s credit, in its first 40 years it succeeded in mounting a successful deterrent effort against Soviet attack, which ultimately resulted in the peaceful termination of the Cold War. And as a second, and less recognized achievement, NATO contributed to the end of the centuries-long “civil war” within the West for European supremacy.¹

Unfortunately, despite NATO’s successes, for the last several years internal frictions have torn its fabric to the point at which some fear they could ultimately cause the dissolution of the Alliance. These difficulties tend to fit into two major categories: ‘threats’ and ‘resources.’ Arguments regarding threats range from policy towards Russia to the validation of non-conventional threats. Resourcing arguments extend from capability shortfalls for NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan to inadequate levels of national defense spending. These frictions produce heated arguments which, more often than not, fail to produce a meaningful result (as consensus is required to approve every activity in NATO) or leave a nation feeling manipulated into accepting domestically unpopular decisions.

To explain the causes of this friction, Harvard Professor and alliance scholar Stephen M. Walt argues that, with the end of the Cold War, the probability of an attack on NATO nations’ territorial sovereignty effectively disappeared and, along with it, the core purpose for the Alliance – collective defense.² With the loss of its shared core purpose, critics go on to suggest that NATO is now caught up conducting a growing number of seemingly disjointed operations that appear to support national interests – largely those of the United States³ – over anything resembling its core collective defense purpose. The ISAF mission is one of these contested events fuelling domestic dissatisfaction within the Alliance.

In 2008, then foreign policy scholar and current Senior Director for European Affairs at the U.S. National Security Council Elizabeth Sherwood Randall noted, “The current pace of [NATO] operations creates a crisis-like environment in which the urgent crowds out the important. For several years, NATO’s political

and military leaders have had literally no time for strategic discussion or planning. As a consequence, NATO is not investing in its future by doing the careful bricklaying that is required to sustain a multinational alliance.”⁴

Stated another way, NATO is an alliance without a purpose and caught up in a myriad of contentious and costly operations that prevent it from appropriately posturing for the 21st century security environment. These frictions, caused by the Alliance’s near-sightedness, put the existence of the Alliance in jeopardy; they lead to a growing paralysis in its decision-making process and increased domestic discontent resulting from perceptions that national resource investments yield little of value in return. Yet despite these frictions and criticisms, NATO continues to attract new members and missions – indicating that there may be more value to be found in this 61-year-old organization.

Figure 1: Comments from Allied Leaders

“I worry a great deal about the alliance evolving into a two-tiered alliance, in which you have some allies willing to fight and die to protect people’s security, and others who are not. It puts a cloud over the future of the alliance if this is to endure and perhaps get even worse.”

Robert Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defense, February 2008

Mr Brown told MPs he wanted "proper burden sharing" among NATO members amid growing complaints that countries such as Germany are refusing to risk their troops.

Benedict Brogan, Daily Mail, February 2008

“[I] won't send an additional soldier [to Afghanistan]”

Response by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, November 2009 to U.S. request for more allied support in Afghanistan

"There is a lot of talk, rightly, about burden sharing within the coalition..."

David Miliband, British Member of Parliament and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, July 2009

“Harper said Canada has done more than its fair share and needs help.”

Comment by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper regarding request for support from allies in Afghanistan, 2008

“...multiple caveats imposed by the [Allied] nations hobble commanders on the ground and increase the risks to their forces.”

General Henri Bentegeat, former Chief of Staff of the French Armie, March 2009

"NATO wants Russia as a good partner,"

Angela Merkel, German Chancellor, April 2008

I do not stay awake at night worrying that the Russians will attack. However, I do worry about second order effects against my country from the Russians resulting from an incident occurring elsewhere in Europe which the Russians view as provocative.

Paraphrase from meeting with Estonian Defense Minister Jaak Aaviksoo, October 2009

This clash of perspectives over NATO's condition presents a foggy path forward for its leaders, as they consider where to apply their scarce resources, and for those nations considering membership. In August 2009, in an attempt to chart a safe course through the fog, NATO brought together an international 'Group of Experts' (GoE), chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, to draft the basis for a new 'strategic concept' which would provide "a sound transatlantic consensus on NATO's roles and missions and on its strategy to deal with security challenges...." Notably, this will be the third time NATO will have written a Strategic Concept in the last 20 years.

Unfortunately, it appears that the new concept will look very similar to the last two, both of which failed to alleviate frictions in NATO's ranks by not examining the validity of the Alliance's fundamental purpose. Instead, it continues to apply its Cold War security policy and structures to a new series of disjointed, non-territorial defense-based security issues with little regard to whether they further its supposed core defense purpose. The Alliance has failed to fully realize that with the disappearance of its defining threat, the Soviet Union, it must either consider a new foundational priority/goal/purpose as a basis for coherent policy development and infrastructure, or face obsolescence.

Hence, the path to renewed vitality and usefulness lies in first determining whether NATO should remain an alliance founded on the principle of collective defense or whether the strategic security environment has changed to such a degree as to require a new purpose for the Alliance. Once NATO reassesses and then fully embraces a freshly derived purpose, the methods – policies, structures, and capabilities – to achieve it will become much easier and less contentious to discern. If NATO can develop this clear path forward, then it can find relief for its current level of divisive behaviors.

In seeking to understand the future ahead of us, we must not ignore the lessons of the past. This paper attempts to identify a path forward for NATO by first examining the nature of alliances – why they are formed and what makes them disband – and then, using these insights gained from history, evaluates NATO's condition against these objective rationales. It goes on to examine the fundamental purposes of military alliances and how these apply, if at all, to NATO today. Lastly, this paper identifies decisions that member nation leaderships should consider in determining the Alliance's next stage.

¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "An Agenda for NATO," *Foreign Affairs*, Sep/Oct 2009: 2.

² Christopher Layne, "It's Over, Over There: The Coming Crack-up in Transatlantic Relations." *International Politics* Vol. 45, 2008: 325-347, <<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/ip/journal/v45/n3/full/ip20086a.html>>.

³ Anne Applebaum, "The Slowly Vanishing NATO," *Washington Post* 20 Oct. 2009, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/19/AR2009101902510.html>>.

⁴ Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, “Is NATO Dead or Alive?”, Harvard-Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 1 April 2008 <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/18223/is_nato_dead_or_allive.html>.

CHAPTER TWO

Nature of an Alliance

Forming Alliances

Military scholars as far back as Thucydides in the 5th century B.C. postulated as to why nations come together as security alliances. Thucydides argued that nations align to deter or go to war out of “honor, fear, and interest.”¹ Today, International Relations and Alliance Politics scholar Tatsuya Nishida suggests that, “[I]n general, the existence of a threat or hostile power is a necessary condition for developing a security alliance.”² Alliance scholar Paul Schroeder goes a bit farther and offers three reasons for alliance development: (1) to oppose a threat; (2) to accommodate a threat through a “pact of restraint,” or; (3) to provide the great powers with a “tool of management” over weaker states.³ Stephen Walt’s book *The Origins of Alliances* expands on Schroeder’s ideas, giving five base hypotheses for alignment.

a. UUBalancing – “States facing an external threat will align with others to oppose the states posing the threat.”⁴

History is replete with examples of alliances established, either formally or informally, on the balancing rationale – also referred to as ‘balance of powers.’ Rome and Messina aligned to deter an attack by Carthage in the Punic Wars of 241 BC.⁵ Turkey, Russia and Austria initially aligned to check France’s strength beginning in the late 18th century at the outset of the Napoleonic period.^{6 7} And World War II found Russia, Britain and the U.S. allied against the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan.⁸ NATO was formed in 1949 under the auspices of balancing against the threat posed by the Soviet Union, especially in light of the 1948 blockade of Berlin. The Alliance began with 12 members and ultimately grew to 16 before the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact.⁹

b. Bandwagoning – States facing an external threat will ally with the strongest power- usually a nation that others perceive as more likely to win a conflict. A corollary to the bandwagoning theory is that “the greater a state’s aggregate capabilities, the greater the tendency for others to align with it.”¹⁰

The bandwagoning rationale for alliance development can, in some regards, be viewed as a counter to the ‘balancing’ strategy. It has a nuanced secondary rationale for inviting membership: the desire to be on the ‘side more likely to

win' and consequently reaping the spoils of war.¹¹ Italy's World War I alliances provide good examples of bandwagoning. Italy initially aligned with Germany (and Austria-Hungary) because Germany was seen as the most powerful force in Europe given its recent conquests led by Bismarck. Later in the war, Italy turned away from Germany and allied with France, Britain and Russia when Germany's ability to win was in question.¹²

NATO also has roots in the bandwagoning rationale as some of its aspirants found the allure of joining with the United States following World War II attractive, especially given the economic and military devastation wrought during the war. After the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, ten former Soviet Bloc nations joined the Alliance, not because they feared NATO but because these nations observed that the aggregate capabilities of NATO were greater than any other potential allies (especially with the U.S. as a primary security guarantor).¹³ NATO was also seen as a stepping stone to eventual membership in the European Union (EU).¹⁴ In short, these new democracies, with outmoded militaries, saw benefit in NATO's ability to: 1) provide protection; 2) accelerate the modernization of their military, and; 3) serve as a means to gain economies of effort to facilitate transformation.¹⁵

c. Ideology - "The more similar the domestic ideology of two or more states, the more likely they are to ally."¹⁶

Common ideologies are often characterized as common interests or common values. In World War I, the Russians aligned with the Serbians on ideological grounds- their shared "Slavic" roots.¹⁷ The Arab League provides another example of ideological formation: its charter of 1946 pledges all signatory nations to promote the culture, security and well being of the Arab community. NATO's treaty preamble specifies the promotion of democracies as an ideological basis for its existence. It states: "[The Alliance is to] *safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.*"¹⁸ Not surprisingly, NATO's ideological stance was directly countered by the Warsaw Pact's advocacy of communism.

d. Foreign Aid - "The more aid provided by one state to another, the greater the likelihood that the two will form an alliance. The more aid, the greater control over the recipient."¹⁹

Walt explains that "[a]ccording to the set of arguments for alliances formed around the provision of 'foreign aid,' the provision of economic or military assistance can create effective allies, because it communicates favorable intentions, it evokes a sense of gratitude, or because the recipient becomes dependent on the donor."²⁰ Stated simply: the more aid, the tighter the resulting

alliance. Examples of this behavior include the Soviet Union's attempt to buy loyalty from Cuba and Nicaragua during the Cold War and the United States' post-WW II Marshal Plan in Europe.²¹

e. Penetration – “The greater one state's access to the political system of another, the greater the tendency for the two to ally.”²²

Walt defines this rationale as the manipulation of one state's domestic political system by another. Some suggest that the Israel-U.S. relationship exemplifies this rationale for Alliance building. They argue that the Israeli lobby within the United States has effectively finessed U.S. protections for Israel.²³ Further highlighting this phenomenon, the Turks aligned with the Germans in World War I in part because of the influence of a German officer serving as the Turkish Army's inspector-general.²⁴

Subsequent to his book's publication, Walt was credited with a sixth rationale – *détente*.

f. Détente – “The voluntary development of peaceful relations to reduce tensions.”²⁵

With the absence of a shared external threat, the *détente* rationale enables two or more traditional adversaries to ease tensions in order to promote greater mutual prosperity. For example, the alliance between Austria-Hungary and Italy during WWI was formed to prevent Italy from going to war with Austria's partners.²⁶ At its inception, NATO was also seen as a means to keep the peace between Europe's historically bellicose nations.

Before leaving this section of the paper, it is important to understand that NATO's formation was based on four of the six rationales of alliances – balancing, bandwagoning, ideology, and *détente* – not just one. Therefore, when examining possible futures for the Alliance, one must consider the motivations associated with each of these bases.

Types of Military Alliances.

Given that there is more than one reason for nations to form military alliances, it follows that there is more than one type of military alliance that can be created – each with a different purpose. In general, there are two categories of military alliances: *security alliances* and *multilateral alliances*. The main difference between the two rests on the promise of indivisible security.²⁷ Security alliances include this promise while multilateral alliances do not.

The objectives of a *multilateral* alliance range from promoting security to addressing issues confronting the environment. *Multilateral* alliances (with military components) often conduct intelligence sharing, training, acquisition support and other military activities – but stop short of pledged mutual defense. The Arab League, whose purpose was to promote the interests of the Arab countries,²⁸ and the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which was formed to prevent the spread of communism in the region,²⁹ are examples of *multilateral* alliances. In both cases, the primary goals of these alignments did not include mutual defense. Hence, the presence of a unifying threat is not fundamental to the existence of a *multilateral* alliance. Alignments formed on an ideological basis normally organize as *multilateral* alliances.

Before the creation of the League of Nations in 1919, a *security alliance* was best described as a *collective defense* alliance, where members all pledge to defend one another from aggression originating outside the alliance.³⁰ Historically, *collective defense* alliances were conceived from the need to bandwagon with or balance against a threat. With the creation of the League, a second class of *security alliance* was categorically established – the *collective security* alliance. The distinguishing difference between a *collective security* alliance and a collective defense alliance is that its members pledge to comply with rules and norms that they create for themselves; this includes abstaining from aggressing against their partner nations unless in self-defense.³¹ It should be noted that some *collective security* definitions include the additional promise of pledged defense against aggression originating outside of the alliance.^{32 33}

Besides the now defunct League of Nations, the United Nations is probably the best known *collective security* alliance. Neither of these organizations were established to counter the threat of a particular aggressor nation, but rather, was created in the hopes that stability would flourish if its members (preferably all the world's nations) complied with a set of agreed rules.

There is some confusion about the meaning of 'collective security' that should be clarified. Since the 1930s the 'collective security' moniker has been used liberally and interchangeably to mean: 1) collective defense; 2) contributing to stability through mutual compliance with rules and norms, or; 3) contributing to the comprehensive security of its member nations against both military and non-military based aggression. The third meaning describes a more 'comprehensive security' that has taken on greater significance given the many new and more virulent security challenges of the 21st century. This broader meaning is particularly significant and challenging since many new risks, such as pandemic illness or cyber attack, do not lend themselves to primarily military solutions. To avoid confusion, this paper uses the following definitions:

- *collective defense alliance*: where all members pledge to each other’s defense against external threats.
- *collective security alliance*: where all members pledge to abide by agreed tenets and norms, including non-aggression against one another.
- *multilateral alliance*: where all members pledge to promote agreed security interests regionally (and often globally).

Historical Implications Regarding Durability of Military Alliances

Historical analysis of the durability of these three types of military alliances should yield a number of conclusions about NATO’s potential viability. Over the last 500 years (1500-2010), 63 major military alliances were formed. The following list delineates the total number of military alliances created for one or more of the three alliance purposes; note that some alliances were created with multiple purposes (see figure 2 below).

- Collective Defense (CD) 43
- Collective Security (CS) 14
- Multilateral (ML) 22

Figure 2: Count of Alliances by Purpose(s)

Type	CD(Only)	CS(Only)	ML(Only)	CD-CS	CD-ML	CS-ML	CD-CS-ML
#	36	4	9	1	4	7	2

A preponderance of the 63 major military alliances formed during this period were established (at least in part) for *collective defense* purposes, but being the most common form of military alliance does not make it the most durable. It is *multilateral* alliances that have enjoyed the greatest longevity. Of the 63 alliances, ten existed for 40 or more years (40 to 250 years). These ten long-lived military alliances were created for one or more purposes. Nine included the *multilateral* alliance purpose, while only four alliances incorporated *collective security* goals. Three alliances included *collective defense* purposes. (See Annex A for details about the specific alliances.)

Collective defense alliances had a median and average age of 15 years. Half of them only existed 6 years or less. *Collective security* alliances had a median age of 17 years and an average age of 33 years– twice as long as *collective defense* alliances. And, like *collective security* alliances, *multilateral* alliances had a median age of 17 years, but *multilateral* alliances’ average age is 1/3 again longer, at 41.1 years.

These statistics suggest a number of trends regarding the durability of these three forms of alliance. First, *collective defense* alliances are the least durable. They are most often formed when nations are challenged by an aggressive foe and disbanded upon termination of their conflict. Second, as previously stated, *multilateral* alliances are the most durable. Third, alliances in existence today include the longest living alliances (less one), and they all (again, less one) have *multilateral* components. This implies that in the 20th and 21st Centuries greater utility was found in *multilateral* alliances. Fourth, *collective security* alliances seldom form for purely *détente* purposes. Rather, they tend to also incorporate *multilateral* alliance roles. The next section will consider NATO's future in light of these findings.

¹ Donald Kagan, *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace* (Doubleday: New York, 1995) 8.

² Tatsuya Nishida, "A Theory of Collective Security Alliances: A Case of Incomplete Pacific Pacts" *Proceedings of the ISA's 49th Annual Convention, Bridging Multiple Divides*, San Francisco, 26 Mar. 2009, <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p253831_index.html>.

³ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987) 7.

⁴ Walt, 32.

⁵ "Second Punic War: Battle of Cannae", *Historynet.com*, 3 March 2010

<<http://www.historynet.com/second-punic-war-battle-of-cannae.htm/1>>.

⁶ "The First Coalition", *Napoleonic Guide*, 3 March 2010,

<http://www.napoleonguide.com/campaign_revolt.htm>.

⁷ "The Second Coalition", *Napoleonic Guide*, 3 March 2010,

<http://www.napoleonguide.com/campaign_2coalit.htm>.

⁸ "The Allies," *World War II History.Info*, 7 March 2010,

<<http://www.worldwar2history.info/war/Allies.html>>.

⁹ "NATO Transformed," *NATO On-line Library*, 20 April 2010, <http://www.nato.int/docu/nato-trans/html_en/nato_trans01.html>.

¹⁰ Walt, 32.

¹¹ Robertas Sapronas, "The Costs of NATO Enlargement to the Baltic States," *Lithuania Individual EAPC Fellowship*, 1998-2000, <<http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/sapronas.pdf>>.

¹² "The Causes of World War One," *FirstWorldWar.com*, 6 Jan 2010

<<http://www.firstworldwar.com/origins/causes.htm>>.

¹³ Bruno Tertrais, "The Changing Nature of Military Alliances", *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2004: 141.

¹⁴ Meeting with Western European leaders at the Brookings Institution, 4 March 2010.

¹⁵ Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney, "Towards a Post-American Europe: a Power Audit of EU-US Relations", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, (London: October 2009) 23.

¹⁶ Walt, 40.

¹⁷ "The Causes of World War One," 1.

¹⁸ "The North Atlantic Treaty", 2

¹⁹ Walt, 46.

²⁰ Walt, 41.

²¹ Walt, 43.

²² Walt, 49.

²³ John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby", *London Review of Books*, Vol 28, No 6, 23 March 2006: 6, <<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n06/john-mearsheimer/the-israel-lobby>>.

²⁴ Walt, 47.

²⁵ Thomas Gangale, "Alliance Theory: Balancing, Bandwagoning, and *Détente*," *OPS-Alaska and San Francisco State University International Relations* 720, 27 Oct 2003, <http://pweb.jps.net/~gangale/opsa/ir/Alliance_Theory.htm>.

²⁶ "The Causes of World War One," 3.

²⁷ Nishida.

²⁸ “The Arab League Charter (Pact of the League of Arab States), 22 March 1945,” The Mid East Web, <<http://www.mideastweb.org/arableague.htm>>.

²⁹ United States, Dept. of State, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954. (Washington: 1954), <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/88315.htm>>.

³⁰ “Collective Security,” International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict, Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, USA. <http://colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/collsec.htm> 18 Nov 2009, 1.

³¹ “Collective Security”, University of Colorado. 1.

³² Charles A. Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan, “The Promise of Collective Security,” International Security, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Cambridge: Summer 1995), 52-61.

³³ Arnold Wolfers, Discord and Collaboration. Essays on International Politics, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1962) 183.

CHAPTER THREE

What Kind of Alliance is NATO?

At 61 years of age, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is one of the six longest-lived military alliances of the last 500 years. As the three types of military alliances (*collective defense*, *collective security* and *multilateral*) have different characteristics that portend their longevity, understanding NATO's alliance type should shed some light on why it has enjoyed such longevity. More importantly, resolving NATO's purpose(s) will aid in deducing if the Alliance has any further potential viability.

Collective Defense? Article 5 of the NATO treaty pledges all members to the defense of the others. This basis of alliance formation specifically establishes NATO as a *collective defense* alliance.

Figure 3: Article 5

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they all agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.¹

The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949

And while not explicitly stated, the impetus for its creation was to leverage the Alliance's collective power against a common threat – the Soviet Union and, later, the Warsaw Pact.² As already noted, NATO was successful in this role for its first 40 years.

Collective Security? The second major reason for creating the NATO alliance was to bring an end to the terrible wars fought between European nations over the previous few centuries, most recently in the form of two World Wars.³ The last phrase in NATO's first Secretary General, Lord Ismay's, famous statement concerning NATO's purpose, "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down,"⁴ codifies the adoption of this second purpose – by specifying maintenance of a *détente* between its member nations

(emphasized here by the reference to Germany). Furthermore, article 1 of the North Atlantic Treaty pledges NATO's membership "to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means."⁵ This concept of reducing tensions to increase stability between member nations meets the definitional criteria for a *collective security* alliance; a role NATO performed well.

Throughout its entire 61-year existence, the Alliance's fora for political discourse and collective military advancement enabled Europe to enjoy an extended period of peaceful coexistence between its partners that had not been seen in the first half of the 20th century. It is also arguable that the *détente* established among NATO members had collateral positive effects for maintaining peace among the other non-NATO European nations by not drawing them into new disputes, as had occurred during prior conflicts.

For the last 20 years, NATO actually stepped up its *collective security* efforts while simultaneously minimizing its *collective defense* (deterrence) activities. Specifically, in the 1990s the Alliance conducted substantial engagement activities with the former Soviet Bloc nations. This engagement manifested itself in the form of partnership programs – principally the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program – which were designed to develop policies and doctrine to assist in the stabilization of the newly independent Central and Eastern European nations that emerged following the collapse of the Soviet Union. For some European partners, the PfP program eventually included political and military reform agendas designed to facilitate accession into the Alliance. From 1992 through 2009, the fruits of this approach saw the majority of Europe's former Warsaw Pact nations embrace democracy, with ten ultimately joining NATO. Here again, NATO's pursuit of *collective security* ideals contributed to the enlargement of the circle of peaceful and cooperative nations and, consequently, promoted a greater transatlantic stability. Further evidence of NATO's *collective security* purpose was its diplomatic assistance, used to solve thorny political issues such as border disputes between Germany and Poland and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia into two separate nations – the Czech and Slovak Republics.⁶

To NATO's credit, it achieved its principal *collective security* purpose of maintaining peace between its European members through political discourse instead of sanction bearing rules, which are normally used by other *collective security* organizations to ensure compliance and stability. In fact, Madeleine Albright and the 2009 'Group of Experts' highlighted that NATO finds great value in being an "entirely voluntary organization" founded on the concept of consensus decision-making.⁷

To be fair, during the Cold War there was little need for sanction bearing rules; the omnipresent Soviet threat contributed to making great bedfellows of these

nations. Today, however, given the recently increased volume of divisive rhetoric concerning non-compliance with burden sharing norms and the absence of a threat to coalesce around, the Alliance is at a point where its method of non-binding political discourse is not effectively soothing tensions or filling resource gaps in current operations. To alleviate this challenge, NATO could steal a page from other *collective security* alliances' play-books.

A quick inspection of two of the larger *collective security* alliances, the European Union and the United Nations, finds that they both possess three qualities that keep them from succumbing to frictions that stem from competing national interests and cause prolonged inaction. First, both have elite councils with rotating representation. These councils have the ability to supersede the authority of their general assemblies when they find themselves at an impasse. Secondly, both organizations allow for majority approval (rather than unanimous) for many types of actions, particularly administrative. And third, each organization is endowed with sanctioning processes that can be used to pressure aberrant member nations into compliance with rules and requirements. In fact, both organizations have sanctioning procedures that allow for the ultimate removal of a noncompliant member from the group's ranks if it fails to meet its respective organization's requirements. Needless to say, NATO lacks the powers necessary to ensure compliance and move its agendas forward, which, as the Alliance grows in membership, has the potential to harm its capability.

Multilateral? As noted earlier, the preamble to NATO's 1949 Washington Treaty explicitly describes the Alliance as ideologically-based given its pledge to promote liberty, rule of law and democracy. Consequently, from its inception, NATO also took on the work of a *multilateral* alliance – to promote common ideals and interests. In its first 40 years, the preponderance of the Alliance's *multilateral* activities was primarily focused on building/rebuilding its member nations' militaries and making them interoperable. Efforts to promote the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law were reserved for strengthening these systems within its own membership.

Just as the Alliance increased its *collective security* activities following the Cold War, it also increased its *multilateral* alliance activities. In fact, the preponderance of NATO's activities over the last 20 years more directly supported the role of a *multilateral* alliance than the two other forms of military alliance. Specifically, the Alliance performed peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan, counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, counter-terrorism operations on the Mediterranean Sea, as well as humanitarian assistance operations in Pakistan and elsewhere, not to mention engagement efforts to promote democratic reform of Europe's former Soviet Bloc nations. These activities did not directly counter a

threat to any member's territorial integrity. However, they did promote adherence to the rule of law and preservation of individual liberties, thus supporting the development of greater stability for the Alliance, its partners and the international community.

In review, NATO has developed into a hybrid alliance incorporates the fundamental purposes of the three forms of military alliances. Its formation resulted primarily from four of Walt's six criteria: to balance its collective powers against a threat; to support an ideological agenda by promoting the development of democracies; to stabilize Europe through a détente process, and; for some members, to bandwagon with the Alliance in order to enjoy the support available within NATO.

Analysis of the three types of military alliances throughout history suggests: first, that NATO's role as a *collective defense* alliance is in jeopardy given the loss of its principal threat, and; second, that the Alliance is currently more viable in its role as a *multilateral* alliance than as one of the other two. In fact, one could justifiably argue that NATO today would best be categorized as a *multilateral* alliance, seeing as a large proportion of its activities since the demise of the Soviet Union have principally supported this role. This observation becomes especially significant when viewed in conjunction with the causes of alliance disbandment.

¹ "The North Atlantic Treaty". Washington: 4 April 1949, 7 Jan. 2010
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm. 2.

² "NATO Transformed," 2.

³ "NATO Transformed," 2.

⁴ David Reynolds, ed., "The Origins of the Cold War in Europe," *International Perspectives*, Yale University, 1994, 13.

⁵ "The North Atlantic Treaty", 2.

⁶ Meeting with Director of International Affairs, Stephen Covington for NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, personal interview, Washington: 23 December 2009.

⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO 2020: Assured Security: Dynamic Engagement, Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on the New Strategic Concept for NATO," (Brussels: 17 May 2010) 11.

CHAPTER FOUR

Why Alliances Disband

With an understanding of the historical viability of the three types of military alliances, the next step is to identify the recurring causes of alliance dissolution and reference those causes to NATO's current track. To this end, history has shown that, in most cases, realization of one or a combination of components from the following four criteria is necessary to cause an alliance to disband (see Annex A). These causes include:

1. Defeat of a Partner. When one of the partners within an alliance is vanquished or otherwise ceases to exist in its joining condition, an alliance is often modified or voided. This rationale is the foremost reason for alliance dissolution. The collapse of the Axis Powers in World War II, stemming from the defeat of Germany, depicts this phenomenon. Furthermore, the abrogation of the Warsaw Pact in 1991 identifies how the collapse of a nation (in this instance the Soviet Union) can signal the end of an alliance, even when no shots are fired.¹

2. Partners' Interests Diverge. The second most common reason for alliances to dissolve is when the interests of alliance members diverge to such an extent that the activities of one member cannot be tolerated by others. Pakistan's withdrawal from SEATO in 1973 because of its diverging interests vis-à-vis India illustrate this point.² Likewise, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) was disbanded in 1977 after Iran, Iraq and Pakistan defected due to disagreements over U.S. policies.³

3. The Threat Disappears. Perhaps the most recognized rationale for a security alliance to terminate is when the threat that underpins its formation vanishes. This form of dissolution is typified by the vanquishing of the Axis Powers in World War II, which caused the 'Allies of WWII' to disband.⁴

4. Partner Fails to Abide by Agreements. Lastly, when a partner in an alliance fails to abide by the precepts or spirit of their agreement, partners tend to void the alliance. Italy's incursion into Ethiopia in 1935 and Russia's assault on Finland in 1939 were in direct violation of the tenets of the League of Nations and signaled the League's ultimate demise.⁵

Of the 63 major alliances established after 1500 A.D., 47 disbanded. Applying the preceding dissolution criteria to those that dissolved finds that:

- Member Defeated/Ceases to Exist 21 (45%)
- Interests Diverge 5 (32%)
- Threat Disappeared 0 (21%)
- Failure to Abide by Agreements 4 (9%)

(*The statistics above reflect the fact that some alliances disbanded for more than one rationale)

In most instances, the defeat of an alliance member translates to the loss of a threat for an alliance ‘balanced’ against the foe. As a result, we find that 66% of all alliances terminated due to a change in the status of the threat.

The table below depicts the major rationale behind the disbandment of the three types of military alliances.

Figure 4: Major Rationale Causing Military Alliances to Disband in Last 500 Years

Disband Rationale/Alliance Type	Collective Defense	Collective Security	Multilateral
Member Defeated	17	2	4
Interests Diverged	9	2	6
Threat Lost	12	1	0
Failure to Abide by Treaty Tenets	2	2	1
TOTAL	40	7	11

Several trends are evident from this data. First, *collective defense* alliances largely disband due to their defeat or the defeat of their foe; ergo, as was noted earlier, the existence of a threat is significant to the durability of *collective defense* alliances. Alliance scholar George Liska validates this observation when he suggests, “alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something.”⁶ Second and, conversely, the existence of a threat is not important to the longevity of *collective security* or *multilateral* alliances. Intuitively, this observation assumes further credence given that *collective security* alliances tend to focus inwardly on their members’ actions and that *multilateral* alliances, by definition, do not focus on mutual defense issues. Third, *collective security* alliances are equally sensitive to the various causes of alliance termination. Fourth, *multilateral* alliances are more susceptible to dissolution due to challenges stemming from the divergence of their members’ national interests. This makes sense given that the purpose of a *multilateral* alliance is to tackle security issues that are of shared interest to the group. Thus, as interests become more nationalistic, others have less incentive to remain aligned. And fifth, military

alliances tend to disband when their originating purpose is no longer valid. This implies that alliances do not persist without a goal to achieve.

¹ Celestin Bohlen, “Warsaw Pact Agrees to Dissolve Its Military Alliance by March 31”, Special to The New York Times, 26 Feb. 1991, <<http://nytimes.com/1991/02/26/world/warsaw-pact-agrees-to-dissolve-ts-military-alliance>>.

² Roger Saunders, “Southeast Asia Treaty Organization: SEATO was Indochina's answer for the more well known NATO,” Modern U.S. History.Suite 101, 23 Jul 2008, <http://modern-us-history.suite101.com/article.cfm/southeast_asia_treaty_organization>.

³ Tertrais, p 139.

⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, 2nd and 3rd ed. (Doubleday: New York, 1954 and 1960) 186.

⁵ “League of Nations,” National Park Service, (Hyde Park: New York, 3 March 2010), 2, <<http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/league-of-nations.htm>>.

⁶ Walt, 7.

CHAPTER FIVE

Where is NATO on the Continuum of Alliance Existence?

Comparing NATO's current stage with the major reasons for alliance disbandment yields the following insights:

Member Defeated

The good news for NATO is that neither the Alliance as a whole nor any of its members have been vanquished over the Alliance's lifetime. In fact, all nations that joined NATO became more stable and prospered in conjunction with their association. To the Alliance's credit, it is unlikely – short of some cataclysmic event – that any of its members would be subject to an existentially dangerous defeat any time soon. Hence, it appears that NATO is not at risk for this kind of dissolution, which proved fatal to the greatest number alliances over the last 500 years.

However, the Alliance cannot afford to breathe easy regarding the subject of 'defeat' as it struggles with the distinct possibility that it may be unable to successfully complete its stability mission in Afghanistan. The question remains: how would a 'defeat' in Afghanistan affect the Alliance?

NATO's Secretary General Rasmussen brought up the consequences of a defeat in Afghanistan during a speech and discussion at Georgetown University in February 2010. He conjectured that losing the conflict could hinder NATO's ability to embrace 21st century challenges.¹ So, while an 'Afghan defeat' is not the same as having one of its member nations catastrophically fail, it does suggest that the Alliance will lose some of its appeal, prestige, power and credibility.² In 1983, President Ronald Reagan used this same argument when he predicted (with regard to the United States) that, "[i]f we cannot defend ourselves [in Central America] ... then we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere... [O]ur credibility will collapse and our alliances will crumble."³ The slow atrophy of the French and British empires as they ceded control to their former colonies throughout the 20th century gives credibility to this argument. Consequently, if NATO is perceived as failing in Afghanistan, it may struggle to justify its future value as a security alliance and will certainly be vulnerable to having important resources bled siphoned off to other alliances and coalitions.

A second concern regarding the topic of 'defeat or collapse of a member nation' is the liability inherent in considering a new nation for membership prior to its achievement of satisfactory levels of internal stability and, thus, viability.⁴ For example, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia are two European nations that NATO wishes to support in their drive towards membership.⁵ However, their current state of political instability is cause for concern; NATO must ensure that it can continue to pass the alliance abrogation test regarding dissolution of a member. Of further illustration, during the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, the question of offering NATO membership to Georgia and Ukraine was a major issue. At the center of the debate was the specter of these aspirants' internal instability and the negative effect they could have on the Alliance if they became members too quickly.⁶ The potential political backlash from Russia due to perceived provocation over Eastern European nations joining NATO was also a concern, albeit a largely unspoken one. Ultimately, the Bucharest Summit participants chose to postpone the formal offers of membership until these nations can provide evidence of national domestic support and stability.

To summarize, while no NATO member is currently viewed as being at risk of dissolution, the possibility of an 'Afghan defeat' and the potential vulnerabilities caused by the accession of new nations with feeble governments into the Alliance are reasons for trepidation.

Diverging Interests

Alliance Theorist Hans Morgenthau wrote that, "...peacetime alliances tend to be limited to a fraction of the total interests and objectives of the signatories...."⁷ His comment suggests that when there is not a common enemy/threat to encourage mutually beneficial security activities, alliance members will instinctively seek to resource only those activities for which they see a national benefit. From this argument, we would expect to see nations, over time, choosing new allies and partners with more shared interests. The United States' creation of a 'coalition of the willing' outside the Alliance in 2003 to support Operation Iraqi Freedom exemplifies this behavior.

The challenge of diverging interests is not new to the Alliance.⁸ The most severe case of divergent interests occurred between 1959 and 1966, when France withdrew from NATO's military structure because of her perception that greater deference was being paid to United States and disappointment that NATO did not intervene on its behalf in the Algerian insurgency.⁹ Today, however, the challenge of diverging interests is magnified by the multitude of new and more irregular 21st century threats, which often find member nations viewing each with greater or lesser degrees of interest. In the extreme case, one nation may not see another nation's threat as a threat at all. A prominent example is the split

among allies regarding NATO's policy towards Russia. Some view Russia as a likely aggressor to their territory, while others view access to her natural gas as vital to their national interests. Still others, the U.S. included, view dependence on Russian fossil fuel as tantamount to being held hostage, even if they do not see Russia as a direct military threat.

Snapshots into other corners of the Alliance reveals a multitude of varying interests. Member nations situated in or near the Balkans view the instability of Bosnia and Kosovo as the greatest threat to their security.¹⁰ Those familiar with the U.S. perspective on national security know that it places the Islamic-extremist terrorist threat at the top of its defense priorities.¹¹ And still other nations rank the recent worldwide economic crisis as their number one security challenge, thus trumping all other defense issues. Other interests competing for attention include: the use of land mines as described in the Ottawa convention; agreement on the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice; Kosovo independence; continued positioning of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe, and; the reduction of NATO structures.

Today, there is perhaps no more vivid manifestation of the challenges caused by 'diverging interests' than the ascendancy of the European Union as a competing *collective security* alliance. This competition exists because the EU (led largely by France and Germany) desires to end the hegemony enjoyed by the United States on the European continent for the past 60 years.¹² And while the European Union currently focuses most of its efforts on coalescing and building Europe's collective diplomatic and economic powers, it is simultaneously attempting to acquire *collective security* responsibilities from the U.S.-led NATO alliance. Three recent actions by the European Union substantiate this point.

The first involved the EU's dash to serve as arbiter between Russia and the Georgian Republic during their August 2008 conflict. While negotiations led by French President (and, at the time, EU President) Nicholas Sarkozy for a cease-fire and Russian troop removal were flawed, the EU did overshadow NATO, establishing that it could serve a greater European *collective security* role.

The second recently acquired responsibility that competes with NATO's role as the preeminent security provider involves the ongoing counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. In this instance, both the EU and NATO have concurrent and separate operations supporting the counter-piracy task when a joint operation would prove more efficient. It is clear that NATO has the preponderance of military capabilities required to conduct the counter-piracy operations, but the EU boasts the economic, diplomatic and judicial qualities necessary to apprehend and prosecute the pirates. Even in light of these synergistic capabilities, the EU rebuffed requests from NATO for cooperation,

presumably to bolster its image as a capable security organization distinct from NATO.¹³

Last, and more pointedly, the EU's 2008 Lisbon Treaty creates the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) which codifies its *collective security* and *multilateral* military alliance roles.¹⁴ It is important to note, however, that their treaty stops short of total pledged mutual defense since some of their members have national neutrality status.

Hans J. Morgenthau wrote that, "A nation will shun alliances if it believes that it is strong enough to hold its own unaided or that the burden of the commitments resulting from the alliance is likely to out weigh the advantages to be expected."¹⁵ His statement emphasizes that nations will avoid (or divest themselves) of the constraints of alliance consensus a) when their national interests are different from those of the alliance, and b) when they have the capacity to achieve their national agendas without support from an alliance. This helps explain why the current phenomenon of 'diverging interests' is so corrosive to NATO.

Even with these points of divergence, there still exist many common interests within the Alliance. NATO's engagements in multiple operations and partnership programs over the last 20 years spotlight the many new, shared interests in 21st century challenges, albeit to varying degrees among members. As we already recognized, NATO was busier conducting security activities on three continents over the last 20 years than it was during its first 40 years of existence. And while individually these activities were not of vital interest to the overall security of NATO's members, collectively they helped stem the spread of tyranny and chaos and advanced conditions that promote the rule of law, human rights and better well-being. Again, it is useful to highlight that these aforementioned security activities are largely the purview of *multilateral* alliances.

At this point, it is too difficult to determine whether divergence of national interests within NATO overshadows converging issues, leaving this particular rationale for future Alliance abrogation inconclusive. However, it is clear that both the diverging and converging interests have increased over the last 20 years, attesting to NATO's shift in focus. Its activities indicate that the Alliance is currently more interested in its ideological goals over all others. Recognizing this change, NATO must be mindful of the insidious effects caused by diverging interests that today are encouraged by the high tempo of globalization.

The Threat - Old and New

a. Old Threat. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact in 1991, NATO's originating threat ceased to exist. And as stated in this paper's opening paragraphs, the loss of this threat suggests that NATO could now be in the twilight of its existence. Of further significance, the loss of NATO's originating threat also marked the loss of its only major threat. Consequently, the probability of an attack on a NATO nation's sovereign territory effectively vanished, and the core purpose for the Alliance, *collective defense*, disappeared with it.

But is the threat really gone? NATO's Baltic and Central European members believe a belligerent Russia is replacing the Soviet threat.¹⁶ In particular, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland view Russia's bellicose behavior as motivated by her desire to:

- Reclaim 'great power' status – which includes political dominance of former Soviet rim nations.¹⁷ (An idea characterized by the old Russian saying: "Russia would rather be feared, than respected.")
- Discredit NATO in the eyes of its neighbors to dissuade their aspirations for NATO accession – Russia views NATO's presence among her immediate neighbors as provocative.^{18 19}
- Use the Baltic States to divide the European Union and NATO.²⁰

Russia's 2010 declaration that NATO expansion is the principle danger to her nation, coupled with her recent anti-NATO training exercise in Belarus, "Zapad (West) 2009,"²¹ lends credence to Central European and Baltic state worries. And, while NATO nations nearest to Russia agree that its leadership is probably not drawing up invasion plans, they do worry that some unrelated event, which impacts Russia negatively, might provoke a knee-jerk reaction which could include territorial incursions into their neighboring countries.²² The August 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict and Russia's recent declaration that it will go so far as to introduce Russian forces into Kyrgyzstan following the 2010 coup to 'protect Russian citizens', lends credence to Baltic and Central European NATO members' fears.²³

The majority of NATO's Western European and North American nations opposes this view and prefers to maintain "an island of détente"²⁴ with Russia. They generally view Russia as a cantankerous global actor with considerable resources with which all parties could benefit through a cooperative relationship.²⁵ Consequently, the majority of NATO nations view attempts to vilify Russia as counterproductive to the stability and security of Europe.

This rift of opinion over Russia is of considerable concern to NATO because it drives a wedge between members and creates problems for the Alliance's consensus decision-making.²⁶ Furthermore, the Russian leadership instigates continued division within NATO by arguing that in its attempts to remain a *collective defense* alliance, NATO is unjustifiably identifying Russia as a threat.²⁷ Russian leadership also contends that NATO's commitment to admit Georgia, Ukraine and other unstable states (with often openly hostile governments towards Russia) into the Alliance will force NATO to support these nations' alarmingly provocative behaviors towards Russia.²⁸ The Russians cite the 2008 Georgian-initiated assault into South Ossetia as an example of this type of irrational behavior that could unintentionally suck NATO into a conflict with Russia.²⁹

While NATO nations dismiss Russia's accusations as paranoia, its members find themselves in a new and difficult position. On the one hand, Russia does not present an immediate threat to any of NATO's members. Yet on the other hand, Russia is a threat to the Alliance as an organization since it fears and resents the 'institution of NATO' and, consequently, is actively seeking ways to undermine it.³⁰ Thus, the Alliance is on the horns of a dilemma regarding how to productively cooperate with Russia. Conversely, NATO does not want to be seen as bowing to the often detrimental demands of Russia in the name of 'cooperation.' Nor do European members want to quit NATO and lose the value of the United States' guarantees of defense that are resident in the Alliance, especially given the early instability of the 21st century. Brookings Institution Foreign Policy Scholar Jeremy Shapiro's statement, "...Russia seems to spook Europe into renewed division and self doubt,"³¹ summarizes the challenge Russia raises for the Alliance.

b. New Threats. In addition to the Russian threat, the Alliance leadership has identified other emerging threats to the security of the Alliance. At NATO's 1999 Washington Summit, heads of state and governments acknowledged that the "dangers of the Cold War ... [gave] way ... to new ... risks."³² These risks included instability in the Balkans, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, oppression, ethnic conflict, economic distress, and the collapse of political order. In 2009, NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) conducted a significant study to identify these new dangers/threats. In this study, entitled *Multiple Futures Project*, ACT cited a number of threat sources in the 21st century, including:³³

- Super-empowered individuals
- Extremist non-State Actors
- Organized Crime
- Rogue States
- Confrontational Powers
- Nature

The study went on to delineate threatening actions:³⁴

- Disruption of Access to Critical Resources
- Disruption of Flow of Vital Resources
- Human Trafficking
- Human Security, Ethnic Cleansing, Genocide
- Violation of Personal Liberties
- Attack on Computer Networks
- Attack on Population or Infrastructure
- Subversion
- Terrorism
- Violation of Territorial Integrity
- Natural Disasters
- Environmental Degradation
- Attack with WMD/WME
- Civil Unrest
- Contested Political Legitimacy
- Stress on Societal Structures and Rule of Law
- Ethnic Tensions
- Mass Welfare and Health Stress
- Challenging Values and Worldviews
- Unassimilated Populations
- Drug Trafficking
- Spillover from Unanticipated Humanitarian Catastrophes and Regional Wars
- Rise of New and Unknown Adversaries
- Undermining of Defense Preparedness
- Unanticipated large Scale Terrorist Attacks
- Piracy
- Stress on Societal Structures and Rule of Law

Examining ACT's list of risks with an eye toward territorial threats underscores that a direct military attack against NATO's member territories, emanating principally from rogue states or other confrontational powers, remains a remote possibility. For example, given the bellicose rhetoric by Iran against Western nations (as well as its oil-producing Sunni neighbors), together with the country's recent push to refine its ballistic missiles and nuclear technology, the potential exists for an attack against a NATO nation or U.S. facilities housed by that allied nation.³⁵

Regardless of the minimal potential for armed invasion, however, the remainder of these 21st century risks, with their corresponding potentially threatening actions, do present a danger to Alliance members. If not checked, they could result in violence, economic hardship or collapse, damage to infrastructure, and human suffering. Any of these results could ultimately place the execution of the rule of law or the existence of governments at risk. And as 'threats,' they beg for a defense against them. Therefore, the arguments for NATO continuing as a *collective defense* alliance have some basis.

A quick scan of these 'new' threats, however, reveals that the breadth of the potential risks is so wide that it brings into question whether NATO actually could deter, defend against or generally react to a great number of them. In reality, the non-military nature of many of the threats makes it questionable whether there is a military role for NATO to play regarding them. What is certain is that NATO is not currently organized to respond to most of these threats. Furthermore, attempts to resource activities to mitigate these new threats led NATO into many of its recent divisive debates. There is little question that a serious discussion must occur within the Alliance to parse out this expansive list of risks into those that NATO can, and is willing to, deter or defend against. And, anytime the allocation of resources is debated there is the promise of an impassioned dialogue. This conversation will be even more

controversial because the development of new capabilities is likely to be expensive.

Partner Fails to Abide by Treaty Agreement

To date, no member nation has been singled out for failing to abide by the NATO mandate. However, the viability would be tested if member nations 'failed to support' the security of another member, a key provision.

Issue #1. Back to the question of Russia. Because of the Baltic nations' fear of Russia - enflamed by the 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict, they want assurances that NATO is ready to effectively support their defense if required. In particular, they want protections gained from the positioning of NATO infrastructure in their countries, contingency plans for their defense, and contingency plan rehearsals.³⁶ Short of these types of assurances, the political leaderships of the Baltic nations and some Central European countries worry that NATO is not prepared to support their defense and, consequently, have difficulty believing that NATO's defense promise, under Article 5 of the treaty, can be executed in a timely manner, if at all.³⁷ Conversely, other NATO members, as well as its organizational leadership, worry that providing these visible assurances would send the wrong signals to Russia and spur unwanted military escalation.³⁸ This lack of confidence in one another for adequate support brings into question NATO's willingness to execute its *collective defense* mandate and, as a result, places the Alliance at risk of failing this test for alliance security.

Issue #2. Defining what constitutes an 'attack'. While most nations in the Alliance agree that a direct military attack against the sovereign territory of any of NATO's member states is highly improbable, members do vigorously debate 'what else' constitutes an attack and whether it should trigger the article-5 mandates of the Washington Treaty. This debate directly underscores ACT's list of risks from the Multiple Futures Project, which highlights the expanse of activities that threaten the security of the Alliance and its members.

Two recent debates exemplify the challenges of defining 21st century attacks. First was the 2008 cyber-attack on the Estonian government's computer system, allegedly promulgated by the Russians.³⁹ During this crisis, Estonia's government systems were critically slowed due to denial of service attacks. Yet, Estonia received little to no assistance from NATO. The Alliance, in addition to the entire developed world, view electronic attack on their cyber networks with great concern. Not only can important defense, economic, and political information be damaged or stolen, these attacks have the potential to cause financial or emotional harm to a nation's inhabitants. However, NATO struggles to agree on the answers to several key questions that would facilitate a defense

against cyber attack: a) Is cyber-defense a matter of vital interest to NATO members? b) Is cyber-defense is a military matter at all? c) If it is, how might it influence NATO's future actions if an attack was not carried out by a nation or was damaging but essentially an act of vandalism? d) What capabilities would NATO need to combat a cyber attack? Certainly, during the country's 2008 cyber-attack, Estonia felt under siege, and NATO was largely stumped with regards to what it would or could do to provide support.

A second debate that illustrates the challenge of 'defining an attack' concerns the defense of NATO forces engaged in Alliance-sanctioned operations that are not directly tied to territorial defense. Such cases include NATO's Kosovo mission in March 2004⁴⁰ and Afghanistan operations that began in July 2006.⁴¹ While fighting in these environments, national elements of NATO forces came under substantive attacks from opposing militant forces. Unfortunately, allied reinforcement was slow and, for some nations, not authorized due to national restrictions (commonly referred to as national 'caveats') on forces assigned to these missions. The lack of immediate reinforcement further highlights a lack of consensus regarding mandatory support to allies. This example illustrates that while article 5 of the Washington Treaty mandates mutual defense if allied territories are attacked, a dilemma exists as to whether an attack against NATO forces outside of their territories holds the promise of the same response. There is no consensus on this issue among NATO members. Yet, without an uncompromising promise of mutual support, members may be reluctant to participate in future NATO operations.

In both of the previously cited cases, NATO members did not initially respond well with support. This lack of adequate and unconditional mutual defense, exacerbated by conflicting definitions of an 'attack' that would trigger article-5 provisions, raises serious doubts over the kind of defense support each member can expect from the Alliance. Unfortunately, without a richer sense of defense requirements, bickering will likely continue. Worse still, this bickering sows the seeds of distrust and dissatisfaction within the Alliance, putting NATO at risk of failing the test of 'abiding by the tenets of its treaty.'

Issue #3. Equitable Burden Sharing. Complaints about equitable burden sharing are not new to the Alliance. Today, however, they may be the most divisive issue confronting it. During its Cold War years, complaints about burden sharing commonly involved resourcing adequate levels of defense spending. Now, the prevalence of out-of-region security operations (particularly in Afghanistan), where greater fiscal and manpower burdens have been placed on operational participants, has led to incessant quarreling at ministerials, summits and in many members' national political fora.⁴²

Alliance members view burden sharing in two contexts. First is the idea that members provide their fair share of resources. For example, complaints arise from the major International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troop contributing nations as 68 percent of NATO members fail to provide the target percentage of forces commensurate with the size of their total national land force. This leaves the remaining 32 percent of NATO members and 18 non-NATO partners picking up the slack.⁴³ Furthermore, while the United States was content during the first 60 years of the Alliance's life to provide over 50 percent of NATO's military capabilities, its position has recently changed. As the U.S. contends with expanding global threats, it has begun looking to allies to become more substantial military partners.⁴⁴ The U.S. plea to share more of the burden has found limited support from other NATO members, bringing into question what value the U.S. receives from its alignment with NATO.⁴⁵ This problem is likely to be exacerbated by the recent economic crisis in the Eurozone, making increased spending impossible for most European NATO members.

The second context is also fairly new and invokes the idea that each nation should take its turn executing the most dangerous and controversial endeavors. This burden sharing challenge is often exemplified by national restrictions on their forces that, for instance, prohibit them from participating in overly dangerous areas or from participating in politically controversial operations, including counter-narcotic activities. Again, NATO's mission in Afghanistan spotlights this issue. Four nations (the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States) suffered over 80% of combat deaths. Their forces served in the most violent areas (Southern and Eastern Afghanistan) with little relief from their fellow members.⁴⁶ Needless to say, this inequitable level of loss plays harshly with each of domestic publics and builds the perception that Alliance partners are not living up to their treaty pledges.⁴⁷ In fact, this issue is so politically contentious that public sentiment drove the Dutch and Canadian governments to mandate the withdrawal of their troops. Even more troubling, when the Dutch government attempted to renege on its pledge in late 2009 to remove its forces from Afghanistan, its coalition government collapsed.

To summarize, NATO faces three significant challenges that put that could cause its members to 'fail to abide by the tenets of their treaty.' First, insecurity and perceived abandonment among Baltic and Central European Alliance members stems from perceptions that NATO is not ready to support their defense against a possible Russian threat. Second, more diverse security risks created by an increasingly globalized world have given rise to the question, "what constitutes an 'attack' in the 21st century?" Moreover, if attacked, "what should NATO's response be?" Lastly, frictions caused by inequities in burden sharing bring into question the Alliance's ability to overcome the fate suffered by alliances whose members did not abide by their mandate- dissolution. In short, NATO's

members have lost trust and confidence and doubt that others will keep their pledges, which is cause for treaty abrogation.

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CHAPTER SIX

Findings

Understanding NATO in terms of the history and theory of alliance formation and dissolution provides an objective basis to examine its future viability.

Poor Potential to Serve as a Collective Defense Alliance

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has done little to enhance its role as a *collective defense* alliance. Other than an unambitious set of annual training exercises, it only attempted three other significant *collective defense* activities, which included the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF), a proposition to establish integrated missile defense across Europe, and a once per decade effort to update its generic contingency plans. All proved to be of marginal utility. NATO's *collective defense* foundation is deeply fractured due to its loss of an omnipresent, unifying threat. And as history demonstrates, *collective defense* alliances habitually dissolve in the absence of a threat.

This fracture is further aggravated by internal disagreements over the threat that Russia poses to Alliance members. And in lieu of a single threat, NATO now must confront more numerous, diverse, irregular and often non-military threats than ever before. These diverse 21st century threats, which range from economic turmoil to terrorism, beg the question: What should/could NATO's role be in combating them? In trying to answer this question, NATO encounters further difficulty, as it has yet to agree on the seriousness and prioritization of these new threats.

Agreement is elusive because Alliance members' national interests routinely conflict.¹ Consequently, it is extremely difficult to achieve consensus regarding the activities and resources that should be applied to deter or defeat these 21st century threats (short of allowing voluntary participation). This disagreement has led to arguments over whether Alliance members are living up to their pledges. Without this consensus, potential exists for member states to abandon their association with NATO, substituting new arrangements and alliances to pursue their own national imperatives and important security issues. In short, the chances of preserving NATO's *collective defense* identity currently appear poor. In fact, attempts to preserve this role are often the source of its most divisive behavior.

Unfortunately, the chances of the Alliance surviving with its current membership and without a *collective defense* purpose are equally poor. Many Baltic and Central European members view the *collective defense* protections provided by NATO as vital to their security. Hence, without a *collective defense* guarantee, these members would likely see the need to cultivate other security partners in NATO's stead.

Thus, NATO is in a precarious situation. Continuing to pursue a *collective defense* role is ripping the Alliance apart, and failing to maintain this purpose will produce the same result. The Alliance's leadership must make tough decisions if the organization is to weather this crisis of purpose.

Mixed and Declining Potential to Serve as a Collective Security Alliance

NATO excels in its ability to maintain order within its ranks. The Alliance is routinely praised for maintaining peaceful relationships among its members, and national governments have generally become stable through this association. By contrast, the United Nations, which officially refers to itself as a *collective security* alliance, cannot boast similar success.

Pockets of instability on the European continent remain where NATO continues to provide a valuable security role. Significant friction exists between Turkey and the EU and between Turkey and Greece. In both cases, NATO successfully serves the role of moderator. In the Balkans, the ultimate stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains in question, and a mutually satisfactory solution between Serbia and Kosovo remains elusive. Here again, NATO's diplomatic efforts have been instrumental in keeping the lid on violence in the region, but still more is required. To the east, countries in the Caucasus remain in varying states of crisis: Georgia contends with its breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia; Moldova struggles with its breakaway territory of Trans-Dniester, and; energy issues stress the entire region. Given NATO's proven track record in providing stability, it could continue to play a valuable role by promoting increased security for its members through further regional engagement.

Three issues sour NATO's potential as a *collective security* alliance. The first involves Russia's ongoing efforts to divide the Alliance by posing as a threat to the Baltic and Central European nations, while leveraging access to its energy resources to maintain Western European cooperation. Unless NATO members can cope with or resolve Russia's dual nature, the Alliance (and the EU for that matter) may experience an irreparable rift among its members.

The second challenge to NATO's future as a *collective security* alliance is the European Union's attempt to assume this role. Given that 21 of NATO's 28

nations are also members of the EU, the Alliance finds itself in the unfavorable position of being undermined from within. Given this shared membership, it is hard to imagine a fix for this problem – if in fact it is actually a problem. Many foreign policy scholars, particularly European Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellow Nick Witney, see the EU’s ascendency as logical, and perhaps necessary, for Europe to ultimately take responsibility for itself.²

However, all the odds are not necessarily stacked in the EU’s favor. It will be very costly and time consuming for EU members to replace the military capabilities that the United States provides to NATO. Hence, NATO can continue to play a valuable role as a *collective security* provider for Europe while the EU sorts out organizational and logistical issues. During this period, it would behoove both organizations to cooperate by pooling their resources and talents to provide greater security, stability, and prosperity for their members.

The third challenge to NATO’s *collective security* role, and in this case its *collective defense* and *multilateral* roles as well, is its inability to reach agreement among the members and to enforce its rules and standards. For the last 61 years, NATO has prided itself on preserving the sovereignty of its members through a consensus decision making process,³ but NATO’s doubling in membership and the disparate challenges of the 21st century are making it more and more difficult for the Alliance to a) come to agreement and b) ensure appropriate adherence to agreements among its membership. Consequently, the Alliance routinely finds itself in divisive and debilitating arguments over its various activities and the adequacy of the support provided.

Perhaps unwittingly, NATO has developed some coping systems to simultaneously enable consensus decision making and preserve sovereignty - defined here as not being able to obligate a nation to an activity without its specific consent. First, the introduction of a ‘force generation’ process has allowed nations (members and non-members) to volunteer forces but does not obligate a nation to participate. The second tool, ‘trust funds,’ allows nations to make voluntary fiscal contributions but does not obligate member nations or NATO as a whole to funding responsibilities. While these voluntary participation systems have facilitated the Alliance’s recent ability to reach agreement on out-of-area operations and other activities, they have also created a detrimental divide between those who ‘will’ and those who ‘will not’ provide resources for the missions. This has unfortunately enflamed the divisive issue of inequitable burden sharing and, in short, transformed NATO into a two-tiered alliance. In order to preserve its effectiveness as a *collective security* alliance and to recover from the debilitating effects of the voluntary resourcing systems, it may be time to entertain options that compel members to give up certain aspects

of their sovereignty in order to gain a more viable decision making and resourcing process, similar to those that exist in the EU and UN today.

To sum up, NATO's role as a *collective security* alliance remains viable over the near- to mid-term. If the European Union continues to improve its nascent military force capability, then it is only a matter of time before it succeeds NATO as Europe's *collective security* provider. NATO would require alliance-to-alliance cooperation and agreement in order to arrest the EU's ascendancy, which while not impossible to achieve, appears improbable given that the EU has shown little interest. In the near-term, immediate attention must be given to Russia's divisive effects on NATO's members. Otherwise, the Alliance will continue to see a growing impasse in its ability to make decisions regarding policy, structure and the allocation of resources. Lastly, without more institutionalized rigor in the current voluntary adherence to NATO's rules, the Alliance's membership is likely to continue to drift apart as they pursue more narrowly defined financial and national considerations, a result that would continue to leave NATO under-resourced.

Still Strong Potential to Serve as a Multilateral Alliance

For the past 20 years, NATO has served principally as a *multilateral* alliance. As previously stated, the Alliance continues to successfully achieve its ideological goals through engagement with fledgling democracies, particularly in Eastern and South-Central Europe. Major *multilateral* security interests began with the Bosnian air campaign in 1991, which was quickly followed by air and ground operations in Kosovo, military and police training in Iraq, stability operations in Afghanistan, and tactical air lift in support of the African Union in Darfur. These operations sought to reduce human suffering, advance the rule of law and support democratic rule. Other *multilateral* activities included humanitarian assistance to earthquake victims in Pakistan, counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden designed to protect vital shipping assets and enforce the rule of law, as well as counter-terrorist interdiction on the Mediterranean Sea. Together, all of these operations reinforced the members' shared ideals enshrined in their charter's preamble "...to safeguard ...the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."⁴ Unlike organizations with a more global membership, NATO's regional associations - characterized by more common ideological views and values - portend NATO's continued capacity to execute operations of mutual interest.

Despite the plethora of important security activities that keep NATO busy, they do not cement the Alliance's viability as a *multilateral* alliance. In fact, it is the diverse nature of 21st century security challenges that places this role at risk given that Alliance members view these threats with varying levels of interest,

making it more difficult to reach consensus over appropriate responses. This is particularly dangerous given the historical evidence suggesting that *multilateral* alliances tend to disband because of diverging interests. As noted in the previous section, the Alliance recently developed coping tools to enable its members to reach consensus on proposed actions. Unfortunately, as was also noted above, these tools often have negative side effects.

For most intents and purposes, NATO has transformed into a *multilateral* alliance, and it is as a *multilateral* alliance that NATO has the best chance to survive. Given the decrease in conventional state conflict and increase in non-state, irregular security challenges, *multilateral* security organizations will likely be of greater use in the future because of their ability to operate at extended distances with military, economic and diplomatic power. Consequently, there is no better time for the Alliance to embrace its *multilateral* security role. Once NATO embraces and codifies this role, it can begin to adjust its policies, structures and capabilities to better achieve this purpose, and as a result, eliminate much of its divisive behavior.

The following table (figure 5) summarizes and rates the level of risk NATO faces in attempting to retain its three military alliance missions (*collective defense, collective security, or multilateral*).

Figure 5: NATO Level of Risk for Loss of Military Alliance Missions

Overall Risk for Role Termination	Threat	Member Defeated	Not Abiding w/ Treaty Tenets	Diverging Interests
Collective Defense High (-)	Rating: (-) - Lost Soviet Threat - New threats are not agreed/prioritized. - It takes more than the military forces found in the Alliance to contend with many new threats	Rating (o) + Little risk of the dissolution of an alliance member - Effects of defeat in Afghanistan o Liability of admitting unstable States.	Rating (-) - Disagreement on protections needed against Russia - Burden Sharing: strife due to differences in resources provided to operations.	Rating (-) - Disagreement on threats leads to difference in resource national resource allocations and new alignments. - Russia fomenting a divide between Alliance members
Collective Security Moderate (o)	Rating (+) + Tensions between new and prospective member nations advocates for a <i>collective security</i> forum + The existence of an external threat is not required to support the purpose of <i>collective security</i> alliance.	Rating (o) + Little risk of the dissolution of an alliance member - Effects of defeat in Afghanistan o Liability of admitting unstable States.	Rating (o) + Consensus decision making helps ensure the Alliance does not adopt unpopular – retain sovereignty. - Prolonged failure to comply with ‘norms’ (i.e. equitable burden sharing) will increase frictions. - no tools to enforce rules.	Rating (o) - EU looking to assume <i>collective security</i> role in Europe. o Diverging interests are not a major factor as long as all nations continue to abide by the agreed tenets. + Currently too costly and time consuming for Europe to divest itself of U.S. military support
Multi-lateral Low (+)	Rating (+) + 21 st century security issues promise many opportunities for multilateral security activities + New Threats and challenges do not need to be addressed in their totality in multilateral alliances.	Rating (o) + Little risk of the dissolution of an alliance member - Effects of defeat in Afghanistan o Liability of admitting unstable States.	Rating (o) - Multilateral alliances can largely tolerate differences of opinion. - Coping mechanisms exacerbate inequitable burden sharing divide	Rating (+) + Multilateral alliances tend to accommodate different interests o Currently diverging interests to not outweigh common interests among members

Legend: Positive Effect = '+'; Neutral Effect = 'o'; Negative Effect = '-'

¹ Jeffrey Lightfoot, “NATO Interests vs. National Interests,” Atlantic Council, 12 May 2009, <<http://www.acus.org/print/4005>>.

² Shapiro, 66.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Decisions to Take

The NATO Alliance has reached a turning point with regards to its role in the current security environment. Over the last 20 years, the Alliance recognized these changes in the security domain and has tried to adapt its Cold War policies and systems to accommodate them. Unfortunately, its attempts have exacerbated debate to the point that they threaten to rend the fabric that holds NATO together. Elizabeth Sherwood Randall captured this sentiment when she noted that, "...while allied leaders haggle over commitments to the fight in Afghanistan [and elsewhere] NATO needs to keep its eyes on the strategic prize: an alliance that can thrive in an increasingly messy world."¹

This paper highlights that the principal issue confronting the Alliance's viability is clarification of its purpose. From the analysis presented, it is clear that NATO is at a crossroads regarding its *collective defense* role; the Alliance finds it extremely difficult to survive while sustaining this purpose, yet is unsustainable without it. With adequate resolve to transform, however, the Alliance has the potential to support its members' security for the foreseeable future. To facilitate a transformation into a 21st century security alliance, NATO would be wise to take the following decisions.

Figure 6: Five Decisions to Take

- Agree on and prioritize the threats.
- Reconcile burden sharing inequities through reform of decision making and decision enforcement systems.
- Reconcile its *collective security* role with that of the European Union's.
- Endorse its role as a *multilateral* alliance.
- Re-establish security assurances through adoption of a 'Crisis Management' Role.

Agree on and Prioritize the Threats

First and foremost, NATO's membership must definitively decide what threats to acknowledge and address in order to maintain the rationale for *collective defense*. The question of Russia must be at the top of this agenda. Russia's recent rhetoric and brazen activities continue to drive a wedge between Central/Eastern European members and their Western European/North

American counterparts. Until member nations agree on common threats, the Alliance will gravitate towards decision-making stalemate.

For the most part, other 21st century threats are 'non-state' in character- terrorists, pirates, pandemic disease. Many are indirect in nature, as opposed to more conventional threats. They threaten new domains and networks such as space, cyberspace and transportation. In addition, these threats are often generated far from NATO's borders, forcing the Alliance to adopt a global view of security challenges. To confront these risks, a determination must be made as to whether these irregular threats will be considered in the same context as a conventional military threat. In short, the question is: will deterrence and defense activities for unconventional threats be treated as comprehensively as traditional state-to-state threats have been in the past?

Given the differences in national interests among Alliance members and NATO's propensity to avoid thorny decisions regarding threats, it is uncertain whether NATO will be able to agree on what constitutes a threat, let alone prioritize (vital, extremely important, important, and less important or secondary²) according to their ability to impact the Alliance's interests. However, if this is not resolved, NATO will likely continue down the path toward dissolution that past *collective defense* alliances have traveled.

Reconcile Burden Sharing Inequities

Alliance members must decide if they are willing to give up a portion of their sovereignty in order to develop decision making policies and systems that will ensure compliance and reduce the perception of inequitable burden sharing. This would likely include forfeiting consensus decision making - on at least some topics - in favor of a more effective majority-based system. Furthermore, it would require some ability to sanction members that do not comply.

The chances of achieving this kind of change are slim given that consensus decision-making has been one of NATO's major drawing points. Certainly, nations with lesser levels of influence in the Alliance will object, as already evidenced by Turkey's negative reaction to the idea of majority decision-making proposals.³ Additionally, the European Union would likely view any attempts to wrest sovereignty from its European members as direct affront to the EU's system of powers. For example, the EU can currently sanction members that let their budget deficits get too high. Many of its members adjust their levels of defense spending as an immediate and domestically palatable method to remain in compliance with EU requirements. This is in direct conflict with NATO's agreed policy, which requires nations to apply 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) toward defense matters. Due in part to this activity, NATO now

finds only 5 of its 28 nations in compliance. Consequently, if NATO possessed any ability to enforce compliance on this issue, it would be in direct competition with the systems of the EU.

Without policy or systems to enable timely decision making, especially with regard to approving immediate requirements for current military operations, the Alliance will continue to move towards gridlock. Turkey's unwillingness to entertain any activity that involves the EU vividly illustrates this effect.⁴ Furthermore, NATO's continued inability to ensure equitably shared sacrifices elicits complaints of non-compliance, again propelling NATO closer to abrogation of its treaty.

Reconcile NATO's and the EU's Roles

NATO appears on an irreversible course to lose its *collective security* role to the European Union and, as noted earlier, this may be a satisfactory course of action. However, there remains much work to be done in Europe – particularly Eastern and South-Central Europe – to promote a greater peace and stability that the European Union is not yet postured to facilitate. This leaves the door open for NATO to continue its *collective security* role for the next decade or two. Given this window of opportunity, it is clear that the uncooperative behavior between the EU and NATO are not helpful. Therefore, the Alliance must reconcile its *collective security* role with that of the European Union's. This is easier said than done, as the EU has largely proven unwilling to meaningfully join in a constructive debate, instead choosing to pursue its own agenda. At this point, and at least for the short- to mid-term, cooperation between the two organizations would bring improved stability quicker and lower cost.

Endorse Multilateralism.

The next decision for NATO to tackle is whether to officially acknowledge and endorse the purpose of a *multilateral* alliance. In this role it would possess the greatest opportunity for increased longevity because:

- *Multilateral* alliances are historically more durable.
- There are numerous mutually beneficial security tasks to perform.
- The diverse challenges of the 21st century security environment lend themselves to the varied activities normally associated with *multilateral* alliances.
- While there is the real danger of national interests diverging from those of the Alliance as a whole, the current consensus decision making ensures that nationally (politically) unacceptable activities are avoided.

- NATO has developed systems to allow nations to tailor their participation in order to accommodate national political contingencies and financial challenges and that prevent impasses in decision-making. (Unfortunately, these systems have negative side-effects.)
- It is the easiest and, therefore, the most feasible decision its membership can take.

By formally recognizing its *multilateral* role, the Alliance will be able to institutionalize the currently ad hoc policies and structures needed to perform its responsibilities. Through this formalization, NATO can avoid the need to remake the hard and often divisive decisions that it originally took to carry out recent operations.

Thucydides predicts that warfare is inevitable and that the nation that ignores this prophesy will be caught unprepared. Given this prediction, sustaining NATO as a *multilateral* alliance also acts as an insurance policy. It preserve its current defense capabilities and allows it to serve as the foundation for rearmament efforts if ever confronted by another Cold War-like threat. This argument is bolstered by Walt's prediction that alliances will gravitate to a balancing (defense) strategy if and when a new threat emerges.⁵

Reestablish Security Assurances through Adoption of a 'Crisis Management' Role

The findings above are based on the traditional roles that military alliances have performed for the last 500 years. However, as has been articulated throughout this paper, the nature of 21st century risks suggests that the traditional military alliance systems may be inadequate today. Furthermore, the effects of globalization easily spread the repercussions of far-flung crises to NATO's doorstep. One only has to look at the global effects of terrorism spawned in Afghanistan and the instability caused by the global financial crisis to recognize that the Alliance can no longer sustain its localized transatlantic focus.

With looming challenges such as Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Pakistan's internal insurgency, it would be prudent for NATO's members to effectively monitor potential crisis areas wherever they exist. Then, when necessary, NATO's military structures can provide advanced warning and advice, in the form of courses-of-action or contingency plans, to its political leadership. These courses-of-action may be as simple as official statements or as complex as coordinated civil-military operations. This 'early warning' and proactive problem solving would at best facilitate preemption of a crisis and at worst allow the Alliance to react quickly and decisively against it. It would be truly debilitating if NATO allowed its currently myopic view of the

security horizon to contribute to a failure similar to that which occurred in the 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict, where the Alliance neither predicted nor proactively responded to combat on its front door. To continue to languish in a state of inaction, from being uninformed and unprepared to make decisions, would contribute to NATO's decreasing levels of assurance that it can effectively provide security for its membership.

It is clear that NATO cannot defend nor deter against the entire spectrum of diverse 21st century threats, and it is improbable that the Alliance members will agree to expand NATO's role as a military alliance to include a more robust portfolio of economic and diplomatic powers required to address many them. However, the idea that the sum of the parts can be greater than the whole highlights the notion that a security organization such as NATO can not only inform and organize its own membership but also alert and, at times, organize the many international institutions that may be required to combat the various security challenges of the 21st century. These abilities would provide a valuable security service to the Alliance and its partners. In essence, the Alliance could provide a 'crisis management' role and bring a more *comprehensive security* to its membership and the transatlantic region. This 'crisis management' role would not supersede its military security role, but would augment it in order to facilitate the coordination of the other elements of power and achieve a more *comprehensive security* posture.

As highlighted earlier, the Alliance can not survive if it discards its collective defense role because some NATO members view its defense assurances as vital to their national security. The challenge for NATO is to provide these assurances without appearing overly provocative toward what perceived external threats. Fortunately, many of these assurance can be effectively and benignly provided through the development of a robust 'crisis management' capability that is required to conduct routine contingency planning. By enabling a 'crisis management' system that monitors and assesses the host of security issues that present themselves or that may be looming on the horizon, the Alliance will provide its political body with the information and assessments they require to make timely and informed decisions – improving assurances that the organization is prepared to defend its membership.

¹ Sherwood-Randall, 1.

² Graham T. Allison and Robert Blackwill, "America's National Interests," The Commission on America's National Interests, July 2000, 5, <<http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/amernatinter.doc>>.

³ Meeting with Turkish Officials at NATO Headquarters, Istanbul, 24 June 2009.

⁴ Turkey: Iran, NATO, ESDP Also on Agenda of Turkey-EU Troika Meeting Report by Dondu Sariisik: "EU To Ask Turkey To Adopt a 'More European Iran Policy'" Hurriyet Daily News.com, Istanbul: November 26, 2009.

⁵ Walt, 22.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

NATO finds itself in the throes of a crisis of purpose. For two decades it has focused on security tasks that only tangentially supported its *collective defense* role. As nations viewed these new activities with widely varying levels of importance in respect to their national interests, each tended to support these activities with corresponding levels of enthusiasm. This has led to divisive discussions over need and accusations or lackluster support. These differences of opinion have fomented a lack of trust and confidence among allies.

Historical analysis of military alliances over the past 500 years provides insights into why NATO is experiencing divisive behavior but still has continued viability. This analysis highlights that the durability of the three forms of military alliances (*collective defense*, *collective security* and *multilateral*) conforms to the following:

- *Collective defense* alliances are the least durable, tending to disband soon after the disappearance of the threat they were formed to deter or defend against.
- The existence of a threat(s) is not necessary to the viability of a *collective security* or *multilateral* alliance.
- *Collective security* alliances are generally not sustainable unless coupled with *multilateral* alliance goals.
- *Multilateral* alliances are the most durable alliances and make up the majority of the currently long-lived alliances.
- Diverging interests are a major contributing factor to the downfall of *multilateral* alliances.
- On average, alliances only exist for 17 years. This suggests that past alliances have been very rigid in their purpose, causing them to disband when their goals were achieved or changed.

Applying these historical factors to NATO's current condition finds the Alliance's role as a *collective defense* alliance greatly diminished, while conversely, its *collective security* and *multilateral* roles have gained prominence because:

- NATO has no substantive agreement among its members regarding threat(s) which they might deter or defend against. Without agreement there can be no viable *collective defense* administered.

- Diverging and converging interests have both increased in the last 20 years, indicating a (yet to be recognized) metamorphosis of goals within the Alliance. This evolution involves a move away from *collective defense* activity towards *collective security* and *multilateral* alliance goals.
- The security challenges caused by the global effects of diverse, non-traditional 21st century risks have brought about new and unexpected challenges to security conditions, challenges that NATO is not adequately equipped to confront in its current configuration as a *collective defense* alliance.
- A greater durability and ability to view security matters more widely is inherent in a *multilateral* alliance; it is in this role that NATO possesses the greatest potential for continued longevity in the 21st century security environment.

Even though NATO's role as a *collective defense* alliance is largely voided, retention of this function remains a necessary condition for some members. Thus, the Alliance's leadership is confronted with the almost insurmountable predicament of needing to mitigate the causes for alliance dissolution (i.e. identifying and prioritizing threats, renewing its members' faith in security assurances, and achieving equitable burden sharing) in order to preserve the collective defense role. Notwithstanding the challenges of retaining a collective defense function, its role as a *multilateral* alliance has taken priority over that of *collective defense* or *collective security*, providing the greatest utility for its members for the foreseeable future. Still, transformational efforts are required to realize the full potential of this new primary role.

The development of a new strategic concept could be the start of this transformation. The initial work by the Group of Experts submitted to the Secretary General in May 2010 helps frame the transformation by accurately highlighting NATO's increased *multilateral* role to promote democracy, individual liberties, and the rule of law. But their use of vague terminology and undefined terms, such as 'assured security' and 'full range of threats',¹ is not precise enough to allow the Alliance to make consistent and prudent political and military decisions, especially those regarding resourcing. NATO can no longer afford this ambiguity in its roles, if it expects to survive in the future.

The global environment has changed significantly in the last 20 years, requiring the Alliance to seriously reexamine its purpose – a task it keeps avoiding. The substitution of subordinate decisions, such as the modification of particular structures or military capabilities, is a red herring. It is detrimental to the health of the Alliance because it encourages the potential allocation of resources to activities that do not necessarily support the primary purposes and goals of the

Alliance. And the inefficient use of resources sows the seeds of national discontent. Without a reconciled purpose, the Alliance cannot appropriately determine the policies, structures and capabilities it needs to achieve its goals. Avoiding these decisions is a choice in itself that will likely continue to cripple NATO's ability to perform effectively and cast into doubt its ability to survive.

Without substantive action, the Alliance will continue to suffer from a loss in trust and confidence among its members. Lack of defense preparedness and 'will' to reconcile Russia's status and the status of other emerging 21st century risks, lack of equitable support for current operations, lack of confidence that the U.S. will lead the Alliance into operations that are of value to the remainder of the Alliance, and lack of confidence in the Alliance's ability to prevail in Afghanistan form the basis for this insecurity. If this lack of confidence among members prevails and decisions continue to be deferred, history tells us that NATO will break.

¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO 2020", 12.

APPENDIX A

Table of Military Alliances – Modern Era to Present (2010)

Dates of Alliance	Yrs	Name of Alliance	Participants	Formation Rationale	Type Alliance	Dissolution Rationale	Bureaucracy Level *
1480 - Late 15 th century	10	Franco-Indian Alliance	France and India	- Balancing against Britain	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated. (i.e. Napoleon defeated)	None
1508-1516	8	League of Cambria	Papal States, France, Aragon, Holy Roman Empire	-Balancing	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Limited
1524-1525	1	Franco-Polish Alliance	France and Poland	-Balancing	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	None
1528	1	Franco-Hungarian Alliance	France and Hungary	-Financial Support	- Multilateral	Interests diverged	None
1531-1547	16	Schmalkaldic League	German Protestant States against to Holy Roman Empire	-Balancing	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat – peace treaty	Limited
1571-1573	2	Holy League	Catholic maritime states against the Ottomans	-Balancing	- Collective Defense - Multilateral	Lost Threat – peace treaty	Limited
1673-1678	5	Quadruple Alliance	Holy Roman Empire, Spain, Lorraine, and Netherlands	-Balancing against France, England, Muenster and Cologne	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	None
16 th -19 th century	250	Franco-Ottoman Alliance	France and Ottoman Empire	-Détente	- Multilateral	Member Defeated	None
1716-1731	15	Anglo-French Alliance	Britain and France	- Balancing against Spain and Russia	- Collective Defense	Interests diverged	None
1718-1720	2	Quadruple Alliance	Austria, France, Dutch Rep, Britain	-Balancing against Spain	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	None
1745	1	Quadruple Alliance	U,K. Dutch Rep, Saxony and Austria	-Balancing against Prussia and France	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	None
1754-1760	6	Franco-American-Indian Alliance	France and North American Natives	- Bandwagoning - Détente	- Collective Defense - Multilateral	Member Defeated (ie. France defeated.)	Limited
1756-1790	34	Franco-Austrian Alliance	France and Austria	-Balancing	- Collective Defense	Interests diverged	None
1777-1820	43	Franco Vietnamese	France and Vietnam	-Foreign Aid	- Multilateral	Interests diverged	Limited

Dates of Alliance	Yrs	Name of Alliance	Participants	Formation Rationale	Type Alliance	Dissolution Rationale	Bureaucracy Level *
1778-1799	21	Franco-American Alliance	U.S. and France	- Balancing against Britain	- Collective Defense	U.S. failed to abide by tenants of treaty	None
1793-1797	4	First Coalition	Austria, Prussia, Britain and Spain	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Limited
1799-1802	3	Second Coalition	Austria, Russia, Turkey, the Vatican, Portugal, Naples and Britain.	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Limited
1803-1806	3	Third Coalition	Britain, Austria, Russia, Sweden and some German states	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Limited
1806-1807	1	Fourth Coalition	Britain, Prussia, Russia	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Limited
1807-1809	2	Franco-Prussian Alliance	France and Prussia	- Balancing against Russia	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Limited
1807-1809	2	Franco-Persian Alliance	France and Persia	- Balancing against Russia and Britain	- Collective Defense	Diverging Interests	Limited
1809	1	Fifth Coalition	Austria and Britain	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Limited
1812-1814	2	Sixth Coalition	Austria, Prussia, Russia, Britain, Sweden, and German States	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	Limited
1815	1	Seventh Coalition	Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	Limited
1815-1825	10	Holy Alliance	Prussia, Russia and Austria	- Ideological to instill the Christian values of charity and peace in Europe	- Multilateral	Member Defeated (Czar Alexander died)	Limited
1815-1825	10	Quadruple Alliance	U.K., Russia, Prussia, and Austria	- Balancing against France	- Collective Defense	Interests diverged	Limited
1863-1865	2	Russo – American Alliance	USA and Russia	- Balancing against U.S. Confederacy, France and Spain	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	None
1879-1918	39	Dual Alliance	Austria-Hungary and Germany	- Balancing against Russia	- Collective Defense; - Collective Security	Member Defeated	None
1881-1887	6	Three Emperor's League	Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia	- Balancing (primarily against France) - Détente	- Collective Defense	Diverging Interests	None
1881-1895	4	Austro-Serbian Alliance	Austria-Hungary and Serbia	Balancing against Russia	- Collective Defense	Diverging Interests	None

Dates of Alliance	Yrs	Name of Alliance	Participants	Formation Rationale	Type Alliance	Dissolution Rationale	Bureaucracy Level *
1882-1915	33	The Triple Alliance	Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy	- Balancing against any other two great powers or France	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Moderate
1883-1916	33	Austro-German-Romanian Alliance	Austria-Hungary, Germany and Romania	- Balancing against Russia	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	Moderate
1887-1890	3	Reinsurance Treaty	Germany and Russia	- Détente (to keep each nation from siding with an other belligerent excluding France and Austria)	- Collective Security	Diverging Interests	None
1894-1917	23	Franco-Russian Alliance	France and Russia	- Balancing against Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy)	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	Moderate
1902-1913	11	Russo-Bulgarian Military Convention	Russian and Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary	- Balancing against Romania; - Détente	- Collective Defense	Failure to abide by tenets.	None
1904–Present	106	Entente Cordial (Revived as the 1947 Pact of Dunkirk)	U.K. and France (BENELUX nations joined under the 1948 Treaty of Brussels and in 1954 to include Germany and Italy)	- Détente	- Multilateral		None
1907-1917	10	Anglo-Russian Entente	England and Russia	- Détente (regarding Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet)	- Multilateral	Diverging Interests	None
1907-1917	10	Triple Entente	Britain, France and Russia	- Balancing against Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy - Bandwagoning (Italy)	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	High
1913-1918	5	Central Powers	German Empire, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire, and Kingdom of Bulgaria	- Balancing against England, France, and Russia	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	High
1919-1945	14	League of Nations	66 Global Member Nations	- Détente	- Collective Security - Multilateral	Failure to abide by tenets. Diverging Interests	High
1919–Present	91	ABC Pact	Brazil, Argentina, and Chile	- Détente - Ideology - Balancing (against USA influence)	- Collective Security - Multilateral		None
1934-1940	6	Balkan Pact	Greece, Turkey, Romania and Yugoslavia	- Détente	- Multilateral	Diverging Interests; Member Defeated	None

Dates of Alliance	Yrs	Name of Alliance	Participants	Formation Rationale	Type Alliance	Dissolution Rationale	Bureaucracy Level *
1939-1941	1	Moscow-Berlin Pact	Russia and Germany	- Détente	- Collective Security	Failure to abide by tenets.	None
1939-1945	6	Allies	USA, UK, Russia, and others	- Balancing against Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan)	- Collective Defense	Lost Threat	High
1939-1945	6	Axis Powers	Germany, Italy and Japan	- Balancing - Bandwagoning	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	High
1945 – Present	65	Arab League	22 Arab Nations	- Ideology	- Multilateral - Collective Security		Moderate
1945 – Present	65	United Nations	192 Global Member Nations	- Détente	- Collective Security - Multilateral	Members failed to abide by tenets	High
1948- Present	62	Organization of American States (OAS) (Includes the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Pact))	Western Hemispheric Nations	- Détente - Balancing (Cold War)	- Collective Defense - Collective Security - Multilateral	Member failed to abide by tenets of Treaty Falklands War.	High
1949- Present	61	NATO	12 (now 28 nations)	- Balancing (against Russia and the Warsaw Pact); - Détente - Ideology (promoting democracy)	- Collective Defense - Collective Security - Multilateral	Lost Threat	High
1951 - Present	59	Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS)	Austrian, New Zealand, USA	- Ideological	- Multilateral	1984: New Zealand withdrew due to diverging interests	None
1953-1955	2	Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation (Balkan Pact of 1953)	Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia	- Balancing against Soviet encroachment	- Collective Defense	Diverging Interests	None
1954-1977	23	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)	Australia, Bangladesh, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, USA and U.K.	- Ideological - Balancing	- Collective Defense *although in actuality it was a Multilateral Alliance (against Communism)	Diverging interests.	Moderate

Dates of Alliance	Yrs	Name of Alliance	Participants	Formation Rationale	Type Alliance	Dissolution Rationale	Bureaucracy Level *
1955-1979	24	Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)	Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the U.K.	- Balancing (Cold War) - Détente	- Collective Security	Member Defeated; Diverging Interests	Moderate
1955-1991	36	Warsaw Pact	Soviet Union, East Europe, and Central Asian nations	- Balancing (for USSR) against Western Europe and the USA (NATO) - Bandwagoning (or other members)	- Collective Defense	Member Defeated	High
1960- Present	50	Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security	Japan and USA	- Détente - Bandwagoning	- Collective Defense – of Japan; Keep Japan from re-arming.		Limited
1971- Present	39	Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA)	U.K. , Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore	- Balancing (economic and defense);	- Collective Defense		None
1982 – Present	28	Regional Security System (RSS)	Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados. St Kitts and Nevis, and Grenada	- Ideology (Democracy); -Détente	- Collective Defense - Multilateral		Moderate
1993- Present	17	European Union	21 European Nations (led by France and Germany)	- Détente - Ideology (promoting political and economic power of European nations)	- Multilateral - Collective Security		High
2001 – Present	9	Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between	China and Russia	- Détente; - Balancing against USA, NATO, EU and Japan	- Collective Security - Multilateral (- implied Collective Defense)		None
2001- Present	9	Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan	- Détente	- Multilateral		Moderate
2002 – Present	8	Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)	Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan	- Détente - Bandwagoning	- Collective Defense - (mildly multilateral)		High
2004 – Present	6	Peace and Security Council	AU Nations	- Détente	- Collective Security		High

Dates of Alliance	Yrs	Name of Alliance	Participants	Formation Rationale	Type Alliance	Dissolution Rationale	Bureaucracy Level *
2008 – Present	2	South American Union	South American Countries	- Balancing (economic-political) - Détente	- Multilateral - Collective Security		Moderate

*** Note: Definitions of Bureaucracy Levels.**

1. None – written agreement only.

2. Limited – Established council(s) (usually Heads of State and Government, or Foreign and Defense Ministers) meet periodically.

3. Moderate – Established Councils, and an organization headquarters that includes permanent staff who conduct the day-to-day business of the Alliance. This includes nations providing resources to support the staff and their operations.

4. High, Established councils, with representatives sitting in permanent session and/or military headquarters and staffs which conduct manage training, planning, and operations for military forces. This includes nations providing resources to support the staff and their operations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colonel Patrick T. Warren was commissioned as an armor officer in the United States Army in 1982. He served in assignments in Germany, Belgium and the continental United States. He commanded armor, cavalry, and infantry units through the brigade level and served on staffs at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. Colonel Warren most recently served as the senior military assistant to NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)/Commander U.S. European Command. While with NATO, he worked to prepare the SACEUR for engagement with key national and international political and military leaders concerning Afghanistan, the Balkans, counter-piracy, counternarcotics, Georgia-Russia and NATO reform. Colonel Warren's operational experience includes service in Kosovo, Operation Iraqi Freedom and strategic level support for NATO's International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan.

Colonel Warren graduated from the United States Military Academy and holds a masters degree in computer science from the Naval Postgraduate School and a masters degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College. His military education includes attendance at the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the US Army War College. He served as a 2009-2010 Army Federal Executive Fellow with the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution.

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