Putting Europe First

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The Bush administration enters office at a time when flash-points around the globe – from the Middle East to Colombia and from the Persian Gulf to the Taiwan Straits – threaten to explode. This contrasts starkly with a Europe that today is relatively quiescent. The violence that bloodied south-eastern Europe throughout much of the 1990s has ended. Slobodan Milosevic, the man most responsible for Europe's recent instability, has been swept from office. Except for isolated pockets like Belarus, democracy is ascendant throughout the continent. America's oldest friends are creating an ever-closer union amongst themselves based on a single currency and a common defence and security policy. And Russia, though still struggling to emerge from decades of disastrous economic and political mismanagement, no longer threatens Europe's stability and security.

As Europe remains quiet and increasingly capable of taking care of itself, the new administration in Washington may be tempted to concentrate American efforts elsewhere around the globe. Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, suggested as much towards the end of last year's presidential campaign. She said that Bush favoured a 'new division of labour' that would leave extended peacekeeping missions in Europe, such as those in the Balkans, to the Europeans so that the United States could focus its energies elsewhere. 'The United States is the only power that can handle a showdown in the Gulf, mount the kind of force that is needed to protect Saudi Arabia and deter a crisis in the Taiwan Straits,' Rice stated.1 Rice's remarks caused quite a stir in Europe, and there were immediate efforts by the Bush campaign to downplay the suggestion of an early withdrawal of US troops from the Balkans,² Since then, Bush, Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell have reaffirmed the US commitment to the Balkans and assured that an American troop withdrawal would be subject to extensive consultations and would not be precipitous.3

Largely missing from the public reactions to Rice's call for a new division of labour was the other side of the proposed division: the idea that the United States alone should bear responsibility for dealing with flash-points in the

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Middle East and Asia. Yet this idea has major drawbacks. Although America today enjoys unrivalled military, economic and political power, it lacks the capacity to deal with many of the critical global challenges – ranging from weapons proliferation and terrorism to environmental degradation and the rapid spread of infectious disease – without support from allies.

There are also fundamental political problems with such an approach. The unilateralism implied by assigning primary responsibility for global security and stability to the United States without support from or regard for the perspective of regional allies and other countries is hardly consistent with the desire, repeatedly emphasised by the incoming team, to exercise American power 'without arrogance and to pursue its interests without hectoring and bluster'.4 At a time when the United States is already regarded by much of the world as an overbearing 'hyperpower', insisting on a division of labour that assigns Washington the main international security role to the exclusion of others is unlikely to be popular among its allies. Such a posture is also unlikely to be popular at home. In recent years, it has become very clear that the American public will support the use of US military forces overseas only if other countries share the burden. This is not only in the case of so-called humanitarian interventions, but also when it involves the defence of such vital national interests as the world's supply of crude oil. In either case, international legitimacy of action and a commitment by other nations to share the costs will be a political prerequisite for gaining public support.

Despite Europe's internal weaknesses and divisions, no part of the world offers the United States a better prospect for becoming a strong partner in taking on global challenges and opportunities. Europe combines actual economic strength with potential military and diplomatic capacity to be America's strategic partner, if not today, then tomorrow. And rather than assigning Europe a limited, albeit still important role, of handling its own affairs in ways that do not require US participation, as the new division of labour suggests, American interests are best served by developing a genuine partnership with a Europe that is both capable and willing to share the burdens of maintaining and strengthening international security.

Regardless of pressing developments in other parts of the world, the United States cannot afford to ignore Europe. The Bush administration appears to recognise this, notwithstanding the rhetoric about a new division of labour. Candidate Bush and incoming policy-makers consistently pointed to the need for strengthening US alliances as one of the first items of business, reflecting at least a concern for maintaining America's strong bonds within NATO.⁵ Even more importantly, the many Europe-related issues requiring decisions in the near-future – including NATO enlargement, the future of Europe's defence policy, national missile defence, US troops in the Balkans and relations with Russia – will make it impossible for the new administration to ignore Europe.

The question for the new administration, therefore, is not whether Europe still matters, but rather, what should be America's strategy for addressing the array of issues on the European agenda. These issues, and the US approach to

them, will determine the nature and depth of the US-European relationship. Some, including many in the Bush administration, will argue that a strategy based on American leadership in NATO will be needed for the years ahead. They will contend that the main problems facing US-European relations are the result of recent efforts to dilute NATO and thereby undermine the main vehicle for realising America's continued strategic interests in Europe. Others are more concerned that developments in Russia will determine Europe's future, and they accordingly counsel a policy that gives Moscow's interests and perspective a critical role in resolving the issues on the European agenda.

Neither a NATO-first nor a Russia-first policy towards Europe will best serve American interests, however. A strong NATO and amicable relations with Russia are, of course, important. But they are means to a desired end, not ends in themselves. The end is a strong Europe that is capable of being a strategic partner of the United States in meeting the multitude of global challenges. The means to that end is a Europe that is at peace, undivided and democratic; that is, a Europe that no longer requires intensive American involvement to secure its future and, instead, is able and willing to involve itself in world affairs politically, economically, and, if necessary, militarily. Such a Europe requires that the new administration continue where the Clinton administration left off, which is by pursuing a strategy towards the region that puts Europe – not NATO or Russia – first.

The Agenda for Europe

The Bush administration faces a full European agenda and a pressing calendar of events. Existing commitments by the United States, NATO, the EU and individual European states will force an early inter-agency review and timely resolution of five key issues:

NATO enlargement

At NATO's fiftieth anniversary gathering in April 1999, the 19 members agreed to hold another summit no later than 2002 to review the progress made by the nine countries that have formally applied for membership.⁶ These nine countries expect that they will be invited to join if they have fulfilled the criteria. When Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined the alliance in March 1999, NATO promised that membership would be open to other European states as well. The 2002 summit will provide a real (and possibly final) test for this much-touted US and NATO policy of an 'open door' for new members. Key members of the Bush foreign policy team, including Condoleezza Rice, have expressed concern in the past that if NATO expands too quickly into Central and Eastern Europe, it will be unable to function as an effective and coherent military alliance.7 Others, including Rice's deputy, Stephen Hadley, are firmly committed to enlargement.8 What is clear is that Washington's attitude will be key: without clear and enthusiastic American support and leadership, there will be no further NATO enlargement. In order to shepherd a policy through the alliance before the summit, the Bush administration will have to decide by the end of 2001 which approach it will take.

European Security and Defence Policy

The EU has ambitiously set 2003 as a target date for achieving a European defence capability that would allow deployment of 60,000 troops within two months for up to one year. After some initial hesitation and concern that this plan might decouple US and European security, entail a costly duplication of NATO efforts, and could discriminate against non-EU members of NATO, the Clinton administration embraced the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as an appropriate way of strengthening Europe's capacity for military action.9 Opinions in the new administration are mixed. Many fear that European efforts to build a real ESDP will come at the expense of contributions to NATO - or duplicate alliance structures and capabilities that already exist. At worst, in this view, the EU could emerge not as a strengthened part of NATO, but as a competitor of the one European institution in which the United States remains dominant. Others see benefits of the European effort. If it leads to enhanced military capacity - even if only for crisis management and peacekeeping purposes – it will invariably help to relieve some of the burden from an American military that many Republicans in particular believe to be overstretched. Moreover, for many in Washington, the problem is not so much Europe's desired military strength as its actual weakness - which, as the Kosovo war dramatically underscored, leaves the United States with the choice of seeing nothing done or having to take on the military task largely on its own.

National Missile Defense

Never comfortable with the idea of deploying defences against ballistic missile attacks, and given the state of the existing technology, President Clinton deferred a decision on deploying NMD to his successor.¹⁰ But even if the technology remains uncertain, the Bush administration will have to decide the issue early in its tenure in order to be in a position to deploy even a limited system by 2006-07, by which time a state like North Korea or Iraq could possess the capability to conduct a small-scale missile attack. Top officials have suggested that the administration will decide to proceed with deployment, but that still leaves the president to decide what kind of system to deploy and how to deal with the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which bars the deployment of any system he might favour. Rice has called the ABM Treaty a 'relic' of the Cold War and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has dismissed it as 'ancient history'. 11 Much of Europe, meanwhile, has been nervous about being left out of a deployment decision, about Russia's adverse reaction, about the consequences for multilateral efforts to stem weapons proliferation, and about a scenario in which America can defend itself but not its allies from missile attacks. 12 In addition to avoiding a serious rift in the alliance, there is also a more practical need to garner some European support for an American missile defence programme: a serious system will require upgrading radars in Greenland and the United Kingdom, which means that, at the very least, officials in Copenhagen and London will have to back the effort.

The Balkans

During the presidential campaign, European countries grew uneasy when then-Governor Bush implied that the United States was doing all the work keeping the peace in Kosovo, and that under his administration, Washington would turn operations there over to the Europeans. With the resultant hue and cry, the Bush foreign policy team assured NATO allies that it would consult them before taking any action. Yet the main problem with these remarks (apart from what they suggested about the Bush administration's mindset) is that they likely will feed Congressional pressure to get Americans out. The United States Congress already tried in 2000 to set a target date for American withdrawal, and while candidate Bush opposed this effort, he objected not on policy grounds but because the move would tie a new president's hands. Many rank-and-file Republicans will grow restless regarding the continuing American presence in Balkans peacekeeping missions and will renew their pressure for a pullout. Again, the administration will not have much time before it has to decide the importance of a continued US deployment.

Russia

When the Soviet Union broke apart, many in the West hoped that Russia would succeed in building a market democracy and in joining the West. President Boris Yeltsin was in most respects pro-Western, and despite misgivings, he went along with the NATO deployment in Bosnia, the enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance to include former Warsaw Pact states, and even with the endgame to the war in Kosovo. Russia succeeded in building an electoral democracy, but not one in which the rule of law and freedom of expression were deeply established. And while the command economy was dismantled, a functioning market economy did not flourish. The Bush team was critical of the Clinton-Gore policy towards Russia during the campaign, but it did not lay out an alternative approach, other than to say it would not encourage further International Monetary Fund assistance (which has not been provided since 1998 in any event) and that it would not be as obsessed as President Clinton allegedly was with Russia's internal transformation. Given President Vladimir Putin's more carefree approach towards democratic institutions than Yeltsin (who himself fired on the Russian parliament when he felt it was necessary), there could be the beginnings of an American effort to disengage from Russia, at least with respect to attempts to include Moscow in building the new Europe. How the administration decides to proceed with NATO enlargement and missile defence will have a profound effect on US-Russian relations and on whether Russia can truly become integrated into European affairs. And how the United States gauges the importance of Russia may in turn affect how it decides to proceed on enlargement and NMD.

Addressing the European Agenda

Given the multitude of other demands that the Bush foreign-policy team will face, the natural temptation will be to address each issue in turn as the need for a decision arises. Yet decisions on one set of issues, say NATO enlargement and NMD, will invariably affect other issues; for example, Russia and a separate European defence capability. Even if these issues are addressed sequentially when the need arises, it is vital that the Bush administration have some sense of how they fit with other US goals for Europe. In this regard, there are at least three different strategies for addressing the large and complex European agenda – one that aims to strengthen NATO; another to encourage Russia to continue its democratic and economic transformation; and a third that seeks to build a Europe that is peaceful, undivided and democratic.

If past statements are any guide, the Bush administration is likely to address the European agenda from the perspective of putting NATO first. As Powell declared at his confirmation hearings, NATO 'is the bedrock of our relationship with Europe. It is sacrosanct. Weaken NATO, and you weaken Europe, which weakens America'. 13 From this perspective, the most important agenda item in Europe is maintaining and strengthening a NATO whose primary function would be to serve as a military alliance against threats to member states. Putting NATO first would likely mean discouraging European efforts to develop an independent defence capability. It could also imply closing to door to further NATO enlargement on the grounds that additional members would further dilute the alliance's capacity to function effectively in a crisis or war – or at least limiting enlargement to those countries that would contribute militarily, geographically or strategically. The approach suggests a downgrading of the Russian presence at NATO provided for by the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, an agreement that key Republicans derided for letting Moscow participate in a way that would allow it to create havoc for NATO decision-making.¹⁴ And it would mean that efforts to build missile defences would seek to embrace the NATO allies, by making clear that any defence system would seek to defend them as well as the United States.

A second strategy would be to put Russia first. The argument here (which has been put forward in the 1990s by Democrats on Capitol Hill as well as by many academics, especially Russia specialists) is that only Russia can pose a real threat to America's core interests in Europe. Without question, problems can arise in the Balkans or the Caucasus, but Russia, with its large nuclear arsenal, is the country that matters most. Putting Russia first would mean accepting some notion of a Russian sphere of influence, especially in regions formerly part of the Soviet Union, and thus eschewing NATO enlargement into the Baltic region. Indeed, NATO enlargement as a whole would have to be put on the backburner, given that the purported gains of inviting new members are outweighed by the damage that does to relations with Moscow. It could also mean not going forward with national missile defence, or perhaps only doing so jointly with Moscow or when the threat environment leaves no other choice. In short, this approach suggests, as does a recent report from the Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace, the need for 'placing a significant value on the US–Russian relationship and not sacrificing it for the sake of special issues that arise, based on a misguided assumption that Russia will always end up falling into line no matter what the United States does'.¹⁵

Although the Bush administration is unlikely to make many of its foreign-policy decisions with an eye to Moscow's reaction, it is possible that the administration will nevertheless place Russia at the centre of its European policy. Thus, the strengthening of NATO – to include its strategic enlargement – could be explained in part by the need to hedge against an uncertain future *vis-à-vis* Russia. National missile defence, while deemed necessary to deal with the threat of missile proliferation, could also be justified as a useful insurance against an accidental or unauthorised missile attack from Russia. And, more positively, if Russia desires to play a constructive role in the Balkans – which is, after all, of greater strategic significance to Moscow than to Washington – then it could be argued that the United States should not stand in its way. (This sentiment helps explain the view of some Bush administration officials that the United States and NATO should never have intervened in the region, and that doing so needlessly aggravated relations with Russia, which had legitimate reasons to object.)

The Clinton administration pursued a third approach, different in ways that are subtle but also important, of putting Europe first. The goal of this approach was to build what President Clinton called a 'peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe', or, as former President Bush called it, a 'Europe whole and free'. ¹⁷ The principal means to that end has been a strategy of enlargement – not just the institutional enlargement of NATO and the EU, but a broader strategy designed to extend the security and stability Western Europe has long enjoyed to the rest of the continent. ¹⁸ The Clinton administration's Europe-first strategy contained four major elements:

- promoting a stronger European Union to share the burden of assisting central and eastern European countries to make the transition from authoritarian command economies to market democracies;
- transforming NATO into the primary security institution for all of Europe by adapting its purpose to ensure Europe's overall security and opening its doors to new members;
- · engaging Russia as a key partner in building the new Europe; and
- bringing peace and stability to areas of Europe, particularly the Balkans, in which violence and insecurity persisted.

From a US perspective, a peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe is a means to a larger end, not just an end in itself. For only in a Europe that is at peace, where divisions have been overcome and democracy has triumphed, will it be possible for the major European powers, working together in an expanded European Union, to bring their full weight to bear outside the geographical confines of Europe. Only in such a Europe, in other words, is

Washington likely to have the strong and full partner it seeks for addressing the myriad of opportunities and challenges that exist in the current age of globalisation.

Putting Europe First

Of these three approaches, putting Europe first is the most appropriate strategy for advancing the full range of American interests. Although putting NATO first has the potential to enhance American leadership and perhaps to strengthen relationships with key European allies, it would do so at a cost to other important goals, including the promotion of a stronger Europe more capable and willing to share the burdens of European and international security. A NATO-centred approach, especially one that emphasises NATO's traditional strengths and purposes, is also likely to complicate needlessly relations with a Russia that still views the alliance as a potential threat to its interests. And, while a Russia-first strategy appropriately calls attention to the importance of dealing with the residual nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction capabilities that remain from Soviet days, the approach elevates US–Russian relations at the expense of other important American interests in Europe.

By contrast, a strategy that puts Europe first serves American interests in two fundamental ways. First, an undivided Europe that is democratic and prosperous is unlikely to be the source of instability, conflict and war that marked most of the twentieth century, wars that kept the United States engaged at great cost and sacrifice. While great progress has been made, there are still pockets of instability and potential conflict that threaten escalation to a wider conflagration. These include not only Bosnia and Kosovo, but also relations between Greece and Turkey, turmoil in the Caucasus and lingering suspicions between the Baltic countries and Russia.

Second, a strong Europe at peace with itself is more likely to be a full and capable partner of the United States in addressing the many challenges and opportunities around the world. A democratic Europe shares America's values and interests. A prosperous Europe has the economic and military capability to be a more equal partner with the United States – both in Europe and beyond. And a Europe that includes Russia will have finally settled a long-standing Western security concern, thus enabling it to shift its focus and attention from the narrow confines of Europe to broader concerns internationally. The Bush administration should therefore embrace the European policy framework set out by its predecessors. In so doing, it should be guided by five policy precepts:

Promote a stronger Europe

The United States has long been an ambivalent supporter of European integration efforts. While a stronger Europe would offer the potential of more equitable burden-sharing, it would also be more able and willing to take an independent – or even competitive – stance on issues of importance to Washington. As a result, while successive administrations adopted outwardly supportive policies towards European efforts to enhance their cooperation and

unity, they have often expressed quiet concern when such efforts threatened to undermine America's leadership role. Nowhere has this ambivalence been more apparent than in the defence and security sphere. As the main provider and guarantor of Europe's security for more than a half century, Washington has consistently urged its European allies to do more. But it has just as consistently warned them not to do so in ways that challenged NATO or in any other way weakened alliance unity (and, implicitly, Washington's uniquely leading role within the organisation).

While this ambivalent attitude was understandable at a time when European security was precarious, it is less so now that the major threat to NATO members and indeed, much of the rest of Europe, has all but disappeared. NATO still performs unique functions. But there is now clearly also scope for a larger security role by strictly European organisations, such as the European Union. Indeed, the first post-Cold War decade has demonstrated to many Europeans that continued reliance on the United States for security in Europe can have significant costs. For example, Washington may decide, as it did for more than three years in regard to Bosnia, that its interests are not affected by what happens in the region, even though these developments do affect European interests. Conversely, Washington's military pre-eminence can translate into strategies for using force – for example, relying solely on airpower during the Kosovo war and eschewing a possible ground campaign – that its European allies must follow regardless of their own strategic preferences.

Against this background, it is not surprising that European countries have sought to enhance their capacity for autonomous action in the defence realm, notably by committing to deploy a 60,000-strong rapid-reaction force. At least for some European countries, including notably the UK, the impetus for this EU-based effort was not to create an alternative to NATO, but to have independent options available if, for whatever reason, the United States decides not to take part in a security operation that these countries regard as important. Moreover, even if Washington decided to participate, added military capability ought to give Europe a larger voice at the military and strategy table.

The Clinton administration initially reacted with traditional American wariness towards the idea that the European Union, of all organisations, should, in the words of the Anglo-French statement that launched the effort, 'have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises'. Washington believed that this effort, while welcome as a means to enhance Europe's contribution to the common defence, also posed potential risks, which Secretary of State Madeleine Albright summed up as the three 'Ds': that it could *decouple* Europe's security from that of the United States, *duplicate* what NATO already does in a costly and ineffective way, and *discriminate*, notably against European NATO allies that were not EU members. While the Clinton administration subsequently welcomed the initiative as a useful complement to NATO, key officials within

and outside the administration remained extremely wary of the possibility that a European defence effort would supplant rather than supplement alliance efforts. Thus, Defense Secretary William Cohen used his last meeting with his NATO colleagues to warn that if the EU initiatives were not pursued carefully, NATO could become 'a relic of the past'. Two key Republican Senators echoed the sentiment that ESDP risked 'undermining – even destroying – the NATO Alliance'.²¹

It is likely that the incoming administration will share many of its predecessor's doubts about these European defence efforts.²² These doubts, however, are misguided. The United States should show clear support for ESDP for two main reasons. First, as Condoleezza Rice has rightly argued, 'the greater danger is that European militaries will not do enough, not that they'll do too much'. 23 Anything that improves Europe's capacity to act, especially in the military sphere, should therefore be welcomed. As for fears that a stronger Europe would also be a more independent Europe, that is likely to be true, but ought not to concern the United States too much. On the major issues, the United States and Europe will probably see eye-to-eye, while in any situation demanding the use of significant military force, European governments will want Washington's full participation. Finally, most European allies will remain committed to sound transatlantic relations and will successfully oppose the presumed efforts of countries like France to weaken that relationship. Washington would do well, therefore, to trust London, Berlin, the Hague, Copenhagen and others to ensure that ESDP evolves in ways that are consistent with NATO's continued importance.

Another reason for supporting the recent European defence efforts is that a future US-European strategic partnership depends on ESDP's success. Only a stronger Europe can share with the US the burden of maintaining international order. A more capable Europe will invariably have a greater voice in decision-making councils – be it NATO or elsewhere – and this greater influence implies that Washington may well find itself more often on the losing side of an argument. However, this is a price that the US should be willing to pay for having partners that are better able to stand together in meeting global challenges.

Transform NATO

NATO cannot justify its existence to either Europeans or Americans if it serves merely as a military alliance against external threats. Defending the member states is a relatively easy task, and Europeans in particular will not feel any urgent need to provide more funds for this purpose. In July 1990, NATO began the effort to transform itself into a more political organisation whose purpose it increasingly was to export security and stability to central and eastern Europe. The means to that end were two-fold: first, by shifting the primary military mission from territorial defence of its members to ensuring all of Europe's security; and, second, by opening membership to any interested European country so as to entice those that desired to join to make the difficult political,

economic and military choices required to become full partners in the community of market democracies. It is important to recognise that NATO is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. And that end should be the elimination of interstate war in Europe, *not* the preservation of NATO's Cold War form and function. Enlargement of the alliance to include all European states that meet membership criteria will help NATO meet this task.

The evolution of NATO's mission from territorial defence to ensuring security throughout Europe was completed in 1999 with the adoption of the new Alliance Strategic Concept. At the fiftieth anniversary summit in Washington, the allies agreed that since 'the Alliance has striven since its inception to secure a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe', which could be 'put at risk by crisis and conflict affecting the security of the Euro–Atlantic area', the purpose of NATO was now to 'contribute to peace and stability in this region'. This formal commitment codified what had already become a practical reality: since 1995, NATO's primary focus, if not its main mission, has been to stabilise the Balkans, the one area in Europe in which neither peace nor stability prevailed. Increasingly, NATO has come to regard threats to peace and stability anywhere in Europe as issues of direct interest to the alliance, and even possible reasons for intervention, especially since no other security organisation (be it the UN or the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) has proven capable of doing so.

Although the incoming administration may be inclined to turn the clock back and emphasise NATO's original mission as a defensive alliance, it is likely to find few takers in Europe. Certainly, for most European allies, collective defence remains a fundamental purpose of the alliance; however, its contribution to overall European security is now generally regarded as NATO's primary purpose. This is underscored by NATO's involvement in the Balkans, which today is the main concern of diplomatic and military leaders in Brussels. NATO conducted the first offensive operations in its history in Bosnia in 1995, and it went to war for the first time in Kosovo in 1999. Today, nearly 75,000 NATO troops are deployed in south-eastern Europe, where their presence is a fundamental source of stability and hope for the peoples of that region. These operations are likely to be the alliance's future, whereas standing guard to defend allied territory is clearly a mission of the past.

Enlargement is the second main element of NATO's transformation. Contrary to the views of some supporters and opponents, enlargement is not primarily about enhancing defence by adding new members, nor is it primarily designed to hedge against the possibility of Russia's re-emergence as a threat. Enlargement's main goal is to extend the zone of stability and security further east by providing states in the region with an incentive to undertake the political, economic and military transitions necessary to become a part of the European mainstream of market democracies.

Those who oppose enlargement should not underestimate what the prospect of membership in leading Western institutions has already accomplished. Poland's military was not eager to allow Western-style civilian

control and transparency, but it had no choice if it wished to join NATO. Hungary could not afford to hang on to territorial claims against Romania, and Romania could not afford to mistreat its Hungarian minority. The Baltic states have had to satisfy Western human-rights concerns regarding their Russian-speaking populations. In general, governments have had to make some painful economic, military and political choices to stay in line for EU and NATO membership. If the door closes, many of these governments could have a hard time containing anti-Western sentiment among their populations.

This does not mean that NATO should rush its enlargement process, but rather that it should stick to the open-door approach it enunciated in the first round of post-Cold War enlargement. It should be recognised that the 1949 Washington Treaty that established the alliance embodied this approach. Article 10 allowed that any European state could be invited to join, provided that it could contribute to alliance security and further alliance principles. This is the approach that NATO reaffirmed at its fiftieth anniversary summit when it established a membership action plan, which committed NATO to meet frequently with each prospective member to review that country's progress in fulfilling the membership criteria. And it was to review that progress that NATO announced it would hold its 2002 summit.²⁵

In deciding the next step, NATO cannot let Russia dictate which European countries can or cannot join. That would merely embolden Russia to reassert a sphere of influence that should no longer have a place in European affairs. It would also send the wrong signal as to what NATO and the new Europe are all about.

But neither should NATO move precipitously. One approach discussed in 2000 in Washington, Brussels and in central and eastern Europe was dubbed the 'Big Bang'. 26 The aim was to get around the fact that each round of NATO enlargement was tortuous, with no certainty for unsuccessful countries that the process would even continue. The idea of the 'Big Bang' was that NATO should simply admit all nine of the aspirant countries, or at least Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (leaving aside Macedonia and Albania). But if NATO does not stick to rigorous standards regarding the ability of each candidate to contribute to alliance security and to further core democratic and market principles, then it will severely undermine its credibility (and will likely lead the US Senate to reject the ratification). It will mean that any leverage to ensure that countries make tough choices at home will be lost. And finally, a Big Bang approach will make it clear that Ukraine and Russia are not part of this process. Neither country has applied to be a NATO member, but inviting all of the aspirants in at one time will end the process, as its proponents hope. In Ukraine's case, ambiguity regarding its future relationship with NATO is useful in its relationship with Russia; and in Russia's case, the insistence by NATO that the door is open potentially even to Moscow has important, if largely symbolic, value.

Enlargement should be a step-by-step process in which the possibility of membership for all European countries remains open. Any country that wants

to join and is demonstrably ready to do so should be allowed entry – no sooner, and no later. If by 2002 only Slovenia is ready, it should be invited to join, a step NATO could and should have taken in 1999.²⁷ If Lithuania is also ready, then it should be invited in, recognising that this step is painful for Russia to contemplate. Recognising Russia's 'pain' and its interests in Kaliningrad is not the same, however, as letting Russia prevent any Baltic country from choosing its alliances.²⁸ This right fundamentally underpins the Helsinki process, as Mikhail Gorbachev conceded in 1990 during talks about German unification.

Engage Russia

A Europe without Russia cannot be peaceful, undivided and democratic. If Russia remains on the outside, it will be a destabilising presence for the Baltic countries, for Ukraine and the Caucasus and for Western interests in central and south-eastern Europe. It follows that the United States and Europe have much to gain by engaging Russia as a partner in building the new Europe rather than as a potential adversary. Success in this will depend primarily on what Moscow does and wants, but also, at least in part, on how Washington in particular deals with Russia as it struggles to emerge from its past.

Throughout President Putin's first year in office, which included numerous meetings with Western European counterparts, he reaffirmed his desire for Russia to be part of Europe.²⁹ The problem for Putin's Russia is that Europe is about something more than geography; it is also a set of values. For him to believe that Western leaders will be willing to do business with him regardless of Russia's internal evolution would be a misreading of Europe.

It will be important for the West to ensure that new divisions caused by the enlargement of both the EU and NATO do not become onerous. While those Baltic nations that meet NATO criteria should be allowed to enter the alliance, NATO should take steps to reassure Moscow that the alliance poses no threat to Russian security. At the very least, NATO should encourage the Russians to help make the Permanent Joint Council, provided for by the NATO–Russian Founding Act, truly serve as a consultative body for areas of common interest, particularly to combat the threats of terrorism and weapon proliferation. The council has been hindered because many in NATO are still suspicious of Russia's willingness to cooperate, and because Russia has feared that cooperating on particular issues in the Permanent Joint Council will give the North Atlantic Council a green light to act even if Russia is not on board.

Over the medium term, if Russia can stay on a democratic path (and if it can find a political solution to its war on Chechnya), then NATO will need to go beyond the Founding Act. From the very start of the enlargement process in the early 1990s, Washington has been careful to hold open the possibility of Russian membership of NATO, while of course realising that full membership would be well down the road. Yet, unlike smaller European states, which join NATO in part for its Article 5 security guarantee, Russia can settle for less than full membership, at least for an interim period. Like the EU, which assigns members associate status as a way-station along the road to membership,

NATO could create some kind of associate membership status for Russia. Negotiating such a status for a Russia that is seen as sharing the values underpinning NATO could be a good target for the next 5–10 years. If Russia succeeds in joining the Western mainstream as the decade goes on, it should have a place within NATO beyond the 'voice' provided by the Founding Act.³⁰

The Bush administration should not base its policy on the assumption that its relationship with Russia does not depend on Russia's internal transformation or that Russia is inevitably a power that has to be contained in Europe or even that Russia is still *the* great power in Europe. Russia's internal transformation is crucial for any US effort to make Moscow a partner in the new Europe, or even to address the immediate issues on the nuclear-weapons agenda. It was Russia's internal transformation after 1985 that made the end of the Cold War possible in the first place. A democratic Russia is the West's best hope for a cooperative relationship.

Moscow's interests will not always coincide with those of America or of the Western European powers. Its geographic stretch to the Pacific Ocean will always make it different from other European countries. However, it does share interests with the West, and can only succeed economically by fully joining the European mainstream (which means, for example, becoming a member of the World Trade Organisation). Its success will depend, in large part, not only on the political and economic structures it adopts internally but also on its ability finally to adjust to its loss in status. Its model should be Britain after the Second World War, not Soviet Russia or Weimar Germany after the First World War. The United States and Europe can help by providing a meaningful place for Russia in Europe, if it chooses to belong.

Enhance peace and stability in the Balkans

American engagement in the Balkans has been the core of a strategy that put Europe first. So long as violence engulfed the region and ethnic divisions characterised communities at every level, and so long as authoritarian rule persisted, the Balkans were a central concern for those committed to the new Europe. The reasons were both intrinsic to what was happening in the region – where violence was of a scale and brutality that Europe had not witnessed since the Second World War – and tied to broader considerations, not least the negative impact on US–European relations more generally. Indeed, key elements of America's European policy – including efforts to transform NATO by updating its missions and enlarging its membership and to engage Russia as a potential partner – were held hostage to events in Bosnia in the first part of the 1990s.

The Clinton administration eventually concluded that not only could a peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe not be built while a significant part of the continent was mired in conflict, but that efforts to resolve that conflict could have a profoundly positive effect on the broader strategy of building the new Europe.³¹ Getting NATO fully involved in Bosnia and reasserting American leadership of the diplomatic process proved crucial to ending the Bosnian war and halting the brutal Serb oppression in Kosovo.³²

Ending violence in the region proved equally important for revitalising and transforming NATO into the organisation best able to secure Europe's future. Active and deliberate involvement of Russia in the diplomatic and peacekeeping aspects in the region also proved important, both in mitigating some negative effects of NATO's interventions in the Balkans and in shaping a new NATO-Russian relationship that, at a minimum, secured Moscow's acquiescence in NATO's enlargement.

The 1990s have demonstrated that there can be no substitute for NATO and American engagement in the Balkans. It would be a profound mistake to believe that the positive developments throughout the region – which include not only ending two brutal wars, but the emergence of democratically elected regimes in every country in the region – can be sustained without a continued American role. Current conditions in the Balkans are no accident; they are the product of deliberate choice. And while the resulting policies were partly informed by humanitarian concern about the deplorable conditions in the warravaged countries, they also reflected the American interests in Europe.

It follows that the United States should remain fully engaged in the Balkans: diplomatically, economically and militarily, for as long as an international presence is required. Continued American military engagement is necessary to sustain the international effort, including NATO's indispensable role in maintaining peace and stability. A long-term military presence to promote stability is nothing alien to American policymakers – the United States has long-standing military commitments all over the world, from the Sinai and the Persian Gulf to Korea and Japan. The military presence in the Balkans is similarly an integral part of the US commitment to Europe. Most Europeans would view any move to withdraw American troops as an indication that this commitment was weakening.

At the same time, however, the Balkans is clearly an area of more fundamental interest to America's European allies than to Washington. This difference is, quite properly, reflected in their respective contributions to the region - with Europe deploying nearly 80% of the military forces and funding almost 90% of the financial and economic assistance. But it also needs to be reflected in the relative diplomatic burden, where the United States continues to play the leadership role, reflecting Washington's belief that European efforts in the early 1990s to resolve the Balkan conflicts on their own were a spectacular failure (although, in truth, this was due in part to the United States offering advice without much material support) and that concerted American leadership was necessary to end the Bosnian war. But with democratic leaderships in power throughout the region, and the key challenges confronting the Balkan states primarily economic rather than security-related, a continued insistence that Washington must lead diplomatically, even though Europe pays the bill and provides most of the troops, is no longer sustainable. And while the European Union and its members have yet to forge a coherent strategy for helping to integrate the region into the European mainstream, they have had little incentive to do so as long as the United States insisted on leading the diplomatic charge.

In short, the United States should remain engaged in the region, including by deploying a small percentage of the military force in Bosnia and Kosovo so long as a security presence is required. But Washington's overall posture should be one of supporting rather than leading the EU effort. Rebuilding societies in the Western image – by promoting democracy, multi-ethnicity, and market economies – is best left to those countries in Europe most immediately affected by what goes on in the region. The Balkans should occupy a place on the margins, rather than at the centre, of American foreign policy.

Proceed with care on National Missile Defense

The ability of the Bush administration to pursue many of its European policy objectives will hinge on its approach to ballistic missile defences. At all levels, the new administration has made it clear that deployment will proceed; the only question is what kind of system and when. Handled in ways that are responsive to the concerns of others, the deployment of missile defences can enhance security. But a decision to proceed without regard for the views of others could cause grave damage to relations, and even weaken US security.

Since the issue of missile defence returned to the transatlantic agenda in the late 1990s, Europeans have voiced various concerns about possible deployment. Three stand out. First, even those Europeans who accept that states like North Korea, Iran, or Iraq may in the future deploy ballistic missiles capable of threatening the United States worry that the deployment of limited defences could weaken the transatlantic security link that is the foundation of NATO. Second, many in Europe believe that a rush to deploy missile defences will further weaken non-proliferation efforts by substituting unilateral response to the developing threat for coordinated, multilateral action designed to prevent the acquisition of missiles and weapons of mass destruction. Third, and most important, nearly every European government fears that if Washington proceeds with deployment by withdrawing from the ABM Treaty rather than negotiating the treaty's modification, relations with Moscow will suffer significantly and thus undermine efforts to build the new Europe.

The Bush administration should recognise that these European concerns are real and not easily dismissed. It is not enough to pay lip-service to these worries, or to engage in an intensive round of consultations, only to proceed with deployment as planned. The nature of any deployment, as well as the manner in which to proceed, must be discussed within NATO and with Russia in an effort to forge a compromise strategy. Even if these discussions fail to produce complete agreement, it is vital that the administration demonstrate a commitment to trying to get the allies and Russia on board. Ignoring their concerns completely is certain to cause a major transatlantic row that will undermine much of what has been achieved to date.

Fortunately, it should be possible to proceed with missile defences in ways that minimise these frictions.³³ America should make clear that the explicit purpose of missile defences is to provide the United States and its NATO partners with a measure of insurance against a small-scale missile attack rather than to provide them with perfect protection; that a decision to deploy defences

will be embedded in a broader non-proliferation strategy; and that Washington will commit to modifications in the ABM Treaty and other arms control ideas that meet Moscow's primary concerns about the continued viability of its dwindling offensive nuclear capacity.

Given the current state of technology, the only real purpose of deploying missile defences is to provide a measure of insurance in an uncertain world. In particular, Washington must abandon any thought of building defences to protect the United States against a putative Chinese missile attack. Not only is today's conceivable technology not up to the task, but a defence against China implies building a system of a size and scope that is far above what would be required to deal with the missile threat from states like North Korea, Iran, or Iraq. As an insurance against such a limited threat, defences will replace neither offences nor deterrence. At most, a defensive system can bolster deterrence by giving an extra measure of protection and thereby enhance the credibility of retaliatory threats.

Second, missile defences are just one among a range of tools to deal with the proliferation of advanced technologies. US and European non-proliferation efforts involve action on three different levels: actions to prevent countries from acquiring technologies; steps to persuade countries that have acquired the technologies to give them up; and efforts to manage situations in which countries possess advanced weapons technologies. Missile defence deployments are most appropriate at the final stage, when the objective is to manage the consequences of proliferation. They may also provide an incentive for proliferators to give up the capabilities that have been acquired. But it would be folly to put all of one's non-proliferation eggs in the missile defence basket on the incorrect assumption that acquisition is a foregone conclusion. It is not. The weapons-proliferation problem is geographically and strategically constrained, involving only a handful of countries in the Middle East, South Asia and North-east Asia. In other parts of the world, proliferation rollback efforts have also proved effective, including the dismantlement of nuclearweapons programmes in Ukraine and South Africa, as well as of missile programmes in Argentina and Brazil. It may well be necessary - and even prudent - to complement non-proliferation and rollback efforts with the deployment of defences, but the latter cannot substitute for the former. Any attempt to do so, moreover, would constitute another source of transatlantic friction, for the European allies remain fully committed to pursuing the full spectrum of non-proliferation efforts.

Third, while Moscow remains firmly opposed to major changes in the ABM Treaty, it appears committed to intensifying the strategic dialogue with the new administration in an effort to reach an acceptable compromise.³⁴ A US–Russia compromise on this issue will not be easy, but it is crucial that Washington makes the attempt, in order to retain European support for the effort. The critical element of any negotiation to modify the ABM Treaty must be to seek changes that accept the treaty's three cardinal prohibitions: banning the deployment of strategically significant missile defences (implying the need to limit the number and deployment location of interceptors); preventing the

possibility of a rapid break-out from treaty constraints (making necessary strict limits on the kind and number of sensors that can be developed and deployed); and averting the circumvention of agreed limits (suggesting the importance of limiting the capabilities of anti-satellite and other non-missile defensive systems). Given the limited purpose of deploying missile defences, it should be possible to devise treaty amendments that allow for deployment of limited systems within these parameters, for example, by constraining the number of land-based interceptors that can be deployed and agreeing to a ban on space-based weaponry.

No European country is enthusiastic about the possible deployment of missile defences, and a headlong rush to deployment is bound to create a major crisis within NATO. But a carefully crafted strategy designed to meet key European and Russian concerns can mitigate the negative fallout. Europe will have to accept that deployment of a limited defence is necessary. Russia will have to agree to modify the ABM Treaty in ways that loosen constraints on deployment while still retaining the core prohibitions of the treaty, or else accept that the United States withdraws from the treaty. And the United States will have to acknowledge that missile defences will not provide the absolute protection its advocates have long sought, but instead fulfil the more limited, yet still useful purpose of providing some protection against small-scale attacks.

Conclusion

Europe today is more peaceful, less divided and more democratic than at any time in the modern era. This is not an accident, but the outcome of deliberate policy. The US role in this effort was crucial. For more than 50 years, the United States has pursued a policy toward Europe that aimed at strengthening the democratic core – first in the West and, once the Berlin Wall came down, in the East. The immediate challenge is to ensure that the process started at the end of the Cold War will be brought to fruition, so that a peaceful, undivided, and democratic Europe, stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals (and beyond), will finally have been created. That implies clear policy choices: Washington should fully support the development of a strong Europe; NATO enlargement must continue; Russia cannot be left to its own devices but must be encouraged into a cooperative partnership; some American troops will have to remain in the Balkans for quite some time; and the United States should proceed with deliberate care in deploying limited missile defences.

Although success in building a peaceful, undivided, and democratic Europe would be a historic achievement in itself, it is important to remember that, for the United States, such a Europe is a means to a larger end. Such a Europe would require less American presence and investment than has been the case for over a century. More importantly, a strong Europe would be the best possible partner of the United States in dealing with the myriad of global challenges and opportunities. That strategic partnership, rather than a 'new division of labour', should be the fundamental goal of America's European policy in the twenty-first century.

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