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## Preface

Andres Kasekamp

During the past year the two major goals of Estonian foreign policy – joining NATO and the EU – have been achieved. In 2003 accession treaties with both NATO and the EU were signed and a referendum was held in which the Estonian people approved EU membership. Formal membership of both organisations will be achieved by 1 May 2004.

However, the NATO and EU that Estonia will be joining are both in the midst of transforming themselves. The articles in this volume analyze these processes and address the new challenges that Estonia will face as a member of both organisations. The five Estonian and four international authors consider what the new priorities on the agenda will be, particularly in the field of security.

The year 2003 was also a significant one for the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute: it launched the first Estonian monthly journal of international and security affairs, *Diplomaatia*, was accepted as a member of the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA), and expanded its geographical scope by co-organizing a seminar on democratic control over the armed forces in Tbilisi, Georgia. Please visit the internet homepage [www.evi.ee](http://www.evi.ee) for more information about the Institute and its activities.

The 2004 edition of the Estonian Foreign Policy Yearbook is the second and thus particularly crucial for establishing a sustainable tradition. Its publication was assisted by a grant from the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The editor would like to express his gratitude to the Norwegian Ambassador to Estonia, H.E. Per Kristian Pedersen, whose personal intervention was decisive, and to Mailis Pukonen, of European Union Secretariat at the Estonian State Chancellery for her support.





# Estonia and the Security Policy Challenges of 'Dual Enlargement': Towards a New Agenda'

Graeme P Herd\*\*

'The distinction between old and new Europe today is not really a matter of age or size or even geography. It is a matter of attitude, of the vision that countries bring to the trans-Atlantic relationship.'

Donald Rumsfeld (2003)

'The transatlantic partnership is based so firmly on common interests and values that neither feuding personalities nor occasional divergent perceptions can divert it. We have new friends and old friends alike in Europe. They are all, in the end, best friends, which is why the president continues to talk about partnerships, not polarities, when he speaks about Europe.'

Colin L. Powell (2004)

## Introduction: 'Touching the Void'?

In the post-Cold war era the EU, NATO and other multilateral institutions have succeeded in articulating statements that delineate an agreed division of labour, but there are few instances of areas where they cooperate effectively. The transatlantic differences and tensions that have steadily arisen through the 1990s in the Balkans, evidenced by a major cleavage in transatlantic unity over conflict management in Kosovo, culminated in the 'transatlantic trauma' associated with the Iraq war in 2003. Although the US and European states share many common threat

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\* An earlier variant of this article will appear as 'Variable Geometry and Dual Enlargement: from the Baltic to the Black Sea', CSRC Occasional Papers, 2003.

\*\* The views expressed are those of the Author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the George C Marshall European Center for Security Studies, the US Department of Defense, the German Ministry of Defence, or the US and German Governments.

assessments, they disagree over how best to manage these threats, and in particular how, when and why to deploy coercive force. This strategic-conceptual gap is exacerbated by military-technological capability asymmetries amongst states within the region. At its extreme, this has been presented as a dichotomy between European multilateral passivism and US unilateral activism. As a result, policy-makers and analysts alike have suggested that we face one of three possible futures: an amiable separation (Daalder, 2003); strategic divorce (Kagan, 2003); or, strategic realignment and renewal (Asmus and Pollack, 2002).

As these strategic disputes, tensions and ambiguities have arisen the transatlantic security community is set to enlarge. The political will within NATO and the EU, expressed at the 21-22 November 2002 Prague NATO Summit and 12-13 December 2002 EU Copenhagen Summit, to integrate new members in May 2004 will have an impact on institutions and security policies in the Euro-Atlantic region. However, NATO at 26 and the EU at 25 will be profoundly different entities from NATO at 19 and the EU at 15 (particularly as 19 out of the 25 EU states will also be NATO allies). The EU will increase its collective population by 20% and its GDP by between 5-9% and small member EU states will increase from 10 to 19 of the 25 members (Batt et al, 2003: 17).

Although it could be argued that the 'variable geometry' between NATO and the EU will be reduced, it should also be noted that as there will be less diversity outside the EU and NATO so there will be greater diversity within it. Relations of newly integrated states with neighbours that are not yet integrated will be changed as these institutions further enlarge: the EU-Balkans Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003 endorsed the belief and aspiration that the entire region be integrated into the EU over the next decade, whilst both the State Union of Serbia-Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina look to integrate into PfP by 2004. Dual enlargement has the potential to generate a number of asymmetric impacts within the Euro-Atlantic security region: between existing EU and NATO member states; between old and 'first echelon' new members; between security policies within these organizations that stress competitive or cooperative functional division of labour (that is, in terms of roles, missions and duties) between these organizations; between EU and NATO member states and those that will integrate by May 2004; and, between those that have the ability to integrate and those states that either do not or in which their current elites and publics perceive integration as a distant long-term generational strategic objective.

Let us examine some of the issues that arise in relation to the asymmetric impact of dual enlargement in greater detail, and then outline some of the security policy implications that have been highlighted by

this process. How has the Euro-Atlantic security environment and agenda been shaped, particularly with regard to states that create an arc of integration from the Baltic to the Black Sea? The chapter will conclude by examining some of the security policy implications for these states, and in particular Estonia.

### **Euro-Atlantic Strategic Divorce or Renewal?**

The 1999 Kosovo campaign highlighted the dangers in the eyes of some NATO members of conducting a war by committee. The US administration understood NATO's cumbersome decision-making structures as detrimental to the achievement of 'closure' or victory in the campaign, whilst the UK argued that the US' lack of political will to rule in the possible use of ground troops at the beginning of the air campaign undermined the deterrent effect of NATO. The Kosovo campaign also served to reopen the discussion of the capabilities, technology, and power projection disparities between the US and other NATO member states. (Clark, 2001: 427.) The low defence expenditures of the European NATO member states and the largely static nature of their force structures were exposed, raising again perennial debates over optimal burden sharing and division of labour within NATO. Moreover, some old NATO member states, as well as new members, were perceived to have performed poorly, with political elites not spending political capital to persuade their publics about the necessity and virtue of NATO intervention.

The shocking impact of 11 September 2001 determined that the Bush administration 'would seek to dominate the international system to such an extent that no strategic challenge would ever again be posed'. (Lyndley-French, 2002a: 802) The 'lessons learned' from Kosovo impacted heavily on the transatlantic response to 11 September 2001. The diplomatic failure of the US to engage European NATO allies post 11 September 2001 – even as they offered 'unlimited solidarity' – undermined NATO's relevance. Although NATO's support proved politically useful, the US rejected European NATO offers for the alliance to engage as NATO in war fighting in Afghanistan: 'The Bush administration viewed NATO's historic decision to aid the United States under Article 5 less as a boon than a booby trap'. (Kagan, 2003: 102) In the words of the US Secretary of State for Defence: 'the mission defined the coalition, not the coalition the mission'. The implications of the global war on terrorism (GWOT) and US-led and -inspired 'coalitions of the willing' –

à la carte multilateralism – for NATO were apparent.

A third dynamic process was highlighted by the November 2002 NATO Prague Summit. The debates that preceded it were shaped by lessons learned from Kosovo, but also the imperatives that flowed from 11 September 2001. As a result, NATO refocused attention on one old and introduced two new issues to its agenda. Firstly, the renewed focus on capabilities of NATO allies had to be improved and the 'Prague Capabilities Commitment' (PCC) tackled this issue. In the context of GWOT, new NATO members were strongly encouraged to reform their internal security structures – the civil-military focus of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process was extended to include more explicitly civil security sector reform. NATO's Response Force (NRF) was to be the catalyst and most visible and useful objective of PCC. The NRF was to be a 21,000 strong force, technologically advanced, deployable, interoperable and sustainable by 2006, with 20,000 troops to be sustainable for operating in the field for 14-30 days by October 2003. It was understood to be a means of improving the NATO capabilities of European states. At no additional spending, it would help to keep NATO interoperable through intense periods of training and missions and would be deployed to Afghanistan under German-Dutch leadership.

Secondly, a decision to integrate seven new members in second echelon enlargement was taken – and this included the three Baltic States. However, second echelon enlargement was shaped by the first echelon post-accession performance. A number of 'lessons learned' have been identified, which suggest security policy implications for second echelon integration states. Following the experience of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, it is likely that whatever the force structure of current prospective NATO member states is now, that structure will change in the future after accession. All new members will face budgetary constraints as they attempt to restructure their military; constitutional and legal system inadequacies will persist and have to be addressed, along with changes to national security doctrines and military concepts. Incompatibilities between national and NATO defence planning will appear and will have to be addressed and it appears questionable whether the publics and elites will continue to support NATO membership to the same extent post-accession as in the pre-accession period. The lack of support for the Kosovo campaign in the public and elites of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland, the poor rate of defence reform and force restructuring these states had undertaken since integration and low rates of defence expenditure were compounded by the fact that it was 'more difficult to gain compromise once the new allies were members'. (Simon, 2003) 'Once bitten twice shy' was the watchword – and with it

the realization that NATO could only exert reform pressure on new members through exclusion; once integrated, leverage was lost.

Thirdly, NATO-Russian relations were placed on a firmer footing by the creation of the NATO-Russia Council (RNC). (Kay, 2003) Russia-NATO relations were becoming normalised and part of a routine under the RNC, as a practical content of activities was developed, and an administrative capacity and a shared institutionalized culture gained root. Russia continued to promote security co-operation with the US in GWOT despite Putin's objections to the Iraq war – the issue was not discussed within the RNC forum, but rather through bilateral discussions between Washington and Moscow. The framework of Russian-US strategic partnership rather than the institution of NATO was favoured and this trend further underscores NATO's increasingly limited relevance to transatlantic relations.

However, the latent tensions exposed by Kosovo transformed into simmering disagreement and discontent not so much by the US' declaration of a GWOT and intervention into Afghanistan, but by the way in which the 'coalition of the willing' intervened and the implications that held for US security policy in the Bush administration. Open cleavages within the transatlantic security community continued to surface, particularly in a France preoccupied with the exercise of US 'hyper-power' and Germany, where the Chancellor was caught in a close political election and politicized his party's (SPD) opposition to US 'adventurism' to capture critical floating voters and bolster his Green Party coalition allies. The 'Bush Doctrine' of pre-emption (US National Security Strategy of September 2002) against states that currently threaten the US or that might conceivably threaten US primacy was understood by some alliance members in terms of neo-imperial 'adventures', to be opposed or counter-balanced through a greater emphasis on NATO or other multilateral institutions, such as the UN. (Stelzenmueller, 2002) President Jacques Chirac argued: 'There can be no lasting international order based on the logic of power', a sentiment supported by German Foreign Minister Fischer, who noted: 'a world order in which the national interests of the strongest power is the criteria for military action simply cannot work.'

Although many pre-emptive wars have occurred in history, the US-led invasion of Iraq – 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' – on 20 March 2003 represented the first pre-emptive war in accordance with the US September 2002 Strategic Doctrine. 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' can be understood as the fourth dynamic, as it ushered in 'an era in which the US has thrown off the constraints and balances of the multilateral system and exercised its enormous political and military supremacy on its own terms'. (Baker et al, 2003: 17) UN Security Council Resolution 1441

brought fully into the open cleavages between 18 European states and France, Germany, Russia, Belgium and Luxemburg, and between the US and Turkey (where the US strategic partnership with Turkey was deemed to be 'in tatters'). Current European NATO members signed 'Letter of Eight'<sup>1</sup> in support of the US position on Iraq, and days later a further 10 European states – the 'Vilnius 10' – added to this majority. The so-called 'Chocolate Summit' held in Brussels by the 'Gang of Four' (Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg) was grist for the mill of those that pointed to 'strategic divorce'. These splits now appeared fundamental in nature and constituted a crisis for NATO, only comparable in NATO history to the Suez Crisis of 1956, when the US opposed a French-UK led 'coalition of the willing' occupation of the Suez canal, to the point of forcing a humiliating retreat on its erstwhile allies.

These dynamics both generated and illustrated tensions and cleavages that were cumulative in nature, but driven over the immediate short-term by French, German and Russian opposition to US intervention in Iraq without a second UN resolution. (Howorth, 2003-04) This opposition, whilst reflecting the overwhelming popular sentiment, also served to highlight European inability to stop the intervention through political diplomatic means. It merely underscored the realization that Europe lacked sufficient military power coupled with a political determination to become a global strategic power through the exercise of military force ('hard power'). Europe and the US appeared to entertain different strategic appraisals, disagreeing on the fundamentals of security policy, in particular over what constituted a vital security interest, a threat to those interests and the role of military force in security policy. (Thomson, 2003)

The Iraq crisis also demonstrated that the US was prepared to deal with like-minded EU states individually, rather than to attempt to deal with the EU as a unified whole. The widely reported statement attributed to US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice underscored this perception: US post-Iraq policy towards Europe was to 'Punish the French, ignore the Germans, forgive the Russians' ( – and presumably reward the Spanish and the British?). Such disaggregating or 'cherry-picking' isolates opponents on any given issue and undermines the European project, and this may further undermine the rose-tinted vision of transatlantic renaissance. Solana, for example, has argued that 'such an approach would not only contradict generations of American wisdom, it would also be profoundly misguided. Different voices must be heard

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<sup>1</sup> The eight NATO members were Britain, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary.

and respected, not ostracized or punished.’ (Solana, 2003a) This approach also undermines any attempts to generate ‘credibility, cohesion, convergence, commitment and candour’, the prerequisites for transatlantic re-coupling. (Lyndley-French, 2002b).

## Security & Defence Policy Implications

This ambiguous and unsettled strategic environment, coupled with the process of dual enlargement, will have a number of asymmetric impacts on the defence and security policies of states in the Euro-Atlantic region, particularly the new entrants to NATO and the EU. Firstly, dual enlargement will bring with it the need to effectively fulfil the duties and responsibilities of membership to NATO and the EU. The US in particular asks two key questions of the new NATO allies. Will the candidates’ commitment to democracy strengthen the alliance’s ability to protect and promote the Alliance’s security, values and interests? Can NATO have confidence that a candidate’s commitment to democracy and the alliances values be enduring? In military terms these questions translate more practically into the challenge of EU and NATO membership in balancing a need to both develop high intensity niche capabilities and specialized roles in NATO’s NRF and to promote peacekeepers to support the middle and lower end Petersberg tasks, which the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) is likely to undertake. Can the Baltic and southeast European states advance on two fronts at once or do they have to choose one, due to finance, personnel and administrative and institutional capacity shortfalls and limitations? If both tasks are undertaken simultaneously, then tensions in defence planning, contingencies and tasking arenas are sure to arise.

On the one hand role specialization for the NRF increases ‘strategic partnership’ with the US by providing the certainty of deployment alongside the US, and the possession of a demonstrable and operational NRF niche capability contribution opens up the possibility of integration into US-led ‘coalitions of the willing’. But such participation, though politically important to the US and new NATO member state, would – given the strength and sophistication of US forces – be militarily symbolic at best, albeit US access to coalition partner intelligence sharing, basing rights, and over-flight privileges are useful. (Metz, 2003) Against these political benefits, full-scale participation in such a ‘coalition of the willing’ could be potentially unpopular at home depending on the extent of war-fighting casualties and the possible gap between the perceived necessity for pre-emption and the actual imminence of the threat. If the NRF approach were

forsaken in favour of a concentration in specialisation in peace support operation preparation with the ERRF, similar politico–military tradeoffs would have to be faced by policy makers. It is likely, given the nature of the Petersberg operation, that ERRF participation would be more popular domestically than the possible NRF pre-emptive strike, but it is far from clear that the ERRF has the decision-making capacity, finance and political will to operate in a meaningful manner and these doubts can only increase as the EU moves to 25 members. Will the EU, which currently cannot at 15 agree a common approach to Zimbabwe, bridge the diversity of outlooks to forge a unified and coherent strategic posture after enlargement? Or will ‘strategic deficit’ continue to be the leitmotif for the new century?

Thus, it might have been argued – half in jest – that the best interests of the southeast European and Baltic States within a transatlantic security alliance would be to ‘join any emerging consensus’ in order to maximise their influence: the public appearance of carefully considering policies and reaching a determination of priorities may well cloak the private reality of bandwagoning – ‘going along to get along’ – should the candidate state join the ‘consensus’ at an early enough stage. However, such Machiavellian calculus may well have been thrown out by the dynamic and polarising events of the last few years, which suggest such a policy is now untenable. The US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld has noted: ‘The distinction between old and new Europe today is not really a matter of age or size or even geography. It is a matter of attitude, of the vision that countries bring to the trans-Atlantic relationship.’ (Rumsfeld 2003) French President Jacques Chirac also exacerbated splits through his undiplomatic comments in February 2003 in response to the Vilnius 10 (V10) letter of support for the US: ‘If they had wanted to diminish the chances of joining Europe, they could not have found a better way.’ In October 2003 he further noted: ‘There cannot be a Europe without its own defence system.’ At the same time British Prime Minister Tony Blair stressed his commitment to European defence, arguing Europe needed the capability to act in peacekeeping, humanitarian and crisis management roles under circumstances where the US was not engaged. When push comes to shove – and bluntly stated: which is more important for Baltic and southeast European States – European or American priorities, French and German or US and British?

This prospect has arguably become more of a reality following the French, German and UK Naples agreement over the EU’s defence plans in early December 2003. The EU’s draft constitution included a mutual defence clause, albeit one that stated: ‘commitments in this area shall be consistent with commitments under NATO, which, for those states which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective de-

fence.<sup>2</sup> The military ‘headquarters’ now will constitute a ‘planning and operational capacity’ – a ‘cell’ situated within SHAPE, NATO’s military headquarters near Mons. However, the EU’s small strategic planning headquarters, situated in the heart of the ‘EU district’ of Brussels, would be augmented and given an operational dimension. (Roxburgh, 2003) Given that NATO provides a mutual defence clause and its own military planning structures, it is unclear why or what might be the implications of the EU’s desire to replicate both. Although Javier Solana has described the transatlantic link as ‘irreplaceable’ (Solana 2003b), might the process whereby the EU augments roles and capabilities become more comprehensive, and so undermine NATO’s primacy in defending Europe, just as dual enlargement becomes a reality?

Secondly, it places a stress on relations with both traditional regional partners and near neighbours. The attitudes of Baltic elites, for example, and the foreign and security policy choices they make may well constrain or inhibit the ability of their neighbours foreign and defence establishments to maintain cohesion in foreign and security policy formation and implementation once accession to NATO and the EU have been achieved. It is highly likely that – just as after the Benelux bloc or Iberian Peninsula integration – the constituent parts will follow their own on occasion divergent interests, and accession will lead to a greater fragmentation of the Baltic States in foreign and security matters. This in turn will reduce the collective geopolitical weight of the Baltic bloc, but increase the bargaining power and influence of individual states in new informal alliances and partnerships within the EU and NATO.

This process of decoupling more readily identifiable national priorities from the previous sub-regional and trilateral initiatives has implications for civil-military relations in the region. The jewel in the crown of intra-Baltic co-operation – the most active, interoperable (personnel, materiel, infrastructure) and effective example of practical and meaningful co-operation – is perceived to lie in the military-security sector. BALTBAT was hitherto *primus inter pares* within this sector. However, in May 2003 the three Baltic Ministers of Defence decided to conclude the BALTBAT project on 26 September 2003 (following the last ‘Baltic Eagle’ exercise), because it had fulfilled its objectives and missions. In its place will emerge three national battalions – ESTBAT, for example, will be have full operational capability by the end of 2005. Can the cohesion hitherto enjoyed by such co-operative ventures be redirected and grafted

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<sup>2</sup> The draft wording of the clause states: ‘If a member state is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other member states shall give it aid and assistance by all the means in their power, military or other, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.’

onto either the ERRF or NRF? Or may pre-accession sub-regional co-operation wither on the vine as post-accession integration into pan-European and transatlantic military security structures fails to take hold?

The relationship between the three Baltic states and their Nordic neighbours – states which had extended ‘sovereignty support’ and played the critical role of strategic partners through the 1990s – channelling military materiel and advice to guide democratic security building efforts and strategic reorientation westwards – is also placed under stress by this changing strategic environment. Some analysts have argued that Nordic unity is ‘in tatters’, as the US-led coalition in Iraq has received military and political support from the Poles and political support from the Danes, while Sweden has called it ‘illegal’ and a ‘breach of international law’. (Northern European Security Forum, 2003) Baltic integration into NATO may increase the perception that Finnish and Swedish non-alignment represents a redundant security strategy – indeed, Finland currently participates in almost all NATO activities but those exclusively related to the collective defence role. Lastly, as with Poland and Romania, the Baltic States are ahead of the Nordic states in offering aid to the post-conflict rehabilitation phase of the Iraq operation – contributing on a per capita basis as much as the UK. Such a realignment of power and support in the Baltic region will impact on the ability and willingness of the Nordic states to continue to offer such close co-operative military assistance and collaboration with their Baltic neighbours. Although it is impossible to quantify, this emergent process will have an impact on the nature and quality of civil-military relations within and between the Baltic States.

In southeast Europe similar dynamics are at work. Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria, states that will integrate into NATO in 2004, have argued that the extension of NATO membership to all states in the Western Balkans is critical to stability in the region and praised the role of the south-east European Stability Pact (Macedonia, State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Albania joined the Pact in 1999). The Adriatic Charter, modelled on the Baltic Charter developed in 1997 as a compensatory alternative to first echelon NATO membership, has been offered to Albania, Croatia and Macedonia as compensation for the ‘abandoned’ and their failure to gain second echelon integration offered to the ‘privileged’.<sup>3</sup> It plays much the same function as the Baltic Charter: it encourages new and intensifies existing security consultations and co-operation between these states, as well as demonstrating a co-operative capacity, thereby strengthening the possibility of

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<sup>3</sup> According to the rhetoric of an Albania MFA official in private conversation with the author, November 2003.

third echelon NATO membership. The Adriatic Charter states clearly perceived the US to be the engine of second echelon NATO enlargement and the motor of possible third echelon integration. Slovenia, though, has suggested that it can shoulder responsibilities Greece and Italy currently undertake as strategic partners offering 'sovereignty support' and promoting democratic security building in the Western Balkans – particularly the former Yugoslavia. Slovenia has peacekeepers in BiH, Macedonia and Kosovo, active economic investments in the region and has stressed the importance of EU integration of these states. Despite such offers, it is clear that Albanian foreign policy will continue to prioritise strategic relationships with the key regional hegemon – US, Italy, Greece and Turkey – even if it upgrades relations with Slovenia.

The EU-Balkan Summit of June 2003 has reaffirmed the EU's desire to eventually integrate all Balkan states into the Union, characterising the EU and western Balkans relationship as 'privileged'. As Slovene Prime Minister Anton Rop stated: 'The EU has shown that the integration of the Balkan states is one of the priority tasks.'<sup>4</sup> The necessity of integration was underlined by Lord Robertson, who has argued that border controls need to be strengthened in order to fight organised crime – a key threat to regional stability: 'either the region takes control of its borders or the criminals will take control of the region'.<sup>5</sup>

However, there are a number of challenges to stability and security that must be overcome before integration into EU and NATO can be realised. Some are relatively straightforward. Although in Albania 90% of the population support NATO membership, it has low democratic standards – but this can be enhanced by continued EU integration and the support of near neighbours. It is not entirely clear whether the Bulgarian and Romanian experience is relevant and could be transferred to the South Caucasus or the Balkan region. The Croatian elections of November 2003 reflected the strengthening of nationalist parties at the expense of the moderate democratic forces. The motivating influence of NATO membership, its normative power to encourage accession candidates to consolidate their arrangements for democratic, civilian control of armed forces, remains only as powerful as the prospect of membership. If NATO membership is not offered to Croatia in 2007, it will place Croatia's strategic realignment westwards under severe strain. This and the destabilising dynamic of continued war crimes trials at The Hague could further marginalise the power and electoral appeal of moderates. However, if NATO membership is offered to Croatia in

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<sup>4</sup> STA news agency, Ljubljana, 21 June 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Agence France Press, 22 May 2003.

2007, then it is highly unlikely that both Macedonia and Albania would also be integrated as one echelon, thereby diminishing the consolidation of co-operative efforts within the Adriatic Charter. The same argument can be used for the State Union of Serbia-Montenegro – whose democratic political factions narrowly succeeded in gaining a majority in the December 2003 elections. Clearly the EU's enlargement strategy the 1990s which was characterised by complacency and drift, will have to become more focussed and directed in its relationship with the Balkans, where strategic reintegration westwards is in the balance.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) represents another challenge, which poses far harder policy questions for the enlarged EU and neighbouring states. Firstly, the state has little internal cohesion, with 13 prime ministers, 180 ministers and 760 legislators within three entities led by nationalist leaders with a zero-sum mentality. BiH can only be administered through the international supervisory administration and central to its success will be the policies of neighbouring states and the unity of the international community forcing reforms – including the non-tolerance of anti-Dayton factions – in a comprehensive and unified manner.

In addition, near neighbours do not have comprehensive and unified policies towards BiH. Two-thirds of BiH's borders are shared with Croatia: 'It is the primary transit country for international forces and supplies to this totally landlocked country, and Croatia's many ports and roads along the Adriatic are BiH's lifelines to the world.' (Raguz, 2003) Although the new Croatian government has withdrawn outright support for integrating Bosnian Croats and their territory into a Greater Croatia, it is not yet apparent what will replace this 'BiH-breakup' policy. The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro has a huge reform process to implement, and difficulties are compounded by the possible independence of Montenegro, following the election in early 2003 of a pro-independence president. The status of Kosovo also has yet to be decided and this has the potential to impact on relations with the West, although it is being at least discussed within the context of KFOR-Belgrade dialogue and with the EU's Stability and Association Tracking Mechanism. The current Belgrade government has stopped military ties between Belgrade and Banja Luka in Republika Srpska, but has continued economic ties – though leading generals in the VS army are no longer paid by Belgrade nor do they continue to receive former JNA military equipment. This abandonment of the Republika Srpska national leadership has generated a backlash in the entity, with politicians in Banja Luka calling those in Belgrade 'traitors'.

Moreover, the power and credibility of the international community is weak. The Bush administration is progressively turning over Balkan responsibilities to the EU, including the long-term development of the

region and short-term crisis management, reducing both US funding and troops in and for the region. The EU is utilising a number of instruments to fulfil these responsibilities: a region wide Stability Pact providing a framework for concrete projects; a Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) which maps steps towards association then membership of the EU; and Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, Stabilization (CARDS). Although the EU is the most powerful force for reform and the prospect of membership makes policies more effective and reliable, it has been undermined by the failure of its past engagement with the region. EU security promises and action have little credibility in BiH after the massacres at Srebrenica on 11 July 1995. This trust will be hard to replace. (Abramovitz & Hurbunt, 2003)

Current EU member state policies appear split, with coherence losing out to the national policies of national governments. When policy reform issues are brought to the table, EU unity is on occasion lacking and this damages the prospect for BiH state consolidation. Two examples will illustrate this. Some European NATO (and EU) member states argue that despite the lack of a pan-Federation MoD, BiH with its Standing Committee on Military Matters might still be integrated into PfP in 2004, whilst others insist that such a double standard cannot be tolerated. The EU and US also do not provide a united front. The day the US suspended international aid to BiH in response to the lack of action against war criminals (having published its Black List of suspected war criminals), particularly Radovan Karadic and Ratko Mladic, the EU made available a loan of \$100 m. and proceeded to remove key individuals from a list of war criminals it had developed after intensive lobbying from some European capitals.<sup>6</sup>

A further consideration – in the Balkans more than in the Baltic States – is the extent to which the changing US military footprint or military presence in Europe will impact on security politics in the region. The changing US military presence is ongoing and responds to the necessity of policing the ‘new American perimeter’. (Donnelly, 2003) It is governed by four principles that will ensure that US interests and those of its allies are upheld. Firstly the reconfiguration must advance US strategic interests; it should allow the US to respond more effectively to the asymmetric challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The potential for sources of insecurity spilling over from the Middle East to Central Asia, Caspian, Caucasus, Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean regions to the Balkans is real and must be ad-

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<sup>6</sup> US Secretary of State Powell certified its compliance on 15 June 2003. The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro did however lose \$278K of IMET funds because it has not yet signed a waiver on the International Criminal Court (along with many other states).

dressed. Africa, as a possible location of al-Qa'idah and an area of rising strategic importance to the US (it is forecast that West Africa could supply 25% of US oil imports) could also be an area of future deployments. Secondly, it should have an operational impact by increasing American ability to respond to current threats, and facilitate and enhance ongoing transformation from the industrial to the digital age. As NATO moves east then so does its centre of gravity and US reconfiguration reflects this reality. At the same time a balance between 'lightness' and 'lethality' must be maintained. Thirdly and fourthly, it has a political and economic component in that the maintenance of old bases or creation of new ones should not be driven wholly by political or economic considerations, though economic prudence and political ties can and do enter the equation. (Spence & Hulsman, 2003)

These principles entail a switch from building large, heavily staffed garrisons, towards a smaller, lighter basing paradigm. General James Jones, the EUCOM Combatant Commander, has spoken of the creation of 'bare bones bases' or 'lily pads', noting that a Pentagon study in 2002 found that 20% of the 499 bases in Germany are no longer 'terribly usable'. (Graham, 2003) Instead, he supports smaller, lighter, more scattered bases in which pre-positioned equipment and a skeleton 6-month rotating staff (without dependents) can respond with greater speed and flexibility to deployments out of area. It is thought that while some 'enduring value' bases will be maintained, such as the airbase at Ramstein in Germany or Aviano in Italy, and the overall number of US troops in Europe will continue unchanged (approx 112,000 with 84% now in Germany), the location of these troops will change. For example, the two US divisions (each division has 15,000 troops) in Germany, the 1st Armoured Division attached to the Vth Corps near Heidelberg and the 1st Infantry Division, currently in Iraq, will only have a brigade (between 3-5000 troops) redeployed to Germany after the Iraq operation. The balance will be sent back to the US or deployed to the 'lily pads'.

Discussions are ongoing as to where these 'lily pads' might be located, and those assets that have been used for operations over the Balkans or in Iraq are the most likely contenders. In Poland the Krzesinsky air base near Poznan has been mentioned, in Hungary the Tazsar airbase. In Romania the Mihail Kogalniceanu air base near Constanta, the Babadag training ground and Mangalia port are all under consideration. In Bulgaria, the airfields of Dobritch in the northeast and Kroumovo in the south and Graf Ignatievo near Plovdiv are all discussed, as are the ports of Burgas and Varna and training grounds of Koren and Novo Selo.

The experience of the Iraq war has impacted on the necessity of reconfiguration. The lack of political support amongst some allies – a

lack that contrasted sharply with Vilnius 10 support – had operational consequences for US military effectiveness. It took several days delay before the Pentagon could get permission to deploy the US 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade to parachute into Northern Iraq. Austria did not make its rail network available for US forces and German, French and Turkish opposition to the war provides a reason to decrease future dependence. Public support for US military presence, aims and objectives within Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Hungary is greater than within ‘Old Europe’ and this lessens threats to deny access to such infrastructure located on their territory. Moreover, the economic benefits of the location of such bases – even the lower cost ‘lily pads’ – will likely maintain or increase public support. EUCOM HQ at Stuttgart puts \$150-\$175 m into the local economy and after 3 months of US use of Constanta port in Romania, \$30 m was inserted into the local economy. (Fuller, 3003)

The military benefits are clear: as well as greater geo-strategic flexibility that location closer to conflict brings (for example, less mid-air refuelling for tactical range F-16s), the less restrictive environmental legislation allows more live fire exercises, training manoeuvres in heavily tracked vehicles and helicopter night flights. This will contribute to an ability to maintain a higher level of military readiness. Joint exercises with host nation militaries will help increase the interoperability of new NATO member states. At the same time as consolidating political ties with these states, basing the US military in both Bulgaria and Turkey will shift the basing burden from Turkey and provide diplomatic cover to Turkish politicians when actions become regional initiatives rather than solely US-Turkish efforts.

The US and Europe face the same threats of WMD proliferation and terrorism and NATO is the anchor of US security relations with Europe. (Brezinski, 2003) However, the eastwards and southwards tread of the lighter US footprint does raise security policy implications that will have to be managed. Will Germany feel snubbed and resent the economic (and politico-cultural) impact of the move? Certainly, radical basing changes would have economic and political consequences in the three Lander where the majority of US commitments are based. Will political contact between the US and Germany suffer; will a ‘strategic seam’ be broken and might this not then be exploited?

Alternatively, will ‘New Europe’ generate unrealistic expectations of the military, economic and political benefits that will accrue from bases on their territory? Will the Russia-NATO Council allow the issue of new bases on former Soviet borders from Central Asia to the South Caucasus to be managed, or might Russia begin to object to this increased US presence, as American trainers are replaced by a more permanent physical

presence in the shape of 'lily pads'? After all, this very scenario is identified as a threat in Russia's National Security Concept of 2000. Armenia, with US bases already in Turkey, is unlikely to argue that it is concerned by the proximity of new NATO bases, but it would be concerned if the arrival of these bases negatively impacted on Russia-NATO relations. It might be argued however that the nature of the 'lily pads' – jump off points for pre-positioned equipment rather than Okinawa-style mini-American garrisons – will help immunise them from negative perceptions of overbearing US presence.

Recent events in the south Caucasus have increased the focus of attention on the U.S. basing shifts and may cause us to draw a less sanguine conclusion. Georgia and Azerbaijan joined the 'coalition of the willing' against Iraq and are critical to Euro-Atlantic global energy strategy. November 2003 witnessed regime change in Georgia (the so-called 'revolution of roses') and the institutionalization of a dynasty in Azerbaijan. These events will reshape Russia's perception of the role and legitimacy of the US' footprint in the region. Whereas the US has reiterated its support for Georgian territorial integrity, representatives from the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (leader Eduard Kokoyev), as well as the autonomous region of Ajaria (leader Aslan Abashidze), met in Moscow and discussed the importance of closer ties. Moscow aims to maintain its military bases in Georgia for at least five to ten years. No final decision on the realignment of the global posture of US forces to more effectively address the new challenges of the post 9/11 era has yet been made, but it is clear that the South Caucasus makes the issue of 'lily pads' a more sensitive one than its proponents may have realised. (Feith, 2003)

It may well be that two latent processes are realised, further undermining this generally positive understanding of the relocation. Firstly, bureaucratic, institutional and political considerations might see the 'lily pads' grow in size, thereby negating the benefits of the lighter footprint and increasing antagonisms with Russia. Secondly, a realization of the hidden costs of such a move might also undermine the US DoD's determination to carry it through. The morale, retention and re-enlistment problem is expected to grow, as rotation without families increases in a period of high operational tempo. Two sets of equipment are needed – one forward and one rear, to carry out training; and transport costs and additional capital costs must be considered. Moreover, it can be noted that there is an air of unreality attached to the notion of forward basing troops and especially equipment in 'New' rather than 'Old' Europe. The airlift capacity requirements and deployment time differences from Romania to the Middle East as opposed to Germany are hardly great.

## Conclusions: New Dynamics, Obstacles, Challenges and Dilemmas

Current dynamics do not allow for a complete breakdown in transatlantic relations, but they are disruptive enough not to promote a reconciliation and renewal. Instead we are faced with strategic disequilibrium or strategic dissonance, an environment with three key features. Firstly, the constancies of US 'hard' military power and EU 'soft' economic and political power will increase over the next few years. Secondly the US, although maintaining a broadly unilateral, proactive and pre-emptive foreign policy, will work harder at securing allies as the costs – military, political, economic – of sustaining GWOT at its current operational tempo become apparent to the Bush administration. The price to be paid for acting in a de facto unilateral manner (that is, within a coalition of the willing which is militarily weak) has become apparent: 'Over 90% of the troops, financial resources and casualties in Iraq are American.' (Blinken, 2003-04) As another analyst noted, the US public is 'not comfortable with the impression that the US is bearing burdens without support of the European allies'. (Hunter, 2003-04) Thirdly, and paradoxically, the stronger the EU becomes as a 'soft' power (the greater its ability to integrate first and then second echelon members) and the larger the membership, the harder it becomes to generate strategic consensus within the EU for common foreign policy and possible military intervention in all but the lowest common denominator actions: the accumulation of EU 'soft' power precludes its ability to generate 'hard' power. As a result of disagreement over threat perception, attempts to formulate a coherent, symmetric Euro-Atlantic response to manage these asymmetric threats have yet to succeed. The Euro-Atlantic security community may attempt to manage the threats by strengthening global institutions; increasing Euro-Atlantic institutional co-operation; or adopting a compartmentalized and differentiated approach over a range of issues that combines institutional co-operation, competition, and ad hoc coalitions. Time will tell.

The collapse of the EU constitutional convention in December 2003 and the ambiguities inherent in the new EU Security Strategy suggest that the new EU member states are integrating in a time of turbulence. For Estonia, joining coalitions of 'New European' states in support of US preferences within NATO as a security strategy may well prove to be the most effective in the context of current transatlantic relations. This would allow the new entrants to maximise gains – particularly strategic partnership with the US that will be underpinned by greater US military assistance. However, the role of 'balancer' might well recommend itself to the larger of the CEE states. Poland – accounting for roughly half the

population and GDP of central Europe – has a geopolitical weight that can shape the strategic balance (it can represent that oft quoted ‘tipping point’) between NATO European member states and the US. This was evidenced by the deployment of the Polish Division to Iraq, a move that highlighted the differences in support for the US on issues of critical strategic concern between ‘Old Europe’ (Germany and France) and ‘New Europe’. Thus, whilst NATO’s eastward enlargement illustrates that its political goals have increasingly outpaced traditional military priorities, and ‘the military contribution that the new members can make to the Alliance will inevitably be limited’ (Edmunds, 2003), the political power and influence of at least some of the accession states within NATO and the EU should not be underestimated. Within the EU, Polish and Spanish opposition to a proposed change in the voting system in the draft EU constitution agreed at the Nice Summit in December 2000 (the Nice formula)<sup>7</sup> has also undermined the strength of the Franco-German strategic axis.

However, the dual enlargement in 2004 will render ‘New’ Europe less amenable to supporting US foreign and security policy when it is at variance with the views of elites and publics in Europe and when it is at variance with the imperatives of EU integration. This tendency to downgrade transatlantic ties and to focus on economic security issues associated with the EU may well be balanced by GWOT and the necessity of counter-terrorist cooperation. Whilst it is true that the US over-militarizes foreign and security policy and the EU over-civilianizes it, the realization that trans-national terrorists can be best countered through a combination of 90% non-military (political, diplomatic, economic and financial strategies) and only 10% military efforts will bring the focus back to combining and consolidating the ‘soft-hard’ Euro-Atlantic power nexus. An acceptance of this calculation by political elites – particularly the US, French and British governments – may help realign and rebalance US with European power. The greatest strength of the multilateral approach is its logic and underlying pragmatism. The constraints which acting multilaterally places on freedom of action tends to be outweighed by the capacity to achieve shared objectives. Acting multilaterally pools the resources of a range of actors and institutions with complementary expertise and experience, allows for burden sharing important financially and in terms of sustaining commitments, provides greater legitimacy by creating ‘permissive conditions for action’ but-

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<sup>7</sup> In the words of the Polish Foreign Minister: ‘We have a population half the size of Germany’s and an economy about a tenth of the size, and yet we get 27 votes to their 29. We would be crazy to turn down a deal like that.’ (The Economist, 2003)

tressed by the adherence to international norms and values, rather than national ones, and it limits the extent to which other states balance, bargain and oppose or bandwagon against the US. In short, it bestows upon the US access to influence – ‘soft power’. (Jentelson, 2003-04)

The foreign and security policies of Baltic and southeast European states have their part to play in consolidating transatlantic security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Will Estonia join ‘Trans-Atlantic Europe’ alongside the UK, Spain and the Netherlands, or ‘Core Europe’ alongside France and Germany? Or will its contribution to international security be primarily non-military in nature; will it become de facto part of ‘Non-aligned Europe’, and a useful bridge to ‘Periphery Europe’? That these questions can still be asked indicates the extent to which dual enlargement has the potential to both undermine and underpin existing trends in transatlantic relations. More importantly, Estonia’s imminent membership of NATO and the EU will place it the position of potentially being able to adjust the balance of power in the security equation as part of a broader regional coalition on any given issue.

In the dialogue currently underway, redefining the relationship between all these groupings, ‘New Europe’ brings to ‘Core’ and ‘Transatlantic’ Europe the advantage of flexibility. However, ‘Old Europe’ as well as ‘Old NATO’ are becoming slowly aware that their clubs will not offer the same cosy certainties after enlargement; that the new members’ priorities and agendas may differ, in some cases significantly, from those of the members a decade ago. As the new relationships settle down and their complexities develop further, the onus is on the new members to demonstrate maturity in negotiation that they have not had to exhibit in the accession phase. The future of Europe and the Transatlantic relationship are in the hands of the elites in Tallinn and the other ‘Vilnius 10’ capitals as much as Brussels and Washington, London, Paris or Berlin: former ‘suplicants’ have the chance to be ‘saviours’.

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# The European Union's "Wider Northern Europe" and Estonia

Pami Aalto

## Introduction

Today, the European Union (EU) exercises a number of policies with either implicit or explicit bearing on northern Europe. A common approach in European integration studies is to treat this as resulting from the Union's increasing "presence" in the region. For example, Esko Antola describes how the Union has achieved an increasing presence in northern Europe through successive enlargement rounds, memberships in international organisations functioning in northern Europe, and through overlapping institutions such as its co-operation and division of labour with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>1</sup>

As for the enlargement rounds, Denmark's EU membership in 1973 did not greatly contribute to the Union's "northernness" due to the fact that the Danes preferred to adopt a mostly economic approach to European integration whilst maintaining their politico-cultural attachment to Norden – the group of Nordic countries – as a separate preoccupation.<sup>2</sup> Neither did the re-unification of Germany contribute much, as the country's Mittellage position – being literally located in the middle of

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<sup>1</sup> E. Antola, "The Presence of the European Union in the North", in H. Haukkala (ed.), *Dynamic Aspects of the Northern Dimension* (Turku: University of Turku, Jean Monnet Unit, 1999): 119-25.

<sup>2</sup> L. Hansen, "Sustaining Sovereignty: the Danish Approach to Europe", in L. Hansen and O. Wæver (eds.), *European Integration and National Identity* (London: Routledge, 2002): 64-5.

Europe – and its historically developed traditions ever instruct German policy-makers to focus their primary attention to northern Europe.<sup>3</sup> The accession of Finland and Sweden in 1995 did, however, bring in new members who confidently went on to promote their northern preoccupations in the Union.<sup>4</sup> They proposed new EU policies specifically tailored to the region, such as Finland's Northern Dimension (ND) initiative that became an official EU policy in 1997, and which has since then been supported by the Nordics' efforts for example in the form of organising ND follow-up conferences. Together with Denmark, Finland and Sweden strove –

also outside the ND framework – at directing the Union's attention to their own geopolitical neighbourhood: Russia and its northwestern regions, including the Kaliningrad enclave/exclave. Moreover, they declared support for the EU membership applications of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. As a Finnish policy maker said in an interview conducted by the author in February 2003: "The countries that freed themselves from the Soviet Union need to be stabilised in order for peace and stability to continue to prevail in Europe, and therefore their membership must be accepted". Thus, regardless of the Finnish fears of Estonia becoming Finland's tough competitor in the Union, and the consequent Finnish insistence on transition periods for the free movement of the cheaper and well-qualified Estonian labour force, the Finns deemed the reasons of "peace and stability" weighed more than narrowly understood national (economic) interest.

The membership of the EU in north European international organisations, for its part, gradually evolved from a relatively passive participation in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) into a more influential form. The CBSS started its activities in 1992 as an experimental region-building organisation interlinking the former "west" and "soviet/communist" territories around the Baltic Sea into a new type of relationship, with the EU Commission as one of the founding members. However, as a consequence of the Union's weightier involvement in the region, the organisation has in some sense transformed into a consultatory and implementation organ of the EU's Northern Dimension (ND) policy. In the face of more high-ranking EU-

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<sup>3</sup> U. Schmalz, "German Ambitions and Ambiguities: EU Initiatives as a Useful Framework", in G. Bonvicini, T. Vaahtoranta and W. Wessels (eds.), *The Northern EU: National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension* (Helsinki and Berlin: UPI-FIIA and Institut für Europäische Politik, 2000): 216-7.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. P. Joenniemi, "Finland in the New Europe: a Herderian or a Hegelian Project?", in L. Hansen and O. Wæver (eds.) (2002): 182-213; L. Trädgårdh, "Sweden and the EU: Welfare State Nationalism and the Spectre of 'Europe'", in L. Hansen and O. Wæver (eds.) (2002): 130-81.

Russian co-operation and other EU projects, by 2003 the CBSS was re-viewing the focus and scope of its activities.<sup>5</sup> The BEAC has also gradually learned to assume a consultative role in the context of the ND, and has become increasingly dependent on EU funds that have partly re-oriented its original focus.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the ND itself is becoming more “Arctic”, as the Baltic Sea is losing its status as a pivotal ND focus area. Finally, as for overlapping institutions mentioned by Antola, by the end of 2001, the OSCE terminated its task of monitoring and reporting inter-ethnic relations in Estonia and Latvia, a function it had fulfilled in co-operation with and partly also on behalf of the EU. The supervision of these policies has now been made a largely bilateral issue between the EU Commission and the new members, in place of the transnational nexus of the OSCE, CBSS, Council of Europe, and EU and Russia making demands and recommendations for Estonia and Latvia to fulfill.

This article starts from the observation of how these briefly described developments hint that something more than mere EU presence in northern Europe has developed. In fact, the article provides an alternative to the commonplace attempts to suggest the concept of ‘presence’ as the conceptual anchor of the EU’s “actorness”. In one such attempt, Stefan Gänzle concludes that “foreign policy on the European level seems to be ‘crabwise’, incremental and lacking any kind of master plan and strategic policy-making”.<sup>7</sup> In this article, I argue that by taking presence as a starting point, we easily end up with a far too a-political and passive account of the Union’s present-day involvement in northern Europe. The problem with the concept of presence is its tendency for the EU to evade any responsibility for the consequences of its involvement. Consequently, the presence/actorness model is ill-capable of elucidating the nature of power within the Union.

In short, I suggest here that the EU is not best understood as being somewhat innocently “present” with a certain degree of “actorness”, but that it has become the main “subject” of north European politics. It is not only the main talking point around which political debates in various north European locations tend to be geared, but also the main frame of reference for any attempts to promote political action, a con-

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<sup>5</sup> See P. Aalto, “European Integration and the Declining Project of Building a Baltic Sea Region”, in J. Stampel, D. Brekenfeld, A. Bannwart and U. Plath (eds.), *Perceptions of Loss, Decline, and Doom in the Baltic Sea Area* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> A. Myrjord, “Governance beyond the Union: EU Boundaries in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region”, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 8 (2003): 247-55.

<sup>7</sup> S. Gänzle, “The EU’s Presence and Actorness in the Baltic Sea Area: Multilevel Governance Beyond Its External Borders”, in H. Hubel (ed.), with A. Bannwart and S. Gänzle, *EU Enlargement and Beyond: The Baltic States and Russia* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2002): 98.

siderable part of which originates in its own fairly recently strengthened subjectivity. Thus, the argument is that the EU has become visibly goal-oriented, possessing explicit aims to transform the political context in northern Europe, and that in this process it has become the main (geo)political “subject” in the region.<sup>8</sup>

To take a few more specific examples of the EU’s recently strengthened subjectivity in northern Europe, it has been noted that since 1990, the Union’s spatial planning policies have assumed a clearly cartographic character, and that evocative maps of the Baltic Sea region and other co-operative regions have become central in the definition of EU-space. Since Finland’s and Sweden’s EU membership, a similar effect has occurred in EU programmes on the whole.<sup>9</sup> Also, cross-border co-operation in the region has increasingly assumed a more “European-designed” character, and the co-operation networks must follow EU spatial policy practices which the EU’s Interreg, Phare and Tacis programmes are teaching them.<sup>10</sup> The EU enlargement process, for its part, has witnessed the Baltic states and Poland facing the Commission as a very serious and self-confident negotiator overseeing their adoption of the EU *acquis* with no opt-outs, and with relatively long transition periods in agricultural support schemes before they can enjoy the same benefits as existing members. This situation has tempted Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, who maintain the presence/actorness model as the basis of their otherwise innovative conceptual toolkit, to comment how through the accession process of new members such as Estonia, the EU not only occupies a “formidable” presence, but has also managed to transform it into “unprecedented” actorness.<sup>11</sup>

My contention here is that Bretherton and Vogler are in principle correct in their substantial evaluation of the EU, but that their presence/actorness based conceptual toolkit is not the most insightful or elegant one in the north European context. After all, the concept of presence was initially invented by David Allen and Michael Smith more than a

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<sup>8</sup> The notion of (geo)political subject is used here in a somewhat metaphorical sense. Elsewhere it is defined in more detail as goal-oriented ordering of territories and political spaces, extending from one’s own sphere of sovereign rule to broader regional contexts; see P. Aalto, “A European Geopolitical Subject in the Making? EU, Russia and the Kaliningrad Question”, *Geopolitics*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2002): 148-51; also Aalto, *European Union and the Making of a Wider Northern Europe*. Book manuscript (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> J.W. Scott, “Baltic Sea Regionalism, EU Geopolitics and Symbolic Geographies of Co-operation”, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 140, 146.

<sup>10</sup> J. Jauhiainen, “Territoriality and Topocracy of Cross-Border Networks”, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, (Summer 2002): 156-76.

<sup>11</sup> C. Bretherton and J. Vogler (1999), *The European Union as a Global Actor* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999): 149-50, 168.

decade ago to round the problem of terming the then relatively incomplete EU an “actor” among others in international relations.<sup>12</sup> The concept of actorness, for its part, rather unnecessarily compares the EU to a Westphalian state, although most observers would probably agree that the Union differs from its old and new north European members, and partners, such as Russia, who are more easily understood as traditional international “actors”. Hence, suffice it to say here that in the north European context, the presence/actorness model represents a somewhat unhappy and unneeded conceptual marriage, which has largely lost the importance it once had. Subjectivity represents an alternative manner to grasp the views of the EU and its involvement in northern Europe by new members such as Estonia, with the argument being that the Estonian views contribute to the construction of the “EU subject” and the political space allocated to it in northern Europe. In particular, this conceptualisation helps us to incorporate the issue of responsibility, and understand better the distribution and nature of power in the geopolitical neighbourhood of Estonia.

### The EU's “Wider Northern Europe”

The brief remarks above were made in order to open thinking space for elucidating the processes by which the EU is increasingly assuming a pivotal role in north European politics. For the Nordic countries Finland and Sweden, most policy issues are nowadays embedded into the EU context and even mere initiating of new issues fairly quickly invokes the question of the EU. Norway is also bound to the EU through the European Economic Area (EEA) and belongs to the Schengen area together with Iceland. Even Norwegian foreign policy is claimed to be closely associated to the EU.<sup>13</sup>

Admittedly, Norway and Denmark – and perhaps even more so the new members Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – continue to assign importance also to NATO. This leads to their either “hard” or “soft” security involvement in global scope issues such as the war in Iraq and its post-war settlement. Indeed, NATO’s operational gaze has turned to a more

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<sup>12</sup> D. Allen and M. Smith, “Western Europe’s Presence in the Contemporary International Arena”, *Review of International Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1990): 19-37.

<sup>13</sup> M. Vahl, “Whither the Common European Economic Space? Political and Institutional Aspects of Closer Economic Integration between the EU and Russia”, paper presented at the workshop ‘A Laboratory in the Margins: The EU’s and Russia’s Policies in Northern Europe’, Danish Institute of International Studies, Copenhagen, 26-27 September 2003.

global context of the “war on terrorism”, at the expense of former zones of confrontation like northern Europe. Although the Baltic states’ NATO accession has undoubtedly increased their subjective sense of security, the organisation itself seems to have lost a lot not only of its controversiality, but also subjectivity in northern Europe. Its military security guarantees remain formally in place as some sort of a structural parameter in the region, but are unlikely to be needed at the operational level in the mid-term.<sup>14</sup> This situation leaves more room for the EU, which, in fact, is far better equipped to deal with the remaining mostly “low politics” type security issues within the region. To this can be added that the leading NATO power – the US – has through its Northern European Initiative (NEI) mostly striven at complementing what the Union already does in the region through its ND policy, not at changing this mostly EU-defined context.<sup>15</sup>

To understand adequately the character of the Union’s strengthened subjectivity, a few comments are necessary. First, at the global level, the Union possesses considerable subjectivity in sectors such as trade negotiations, humanitarian aid, and relations with the developing countries. Military operations in the relatively far-away locations from the core area of the Union such as Iraq do not, as yet, form an actual part of such subjectivity. Second, at the mega-regional level of “Europe” and its neighbouring areas, the Union possesses considerable subjectivity in almost all policy sectors, and also increasingly in the security sphere, through the evolution of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Yet, the CFSP and ESDP are “second pillar” issues where the Union relies on intergovernmental co-operation among member states, and for this reason especially the CFSP is often cited as ending up empty and incoherent in the face of pressures from member state governments having their own bilateral aims and ties in particular directions. In this light, the Commission-led “Wider Europe” initiative promises a much more coherent and consistently followed policy, in the way that “first pillar” issues commonly tend to be. The initiative is in response to the Union’s new neighbourhood that is opening up as a result of the ongoing enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Commis-

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. H. Heikka, *Grand Strategies and the Northern Dimension of European Security: Four Scenarios for 2010* (Helsinki and Berlin: UPI-FIIA and Institut für Europäische Politik, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> The exception here is the fact that NEI has concomitantly included an effort to prepare the Baltic states for NATO membership; see C. Browning, “Complementarities and Differences in EU and US Policies in Northern Europe”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2003): 23-4, 31-6, 40.

sion issued a “Communication” document to the Council in March 2003, which sets a clearly declared responsibility for the Union towards its new neighbours:

The EU has a duty, not only towards its citizens and those of the new member states, but also towards its present and future neighbours to ensure continuing social cohesion and economic dynamism. The EU must act to promote the regional and sub-regional cooperation and integration that are preconditions for political stability, economic development and the reduction of poverty and social divisions in our shared environment.<sup>16</sup>

The “Wider Europe” policy aims at providing a strategic gaze at the Union’s new borders in order to “develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood – ‘ring of friends’ – with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations”.<sup>17</sup> In practice, this means spreading the EU’s own order as far as possible towards its new neighbours without offering the prospect of membership, nor substituting existing treaties and partnerships. In the north European context, the existing arrangements include the ND policy. Yet, according to the Commission, the Wider Europe policy can be used as a springboard for new regional cooperation initiatives. One instance where the ND experiences – both positive and negative – could be exploited, is Poland’s proposal for an Eastern Dimension (ED) of the EU, bearing on Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, alongside Russia. It is not totally implausible that Poland’s proposal may in some form end up in the “Wider Europe” umbrella, as its target areas include the same post-Soviet countries as mentioned in the Union’s Wider Europe documents. However, in referring to Russia, it problematically lumps it together with its post-Soviet sphere of influence, and also overlaps with the focus of the already existing ND policy.<sup>18</sup> And, the ND is far better institutionalised in the form of the adoption of the second ND Action Plan (2004-2006), and its own earmarked ND Environmental Partnership (NDEP) fund. As Action Plans will substitute the Common Strategies (CS) concept also with regard to Russia, thus making the 1999 adopted CS on Russia irrelevant at the date of its expiry – by the end of 2003 – it is worth looking in more detail how the ND manifests the wider Europe policies in the north European context.

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<sup>16</sup> Commission of the European Communities: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, “Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with Our Eastern and Southern Neighbours”, Brussels, 11.3.2003 COM(2003) 104 final: 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*: 4.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. C. Browning and P. Joenniemi, “The European Union’s Two Dimensions: The Northern and the Eastern”, mimeo, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2003.

First, we should note how the ND has shrunk geographically during its evolution. The reasons for the emergence of the ND are manifold, yet in many senses detectable to Finnish needs to force the EU to take a broader view on Finland's post-Cold War geopolitical environment.<sup>19</sup> Yet, it is clear that by now, the ND has lost a lot of its original inclusiveness, for example its function in mediating the Baltic states' EU accession vis-à-vis Russian concerns by means of increased regional co-operation. Despite Finland's initial preferences, the ND has also included strikingly few references to the role of the US in northern Europe, and this has happened regardless of the efforts of the US to gear its own NEI initiative synchronous to the EU's policy.<sup>20</sup> In this manner, the ND has come to represent the Union's alternative Russian policy. Whereas the Partnership and Co-operation agreement (PCA), its related ministerial level Co-operation Council, senior policy maker level Co-operation Committees, and the CS on Russia are implemented at the level of the EU-Russian "strategic partnership", the ND is a regionalising initiative. It is geared at co-operation between the Union, northern member states and accession countries or their relevant regions, other willing member states, non-members such as Norway and Iceland, and Russia's northwestern regions. One of the aims is to strive at a greater synergy between existing EU financial instruments such as Tacis, Interreg and Phare, and contributions by other funding bodies. Tacis is the only programme applying exclusively to the Russian side, and synchronising it with the other instruments has proved one of the most persisting practical problems. Finally, Russia's request in the drafting of the second ND action plan for Kaliningrad to be dealt with separately at the "strategic partnership" level,<sup>21</sup> effectively removes Russia's earlier request for a "pilot region" status for the oblast' from the context of ND politics. Although Kaliningrad continues to feature in the final plan, on the whole, it is clear that the ND's focus has narrowed down from an overall north European initiative towards Russia's northwest and the Arctic.

Second, on balance, it must be said that the resulting regional focus on Russia's northwest has received a mostly positive Russian response. The ND embodies a scenario of a "wider northern Europe", which in some comments has been seen to resonate well with the Russian history of ideas, and as offering a fruitful opening to the age-old westernism-

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<sup>19</sup> D. Arter, "Small State Influence within the EU: The Case of Finland's Northern Dimension Initiative", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 38, no. 5 (2000): 679-82.

<sup>20</sup> P. Aalto, S. Dalby and V. Harle, "The Critical Geopolitics of Northern Europe: Identity Politics Unlimited", *Geopolitics*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2003): 8-10; C. Browning (2003): 36.

<sup>21</sup> "Non-Paper: EU Northern Dimension: Russian Approach", 14 January 2003.

eurasianism dilemma,<sup>22</sup> as well as at least some sort of compensation to the non-option of Russia's EU membership. Russia's northwestern regions bordering the EU have also mostly welcomed the idea of the initiative.<sup>23</sup> However, as for its practical implementation, Russian policy makers especially at the federal level have occasionally expressed frustration with its focus on countering the "soft security" risks perceived as emanating from Russia to the Union, for example in the environmental sector. Other Russian concerns have included fears of a sinister aim of simply trying to make use of Russia's energy and other natural resources in the northwest of the country, without any real willingness to help to overcome Russia's transition problems and develop its overall industrial potential on equal terms.<sup>24</sup> Procedural matters in the drafting of the ND Action Plans have also been at the heart of the Russian complaints of inadequate subjectivity granted to it in developing the policy.<sup>25</sup>

Some of the Russian concerns regarding the implementation of the ND can possibly be removed by the plans to merge all the different financial instruments into one Neighbourhood Instrument during 2004-2007.<sup>26</sup> Taking into account Russia's repeated criticism towards the fragmentary nature of the EU programmes, and the insufficient financial contributions in the Tacis programme – of which about 80% goes to mere technical recommendations by European consultants – this might prove significant news, especially with regard to the Union's power in the north. So far in the Russian direction, the Union has suffered from the inability to offer as attractive financial incentives for Russia as has been offered for example to

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<sup>22</sup> P. Aalto et al. (2003): 9-10; P. Joenniemi and A. Sergounin, *Russia and the European Union's Northern Dimension: Encounter or a Clash of Civilisations?* (Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University Press, 2003): 105-10.

<sup>23</sup> As for Kaliningrad, this is visible for example in the eight interviews conducted by the author with euro-experts in the oblast' in November 2002. Only one interviewee is predominantly critical, and mainly of the implementation of the initiative. As for the Karelian Republic, its foreign relations minister, Valerii Schliamin, is also critical of the implementation side, but concomitantly notes that the initiative as such is useful, as it raises the question of a "multi-aspect" strategy for northern Europe; see V. Schliamin, "Rossiia v 'Severnom Izmerenii'" (Petrozavodsk: Petrozavodsk State University Press, 2002): 141. However, note that St. Petersburg has for various reasons failed to pay enough attention to the initiative – e.g. due to the fact that it does not border the EU directly, but is rather surrounded by other Russian regions, and because of its otherwise high standing in contemporary federal Russia. This is the case despite the possible gains that the ND might bring for the city; see A. Marin, "St. Petersburg in the Northern Dimension", mimeo, Institute for Political Studies and Centre for International Studies and Research (CERI), Paris, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> P. Aalto et al. (2003): 12-13.

<sup>25</sup> "Non-Paper".

<sup>26</sup> Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the Commission: Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument", Brussels, 1 July 2003, COM(2003) 393 final.

Estonia through PHARE and the pre-accession structural funds. Such a more effective use of positive power in the form of the prospect of better administered and larger financial contributions could mean improved prospects for the Union to create a “wider northern Europe” as part of its neighbourhood policy. In terms of policy sectors, “wider northern Europe” would most likely be based on economic integration and the realisation of the “four freedoms” between the EU and Russia – of persons, goods, services and capital. This could represent a considerable challenge for a country like Estonia, which only gradually managed to improve its Russian relations towards the late 1990s and the new millennium, through various factors such as the EU and NATO accession process, closer EU-Russian and NATO-Russian integration, and the changing overall strategic context.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the fact that the whole Wider Europe policy will also concern Ukraine, with which Estonia has cultivated rather close relations throughout the post-Soviet era, can help to inch Estonia’s perception of the northern component of the policy into the direction of opportunities.

### **Estonian Views of the “Wider Northern Europe”**

In its “Wider Europe” Communication, the Commission asserts that “any decision on further EU expansion awaits a debate on the ultimate geographic limits of the Union. This is a debate in which the current candidates must be in a position to play a full role”.<sup>28</sup> This remark is interesting, as it finally grants more than mere speaking power to the new members in determining how wide “Europe” should be. Even in the Convention on the Future of Europe, which finished its work in the summer of 2003, the accession states lacked any voting power, although they had a speaking right. The Union’s new draft constitutional treaty, which was prepared by the Convention, remarks that the Union “shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring States, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation”.<sup>29</sup> In the Convention, Estonia initially opposed a special clause on close neighbourhood policy, indicating that it reminded of Russia’s 1990s “near

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<sup>27</sup> P. Aalto, “Revisiting the Security/Identity Puzzle in Russo-Estonian Relations”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 40, no. 5 (2003): 576-8; also Aalto, *Constructing Post-Soviet Geopolitics in Estonia* (London: Frank Cass, 2003): ch. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Commission (2003): 5.

<sup>29</sup> The European Convention, the Secretariat: “Draft treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe”, Brussels, 18 July 2003, CONV 850/03; emphasis added.

abroad” policy of claiming to protect the Russophones in the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and sometimes also the whole of the Former Soviet Union.<sup>30</sup> In any case, only once the principle of such special relationships with the Union’s neighbourhood was agreed, without Estonia having been able to vote on the question, Estonian views on the issue started to become better empowered.

To understand properly the tension between the Union’s Wider Europe policy and the Estonian views, it is necessary to take a brief look at the evolution of Estonian views of the ND, which is now being used as a partial blueprint to the geographically more encompassing Wider Europe policy. This discussion will reflect on how Estonia has found itself confronted with a new policy that it initially opposed, and on how Estonian policy makers have since then recognised the empowerment of the initiative, in the process themselves becoming better empowered within the Union.

The Estonians initially had some fears of the ND being a Finnish effort to patronise Estonia.<sup>31</sup> Since then, Estonia organised an ND business forum in April 2001. Although such actions have led some observers to portray Estonia as an “active participant in regional cooperation around the Baltic Sea”,<sup>32</sup> it is clear that at least for a while the country failed to build on this start. True, the Estonian president Arnold Rüütel has claimed the Estonians have “positive experiences of cross-border co-operation with Russia in the framework of the Northern Dimension”.<sup>33</sup> Yet, as statements by two Estonian EU experts imply, at the more substantial level it is clear that for a long period, Estonian policy makers preferred to take the ND as something coming from Brussels – not Tallinn, Helsinki or Stockholm:

Estonia’s position in relation to the Northern Dimension programme has always been that those priorities and programmes providing the widest possible effects, should be considered as the primary ones. There is no point in promoting some sort of a small scale and local programme, as such programmes do not yield any great benefits or effects.<sup>34</sup>

The Northern Dimension is not often mentioned in Estonia... Lithuania has very effectively linked the Kaliningrad and Northern Dimension questions to each other...the Latvians opted for a very active

<sup>30</sup> “Statement by Mr Henrik Hololei, Alternate Member of the Convention, Government of Estonia, on articles on the Architecture of the Constitutional Treaty, 7-8 November 2002, Brussels”.

<sup>31</sup> K. Raik, “Estonian Perspectives on the Northern Dimension”, in Haukkala (ed.) (1999): 157-8.

<sup>32</sup> M. Kuus, “Toward Cooperative Security? International Integration and the Construction of Security in Estonia”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2002): 297.

<sup>33</sup> “Vabariigi President Euroopa Parlamendi Väliskomisjonis 27. novembril 2002 Brüsselis, 27.11.2002”.

<sup>34</sup> Author interview with an Estonian policy-maker, December 2002; conducted in the Estonian language, translation by the author.

approach in relations with Moscow or the Russians; the Latvian Foreign Ministry has founded a special Northern Dimension working group...in the web page of the Estonian Ministry for Foreign Affairs neither Russia nor Finland is mentioned; rather the Northern Dimension has been presented as a common policy of the Union, simply promoting co-operation in northern Europe.<sup>35</sup>

The speech of the Estonian foreign minister Toomas Ilves at the 2001 ND business forum is illustrative of the then Estonian view of the specific priorities within the ND. Ilves is happy to simply quote Chris Patten, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, thus singling out the following priority activities for the ND: “working with Russia to tackle nuclear waste, and addressing causes of environmental pollution throughout the Baltic region, striving to combat organized crime”.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, in October 2002, Ilves’s successor, Kristiina Ojuland repeats the same quote in her speech in Brussels at the European Policy Centre.<sup>37</sup> However, it is notable that by 2003, Estonia became markedly more active. In its own contribution to the second ND Action Plan submitted to the EU in February 2003, Estonia identified as its priority areas infrastructure networks, maritime safety and sustainable development. Of these, especially maritime safety resonated well with the Finnish concerns for the potential environmental catastrophes resulting from Russia’s increased oil shipments in the Baltic Sea from its new ports around St. Petersburg, particularly during wintertime, in harsh ice conditions and by using old ships not built for such conditions. Moreover, Estonia’s contribution included a special section on the enhancement of bilateral co-operation with the Russian Federation. Foreign minister Ojuland also signalled her emphatic approval of the ND and its new parent concept, the Wider Europe policy.<sup>38</sup>

What should we read into this change of the Estonian course – from somewhat suspicious views of the ND in the late 1990s, to a tacit and relatively passive acceptance, and finally to an embrace of both the ND and Wider Europe policy? First, it can be observed that once the President of the EU Commission, Romano Prodi, held a pivotal speech on “A Wider Eu-

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<sup>35</sup> Author interview with an Estonian EU observer, December 2002; conducted in the Estonian language, translation by the author.

<sup>36</sup> Toomas Hendrik Ilves, “The common interests of the Northern dimension”, *Postimees*, April 4, 2001.

<sup>37</sup> “Address by Ms Kristiina Ojuland, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Estonia, at the European Policy Centre’s lecture series “Meet the New Member States”, 23 October 2002, Brussels”.

<sup>38</sup> “Main Guidelines of Estonia’s Foreign Policy: Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia Kristiina Ojuland to the Riigikogu on behalf of the Government of Estonia, 4 November 2003”; “Kristiina Ojuland: Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”, 8 September 2003.

rope” in December 2002 in Brussels,<sup>39</sup> and once the Union thereafter started issuing policy documents on the matter, Estonia bolstered its efforts. It can thus be suggested that a perception of the ND becoming more empowered as part of the Wider Europe policy, persuaded Estonia to try to share some of the “responsibility” the Union had set to itself. Ojuland commented that she is “looking for a new era in which the centre of gravity in the EU will move closer to our region”.<sup>40</sup> The reading here suggests Estonia’s increasing empowerment within the EU, via participating in the Union’s north European subject-construction process. Second, Estonia got some of its own priorities included into the second ND Action Plan. By becoming empowered in this way, Estonia found it easier to assume some of the responsibility. Power and responsibility thus go hand in hand. Third, the inclusion of Ukraine into the wider Europe policy provided Estonia a meaningful counterbalance to the ND’s focus on northwest Russia. It offered a chance for Estonia to empower its own experiences from the well-functioning and non-problematic Estonian-Ukrainian co-operation, and from Estonia’s own bilateral and multilateral development aid to Ukraine since 1998, to be used at the EU level. From the Estonian perspective, that the Union’s “wider northern Europe” – as so far embodied within the ND – becomes part of a geographically more encompassing wider Europe policy, adds a welcome stronger link to the all-European level and to other directions where Estonia can meaningfully participate in influencing EU responsibilities.

### On the Future of “Wider Northern Europe”

The EU’s wider northern Europe project undoubtedly becomes somewhat better empowered as a result of Estonia’s recently emerged more active contribution to it. And, likewise, Estonia’s contribution increases the country’s power within the Union. In this paper, I have tried to direct attention to the important subject-construction characteristics that these processes connote. The enlarged Union becomes a stronger subject with a stronger policy towards its new neighbourhood, which in the eyes of most observers benefits the constituent parts of the “EU-subject”. To attempt to base this chain of events into a mere “presence” of the EU, would easily lead to an account of abstract and faceless external ef-

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<sup>39</sup> “President of the European Commission: A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the key to stability; ‘Peace, Security And Stability: International Dialogue and the Role of the EU’, Sixth ECSA-World Conference. Jean Monnet Project. Brussels, 5-6 December 2002”.

<sup>40</sup> “Kristiina Ojuland: Cooperation...”.

fects of the EU's internal governance, where no-one seems to be directly responsible for a given policy. For example, Russia's complaints about the problems in the ND policy clearly indicate otherwise: that Russia does expect the EU and its various representative bodies to be responsible for the policies directed at the Union's borders.

On the whole, wider Europe policies represent a sphere where the often-assumed split between old and new members is definitely not widening. It has been argued that Poland's ED suggests a somewhat different model than the ND,<sup>41</sup> but concomitantly it is clear that the ED also reflects a concern for the enlarged Union's new neighbourhood, in a similar manner as the ND and the whole wider Europe policy do. Whether the concern is motivated by the familiar "soft security" threat perceptions emanating outside the EU's borders, or otherwise, is a different question, as long as the old and new members can agree on the content of the policy.

However, apart from the response and contribution to these policies of northern EU-bound states such as Estonia, the biggest test for a wider northern Europe and its wider Europe umbrella remains their reception in the target countries like Russia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Finland's special relations with Russia have certainly helped to smoothen some of the problems within the ND, and similar outcomes could be expected for example from Estonia's and Poland's relations with Ukraine. These already existing ties provide an interaction context, which is a necessary condition for any considerations of the involvement of issues of responsibility and power. In the substantial sense, the extent to which the wider northern Europe project becomes realised, will depend on the various actors developing an interest in the overall wider Europe policy. This can provide for a critical mass for the Union's "responsibility" discourse to materialise in more tangible results than critical observers have so far seen both on the EU and its wider Europe side.

Finally, one more remark is due on Estonia. What we are witnessing in the evolvement of Estonia's views vis-à-vis the enlarged EU's neighbourhood policies, is likely to be a similar sort of "socialisation" process as has been seen in Finland's and Sweden's adaptation to EU membership and to the obligations and responsibilities it brings with it. In some other policy sectors than wider northern Europe/wider Europe policies, Estonia has "natural" examples of member states resisting "EU socialisation", e.g. Denmark and the UK. However, in the neighbourhood policy sphere, similar examples do not abound. As a subject, the present-day EU is tremendously strong in socialising its new members for Europe-construction. For Estonia, these might be the early days of its socialisation process.

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<sup>41</sup> Browning and Joenniemi (2003).

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# EU Accession, Schengen, and the Estonian-Russian Border Regime

Piret Ehin and Eiki Berg

## Introduction

Following the integration of the Schengen agreements into the *acquis communautaire* in 1999, the adoption and implementation of Schengen provisions by the candidate countries has become a *sine qua non* of EU's current enlargement. Schengen is a logical continuation of the single market programme, abolishing checks on persons at the internal borders. To reduce the risks associated with free movement of people, it also creates a number of compensatory mechanisms such as stronger controls at the external borders, the harmonization of visa, asylum and migration policies, and enhanced cooperation between the police, immigration and judicial authorities. The enlargement of the Schengen zone creates "direct neighborhood" for the EU, while also bolstering the buffer between Europe's old core and the security risks believed to originate from third countries that remain outside the walls of Fortress Europe. Much of the burden of guarding the external border will be shifted to new member states, many of whom have long land borders with non-EU countries to the East and South.

A number of recent studies have focused on the enlargement of Schengen and the experiences and interests of specific candidate countries in adopting and implementing the Schengen *acquis* (Mitsilegas 2002, Wolczuk 2001, Favell and Hansen 2002, Williams and Balaz 2002). Most of these studies emphasize the numerous challenges and dramatic changes to existing policies and border practices that the implementation of the *acquis* will bring. In particular, such studies focus on the negative consequences of establishing a tight border control re-

gime at the eastern borders of the candidate countries that will, upon accession, constitute EU's external boundaries. Thus, a report by a Select Committee of the British Parliament (2000) states that there is a risk that long established patterns of cross-border movements of people and goods will be restricted or even interrupted and the disruptive effects of existing cross-border economic activity may cause economic problems in the borderlands. The report also emphasizes that many candidate countries have open and liberal terms of entry on their Eastern borders and the change of the border regime may cut through long-existing cross-border ethnic, economic, and political links.<sup>1</sup> As a result, political relations with neighboring non-EU states could be negatively affected. In particular, the adoption of visa lists has been seen as damaging bilateral relations and interfering with foreign policy priorities. As pointed out by Hägel and Deubner (2000), visas have a high symbolic value in interstate relations, since they are an expression of the scope of mutual trust and of neighborly co-operation. For example, the introduction of a visa regime on the Polish-Ukrainian border conflicts with the central premises of Polish Ostpolitik that has focused on a commitment to 'Europeanise' Ukraine (Wolczuk 2001). Schengen has also become an irritant in CEE relations with Russia, intensifying fears that EU enlargement will contribute to Russia's geopolitical marginalization.

Many observers claim that Schengen reflects the interests and agendas of old member states while conflicting with vital economic and political interests of the accession countries (Favell and Hansen 2002, Mitsilegas 2002). Accession conditionality is seen as a poorly masked instrument of leverage. Many studies emphasize the rigidity of the *acquis* and argue that on balance, the costs of implementing the Schengen *acquis* outweigh the benefits. This view is expressed by Mitsilegas whose research on Schengen implementation in the Czech and Slovak Republics and Poland has led him to believe that the attainment of the highly repressive EU *acquis* in the field not only fails to correspond to a clearly defined problem, but also poses to candidate countries a series of multifaceted challenges (legal, socio-political, economic, organisational and last, but not least, symbolic) which, if disregarded, may create more problems than those the *acquis* attempts to address. (Mitsilegas 2002: 665)

In this article, we seek to demonstrate that these arguments do not adequately describe the impact of Schengen regulations on the Estonian-Russian border and bilateral relations. Perhaps more than any other can-

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of close relations between prospective member-states and likely outsiders that could be negatively affected by a rigorous border regime include relations between Poland and Ukraine and between Romania and Moldova.

didate countries, the Baltic states have strong incentives to join Fortress Europe. In fact, principles underlying the Schengen agreement are highly consistent with the general foreign policy orientation and security strategies pursued by the Estonian government over the past decade. EU's efforts to secure its external borders coincide with the vital national interests that call for rigorous control of the Eastern border. After fifty years of Soviet occupation and uncontrolled Eastern immigration, control of the Eastern border has become virtually synonymous with independence, statehood, and ethno-national survival. Political instability and the deterioration of social and economic conditions in Russia add incentives to isolate oneself from the depressing realities of imperial collapse. Whereas the upgrading of the Estonian-Russian border to meet the rigorous criteria for EU external boundaries may increase barriers to interaction between the two countries, the possibility that these barriers might have a negative impact on bilateral relations, however, will not deter Estonia from pursuing full incorporation in Fortress Europe.

Moreover, fears that Schengen will create a "new iron curtain" are unjustified in the context of Estonian-Russian relations. To the extent such a curtain exists, it descended a decade ago, evident from the introduction of the visa regime immediately after the restoration of Estonia's independence, the erection of politically motivated trade barriers by Russia in 1995, and the generally frozen climate of Estonian-Russian relations. These policies have led to a significant decrease of trade and travel, while the lack of progress is also evident from the absence of basic treaties that should serve as a foundation for good-neighborly relations. The "closing" of the Eastern border in the early 1990s has had a profound effect on life in the border regions. The restoration of Estonian independence, the physical demarcation of the border and the creation of the visa regime dramatically changed interaction patterns in the region. This involves a shift from interaction in an integrated, borderless space to interstate relations; a transformation of relations from domestic to international. As a result, border regions have turned into socio-economic problem areas characterized by high unemployment, low income levels, and significant out-migration. It is important to note that this disruption of political, economic, social and kinship ties is the result of national policies that predate Schengen. Local interest in facilitated cross-border interaction have been subordinated to national security concerns calling for a tightly controlled border regime. This complementarity of interests between the Estonian government and the EU, reflected in the policies pursued over the past decade, is clearly one of the reasons why Estonia is generally regarded as very successful in adopting and implementing the Schengen acquis compared to many other accession countries.

## Impact of Schengen on the border regions

Despite our portrayal of Schengen as being highly consistent with previous policies, there was one important aspect of the Estonian-Russian border regime that was not in line with EU requirements. A major step towards implementing the Schengen *acquis* was the termination of the simplified border-crossing regime on the Estonian-Russian border that had been in effect between 1991 and 2000. While Estonia established a visa regime with Russia very soon after achieving independence, residents of the border regions (about 17,000 to 20,000 in total) were allowed to travel to and from Russia under a temporary simplified regime. The procedure was designed for local residents in the Narva-Ivangorod border towns and villages of the bordering municipalities in South-Eastern Estonia and the Pskov region in Russia. The considerations behind establishing such a procedure were largely humanitarian in essence: the simplified regime was designed to allow residents to visit close relatives on the other side, attend churches, and visit cemeteries. As the procedure was implemented largely by local governments there were important regional differences in border-crossing regulations. For instance, in North-Eastern Estonia local governments issued special permits to those border-region residents who had close relatives on the other side of the border or owned land or real estate on the other side. In the South-East, the simplified procedure was effective only at the time of Orthodox religious holidays: the goal was to enable local residents to visit sacred sites on the other side of the border.

Several EU Progress Reports repeatedly emphasized the need to abolish the simplified border-crossing regime in due course.<sup>2</sup> While a position paper from Brussels requested that this simplified regime be abolished by the time of the Estonian accession, Estonia beat this deadline by imposing a full visa regime with Russia in September 2000 and closed “technically unequipped” local points of crossing such as Võmmorski, Meremäe, Lüübnitsa, and Kulje. To compensate for the loss of previous privileges for local residents, a new agreement between Estonia and Russia stipulates that both sides can issue up to 4000 multiple-entry visas a year to those border-region residents who have a compelling need to cross the border on a regular basis. These visas are issued free of charge and are valid for one year. The details of this agreement were based on an analysis by the Estonian Foreign Ministry, revealing that in many

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the Regular Report (1998) notes that the practice, which allows persons living in the Narva-Ivangorod area to enter Estonia with a special permit instead of a visa, is not in line with EU rules. A year later, the same report underlines that Estonia should continue progressive alignment of visa legislation and practice with that of the EU (1999 Regular Report).

cases, residents using the simplified regime did not have vital interests on the other side that would justify visa-free crossing. In issuing free multiple-entry visas annually, priority is given to residents who wish to visit a) close relatives, b) the graves of close relatives, c) distant relatives, d) the graves of distant relatives, or e) those who own real estate on the other side. All residents of border regions can apply for these visas, and the final selection is made by the so-called visa coordinators located in the towns of Võru and Narva (regional centers in South-Eastern and North-Eastern Estonia, respectively).

Local reactions to the termination of the simplified border-crossing regime reveal a debate between two rival perceptions of the arrangement. According to the first view, the regime served important humanitarian purposes by allowing local inhabitants to visit relatives, churches and graves on the other side of the border. A rival view, however, dismisses the humanitarian explanation and argues that border-crossing lists and permits were used mainly for economic purposes: they created privileged groups of local residents who could cross to Russia without a visa, buy cheap gas, cigarettes, vodka and food products for personal consumption or for reselling at home. Below, we assess the impact of this change, relying on the results of fieldwork conducted in North-Eastern and South-Eastern Estonia in summer 2002.<sup>3</sup>

The humanitarian interpretation is supported by local cultural activists, community leaders, priests, and church-attendants. It backed up with arguments about the role of religion and family and the importance of respecting the dead in the indigenous Seto culture.<sup>4</sup> The Orthodox priest of a small border town explains that attending church and visiting graves are an essential part of the local culture: The Setos have this tradition of holding contact with their home church. This means regular participation in the masses and according to the Seto culture, worshipping one's forefathers and ancestors is the most important part of one's life. In the local culture the most important thing is to attend the funerals of the people close to you. It is more important than seeing them at birthdays or at any other holiday. When one cannot cross the border freely it is a serious problem. This is something that the authorities just have to understand (all remarks by priest in the South-East).

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<sup>3</sup> The fieldwork consisted of 13 interviews carried out in the Ida-Viru, Põlva and Võru counties. The respondents included representatives of local authorities, community leaders, local businessmen and representatives of non-governmental organizations. The authors wish to thank Julia Boman for her assistance in conducting and transcribing the interviews.

<sup>4</sup> Setos form a distinctive cultural group who speak Estonian dialect and adhere to the Orthodox faith.

An alternative interpretation downplayed the humanitarian motives of the arrangement and emphasized the opportunities to engage in cross-border trading and to profit from cross-border differences in wages and prices. This skepticism was shared by most businessmen and several representatives of the local governments: The local population certainly wanted to have as many visas as possible but there were lots of rather doubtful, artificial reasons for getting visas, such as relatives' graves. I think that the main reason for going to Russia is economic, not humanitarian (businessman in the North-East). The profitability of cross-border trading increased as the result of the Russian financial crisis in 1998, and the concurrent devaluation of the ruble. The fact that the number of people crossing the border under the simplified regime increased following the devaluation of the ruble is cited as proof of the economic motives behind visa-free border crossing: Until 1998 many people were in the lists, but didn't use the opportunity to go to Russia. After the economic crisis in Russia everybody suddenly found that beneficial. One can analyse the lists and see that it was pretty obvious why people used to go there (official at the MFA).

What was the reaction to the abolition of the simplified border crossing procedure among the local population? While there was some resentment among groups that lost their privileges, there were no public protests. Overall, the responses give a picture of a law-abiding community that accepts the rules and tries to adjust to changing circumstances. The adjustment was facilitated by the fact that the quota of free visas was seen as sufficient and those with vital needs for regular border crossing were able to get one. Overall, then, the popular reaction was characterized by the sentiment that nothing changed much except that there are more people applying for visas, more bureaucracy (businessman in the North East). The need to adjust was emphasized by a surprisingly broad spectrum of respondents, ranging from local officials to cultural activists and to businessmen: Estonians are either tolerant or adapt to changing circumstances, and also the media probably understood that if this is the set of regulations then let it be so (county administrator in the South East); I guess the new system is regarded as a negative side of Estonia's accession to the EU, but to my mind many people are either indifferent or think that it's just one those things that go along with enlargement (community leader in the South East); when a law is passed, we try to adapt our business accordingly and try to solve the issues that have come up because of it in a different way (businessman in the NE); the change of regime has had some impact but it is not that problematic comparing with other issues; on the whole, however, visas are not that important in our business (businessman in the NE); it is natural that if this group of states have the set of regulations which says that one must

have visas then we have to take these rules into account; I'd rather see that the regulations are the same for everybody, so that it would be easier to apply for visas (county administrator in the South-East).

The 4000 visas are divided equally between the South-Eastern and the North-Eastern borderlands. Is the number of free visas sufficient? Is the system working well? Almost all respondents answered affirmatively: It seems so. Everyone who wanted a visa also got it. And maybe some visas were given to some people who needed the visa for trade purposes only. It seems that the number is sufficient. Whether a 60 or 70-year old lady uses this opportunity – filling out all kinds of forms requires skills, time, willingness – is another matter (a country administrator in the South-East); When looking at the names in those lists, I think the existing system is more fair because they look more closely at the applicants. It is always so that when a system gets more strict and there appears to be a filter it makes people complain 'why cannot I go?' but I think it has brought the system more into order and the people who really need to get there have been able to do so (sanatorium director in the South-East); I guess the people who have been coming (to church on the Estonian side) are still coming as now they can come any time whereas earlier they could only come for special holidays (priest in the South-East); I think there is no problem – everyone who needs a visa, gets it. I have a long-term business visa and regularly commute to Russia and back (businessman in NE); It is hard to judge the bulk of the bureaucratic procedures people have go through on the Russian side, but it think at present everything is working rather smoothly (representative of a business organization).

Upon closer reflection, however, respondents pointed out several smaller problems with the current system. The visa coordinator for the North-East argued that the quotas for the Narva-Ivangorod should take into account the different sizes of the Estonian and Russian border towns: (There) are 71,000 people in Narva against 13,000 people in Ivangorod. To make a list of the relatives of the 13,000 people in Ivangorod is definitely different from making a list of the Russian relatives of the 71,000 people in Narva. In Ivangorod, visas are given also to more distant relatives. They have the same system, but fewer people. Others argued that the rules of the new system do not respond fully to the needs of the Seto community. For instance, free visas are issued only to the residents of the border counties who can visit relatives or relatives' graves "free of charge". The Seto population, however, has spread all over the country: ethnic Setos living in Tartu or Tallinn are not eligible for the visas. For them, the problem has not been solved.

What are the economic and social consequences of abolishing the simplified border crossing regime? There are signs according to which the

number of locals crossing the border has decreased, and cross-border trading has diminished. However, the so-called trade rally has not stopped completely: There are simply fewer people crossing the border and border crossing has become more regulated (businessman in the North-East); the number of border crossings decreased when the permits were abolished which caused setbacks to the bread industry in Ivangorod (visa coordinator in the North-East); I'm pretty sure that a bottle of vodka, a tank of gas and ten liters of gas in a container that the customs regulations allow you to bring in are definitely there today as well (sanatorium director in the South-East); I think the people who used to engage in trade rallies still do it (community leader in the South-East); the prices in Russia have stabilized more or less at our level, sometimes even higher, so that there is not much point in going shopping there any longer (businessman in the NE).

Most businesses in the border regions do not seem to be disturbed by changes in the border regime: At least from what I can tell based on the situation in Narva, there haven't been any (economic) changes (businessman in the North-East). Another businessman agrees: We haven't had a case that our business partners, who wished to come and visit us, could not get a visa, it is cooperation for mutual benefits. Another businessman, however, admits that the new system has created some problems with the labor supply: There have been difficulties since we used to employ people from Ivangorod, specifically qualified in the electric power station service, which is now very difficult. This view was shared by an NGO representative in the North-East, who argued that the abolition of the simplified crossing regime had a negative effect on the region because earlier, people from Narva could work in Ivangorod and vice versa.

Who loses and who wins from the changes in the border crossing regime? An official at the country administration believes that losers are older people who could get across the border easily with those name lists; they could go and visit graves and stores. In their case, visiting relatives was probably really important. For them, this whole procedure of turning in an application is difficult in itself. When they do not have the courage to start the whole procedure, someone might help them, but the ones who are more shy and who have more distant relatives just drop the whole thing. So for the ones who cross the border to buy gas, the situation has not changed so much: they get their visas anyhow. The change was more painful for older people (county administrator in the South-East).

Are there any political consequences to abolishing the simplified border-crossing regime? The visa coordinator in the North-East pointed out that along with the abolition of the simplified crossing regime, another important regulation was passed: the carriers of the so-called grey passports (ex-Soviet citizens who have not applied for either Estonian or Rus-

sian Federation citizenship) who used to be able to travel to Russia without a visa are now required to get one. According to the respondent, this change in regulations has led to increased demand for Russian Federation citizenship: Since last fall, the carriers of 'grey passports' also have to get a visa. People might apply for the Russian Federation citizenship as a way out. He notes that about 600 people in Narva took Russian Federation citizenship in 2001 – a significant increase from previous years.

A NGO representative in the North-East also believed that changes in the border regime increase demand for Russian citizenship: for small-scale Estonian businessmen who need to cooperate with Russia it is more beneficial to get Russian Federation citizenship and have a steady living permit in Estonia. She argued that the same applies to Russian-speaking students who want to study in Russia: Qualified manpower drain is certainly a minus of the strict border regime: since it is difficult and expensive to get visas, young talented students apply for Russian Federation citizenship in order to study in Russia, and then it is easier for them to stay there.

Even though the responses of many interviewees have indicated general acceptance of official border policies and sometimes surprising readiness to adapt and adjust, local inhabitants of the border region seem to be rather insecure about possible future changes in the border regime that will affect the lives of the local communities. This insecurity is related to the feeling that the locals have no control over the decisions made at the centre. Inadequate information and communication, combined with the understanding that the interests of the centre often conflict with those of the periphery, have added to the sense of insecurity and distrust.

While the current system of a limited number of free multiple-entry visas was regarded as sufficient, many locals suspected that it would not last for long. The agreement establishing the current system was regarded as an unofficial agreement that lacked the formal power of a treaty. Furthermore, respondents believed that the agreement was valid for only one year and had to be renewed annually. As such, the decision to renew it could be subject to the ever-present fluctuations in Estonian-Russian relations, as well as personal dynamics: There are no official written documents on the system of free visas. No contracts, no signatures. Every year people from the consular office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tallinn simply try to reach an agreement with people from the Russian side upon quotas and other technical details (cultural activist in the South-East); the problem is that the agreement is still not signed, the exchange of visas basically hovers in the air while at the same time, being also extremely vulnerable in terms of the specific set of rules (a community leader in the South-East).

## Dilemmas of cross-border cooperation

The border-producing practices associated with the Schengen regime are just one element in the mix of policies affecting life in the border regions. In fact, the impact of Schengen should not be viewed separately from the broader impact of EU enlargement. A broader perspective is particularly relevant in light of the EU's evolving policies towards its new neighbors. These policies are characterized by a tension between boundary-producing practices (such as the upgrading of external borders) and border-crossing practices (cross-border cooperation, trade and aid, etc). The EU's New Neighbors Initiative and Wider Europe concept refer the need to engage the EU's direct neighborhood to the closer cooperation than experienced before. Below, we briefly discuss main factors inhibiting Estonian-Russian cross-border contacts and point to several ways in which EU accession can contribute to the development of cross-border contacts.

Despite the history of "borderless" interaction and interdependence in the Soviet period, cooperation between Estonian and Russian border regions today remains disappointingly limited. The main obstacles are political. Local-level cooperation takes place but is affected by the broader issues of interstate relations. Political tensions at the intergovernmental level have produced policy stalemates that have a direct negative impact on cross-border cooperation (trade barriers and absence of a border treaty). Interviews conducted in the Estonia's borderlands suggest that local inhabitants recognize that cooperation at the local level is largely determined by the bigger picture of interstate relations: Unless the states decide on the higher political level about the border cooperation, municipalities and regions cannot do much (NGO representative in the North-East).

A second major obstacle to cross-border cooperation arises from a centre-periphery conflict of interests (or, at least, a dramatically different listing of priorities). While national governments in both countries give priority to "high politics" of security and foreign policy concerns; local authorities and inhabitants are more concerned with "soft" issues such as economic development, environmental conditions, social services and the well-being of local populations. These different priorities result in vague attitudes towards cross-border cooperation: national governments prefer hard borders in order to minimize security threats while the regions would prefer a flexible border regime that allows to develop cross-border contacts and trade. Thus, governmental concerns focus on matters of statehood, sovereignty, territorial integrity and potential external security threats. The "low politics" agenda of the regions, however, fo-

cuses on the advantages of cross-border interaction (economic, cultural, ethnic, and kinship contacts). In pursuing joint action or seeking opportunities for cross-border interaction, the regions encounter obstacles that stem from the different priorities or outright opposition of the national governments. National officials tend to regard cross-border activities with a degree of suspicion – it is seen as a source of potential security threats or instability.

Not surprisingly, in this conflict of interest, national interests have prevailed over local interests. Although the strategies pursued by the centre have often been detrimental to local interests, the prevailing attitude is one of acceptance and subordination, with many people emphasizing the need to adjust and adapt. Our interviews showed that local authorities and residents have generally adjusted to the new reality. A borderless, “domesticated” space of interaction is no longer the reference point; instead, contacts with the other side are now seen as falling in the conceptual category of cross-border cooperation, a feature of interstate relations. On the other hand, the sense of dependence on the centre can also lead to a passive attitude and an unwillingness to commit to cooperative projects on the grounds that “things are decided elsewhere” and “we cannot do much to change the situation”.

Our fieldwork analysis leads us to conclude that double tariffs are a greater obstacle to cross-border contacts and cooperation than the visa regime. The visa regime is an impediment to regional development in the sense that it reduces the level of travel and tourism. It should not, however, be considered a major obstacle to cooperation between municipal governments or for developing business contacts or trade. Interviews conducted in 2002 strongly suggest that, overall the visa regime is working smoothly. Company representatives or local officials have had no problems obtaining visas for themselves, their employees, or their Russian partners. Furthermore, there is a strong consensus on the Estonian side, both on the national and local level that the visa regime is necessary; it is regarded as an inevitable component of relations with Russia.

Tariff barriers, the second component in the “closed border” syndrome, however, are unanimously regarded as a major hindrance to cross-border cooperation. The unilateral abolition of Estonia’s most favored nation trading status by Russia in 1995 which, as a consequence, resulted in double tariffs on many Estonian products are seen as the main reason for low levels of cross-border economic activity. This is clearly reflected in low levels of trade: despite its size and proximity, Russia accounted for only 3% of Estonian exports in 2002. In fact, the “exclusion” of the Russian market served a catalyst for the reorientation

of Estonian foreign trade towards the West. Interviews and phone surveys with Estonian companies in the border regions revealed that Estonian producers are extremely interested in access to the Russian market but due to double tariffs they are often unable to compete. Furthermore, this inability to develop trade contacts has been seen as a major impediment to regional development.

Psychological factors constitute a particularly interesting and difficult-to-analyze part of the limited cross-border cooperation puzzle. Some predispositions reflect the general legacy of annexation and occupation by the USSR. The feeling that “nothing good has ever come out of contacts with Russia” is one reason why Estonians may dismiss cooperation off-hand without giving much attention to the details of a specific idea or proposal. There is also the tendency to believe that many of the familiar negative features of the Soviet regime still characterize Russian society today. The growing socio-economic development gap between Estonia and Russia contributes to the perception of “the other” as alien and invokes the need to separate oneself from the undesirable realities of the “imperial collapse”. To put it bluntly, cooperation is hindered by the perception, often cited by our respondents, that Russia is “a messy country” where policy-making remains unpredictable. There is a sense that given the different levels of socio-economic and political development, the Russian side has more to gain from cross-border cooperation and it may even regard partnership with Estonia as an avenue to access Western funding.

These perceptions were clearly reflected in the interviews conducted in Estonian border regions in 2002. Despite geographic proximity and strong ethnic and cultural ties to Russia, the border communities feel little solidarity with the other side. Even the Russian-speaking (and often Russian-born) population of Narva has developed a clear sense of “us” and “them”: notions such as “we and they”, “on the other side of the border”, “there, over the bridge” appear in everyday rhetoric. Despite the fact that both areas are Russian-speaking and used to be closely linked, Ivangorod is now perceived by Narvans as different, Russian-like, unstable and chaotic. Narvans hear about the troubles of Ivangorod (late salary payments, low wages and economic standstill) and are interested in keeping their distance.

There is a widespread opinion that cooperation would be more advantageous to the Russian side, while for Estonian side, it would mean taking risks and getting involved in something “unreliable”. The perceived asymmetry of interests reflects a belief that cooperation with Russia holds no promise of tangible payoffs. Such views were expressed both by ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians: As far as we are con-

cerned, Russia is not the safest place, and the work ethic there is undeveloped (a county administrator in the South-East); Russia is more interested in co-operation, because our people (i.e. city government officials) have all been to Ivangorod and they are not very interested in Russia (visa coordinator in the North-East commenting on cooperation between the city administrations of Narva and Ivangorod); (NGOs in Estonia and Russia) have very different problems and worldviews. Estonia is a small country, and it has managed to introduce a proper order faster than Russia and has learned like a small child all the good aspects of the Western democratic state and civil society getting rid of the remnants of the old system (NGO leader).

### **Accommodation with the European order**

There are several reasons why we expect Baltic EU membership to have a positive impact on cross-border contacts. EU membership would significantly alleviate the insecurities of the Baltic states and increase their leverage vis-à-vis Russia, thus correcting the imbalance of power potential that has long complicated Baltic-Russian relations. Many of the outstanding problems in Baltic-Russian relations could be dealt within the broader framework of EU-Russian relations. Given the EU's importance as a regional powerhouse and trade partner, Russia will have new incentives to cooperate with its Baltic neighbors.

Turning to the list of specific problem areas, the issue of Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltics is likely to gradually lose relevance. European institutions (EU, Council of Europe, OSCE) have already used their leverage to pressure the Baltic states to liberalize their minority policies. Accordingly, Estonian accession to the EU will constitute both a proof and a guarantee that minority rights in Estonia continue to be protected. In an effort to integrate with Western structures, Estonia is increasingly moving from a nation-state ideal towards a multi-national society model, as the government is giving increasing attention and funding to programs designed to integrate Russian-speakers into the Estonian society. Simultaneously, the Russian mandate for protecting "compatriots" is rapidly eroding. Most Baltic Russians are staunchly in favor of Baltic independence. Baltic Russians have also tended to be more supportive of EU accession than the titular populations. In fact, EU expansion will lead to interesting changes in the status and opportunities of the Baltic Russians. Upon the Baltic accession, the more than 1.5 million ethnic Russians living in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

would become the first “Euro-Russians,” a human link between Russia and the integrated Europe.<sup>5</sup>

Second, Estonian accession to the EU will significantly improve the security situation in the Baltic Sea region. In contrast to the “hard” security that NATO membership entails, accession to the EU will bring “soft” security guarantees. The EU accession process has already forced Russia to revise its unrealistic aspirations to achieve regional hegemony. Baltic EU membership would put an end to Russian attempts to impose a “near abroad” status on the Baltic states. Other tangible security benefits come from EU’s stabilization policies in its own direct neighborhood. In the long run, Estonia will benefit from EU stabilization and confidence-building policies towards its new neighbors (consider, for instance, the EU’s 1999 “Common Strategy on Russia”, the 2003 Wider Europe framework and assistance to CIS countries under the TACIS programme).

Third, Baltic accession to the EU will facilitate economic contacts with Russia. With accession to the EU, the punitive double tariffs that Russia imposed on Estonian products in 1995 will have to be abolished because they are not in line with existing EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Estonian producers have vainly sought the abolition of these barriers for nearly a decade; after May 1, 2004, the Russian markets should be considerably more open. Combined with the perspective of export subsidies, we can predict a significant increase in Estonian exports to Russia (this increase, however, will not be dramatic because of the risks still associated with entering the Russian markets). The increase in trading will have a positive effect on socio-economic development of border regions. In addition, growing trade between EU and Russia is likely to increase transit flows through the Baltic states.

Fourth, the possibility to regard Estonian-Russian relations as a subcategory of Russian-EU relations should allow both sides to transcend old stalemates and deeply ingrained suspicions. The undeveloped treaty base of Estonian-Russian relations will be complemented by a number of agreements concluded between the EU and Russia. As an EU member-state, Estonia will be represented in institutional frameworks for cooperation with Russia (summits, cooperation councils and committees). While Estonia remains a small state with limited influence, EU membership will give it increased leverage, allowing it to become a more equal

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<sup>5</sup> Dmitri Trenin (1997) suggests that these “compatriots” could become a unique resource in furthering Russia’s contacts with the West. It has even been suggested that with the broader EU-Russia partnership yet to take shape, arrangements forged within the Baltic Sea region could become something of a scaled-down model of that developing, more expansive relationship.

partner in “the same weight category”. In areas regulated by existing agreements, Russia will have to treat member-states equally and will have to end existing discriminatory practices. Furthermore, there are hopes that EU’s leverage could convince Russia to sign and ratify the pending border treaty.

Finally, support from EU and other international programmes will provide concrete incentives to engage in cooperative projects. There are already strong institutional actors with significant experience in managing international projects. The Council for Cross-border Cooperation – a voluntary association for local and regional governments in the Estonian, Latvian and Russian border regions, founded in 1996, has received support from a variety of EU instruments, including the Phare CBC and Credo programmes. The activities of a major regional NGO, the Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation have been supported by the European Commission, the EU 5<sup>th</sup> RTD Programme, and the Phare LIEN Programme, among others. As evident from these initiatives, the EU and its various instruments already play an important role in supporting cross-border initiatives in the region. The Estonian and Latvian accessions will open up more opportunities for promoting mutually beneficial cultural and economic relations, and involving local and regional actors in higher political levels. The opportunities associated with EU membership, then, may strengthen existing cooperation networks (e.g. the Pskov-Livonia project) and provide the needed impulse to jump-start cooperation in areas where conflicting interests have so far outweighed incentives for cooperation (e.g. the North-East). The Council for Cross-border Cooperation has already declared that central to its vision of the Pskov-Livonia region’s future is the creation of a Euroregion that will be funded by the INTERREG, PHARE and TACIS cooperation programmes.

## Conclusions

To join the EU, the candidate countries have to adopt and implement the Schengen acquis in its entirety. Given that Estonia’s current border practices are largely consistent with the Schengen acquis, and further harmonization will consist mainly of technical and administrative alignment, Schengen regulations per se will not have a significant impact on the existing Estonian-Russian border regime. Consequently, it is unlikely to affect trade and travel in the region or alter the socio-economic situation of the border regions. While the three Estonian counties adjacent to Russia are indeed economically depressed problem areas, their problems

predate the alignment of national policies with the Schengen *acquis* and can be attributed to the generally cold atmosphere of Estonian-Russian relations as well as border-producing policies pursued by the national governments. In fact, the principles underlying the Schengen agreement are highly consistent with the general Euro-Atlantic foreign policy orientation and with security strategies pursued by the Estonian government over the past decade.

Interviews carried out in 2002 with political and economic elites of the border regions suggest that respondents do not foresee any major changes in the border regime after Estonia joins the EU. Respondents certainly do not share the fear that upgrading the EU external border would turn it into a new Iron Curtain. However, there are some concerns about the termination of the current system of issuing free multiple-entry visas to certain categories of local residents. The agreement establishing the current system is regarded as an unofficial oral agreement that lacks the formal power of a treaty. As such, the decision to renew it could be subject to the ever-present fluctuations in Estonian-Russian relations, as well as external pressure.

While Estonia's accession to the EU will not change the border regime, it is likely to have a significant long-term impact on Estonian-Russian relations. An improvement of the overall climate of bilateral relations on the national level would certainly lead to more developed cross-border contacts. Taking into account that until now, national level factors have been a main impediment to developing cooperative relations among regions, these international and national level changes will have a major impact on regional cooperation. Regions will cooperate, if their governments support – or as a minimum, do not obstruct – their efforts. Several factors point to opportunities for closer cross-border contacts, which largely depend on bilateral and multilateral relations between the respective parties: Estonia, Russia, and the EU. This leads us to believe that the emerging European order will lead to an improvement of Estonian-Russian cross-border relations.

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# Conditionality and Dependence as Key Elements in Simultaneous Democratization and Crises Prevention

Viljar Veebel

## Introduction

In 2003 two key documents summarized the EU security discussions over recent years: the draft Constitutional Treaty that described general methods of foreign and development policy, and Javier Solana's "EU Security Strategy" which concentrated on defining EU interests, purposes, and areas of influence, as well as focusing on current crises, major problem areas, and problems associated with possible new partners. The main security problems for Europe were identified as regional conflicts which incited and fuelled terrorism, and instability on the borders of the EU, caused by poor governance, lack of democracy and ethnic conflicts.

This article analyzes the European Union's crises management choices in post-Cold War non-EU Europe. Is it possible to achieve, simultaneously, democratization, strong governance, sovereignty and peace in the region? One option is to let new states find their own way independently, prepare for possible crises by developing the Rapid Reaction Mechanism, and intervene when necessary. The second option is to develop dependent and conditional relations with unstable neighboring states – without waiting for possible crises to emerge, start guiding neighboring countries with 'stick-and-carrot' methods, using (and developing) their economic and political dependence and setting clear conditions for socio-economic reforms.

In this article both models, and their possible combinations, will be discussed, but the primary focus will be on evaluating the efficiency of the dependence/conditionality model in providing crises management consistent

with EU goals and interests. The main questions are: how conditionality develops, what are the preconditions, what is the logic behind success. As empirical input, efforts in 4 different countries over the last 13 years – Estonia, Macedonia, Moldova and Georgia – will be analyzed.

Since many regional conflicts during the Cold War were the result of competing superpower attempts to widen their zones of influence (Brzezinski 1997), the collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as a good start for reducing the number and intensity of regional crises. Attention in security-building turned to solving and preventing regional low-intensity conflicts, worldwide democratization and a decreasing importance of using military measures in conflict resolution.

Relying on the existing international law, world peace, democratization and sovereignty became the main values promoted by the developed world. Military conflicts were seen as rare and peripheral, avoidable by civil conflict prevention instruments. However, instead of “an end of history” the last 15 years the Eurasian region has witnessed an increasing number of highly difficult and complex conflicts. Both modern (reactive in Somalia) and postmodern (preventive in Kosovo) conflict management has not proven effective. At the same time, commitment of economic and human resources for the purpose of conflict resolution has tended decrease – societies are less ready to accept human losses and the high costs of intensive conflicts far away from home. However, staying out also proved not to be an option, as regional conflicts were seen as one of the main sources of terrorism (Solana 2003). This development has also been explained as a value shift from a modern to a postmodern stage (Cooper & Burrell 1988). The resources which were available before for reactive and military intervention are not available today.

This process is reflected most of all in Europe. One of the main aims to create the EU with a three pillar system was to give member states more efficient tools for maintaining regional security and solving crises, using the already existing EC structures and resources. The main question was how to ensure stability, democracy and independence in transition countries while adhering at the same time to European value standards (the rule of law, the emphasis on human life as well as human rights). This new situation had three main characteristics: first, any escalated crisis in these regions that required reactive measures tended to bring with it automatically high (unacceptable) costs both in terms of economic and human casualties, but also cross-border influence; second, neither the European Union nor any of its member countries had any instruments for managing such complex crises; generally they also lacked the political will to create such instruments; and third, using reactive measures tended to escalate the conflicts.

One of the most intriguing conceptualizations of the problem can be seen if we combine two separate theories: Barrington Moore on democratization and the work by Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder on the link between democratization and war. According to Moore, democratization that is imposed or driven by external influences will tend to cause a reemergence of regime instability and crises (Moore 1967). Following the research by Mansfield and Snyder, countries undergoing regime transition (and especially democratization) will tend to be more aggressive and war-prone (both outward and against autonomies or minorities) (Snyder 2000). To this we can add a third consideration – to what extent does the promotion of democracy, by an organization such as the EU, realistically reduce that country's scope for manoeuvre or reduce its self-determination or even sovereignty? These considerations imply that any democratization process can have three possible consequences—democracy, stability and self-determination—only, but only two of them can be achieved simultaneously.

1. Self-determination and democracy with instability.
2. Democracy and stability without self-determination.
3. Stability and self determination without democracy.

As democracy is a priority value, and regional crises are unacceptable for regional powers such as the EU, an important thesis of this article is that in a process of democratization that is promoted or monitored by an external power, the principle of self-determination or/and economic and political autonomy of the democratizing country will be sacrificed. Put in practical terms: if the EU decides to promote democracy and stability, its prioritized instruments will be those which increase target country dependence and develop a conditional assistance relation such as an imbalance in the level of foreign trade with the EU, or dependency on substantial EU aid.

Concerning the remaining two alternatives, the option of self-determination and democracy with instability is worth examining since it involves the emergence of areas of chronic conflict. In these cases the response of an organization such as the EU should be to develop a rapid reaction mechanism for humanitarian intervention.

Dependence (as key variable) is defined in this article as a situation where the subject state(s) obtains from the EU some resource (mainly economic, but also political) vital for their national interest, and is not able to replace it or compensate for its absence (possible third participation can be a critical factor). Dependence is seen as the inevitable effect of economic or political reforms (modernization, transformation) (Gilpin 1987: 282-85).

As an opposite term to dependence this article uses autonomy, sovereignty and self-determination. As they are describing different levels and aspects of independence (Bodin 2001: 58, 59), parallel use will even help to specify the type of possible dependence. Dependence in the form of interdependence can also be binding on all participants (European integration process), but reduces the ability to set conditions (Keohane & Nye 1977). Dependence is usually influenced by geographical and time factors.

Conditionality has a clear connection with dependence, as it is usually possible only in a situation of dependence. Conditionality means in this context a situation where one country is setting demands and conditions on another one, for obtaining economic or political resources. Conditionality varies in scale – from general political or military partnership to very specific demands connected to ratifying essential treaties or lifting economic sanctions. Conditionality is also influenced by subject state willingness to follow conditions – in the 1990s the Baltic states had a quite similar level of dependence first on Russia and later on the EU. Both set conditions for ongoing partnership, with quite contrary results. Conditionality usually indicates waiting for change after the condition is met. It is either the continuation of status quo, or an improvement in relations. The first option could also be interpreted as the imposition of sanctions, the lifting of which is contingent on the subject state's willingness to change.

The theoretical conclusion of this study is that for countries in transition, whose degree of economic/political independence is likely to generate crisis situations, the use of conditionality and the generation of economic/political dependence represent the most effective and reasonable instruments of intervention for organizations such as the EU.

### **Dependence and conditionality in EU policy**

Conditional or dependence components can be readily observed in an analysis of the EU foreign relations network, beginning with the EEC in a wide area starting from development assistance and ending up with WTO. Some political economists (e.g. Robert Gilpin) see the developed dependence creation model, and the following conditionality, as a main source of economic and political success of the EU in world arena. The dependence/conditionality model has also proved to be useful in countering dynamic threats, and influencing crises outside Europe, before these crises impinged on Europe. In situations where crises management was seen inappropriate, and where international law did not support

use of force, economic and diplomatic (soft) measures were considered central. In the development of dependence and conditionality two different lines can be seen:

**Integrated dependence:** with symmetric dependence, there exists a clear competence division between member states (and in some level with candidate countries). It is a stakeholder model, where the member state trades its own sovereignty for influence over other member states. In this situation, the power of the member state can even grow over a long period (as in the cases of Germany and Ireland). Robert Gilpin (1987: 285) introduces this possibility as inclusive and dependent development. The roots of the integrated dependence approach are already in the Schuman Plan and the creation of the ECSC. Key elements here were mutual economic benefit and security, which was later replaced by inseparable economic interdependence and long term solidarity. A half century of prosperity in Western Europe can be seen as the main result. The application of conditionality and dependence policies in the democratization process has proven to be highly successful in avoiding crises. Spain, Greece and Portugal are good examples.

**Dependence model:** implies an asymmetric relationship between countries. Countries seen as possible crises areas are included, with their economic needs and weakness used as levers to advance EU interests. No mutual dependence develops. This approach contains both general post-colonial approaches and the special experience of Europe. Most complex examples here are networks created with developing countries through the Lomé and Cotonou conventions. These are formally presented as equal partnership networks, but are in practice the main EU instruments used to persuade and press ACP countries towards following human rights policies, with economic assistance offered as a “carrot”. The main difference from the previous model, and purposes in that model, is to keep the dependent country sufficiently provided with resources, but to avoid options for changing the patron country or develop independence. This model has also been seen as systematic exploitation: the centre needs for its success the periphery as a market and a raw resource provider. The difference from a neo-colonialist model (economic dominance, military interference, elite collaboration, etc.) is largely theoretical – increasing asymmetry in the dependence relationship is seen as leading to a more neocolonial relationship. The neocolonialist argument is also supported with the Lomé treaty’s 25-years’ experience: the GDP of member states has grown slightly, but economic competitiveness and export quantity has fallen. This model has also faced some major setbacks, as in Middle-East, caused by third party interference by the USA or Russia.

EU and candidate countries' relationships qualify in most aspects for the integrated dependence model, but also have some asymmetric elements. The process was started in spirit of "sovereign self-determination", but was followed by a conditional relationship in which sovereignty was shared only in one way – to candidate countries and by them.

Relations between the EU and Russia or the USA can also be seen through a model of the interdependence prism with some conditional aspects. EC and US relations were supported during the Cold War period by a mutually beneficial partnership, where the military support of the US for European security was developed, using largely EC economic resources. While there was threat from Soviet Russia, the partnership endured. Inseparable dependence did not develop. EU and Russian relations have also in recent years developed towards dependence. On the one hand, trade resources are beneficial for both sides, on the other hand the economy (and dependence with conditionality) is the most effective tool in defending EU member states' interest in Russia (and Ukraine), considering its military and political capability. This partnership is replaceable for both sides, but at high economic cost. The main conditions are connected to human rights and democracy questions and in some aspects of Russian behavior in the "near abroad".

## **EU conflict prevention capabilities and instruments.**

### **Is ESDP the main alternative?**

In the management and prevention of crises, the EU did rely, before the 1990's, on economic measures and conditionality policies. After failure in Kosovo and Bosnia, the last decade has been full of discussions to find alternatives and new models. New initiatives were needed in 2002-2003 to prepare the CFSP and ESDP articles in the Constitutional Treaty. Progress was mainly in institutional, financial and legal aspects, but discussions which general strategy to choose and how to divide roles with member states remained open. It was followed by Secretary General Javier Solana's "EU Security Strategy" presented in 2003. Solana sees terrorism as a main problem, but as it is a result of regional conflicts and state failure, it needs a multilateral approach with preventive and cooperative solutions. The main areas of interest are Middle East, Balkans, Caucasus, Ukraine and Belarus and the main methods mostly are civilian, diplomatic and economic. Being quite successful in defining EU interests, purposes, areas of influence, and potential crises areas, as well as possible partners, it offered very little in developing a solution model.

But Solana's Strategy document represents here only one side, developing ESDP and the creation of a defense dimension is ongoing simultaneously – when it comes to possible selection of options, it must offer more alternatives. When looking for new concepts for regional stability, the main idea is not to replace the existing framework, but to improve it by adding new components. So the question is where to concentrate new investments – to continue to invest in traditional non-military measures or to develop military resources as the least developed part of the EU security model. The tendency towards universality (and desire for universal package for crises management) appeared already in creation of CFSP in 1992 and continued in the creation of ESDP in 1999.

This process has been supported by a restricted number of possible crises areas, starting from Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Middle East and North Africa. At the same time earlier experience and habit in using different models in those areas can be seen as obstacles.

Table 1. Main possible crises areas, following Solana's Strategy document

AREA	TOOLS	PROSPECTIVE TOOLS	INFLUENCE
Ukraine	Economic conditionality	Economic conditionality	Moderate
Belarus	Diplomatic	Economic conditionality	Low
Moldova	Diplomatic	Economic and political conditionality, RRM	Moderate
Middle-East	Diplomatic	Diplomatic	Low
Croatia	Diplomatic and economic	Economic conditionality	Moderate
Macedonia	Diplomatic and economic	Economic conditionality	High
Serbia and Montenegro	Economic and political conditionality, RRM	Economic and political conditionality, RRM	High
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Economic and political conditionality, RRM	Economic and political conditionality, RRM	High

After Kosovo and Bosnia a lot of attention was paid to the idea of using RRM (Rapid Reaction Mechanism) as humanitarian intervention tool for universal managing of emerging regional conflicts. A defined category called Petersberg task mission (Kosovo type) was seen as most appropriate and reliable. However, such a military approach could only be applied selectively – certainly the two biggest (Ukraine and Russia), as well as the intractable Middle-East crises, could not be treated with military measures. The development of the RRM has been heavily influenced by wider guidelines and values set in the Treaty: intervention follows UN, NATO and OSCE positions and action; international law and peaceful solution are seen as their main purpose: in-

ternational need for civilian support in conflict prevention, regulation and rehabilitation.

An already existing network, providing structure and co-operation within NATO was the second main obstacle between member states – NATO members see a duplicative structure as irrational and non-NATO countries mainly do not support the development of military intervention tools. In recent years, previous support by the USA for creating an autonomously capable EU force has gradually changed to concern and, more recently, to outright criticism. The development of the ESDP has also been hindered by its substantial cost to the member states, a cost that is additional to the funding provided for the conditionality and dependence model through the EU budget. Last but not least, doubts about a possible loss of sovereignty and autonomy are preventing some member states from supporting the development of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism and forces.

Nevertheless, when compared with the previous 40 years' efforts and results, recent progress has been quite remarkable. With the creation of the ESDP in 1999, the goal was set for the member states to be ready to provide, collectively, for a full Petersberg task mission consisting of 60 000 men with air and naval support and capacity to stay in the area of conflict for 12 months. Preparations also began for cooperation in intelligence, strategic transportation and subordination. The Helsinki Headline Goal Catalogue and Helsinki Force Catalogue also defined detailed characteristics for member states for participating in Petersberg Task mission. The European Capabilities Action Plan increased the force catalogue to 100 000 men, 400 planes, and 100 ships in order to guarantee more rapid deployment of forces into the area of conflict. In order to avoid possible opposition inside the EU, the possibility for opting out of the ESDP was provided for member states. Denmark was the first member state to make use of it. After the crises in Bosnia and Kosovo, the member states showed some enthusiasm for the development of the RRM, however, this enthusiasm was significantly diminished after the terrorist attacks and anti-terrorist campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. By 2003 the emphasis had shifted back to long term, non-military conflict prevention and resolution measures.

### **Has conditionality and dependence proved to be successful?**

Evaluation of practical cases will help to identify elements of destabilization and elements which increase prospects for success in conflict prevention, with a particular focus on the conditionality and dependence model. To analyze the efficiency of dependence and conditionality

model, two aspects need to be taken into consideration: First, in the process of democratization and conflict prevention, which model of intervention has been used by the EU? Secondly, in comparison with the other main intervention models, how effective have been the EU intervention efforts.

From the position of test-countries, the analysis will focus first on the type (economic, political or military, influencing either autonomy, sovereignty or self-determination) and level (low, moderate, or high in comparison with other cases) of dependence. As the main crises areas marked in Solana's "Security Strategy" are in the Eastern Europe, where one additional variable is Russian influence, the analyzed cases make use of similar earlier experience. The cases – Estonia, Macedonia, Moldova and Georgia – were chosen since they are very different in dependent variable aspect, but are similar in size and geopolitical situation. Other problems in common are numerous minorities in border areas, claiming not just minority rights but autonomy, and the need for external influence to avoid conflict. All 4 countries selected for comparison are in the transition stage towards democracy, but starting conditions, choices, and outcomes by the year 2003 have differed substantially.

Questions to be answered or tested:

1. Which type and level of dependence is presented? The ability to compensate or replace? Possible specific geopolitical, ethno-political or economic aspects?
2. What are the main preconditions and variables for conditionality emerging?
3. Type and level of conditionality, degree of progress, and changes during 13 years?
4. Extent of effectiveness of EU influence by use of dependence/conditionality, possible alternatives?
5. What were the critical variables that provided a successful outcome with conditionality (if used)?

From the theoretical research aspect the analysis could include one more test-country – Belarus, which has chosen a quite rare (for Europe) third option – independence and crises management without democracy and conditionality. But as the case provides very little added value for EU crises management model discussion, it is not tested. Of the selected countries, Estonia has certainly the longest experience with conditionality and therefore the analysis examines the Estonian case in more depth than the others.

## Moldova

Moldova after independence was in a quite promising situation: cultural relations and common past with Romania and no border with Russia. Although it was the first former Soviet republic that elected a communist for president, Moldova headed towards Western Europe and partnership with Romania in the first half of the 1990s. The main problems were concentrated Russian minority (ca 30%) and Russian unwillingness to close its military bases. The economy was highly dependent on exports to Russia (43%). In the 1990s Moldova was westernizing, discussions about rejoining Romania and joining the EU were quite popular, but no practical steps were taken. Due the economic problems (and attempts to overcome them) support for Russian-oriented political parties grew and in 2001 pro-Russian V. Voronin was elected president (instead of pro-national M. Snegur). While limiting its partnership with Romania (trade ca 10%), Moldova has at the same time proved to be a very unstable partner for Russia, participating in most anti-Russian coalitions in the CIS. As a result, no clear dependence relation has developed with Russia or EU, mainly because of the lack of interest of both parties.

The EU is not actively influencing Moldova's democratization, as Romanian membership is only possible at the earliest in 2007, leaving Moldova far from EU borders for many years. Relying economically on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and politically on the OSCE has been proven insufficient. As a result Moldova today is a provisional state, attempting transition, which causes regional problems not because of its strength or aggressive foreign policy, but its weakness and its unstable government. The main difference from Estonia or Macedonia is that Moldova is continuing to follow unconditional relations with EU and Russia.

The Russian approach has been more general and distant, but Moldova was invited to join the Russian-Belarus Union. In any case, Russia is satisfied with the current situation, having achieved its goals in Transdnestria - Russian forces have remained on Moldovan territory east of the Dniester River supporting the Slavic majority population, mostly Ukrainians and Russians, who have proclaimed a "Transdnestrian Republic" (which is officially part of Moldova but in practice self-governing). From a theoretical perspective Russian-Moldova dependence type qualifies more as "exploitative".

In the Moldovan case, similarities with condition setter change seen earlier in Estonia, can be found. The main reason why Moldovan President Voronin surprisingly supported the EU, not Russian, peace plan for Transdnestria, was the Russian supportive reaction in Transdnestrian presidential elections held in 2002. Moldovan political choices are also

slightly influenced by OSCE conditions for crises prevention, and a long border with Ukraine.

## Macedonia

Macedonia achieved independence in November 1991. Being the least developed of the former Yugoslavian republics it managed a fast-paced reform of its economy. The main economic partner was Yugoslavia. Relations with the EU were underdeveloped because of the conflict with Greece, therefore Macedonia was not among the first candidates invited to negotiate accession to the EU. Independent democracy building ended in year 2001, with the ethnic Albanian insurgency. To stabilize the situation in Macedonia, European countries (using EU and OSCE structures) demanded changes in ethnic policies.

Macedonia has followed the path of traditional sovereignty building (reinforced by the geopolitical situation), trying to avoid any external pressure or conditionality. Of all the selected cases, Macedonia has the most balanced foreign trade: export is divided between Serbia and Montenegro 23.1%, Germany 20.6%, Greece 8.8% and Italy 8.6%. Main import partners are Germany 12.6%, Greece 10.9%, Serbia and Montenegro 9.3% and Russia. Foreign debt is also extraordinary low for a transition country: 1.3 bln USD or 650 USD per capita (compare for example with Estonian 2000 USD per capita). Before 2001 the Macedonian economy was interdependent with its main partners, but not causing dependence or conditionality.

From a political perspective the situation was also conducive for independence: Serbia was not able or willing to pressure it and the EU did not have a sufficiently supportive starting situation (not enough economic dependence and co-operative political environment). Possible partnership with the EU was also blocked by the opposition of Greece. After the ethnic Albanian problems in 2001, Macedonia found itself in a new situation, with all OSCE member states stressing strong conditionality and autonomy for the Albanians. As the state had become economically vulnerable and earlier partners Serbia and Montenegro were also facing conditionality, no alternative options were feasible.

After 10 years of a high level of independence Macedonia has ended up with the deepest conditionality level among the four test countries. But in contrast to Moldova and Georgia it has avoided state failure. Macedonia represents a model where a country in transition in supportive geopolitical and economic position, chooses democracy building

without conditionality, missing at the same time both external pressure and guidance. After a successful decade it still ended up with a civil war, economic problems, and the necessity of following conditional relations with EU. The situation after the civil war is quite extraordinary, Macedonia being only lightly economically dependent and well-governed, faces strong pressures in the areas of state autonomy and self-determination.

For the EU, the Macedonian case is providing an example of a possible scenario between humanitarian intervention mission and pure dependence/conditional scenario. Although it did not represent the most comfortable case, with a cooperative elite and strong economic dependence, an emerging crisis was effectively forestalled by European measures. The emergence of the crisis after 10 years of independence suggests that Mansfield's and Snyder's thesis about the instability of democratizing countries (even with stable starting conditions) needs to be considered, and that a sustainable peace requires a preventive conditional policy. When evaluating EU-Macedonia relations from the Gilpin model, change towards conditional/dependence/progress model is evident.

## Georgia

Of all the countries tested, Georgia had most complicated starting conditions. A strong former communist elite, and a lack of industry and technology-based economy. Three different autonomy claims have led to ethnic separation in Abkhazia, Ajaria and South Ossetia (all having their own governments today), and Russian military bases deny the government effective control over the entirety of the state's internationally recognized territory. Problematic areas are also the Pankisi Gorge in the Akhmeti region and the Argun Gorge in Abkhazia, regarded as terrorist training areas. As a result, large swathes of Georgian territory are not controlled by the central government.

Unlike other cases countries facing minority problems, Georgia has large numbers of temporary migrants living in Russia. Economic and trade relations are quite balanced: as only approximately 10 % of foreign trade is with Russia (Turkey is the main partner). Economic development and stability is highly dependent on successful balancing between traditional Russian pressure and a very active US interest (Georgia has one of the highest levels of US foreign aid per capita). Existing dependence is mostly military and political, brought about by a very low level of military expenditure (0.6% from GDP) and, a high number of

foreign troops on Georgian territory. Russia promised to withdraw its troops in 2002 but still has 2 military bases in Georgia. The USA also has military advisers in the country training Georgian troops. Additionally, the OSCE has a monitoring mission. A shift towards change can be seen also in military aspect: in 2001 Georgia hosted naval exercises of 14 NATO members and several post-Soviet countries called "Cooperative Partner – 2001". In 2002 Georgia hosted similar army exercises called "Best Effort 2002".

The main problems however are political, Georgia, left alone (actually in-between Russian, OSCE, EU and USA influence) with its democratization process, faced at the end of 2003 a second political crisis and 'rose revolution' with President Shevardnadze's resignation. The first was in 1991-92 with the overthrow of the government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia. From an EU perspective Georgia belongs to the South Caucasus conglomerate of poor, weak, and unstable states (with Armenia and Azerbaijan), that are part of the Russian sphere of influence. The EU has therefore shown very little initiative in Georgia. To maintain Russian confidence and introduce European values in the region, The Council of Europe and the OSCE have made some joint efforts to improve the electoral system, failing, for the most part, to do so. Once again all three states were analyzed and jointly assessed.

The absence of an EU strategy towards Georgia is simultaneously the cause and result of poor representation of EU interests. At the time when attention was focused on CEE countries, Georgia was left out because of lack of sovereignty and strong Russian and US interests in region. As there were numerous third party players, and central government was weak, no conditional model was possible. Nor did the EU at any time, have a vision or strategy outlining the type of relation or integration that should be developed. A lack of strategy makes it difficult to meet the interests of the Georgian local elite, (finding itself between Russian, EU and USA influence) for concrete institutional framework (like OSCE membership or NATO Euro Atlantic Partnership Council). The EU has only offered a general concept of Europeanizing, concentrating on building democracy, transparency, civilian control etc. as well as some financial support through OSCE for border security and observer missions.

To improve the situation, an existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (1999) will be supported by a Special EU Representative for South Caucasus, beginning in 2003. Developing a special strategy for the South Caucasus republics was discussed in General Affairs and External Relations Council of 16 in June 2003 and it was agreed to return to this question at a later stage. The EU's economic influence has been

growing, through the development of the TRASECA and INOGATE transcontinental transportation projects, as well through the oil pipeline being constructed from Baku to Supsa (in Georgia) and onwards to Jeyhan in Turkey.

Georgia qualifies as a non-conditional democratization case, ending up with active and repeated crises. Georgia represents a completely static example, following only one model during its 13 years of independence: dependence but no conditionality. The fundamental reason for that is the low level of administrative authority. The cases of Georgia and Moldova enable us to see linear relationship between, on one hand, the EU interests for conditionality and target country distance from EU, and, on the other hand, the political willingness of local elites to cooperate.

## Estonia

Estonia, with a common border with Russia and having a long history of Russian, German and Swedish rule, has strong geopolitical and historical support for a possible dependence/conditionality relation.

After re-independence Estonia found itself in economic dependence and conditional relations with Russia. Economic dependence – about 50% of foreign trade with Russia and its CIS partners, was taken into account both in Russian foreign policy and by the EC (later EU). On the Russian side it consisted of strong demands in bilateral relations and a demand to include Russia in the negotiations between EU and Estonia.

Relations between Russia and Estonia are seen as main potential source for conflict or crises. The basic framework for prevention is OSCE where both sides are represented.

The Russian attempt to impose conditionality was unsuccessful due to the following factors: first, meeting its demands would not give any advantage, compared to continuing the status quo and signing some essential treaties. Secondly, after the Russian economic crisis in 1995, the level of exports to Russia diminished to the point of being theoretical.

A rapid re-orientation took place in 1995–1997, and, by 2003, 85% of foreign trade and investment was with EU or with candidate countries.

Conditionality relations can, accordingly, be divided into 3 different periods:

- 1991-1994 Dependence and demands from Russia. No working conditionality, because of political unwillingness

- 1994-1998 Reorientation period, balanced trade and political interests. Beginning of conditionality with EU (general and indirect). OSCE as main condition setter.
- 1997-2003 Accession negotiations with EU, growing economic dependence and clear conditions.

Reorientation from a previous Russian dependency had strong political (but not economical) support immediately after re-independence. Rapid and influential change in the situation was caused by a chain reaction: the first nationalist and market liberal government introduced an uncompromising citizenship and language policy, Russia countered with economic sanctions and a list of demands (focused on the question of Russian minority status). Finding itself under strong Russian pressure, in the middle of 1995 the choice for Estonia was either dependence and conditions from EU and NATO, or meeting Russian conditions. Since Estonia had successfully negotiated the closing of Russian military bases, and since Russian political parties never succeeded in joining forces, the only dependence was economic: foreign trade and balance of payments. The main question was whether Estonia could compensate for, or replace, import of raw materials and oil, and find new markets for its products, however, as the Russian market was already closing, it was left with only one option.

In the process of decreasing Russian economic influence and developing partnership with EU countries, Russia started to use the OSCE, Council of Europe and the EU in conditionality. From 1993-98, OSCE conditions played a central role in the EU-Estonia-Russia relationship triangle. After his visit to Estonia, CSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities Max van der Stoep made numerous recommendations regarding Estonian ethnic policy. As CSCE (OSCE) positive approval in human rights question was seen as a precondition for EU accession, and, at the same time Russia was actively following a line of sanctions and conditions against Estonia, this period can be seen as a transitional or double-conditionality stage. With the submission of her EU membership application in 1995 Estonia developed all main preconditions for irreplaceable economic and political dependence with EU. This led to marginalization of trade with Russia (generally to the same level as with Latvia). Following the government's unwillingness to meet Russian conditions, the EU can be seen, from 1999 on, as the main condition setter. Political relations with the USA and economic relations with Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine provided some balancing effect for growing dependence. During the EU membership negotiations, the situation has continued to develop in the same direction: Estonian foreign trade bal-

ance is growing and is in deep deficit, and is being balanced only by investments and pre-accession partnership with the EU. In exchange, Estonia has improved its citizenship policy, followed the EU rules in fiscal and economic policy, environmental policy, legal harmonization, etc.

It was very logical for the EU in the middle of the 1990s to start conditional relation with Estonia: given its resource supply and export market problems, the highest trade deficit in the CEE countries (compensated by EU investments and aid), and the high foreign debt per capita, Estonia was in no position to reject the opportunity. Assistance has consisted of financial support, opening EU market for Estonian exports and administrative assistance. Support was directly connected to control, evaluation and conditionality. Detailed conditions were followed by the Copenhagen Criteria and at the same time took into account concrete Estonian problems. The main demands and conditions towards membership were:

1. Democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for minority rights. The main concerns were about Russian-speaking minority status – social and political inclusiveness.
2. Free market and the ability to manage in the EU single market conditions. A large foreign trade deficit was seen as a possible source for crises.
3. Administrative capacity and legal harmonization. In recent years, according to progress reports, these are seen as the most problematic.

The EU Commission's Delegation in Estonia acted as a central body and the annual Candidate countries' Progress Reports were the main benchmark for documenting progress.

Estonia's size would leave the possibility also for an alternative approach (similar to Macedonia). As nationalist parties were highly influential during the 1990s, an Estonian government left without external conditions could follow a rather radical minority policy, which could cause Russian-supported unrest in northeastern Estonia and the need for external assistance. A "Macedonian scenario" could mean staying out from the first enlargement round and economical stagnation for Estonia.

From the EU perspective, Estonia's progress has certainly been one of success. From complicated starting conditions in 1991 – Russian military bases, minority problems evaluated as highly dangerous (OSCE), economic dependence on Russia, Estonia has emerged by 2004 as a new EU member state. In recent years political partnership with USA has developed rapidly, on the one hand it is based on similar traditional security and economic values, on the other hand some negative influence has been

caused by EU conditions to simplify language and citizenship policy. The Estonian conservative-national coalition finds partnership (and conditions) with USA more attractive on account of national sovereignty.

Evaluating Estonia from a theoretical aspect, the pure dependence case can be seen (from 1996), with elements of integration and dependent development. The difference from other test cases is especially noteworthy, considering the quite similar starting conditions. Willingness to accept all the EU conditions to gain support and accession was the consistent policy of all Estonian governments. This model has also proved to be beneficial for Estonia – resulting in internal stability, successful administrative reforms, and currently one of the fastest rates of GDP growth in Europe.

### Data 1. Comparative conditions to Estonia

#### RUSSIA 1991–1998:

1. Special status for Russian language and culture
2. Either Estonian or Russian citizenship by applicant's preferal. (Later, citizenship for military pensioners and non-citizens' children)
3. Handing over Nevsky Cathedral to the Russian Orthodox Church
4. Withdraw demand to refer to border line marked in the 1920 Treaty of Tartu
5. Withdraw claim to previously Estonian territory now in the Russian Federation

#### OSCE 1993–2000

1. Soften citizenship policy and language exam demands
2. Take additional measures for minority integration
3. Political and economic inclusiveness
4. Solving identification and travel documentation problems

#### EU 1995–2003

1. Democracy, rule of law, human rights and respecting minority rights
2. Free market and ability to manage in single market conditions. Big foreign trade deficit was seen as possible source for crises
3. Administrative capacity and legal harmonization. In recent years, seen as most problematic in pre-accession framework

## Comparative analysis

All four countries tested were quite similar in 1991: small states, neighboring bigger state (Macedonia is an exception), problems with autonomy claims by minority groups supported by neighboring countries and inevitable economic dependence. To evaluate conditionality changes, dependence dynamics is critical variable

Table 2.

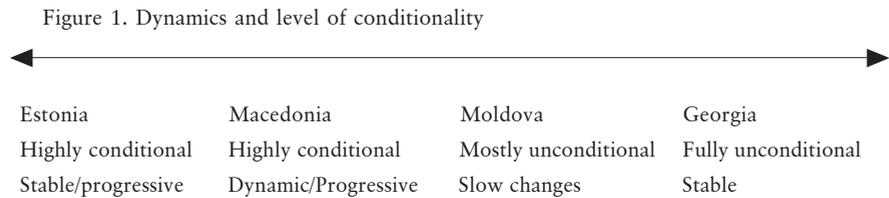
COUNTRY	Georgia	Moldova	Macedonia	Estonia
VARIABLE				
Dependence source and level	Russia (low)	Russia (low)	Yugoslavia (low)	Russia 1991-1995 (moderate)
	US (low)		EU since 2001 (high)	EU 1995–2003 (high)
Dependence purpose	Exploitation	Exploitation	Dependence/development	Dependence/development
Economical dependence	Low	High	Low	High
Political dependence	High	Low	High	High
Geopolitical conditions towards dependence	Strongly supportive	Balanced	Not supportive	Supportive
State authority and autonomy	Failed	Low	Moderate	High
Democratization success	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
Crises prevention success	Failed	Low	Failed	High
Economic development, GDP PPP	\$3200	\$2500	\$5000	\$11000
Conditionality model	No	No	1991- 2001: no 2001: detailed	Detailed
Conditions source	No	No	OSCE, EU	OSCE, EU
Conditionality progress with EU	No	No	Developing	Stable
Specialty	State failure	Separation	Minority autonomy	Full political support for conditionality

Estonia represents the highest degree and stability of dependence, the only change or progress is source of condition: first Russia and then the EU, with the difference that Russian conditions were rejected, whereas EU conditions have been seen as one of the most important political priorities.

Macedonia is the most dynamic of the compared countries, where dependence on the EU was, until 2001, considerably lower for a long period, where the state was more sovereign, and where only local tensions and military fighting required external reactive measures.

Moldova, situated on the periphery of the EU regional security concept border and more within the Russian zone of influence, represents a strong case of a state not having high dependence or remarkable conditional relation with the EU, ending up with a provisional state. Moldova is facing the similar syndrome as Georgia: the economy is dependent and political elite looks for possible partners, but because of weak authority and resources, neither Romania, Russia nor EU have started cooperating in order to improve relations and conditionality relation. It does not mean that Moldova has not shown any attempts or dynamics – the first period of pro-Europeanism was replaced by a pro-Russian, and by 2003, the first signs of an U-turn towards EU and NATO can be observed.

In the middle of axis (Figure 1) Macedonia and Moldova represent a dynamic pair moving from independence towards conditionality and co-operation. While dependence has grown in both counties, conditionality shows progress only in Macedonia: this highlights the importance of local political will and autonomy.



Georgia represents a stable form of dependence in all of its aspects. Combined with a lack of self-determination and ability to control its territory, conditional relations are quite weak (restricted largely to negotiating with Russia and the US for military bases) and non-EU in origin. The Georgian example is more analogous to pure Russian neo-colonialism. To prevent possible confrontation with Russia or USA, the EU has attempted to develop conditional relations. The experience of recent history (civil war, 3 separations, and 2 overthrows of an elected president), suggests that isolation, or counting on the Russian conditionality model efficiency, is not conducive to regional peace.

According to the test cases, the EU willingness and level of intervention depends on two main variables – distance from the EU border and political support for conditionality. Estonia, being less than 100 kilometers from the EU border, and ready to accept conditions, has received the most support. Moldova was for a long period the second favorite, but after the Romanian failure to stay among acceding member states, and the political elite’s re-orientation towards Russia, it gains less interest. Macedonia may gain some benefits from Slovenian membership, while the possible Alba-

nian refugee problem, and its economic consequences, have induced the political elite to accept European conditions.

The analysis also indicated once again that conditionality can emerge only at a level of high dependence, a situation supported by political willingness of both sides. While small states in principle tend to be more dependent, all test countries had at least 2 possible dependence choices, and some smaller partners for additional balancing. Therefore, the conditional relation thus created is a political choice not a historical or geopolitical process. The analysis supported the hypothesis that in the democratization process one or more of its main goals need to be sacrificed: either stability or independence.

Why does conditionality work and develop once started? The logic is quite similar to the success of integration after the creation of the ECSC. Growth of wealth is at the heart of this process. By bringing stability (by minority status development, offering new markets or counterbalancing big neighbors), conditionality supports economic development. It leads to economic development, which brings new supporters among the elite and ethnic minority groups. Possible sources and initiators of instability – minority groups – benefit through economic development (like in Estonia) or representation (Macedonia), and begin to cooperate. Ending dependence with the EU resulted in economic setback and instability. No governing coalition has been prepared to face a possible loss of popularity among voters and financiers.

## Conclusions

In a world where security considerations set democracy and sovereignty as priorities, and rapid reaction mechanisms as the main crises regulation tool, concepts of dependence and conditionality may seem obsolete. Economic suggestions and evaluations from EU and IMF to CEE countries, often offer criticism of the too dependent developing countries. States with imbalanced foreign trade, payments balance deficit and low military costs, are often listed as possible sources of regional insecurity and receive demands to improve their capacity to act independently.

However, practical analysis indicates quite the opposite result: countries with continuous control and conditionality manage to avoid major crises. State failure or governance problems arise mostly in countries that have high levels of self-determination and sovereignty. In a crisis or provisional state stage, those countries have two options, either to head uncon-

ditionally towards full state failure (Georgia), or to turn to conditionality (like Macedonia). Conditionality relations from the EU proved to be stabilizing method, giving in a 13 years period not only economic advantages but also higher state authority and autonomy. But conditionality cannot be seen as a determined consequence of crises, dependence and EU neighborhood: a linear dependence between setting conditionality and existing autonomy appeared – even highly dependent countries do not have conditional relations when they do not control their territory.

On the other hand, political willingness of the subject country is the second relevant factor for developing conditional relation. From a tactical viewpoint, conditionality proves to be more successful when presented within a positive framework – offering changes and advantages is more effective than offering continuing status quo. In situations where sufficient preconditions were met, the dependence/ conditionality model proved to work very effectively. The third main variable is motivation on the part of the EU to begin an intervention and development program with conditional method

The Georgian example also proves quite clearly that attempts to get results without a “stick and carrot method” are very inefficient: years of OSCE mission and millions of euros did not prevent civil war and the overthrow of the president. Together with the Estonian experience it leads to the conclusion that the overall results of conditionality are directly dependent on positive outcomes, such as potential membership in an attractive club (EU), increased financial potential, and economic growth. Adding the Russian, Ukraine and Belarussian cards into the European crises management map, changes the situation only slightly – the key method is the creation economic dependence and the ensuing conditional relations. Since these countries do follow modern security values, the EU would also benefit from having appropriate military tools, which, it must be noted again, can not be used effectively for the purpose of achieving postmodern security goals.

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## Estonia Adrift: Caught in the Crosswinds of the EU's Constitutional Debate

Ahto Lobjakas

In what follows, I will argue two points. Firstly, that Estonia's policy towards the EU has suffered from unprecedented confusion in 2003, evident from the increasingly erratic behaviour of the government in the course of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) charged with the task of providing the Union with a constitution. I will not attempt to analyse the root causes of the confusion at any length since they lie in the body politic of Estonia, which has operated relatively unaffected by any active outside pressure in 2003. Secondly, whilst the confusion has produced no irremediable results so far, it has served to isolate Estonia on the European scene and should this situation persist, the country's ability to benefit from EU membership will be severely harmed.

I

Estonia faces a problem. It saw out 2003 as a de facto member state of the European Union and NATO. In 2004 this state of affairs will in all likelihood be complemented by the acquisition of full voting rights in both organisations.

Yet Estonia has no comprehensive plan, strategy or vision for coping with this situation. On 5 November 2003, foreign minister Kristiina Ojuland told the Estonian parliament (Riigikogu) that the government is still assembling an overarching framework to guide the country in the process of assuming and exercising the rights and duties of EU membership: "The Government is presently formulating Estonia's general long-

term priorities as a member of the European Union.”<sup>1</sup> This is part of the larger exercise of replacing Estonia’s existing National Security Doctrine, which is also currently under review.<sup>2</sup>

In the absence of up-to-date strategic guidelines, in particular with regard to the EU, Estonia’s handling of the pre-dominant EU agenda item in 2003 – the constitutional debate within the framework of the currently interrupted Intergovernmental Conference – has been at worst erratic or at best difficult to comprehend.

The security doctrine nominally still in effect dates from March 2001. The document notes that the guidelines it contains were set out for “the soon-to-be-completed phase of our Euro-Atlantic integration.” As such, the doctrine is arguably outdated and in fact proffers no specific instructions for how to handle the next phase of that integration process.

The most stable feature in Estonia’s foreign policy posture throughout the year 2003 has been an overriding concern with the principle of self-determination. Its sister notion, as the constitutional debate unfolded and Estonia’s government gradually acquired a sense of ownership of it, has been the principle of “equality between member states.” Both appear in most, if not all major policy statements throughout 2003.

All other goals and values have held secondary status. They have either been quietly relinquished in the course of the year, toppled by actions intrinsically incompatible with their spirit, or they are simply too general to test in practice.

## II

Estonia’s position at the IGC and the changes it has undergone throughout the proceedings are easiest described in essentially negative terms. Views conditioned by the country’s earlier outsider status when uncontroversial generalities were both preferred for tactical reasons and seemed inevitable given the lack of access to EU decision-making sharpened considerably as national interest acquired focus. As a rule, these views tended to move away from affirming the initial blanket acceptance of the IGC’s predefined goals such as further integration, deepening cooperation and

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<sup>1</sup> Kristiina Ojuland, 5/11/2003, speech to the Riigikogu, “Main Guidelines of Estonia’s Foreign Policy”, [http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat\\_140/4131.html?arhiiv\\_kuup=arhiiv](http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat_140/4131.html?arhiiv_kuup=arhiiv)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

making the EU more effective. Instead, the Estonian position gradually displayed a growing tendency towards self-assertion, which at times appeared to take little within the EU as a given.

Thus, starting from the more abstract, rhetoric dating from the late 2002 abounds with “congenial” nods towards the entire undifferentiated enterprise of European integration.

Speaking at a think tank in Brussels in October, the Estonian foreign minister Kristiina Ojuland observed that the IGC and enlargement should lead to the EU being reborn as a “new whole,” which “people find more congenial and which will have clearer goals than before.” Ojuland added that the EU must also become “ever more comprehensible” for its citizens.<sup>3</sup>

In December, delivering her twice-yearly summary of the main foreign policy developments to the Riigikogu, the minister noted that it is in Estonia’s interests that the IGC produce a “workable and effective” EU, and that Estonia supported reforms aimed at making the Union’s institutions more transparent, effective and democratic.<sup>4</sup>

These concerns underwent a gradual loss of priority in 2003 and do not appear in any clear shape or form in either of the two keynote addresses by Ojuland before the Estonian Parliament. By December 2003, after the collapse of the IGC talks at the Brussels summit, neither Ojuland or prime minister Juhan Parts saw any “tragedy or drama” in the fact that a relatively mundane dispute over voting weights prevented the loftier ideals from being realised.

The same picture is repeated when it comes to the Union’s coherence and effectiveness as an actor on the world stage. In October 2002, facing an audience of Brussels diplomats and academics, Estonia’s foreign minister was insistent that the EU must have a “clear image” in the eyes of its partners. Estonia would settle for no less than a highly effective, united Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), she said.

We also expect that the on-going reforms will establish a clear image of the European Union in the eyes of the Union’s outside partners. For Estonia an essential factor in our accession efforts is the desire to belong to a body, which has clearly defined goals and is capable of dealing with international questions. In today’s world there are many challenges, which call for the European Union to step forth as a compact unit and speak with one voice. When such matters arise it would be desirable to see the EU arrive at a quicker

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<sup>3</sup> Kristiina Ojuland, 23/10/2002, speaking at the European Policy Institute, Brussels [http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat\\_140/2961.html?arhiiv\\_kuup=arhiiv](http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat_140/2961.html?arhiiv_kuup=arhiiv)

<sup>4</sup> Kristiina Ojuland, 19/12/2002, speech to the Riigikogu, “Main Guidelines of Estonia’s Foreign Policy,” [http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat\\_140/3255.html?arhiiv\\_kuup=arhiiv](http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat_140/3255.html?arhiiv_kuup=arhiiv)

consensus, so that with clearly stated tactics and policy positions a plan of action could be established, which would coincide with the member states' common interests.<sup>5</sup>

In December 2002, this time in front of a domestic audience of MPs, Ojuland emphatically states that an "EU integration policy only makes sense if it is capable of ... influencing global policies which will determine the future."<sup>6</sup>

Albeit less forcefully, this ambition reappears in later statements. In November 2003, the Estonian foreign minister says that Estonia fully shares the need to strengthen the EU's global role, adding that Estonia must "do everything" to ensure that the CFSP is effective and consistent. However, Russia makes an appearance in the very next paragraph, appearing to lend the consistency sought a more immediately pragmatic edge.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, in documents prepared for internal official consumption towards the end of the IGC, attempts to extend qualified majority voting to CFSP remain perhaps the leading anathema to the Estonian government in the run-up to the Brussels summit in December 2003. If asked, the Estonian delegation at the Brussels IGC summit would also have argued against affording the proposed EU's "double-hatted" foreign minister any degree of independence from member state governments or allowing him/her to chair the meetings of the External Affairs Council.

Again, a similar pattern characterises developments in attitudes towards Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) in general. In June 2003 Ojuland told the Riigikogu that enlargement and the "ever closer integration of new ideas render it necessary to make many changes in previous operating procedures. For instance, a wider introduction of the qualified majority voting system."<sup>8</sup> Yet, the government went to the Brussels summit that December opposing any extension of QMV anywhere.

In the same speech, the minister also emphasises that Estonia is "definitely of the opinion" that future EU development must proceed on the basis of community method.<sup>9</sup> The term "community method" is commonly held to stand in opposition to the "intergovernmental method" under which national governments retain the bulk of decision-making powers. Within the intergovernmental method itself, qualified majority voting is the most communal form of decision-taking. No evidence can

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<sup>5</sup> Ojuland, 23/12/2002, op.cit.

<sup>6</sup> Ojuland, 19/12/2002, op.cit.

<sup>7</sup> Ojuland, 5/11/2003, op.cit.

<sup>8</sup> Kristiina Ojuland, 5/6/2003, speech to the Riigikogu, "Main Guidelines of Estonia's Foreign Policy", [http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat\\_140/3760.html?arhiiv\\_kuup=arhiiv](http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat_140/3760.html?arhiiv_kuup=arhiiv)

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

be found throughout the IGC of any active Estonian preference for extending the powers of the Commission or moving additional policy areas to community competence.

In September 2003, Estonia's prime minister Juhan Parts told the Riigikogu that the new constitutional treaty is expected to extend the use of QMV into areas previously subject to national vetoes, and as "it is in the interests of Estonia to have an effective Europe, we welcome in principle such a development."<sup>10</sup>

However, the prime minister then immediately proceeded to rule out QMV in "sensitive" tax, social policy, and CFSP issues. Parts' speaking notes at the Brussels summit in December 2003 state that the proposals of the Italian presidency to extend QMV to three areas are "unacceptable." The document traces the problem back to the draft constitution which was prepared by the Convention on the Future of Europe. The Estonian position at the Brussels summit does not contain a single reference to the wish to either further extend QMV to other areas or to make greater use of it in fields where it already partially applies.

### III

When it comes to the ways and means which Estonia brought to bear on EU decision-making as a *de facto* member state since 16 April when the accession treaty was signed, there is a comparable gap between rhetoric and action. Previously avowed values such as active participation and Estonia's susceptibility to reasonable compromise, prominent in 2002 and early 2003, waned steadily as the December 2003 Brussels summit and with it the expected culmination of the IGC drew closer.

When Juhan Parts called Estonian thinkers and analysts in June to launch a debate on what he called the country's "Europhilosophy," he – most likely unwittingly – couched a call to full scale involvement in shaping the future EU in terms that by the turn of the year would sound ironic, to say the least.

"We must boldly break through to the "core" of Europe," wrote Parts in an opinion piece in the daily *Eesti Päevaleht*, intended to get a debate going, "and take part in as many forms of EU cooperation as possible."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Juhan Parts, 29/9/2003, speech to the Riigikogu on the project of the Constitutional Treaty, [http://www.peaminister.ee/et/base\\_pm?file=kone&news\\_id=7281&language=et](http://www.peaminister.ee/et/base_pm?file=kone&news_id=7281&language=et)

<sup>11</sup> Juhan Parts, 27/06/2003, "Märkmed Euroopast [Notes on Europe]", *Eesti Päevaleht*, [http://www.peaminister.ee/et/base\\_pm?file=kone&news\\_id=6932&language=et](http://www.peaminister.ee/et/base_pm?file=kone&news_id=6932&language=et)

This was a highly unfortunate choice of metaphor, given that Estonia was one of the very few member states – new or old – to greet the breakdown of IGC talks in Brussels in December 2003 with equanimity. Estonia was by all accounts also the only member state to flatly rule out participation in the “core Europe” arrangements tentatively floated by Germany and France on the last day of the summit.

Parts went on to say in June 2003 that Estonia must send its “best cadres” to Brussels whose task would be to “act’ Estonia great” and “earn the trust of others.”<sup>12</sup>

A month earlier, the prime minister had promised a predominantly foreign audience in Brussels that Estonia “must learn the ways of the Union”, and become adept at bargaining, compromise, and identifying the “common European interest.” He then explicitly stressed that the view that Estonia wants to join the EU for economic reasons is “misguided.”<sup>13</sup>

Yet, as this article will show later, the economy is the only area where Estonia sees concrete gains from EU membership. It also constitutes the only field in EU decision-making in which Estonia’s government has consistently and actively argued for greater reforms.

Again, as the IGC marched on, views hardened and were pared down to their visceral essentials, which can only be described as self-assertion above anything else. Thus by November, the professed predilection for bargaining and compromise had given way to a far more warlike mood.

Evoking the gritty imagery of pastoral survival in pre-industrial Estonia of Anton Hansen Tammsaare, one of Estonia’s literary greats, foreign minister Ojuland writes on 5 November of a “struggle for life” that pits those intent of putting the brakes on European integration – such as Estonia – against those intent on creating a political Union. On no account, she says, must Estonia let itself be swayed by its opponents, let alone bow to the dictate of others.<sup>14</sup>

Ojuland then pointedly attacks the dominance of the Franco-German engine, which according to the established view has quite uncontroversially and incontestably spurred many of the moves towards greater integration. This practice of a few countries deciding “everything important, acting as a so-called engine of the European Union” must not continue, concludes Ojuland.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Juhani Parts, 21/5/2003, Address at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Brussels, [http://www.peaminister.ee/et/base\\_pm?file=kone&news\\_id=6784&language=et](http://www.peaminister.ee/et/base_pm?file=kone&news_id=6784&language=et)

<sup>14</sup> Kristiina Ojuland, 4/11/2003, “Pärast pidu tuleb argipäev,” Postimees, <http://www.postimees.ee/051103/esileht/118183.php>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## IV

That nothing is quite what it seems in Estonia's current foreign policy is perhaps most evident when it comes to choosing friends, and increasingly often, enemies.

Estonia's erratic drift away from accepting a political dimension in European integration, coupled with a relentless and officially amply advertised gravitation towards making the so-called British "red lines" in the IGC – retention of the national veto rights in taxation, social policy and foreign policy – the be-all and end-all of Estonian policy had appeared to cause sufficient unease in Berlin by early autumn for the German ambassador to Estonia to give it voice in a fairly straightforward manner in the daily *Eesti Päevaleht* in October.<sup>16</sup>

The German Ambassador, Jürgen Dröge, points to a number of worrying developments in Estonia's European strategy. Dröge notes that "contradictory statements" from Estonia's leaders – who, he observes, are predominantly "young" – make it difficult to establish what role the country envisages for itself in an enlarged EU. He says an inclination to completely reject further integration has become clearly discernible and argues that politicians who subscribe to this view have not understood that "Europe has always striven for something more than being just an economic project." Dröge predicts that Estonia's "no-saying" threatens it with isolation, citing the Schengen agreement and the euro as examples of how national vetoes have forced integration projects outside the EU framework.<sup>17</sup> Dröge's last observation is remarkably acute, considering that Germany and France wasted no time after the collapse of the Brussels summit in evoking the idea of a "core Europe" for faster integration, possibly outside the framework of the current *acquis*.

Dröge's concerns appeared to make little impression on Tallinn, and merely earned him a stiff "carpeting" by the foreign ministry.

Dröge's intervention took place at a time when Estonian policy-makers were making renewed efforts to find and demonstrate the existence of like-minded allies. Whereas during the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe Estonia's representatives participated actively in joint initiatives with groups of smaller and medium-sized current and future member states, whose work was predominantly organised by Ireland and Austria, such cooperation all but ceased once the IGC got underway. Most notably, Estonia declined to sign a letter to the EU's then Italian presi-

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<sup>16</sup> Jürgen Dröge, 30/10/2003, "Mis mulle muret teeb [What worries me]," *Eesti Päevaleht*, [http://www.epl.ee/artikkel\\_249039.html&P=1](http://www.epl.ee/artikkel_249039.html&P=1)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

dency, initiated by Finland and signed by six other countries, most of them Estonia's erstwhile allies in the Convention. Finnish officials confirmed at the time that Estonia was offered a chance to endorse the mis- sive which asked for the mandate of the soon-to-begin IGC to be more clearly defined in a number of relatively innocuous respects.<sup>18</sup> Tallinn's re- sultant refusal to sign the letter was never satisfactorily explained. It seems likely that Tallinn's enthusiasm may have been dampened by the prominent presence of the term "community method" in the list of principles the seven heads of governments urged the IGC to respect.

Meanwhile, Estonia's search for allies yielded a heavyweight trophy in the shape of the United Kingdom. The prime ministers of the two countries published a joint letter in the *Financial Times* and the Estonian daily *Postimees* on 3 October, setting out a joint case for keeping veto rights in the fields of taxation and social policy and arguing strongly for the benefits of unimpeded pan-European tax competition.<sup>19</sup>

After the publication of the article, some leading lights in Estonian foreign policy began to speak of the "Britainisation" of Estonia's Euro- pean policy. This was done above all to indicate Estonia's general reluc- tance to accept further integration, but also to register more specific op- position to relinquishing veto rights in the fields of taxation and social policy, as well as within the CFSP.

A parallel feature of the "Britainising" manoeuvre was a renewed and well-publicised hostility towards countries whose views of European inte- gration and topical global issues diverged from those of the UK. In its coverage of the Blair-Parts letter, the daily *Eesti Päevaleht* quotes Henrik Hololei, a leading Parts adviser, as saying it is "Estonia's strength that its vision coincides with that of Britain." An adjacent comment attributed to an anonymous Estonian diplomat notes that in order to succeed in the European Union, a country like Estonia needs friends, "but the support of one strong member state is absolutely essential." A further unattributed comment in the same piece adds that whilst Britain is in the process of becoming Estonia's main backer in the EU, convergence of views with Germany and France has "recently not been quite complete."<sup>20</sup>

However, while in Germany the following month, Estonia's prime minister Juhan Parts appeared to bend over backwards to give an entirely different impression.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.government.fi/tiedostot/pdf/fi/43265.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Tony Blair, Juhan Parts, 3/10/2003, "Laienev Euroopa vajab konkurentsi [The enlarged EU must be free to compete]," <http://www.postimees.ee/031103/esileht/arvamus/117972.php>

<sup>20</sup> *Eesti Päevaleht*, 3/10/2003, "Partsile ja Balirile teeb muret Euroopa konkurentsivõime [Parts and Blair worried about Europe's competitiveness]," <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel.php?ID=249339>

German papers quote him as saying Estonia would be a “good and reliable” partner after enlargement, and a “friend of Germany,” which it sees as its “door, window and way” to Europe, and with which Estonia works closely together both “culturally and politically.”<sup>21</sup>

Apart from affirming Estonia’s close ties to Germany, Parts also offers a picture of Estonia’s European ambition that bears little resemblance to official utterances either before or after the visit.

The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung quotes him as saying that Estonia supports actively a “strengthened Europe,” and is not only prepared, but ready for closer integration.<sup>22</sup>

Another German paper, *Der Tagesspiegel*, quotes Parts as saying in an interview that for Estonia, “everything is negotiable” in the EU’s constitutional talks. The Estonian prime minister, according to the paper, is also keen to allay German concerns on one of the key issues for Berlin – the strength of the European Commission, saying that a stronger Europe needs a stronger Commission. He also notes that Europe does need “driving forces” to move it forward.<sup>23</sup>

To drive home the apparent point that Estonia is a committed and constructive partner for Germany in its European and global endeavours, the FAZ enlists the Estonian president Arnold Rüütel, who is said to have affirmed in a speech in Finland a few days earlier that Estonia supports “deepening” the CFSP. The paper then adds – without making explicitly clear whether it is quoting Parts or Rüütel – that the strength of Estonia’s attachment to Europe is evident from the fact that a few days prior to Parts’ visit, it had not signed a declaration by 17 Central and Eastern European countries affirming strong ties to the US as central to European security.<sup>24</sup>

It bears noting that the German coverage of Parts’ visit elicited no comment from either the government or the media in Estonia. Equally, the views expressed by Parts in Germany found no reflection in the official rhetoric or the views expressed or aims pursued subsequently by Estonia within the framework of the IGC.

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<sup>21</sup> Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 24/11/2003, “Auf Estland soll Verlass sein”.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *Der Tagesspiegel*, 24/11/2003, “Estlands Premier: Wir verhandeln über alles”.

<sup>24</sup> FAZ, 24/11/3, op.cit.

## V

At the culmination of the IGC at the Brussels summit in December 2003, Estonia played the part expected of it as one of the smallest member states.

The foreign minister, Kristiina Ojuland, said in an interview to Radio Free Europe (RFE) on 8 December, that the government would take a “pragmatic” line on issues like vote-weighting in QMV decisions. Earlier in November, in another interview to RFE, Ojuland had described Estonia’s preference for the Nice Treaty arrangements as a “national interest,” which would give Estonia an appreciable edge over “competitors” within the EU.

In her interview in December, Ojuland indicated Estonia would be content to leave the Brussels summit with three basic compromises that had emerged from the EU foreign ministers “conclave” meeting in Naples in late November. These were a full-fledged commissioner for each member state at least until 2015, an assurance that Estonia can field at least five Members of the European Parliament (down from the initial six, but up from the four offered in the draft constitution), and a simplified arrangement for constitutional change subject, nevertheless, to consent by member state parliaments should at least one object.

Ojuland struck a conciliatory note in the interview, saying she expected compromises to emerge as “the European Union has endured thanks to compromises.”

Estonia’s formal position at the summit, however, did not diverge perceptibly from the hardened late-2003 lines described above, which found little in the final amendments or the initial Convention draft text to prefer to the Nice Treaty. However, officials clearly gave to understand that Estonia alone was not expecting to be able to block agreement on any key issue.

When the summit foundered when Poland and Spain on the one hand and Germany and France on the other failed to agree on a redivision of voting power in QMV decisions, Estonia’s representatives did not appear particularly concerned. Prime minister Parts and foreign minister Ojuland both repeatedly told journalists on 13 December that the result was “not a tragedy.” Both also offered the apparently coordinated response that the result demonstrated that no member state can be “steamrollered.”

In a considered retake on the summit, Parts wrote in the daily *SL-Õhtuleht* that what had happened was “not a crisis” for the EU. Instead, the events proved that for Europe to proceed “everyone’s positions must be respected.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Juhan Parts, 18/12/2003, “Euroopa ei saa kunagi valmis [Europe will never be finished],” *SL-Õhtuleht*, <http://www.sloleht.ee/index.aspx?s=parts&cid=150503>

In what followed, Parts borrowed a phrase more conventionally associated with backers of a strong constitution – its “quality” – defining it, though, as a function of satisfying the national interests of the member states.

What matters to Estonia is the content and quality of the treaty, as well as balance between the larger and smaller member states. What is important is that all member states are content with the treaty and that Europe is strengthened by it. A treaty attained by ignoring the crucial national interests of some member states cannot lay the groundwork for a strong, united and effective Europe. Europe’s common interest can only be what has been agreed by all member states and no member states must have the right to monopolise the interest of Europe.<sup>26</sup>

Parts concluded by saying he believe the treaty “will happen,” because “Europe needs a new and unified basic treaty to make it clearer, more effective, more transparent allowing it to respond to the challenges posed by globalisation.”<sup>27</sup>

## VI

Inconsistencies in Estonia’s core policy positions, their unpredictable and erratic application and the seemingly unchecked opportunism in forging alliances and canvassing for support have not in themselves significantly affected the role the country has so far played in the IGC. As officials often privately acknowledge, Estonia is too small to make a difference alone.

However, the confusion does suggest some important caveats pertinent to the question of how the country will fare as a full member of the EU.

Firstly, the view of Estonia’s present government of the EU’s driving dynamic, its goals and future development diverges in fundamental respects from interpretations prevalent in the present Union and most of the new member states. Estonia expressly rejects the idea of “variable geometry,” although important advances such as the single currency and the Schengen Treaty were and remain the result of political will that is not necessarily shared by all of the member states. Specifically, Estonia also rejects the way Germany and France have often in the past acted as the “engine” of European development.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

This is a view that not only denies the obvious, it also threatens Estonia with future political isolation should the “core Europe” idea re-evoked by Germany and France in the aftermath of the Brussels summit go ahead. Estonia’s analysis of such an eventuality remains painfully inadequate and the government’s response can only be described as reflex action. A “core Europe” has so far been described as unlikely and undesirable, and the closest the government has come to a considered plan of action to prepare itself for tackling a potential problem was to suggest at the end of the Brussels summit that other “regional” blocs could be formed, offering alternatives. In its main policy statements throughout 2003, the government has been keen to promote cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, but the chances that this could produce a competitor to a Franco-German orchestrated bloc must be judged negligible.

Further, Estonia seems to reject wholesale the idea of further political integration. Again, this puts the country at odds with the prevalent climate of opinion in the rest of Europe. A related factor, evident from discussions regarding voting power, is Estonia’s determination to resist a demographic dimension to legitimacy within the EU to supplement that provided by the member states.

Instead, Estonia’s present constitutional vision essentially begins and ends with adherence to the principle of “equality of member states.” This is the sole definition the government appears able to provide for a “quality constitution.” Yet the term itself remains undefined and strongly suggestive of the patently absurd possibility that the government is striving for an EU where every member state can veto everything.

It is difficult to see how Estonia can constructively reengage in any discussions on the future of Europe without markedly reassessing its stance on these key issues.

A second set of problems, partly derived from the first, is that there appears to be no field apart from the economy where Estonia is prepared to make a positive contribution to the debate. Consequently, it can hardly expect to benefit from windfalls in other areas.

The government has indeed emerged as a champion of the so-called Lisbon goals set in 2000 with the stated aim of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by the year 2010. Competitiveness and investment in human resources and information technology are perhaps the most palpable contributors to Estonia’s success so far. The country has sought to forge links and learn from the experience of countries like Ireland and Finland, the former being a leading example of how the economic benefits of EU membership can be utilised within the context of a liberal tax regime, and the latter has

once been memorably described by Jeffrey Sachs as managing its brains better than any other country.

But again, selective engagement is unlikely to win Estonia the allies it needs to make the most of EU membership. Already, the government has had to swallow a bitter pill of seeing the December 2003 Brussels summit hand the coveted information security agency to Greece instead of Estonia despite massive lobbying by Tallinn.

More generally, there are a number of areas where the government has recognised time and again Estonia must profit from EU membership. Relations with Russia and the added weight of the EU's common positions here is the most obvious example, but the same goes for justice and immigration issues such as having to manage a difficult stretch of the EU's outside border, as well as immigration and asylum issues which will inevitably arise. Further, Estonia has repeatedly expressed a keen interest in joining the euro as soon as possible. It also expects to benefit from what it hopes are plentiful structural and cohesion funds in the next budgetary period and beyond.

All of these ambitions, however, are to a greater or larger degree vulnerable to difficulties inherent in Estonia's currently isolated position. To attain them, Estonia needs to be flexible and able to build coalitions, have good faith and be seen as having good faith. Either wittingly or unwittingly Estonia has begun limiting its options even before gaining full-fledged membership of the EU.



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## NATO's Baltic Enlargement Before and After 9/11: The Media's View

Mel Huang\*

For years many called Russia's treatment of the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a "litmus test" of how far it has departed from its imperial past. On the same token, others referred to NATO's treatment of the Baltic countries' bids to join the Trans-Atlantic organisation in the same way, describing it a "test case for the credibility of the alliance."<sup>1</sup> NATO Enlargement expert Michael Mandelbaum went further, writing that "NATO expansion is the Titanic of American foreign policy, and the iceberg on which it will founder is Baltic membership."<sup>2</sup>

For three small countries so far away from the United States, the amount of interest in both the political and media worlds is astounding – partly out of curiosity, mostly out of concern. Many serious issues were prominent in the debate about NATO enlargement in general; most notably, as Mandelbaum hinted, is the serious concern of Russia's reaction when dealing with the "Baltic dimension" to NATO enlargement. Most succinctly worded was a comment by John Hall of the Richmond Times-Dispatch: "But when the subject of NATO expansion into these states comes up, newspaper editorials and congressional voices suddenly get all quivery about the dangers of expanding into the former Soviet Union and courting Russian outrage."<sup>3</sup> This would remain an overriding theme in the Baltics-in-NATO debate.

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<sup>1</sup> Amongst many comments to this topic is, for example, by German Bundestag member (CDU) Friedbert Pflüger in the commentary, "Who's Afraid of Round Two?" in *The Washington Times*, 19 March 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Helle Bering, "Many are Called; But Who Will be Chosen for NATO Membership?", *Washington Times*, 2 May 2001.

<sup>3</sup> John Hall, "Russia's NATO Proposal Must Look Eerie to Neighbors", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 22 July 2001.

However, all that appeared to have changed after the United States – and the rest of the world – experienced the shocking terrorist attacks of 9/11. This enlargement became non-controversial overnight, it seems – most noticeably in Washington and Moscow – forcing the rest of the North Atlantic capitals to take notice.

But was it really overnight? Did opinions in Washington’s halls of power change that quickly upon the vision of a smouldering Pentagon, a charred Pennsylvania field, and the heart-wrenching disappearance of two symbols of the Manhattan skyline? An interesting way to test this hypothesis was to analyse the print media in the period before and after the tragic attacks, to show whether it was a natural evolution, or had circumstances accelerated the process.<sup>4</sup>

In this study, the focus for the most part will be on US print media.<sup>5</sup> Opinions and editorials of the major papers, such as the Washington Post, New York Times, Washington Times, and others will be examined. However, more interestingly, some smaller, local papers and their takes on this issue will also feature in this study – demonstrating their influence even in national and international issues. The US media is the target as Washington was and is, after all, the source of momentum or inertia for any NATO enlargement. A few selected items will be drafted in from wire services and other English-language media for colour and perspective. There is little focus on the actual politics and geopolitics of NATO enlargement; instead, the intent is to use media sources to show the evolution of the debate.

## Controversial: Before 9/11

Ever since the first post-Cold War enlargement of NATO, there has been the pressing problem of what to do with the Baltic states and their bids. There of course was the much-reiterated “open door” policy for future round(s) of NATO enlargement; however, there was also the concern voiced specifically over the Baltic bids – namely how that would an-

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<sup>4</sup> There are no exact timeframe to this study; rather, the beginning is marked around the time the Bush foreign policy team is put in place for the first time in the spring of 2001, and the end is in early 2002 when the debate had “moved on” from the Baltics.

<sup>5</sup> I am severely indebted to Peteris Viõielis and Rojs Dauburs amongst others for the sheer amount of media information distributed via the NATO Enlargement Daily Brief (NEDB) – an exhaustive supply of media items concerning the enlargement process. A large bulk of the media sources cited in this piece come directly from its NEDB source. This study would have been impossible without their excellent and dedicated endeavour.

tagonise Russia. As late as March of 2001, the issue remained on the forefront of any discussion relating to the Baltics and NATO. Testifying at the House International Relations Committee, Secretary of State Colin Powell admitted that “there is a unique set of sensitivities” regarding the Baltics, adding that there remains various schools of thought on how many countries (perhaps even zero) would be involved in the NATO enlargement but insisting that Russia will not wield a veto over the decision.<sup>6</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Frank Csongos noted that this was the first time Powell had mentioned the Baltics by name (thus the Bush administration’s concerns) since taking over his job.<sup>7</sup>

By this point, the media had also continued to focus on Russia’s vehement insistence that the Baltics not be admitted into NATO. The *Washington Times*’ influential foreign policy editorial writer Helle Bering suggested in the same month that Russia would at least wish to “postpone any decision on the Baltics until 2005” – ostensibly to correspond with the planned union with Belarus.<sup>8</sup> On the same day, the paper’s editor-at large Arnaud de Borchgrave argued that the Russian general staff remains convinced that the major threat to the country “still came from NATO and its plans to expand” but noted that the Putin team feared Islamic extremism much more.<sup>9</sup> Also importantly, when scanning the media for the attitude towards a possible Baltics entry into NATO, the tone remained sceptical; for instance, the *New York Times* used “perhaps as far as the Baltics”<sup>10</sup> to describe the Baltics’ chances.<sup>11</sup>

On the European side, there remains much scepticism in the media in general for enlarging NATO. The *Economist* examined the issue, suggesting that “most countries would probably prefer no new members.”<sup>12</sup> From the US point-of-view, Analyst Antony Blinken of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) added that “European allies will probably go along” with the Russian objections<sup>13</sup> while another analyst, Laurence Korb of the rival Council for Foreign Relations (CFR),

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<sup>6</sup> Congressional Record, 7 March 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Csongos, “Powell Says No Russian Veto Over NATO Expansion”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 15 March 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Helle Bering, “A Russian Game of Chess”, *Washington Times*, 14 March 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Arnaud de Borchgrave, “Reassessing Russia’s Security Interests”, *Washington Times*, 14 March 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Jane Perlez, “News Analysis: U.S. Policy on Russia – A Tougher Stance on Russia”, *New York Times*, 24 March 2001.

<sup>11</sup> A good way to gauge the change in the debate is to scan these words, which change significantly in the 12-month period of this study.

<sup>12</sup> The *Economist*, “Doubts on Both Sides of the Atlantic: Europe is Worried About George Bush’s America-and Vice Versa”, 29 March 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Blinken, “NATO Needs to Grow”, *New York Times*, 2 April 2001.

told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that the Baltics issue will be “divisive” and that Europeans not “enthusiastic” with such a dimension to the enlargement.<sup>14</sup>

The opposition is by no means missing in Washington, even to be found in previously sympathetic sectors. Though many of the “Cold Warriors” of Washington remained interested in a nostalgic confrontation with Moscow, some of the staunchest anti-Communists of the past had reverted towards isolationism. For example, staunch right-wing analyst and former presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan, in the *International Herald Tribune*, discussed President Bush’s foreign policy in incredulous tones, suggesting even that a Baltic NATO enlargement would be similar to if Russia “invited Cuba into the Warsaw Pact, handed a war guarantee to Panama and cut the United States out of the oil trade with Mexico.”<sup>15</sup>

One of the more complex aspects of examining US media is its wide geographical and, for the lack of a better term, geopolitical differences. For instance, one of the main supporters (even examining simple wording in describing the countries and their bids) of a Baltic NATO enlargement is the large and relatively influential *Chicago Tribune*. The city and the greater Chicagoland area (and perhaps the Midwest in general) has a healthy Baltic and central-east European émigré population, and pro-European and NATO enlargement ideas have always been reflected in a much more positive light in the local media; while the Washington and New York papers focus on Russia’s anger, the Chicago focus rests on the more human factor.<sup>16</sup>

On the same token, the smaller, local papers in areas where there are less ethnic flavour take a much more distant view of NATO enlargement – thus Washington-based politicians could ill afford to disregard local opinion. With a weak whip system, there is less predictability in voting in the US Congress and the local influence could easily outweigh party discipline.<sup>17</sup> And in these smaller media markets, the “big city” arguments fall

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<sup>14</sup> Breffni O’Rourke, “Baltics: NATO Membership is Divisive Issue”, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 12 April 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Patrick Buchanan, “Washington Shouldn’t Be Antagonizing Moscow, A Natural Ally”, *International Herald Tribune*, 12 April 2001. During the heated days of the Cold War, Buchanan had been one of the most steadfast supporter of Baltic freedom and the fall of what his former boss called “The Evil Empire.”

<sup>16</sup> It is common to see lengthy features from the Baltics in the Chicago papers, especially as its long-term resident Valdas Adamkus was then the president of Lithuania.

<sup>17</sup> One good example is Republican Representative Connie Morella of Maryland, who represents a heavily Democratic district, who openly voiced her opinion that if the 2000 presidential election went to a House vote (if the electoral college result is deemed inconclusive), she would abide by the will of her district against her party affiliations.

flat to issues of protecting their own sons and daughters from war. The Florida Times Union (Jacksonville), in an editorial, openly questions whether NATO still had a role following the fall of Communism, asking “why the United States should remain an active member or why the senators think expansion would serve any U.S. objectives.”<sup>18</sup> Another Florida Paper, the Star Banner (Ocala), asked in an anti-enlargement editorial, “will Americans allow their sons and daughters to die to defend Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic?” adding that “we’re not talking about the sons and daughters of the political-industrial-corporate elite. We’re talking about the sons and daughters of Ocala, Belleview and Dunnellon.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus in the early months of the George W Bush administration, the mood on enlarging NATO to the Baltics remained quite sceptical, with notable opposition in many sectors. The viewpoint of Russia and its fears remain primary in all debates, and the growth of the isolationist voice after the Bush victory remains prominent. It was not until the middle of the year, when the issue was thrust into the limelight, that the media returned with more vigour – and more resolve.

### The Momentum Builds...

Several high-profile events in the middle of 2001 gave the media the opportunity to weigh in further on the issue of NATO enlargement. Starting with the Bratislava summit in May of candidate countries’ leaders (which included the staunch Baltics-in-NATO speech by Czech President Václav Havel) to George Bush’s speech in Warsaw in June, pundits and editorial boards were given quite enough fodder to argue this topic for the entire summer into the month of September.

Through the period, a noticeable view started to permeate all the media and pundits’ opinions, that there is some sympathy towards the Baltics and their aspirations, but there is also great concern over Russia’s fears and anger. Some op-ed writers took sides in this split, but editorials remained rather neutral in balancing these two opposing issues in their traditional non-committal way. For instance, the influential Washington Post, in an editorial at the eve of the Bratislava summit, suggested that it would be “too provocative” to Moscow to enlarge NATO to the Baltics, but such arguments “risk becoming self-fulfilling prophecies” in that “if NATO decides to exclude them for fear of offending Moscow,

<sup>18</sup> Florida Times Union, “NATO Seeking a Mission”, 14 April 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Star Banner, “Should We Enlarge NATO? Not Now”, 24 May 2001.

Russian President Vladimir Putin will surely conclude that he has been granted a license to restore suzerainty.”<sup>20</sup>

Many op-ed writers took a firmer position than the ambivalence of editorials. The pro-Baltic commentator, Tod Lindberg of the *Washington Times*, called the enlargement “the acid test” of the US-dominated European security framework and that all qualified candidates should be admitted, “the Baltics certainly included.”<sup>21</sup> Continuing with the theme, veteran foreign affairs correspondent Martin Walker for UPI emphasised that “the United States thinks the Balts need and deserve NATO membership, and bridle at Russian opposition,”<sup>22</sup> while Matthew Kaminski of the *Wall Street Journal* noted that most thought the Baltic bids “seemed like a pipe dream just years ago” but now “are strengthening” with the US “conspicuously” not excluding them.<sup>23</sup> The difference in perspective on the “Baltics problem” across the Atlantic can also be discerned from media opinions during the Bratislava summit. The *Wall Street Journal Europe’s* Frederick Kempe noted that “West European diplomats have counseled Slovakia and Slovenia to delink themselves from the troublesome Baltic issue, but they know that a larger group will gain more attention in the West and that ultimately the Baltics have more political backing in Washington.”<sup>24</sup>

However, media positions began to firm in advance of President George W Bush’s visit to Warsaw – where he would make a groundbreaking speech on NATO enlargement and change the consensus opinion towards a larger enlargement. Amongst major papers, *The Washington Times*, known for its right-wing positions and many “Cold Warriors” writing op-eds, was first to be clear on the Baltics matter in an editorial: “Now is not the time for the United States to be ambivalent about whether the door will be left open to the Baltics in Prague next year,” adding that Russia cannot be given any veto on the Baltics bids.”<sup>25</sup> Even smaller local papers debated the points: “Another thorny issue is whether NATO will be enlarged in 2002 to include not only Slovakia and Slovenia

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<sup>20</sup> *Washington Post*, “A Commitment to Europe”, 29 April 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Tod Lindberg, “The More the Merrier; NATO Enlargement Serves U.S. Interests”, *Washington Times*, 1 May 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Walker, “Analysis: The Strategic Triangle – EU, Russia and US”, UPI, 12 June 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Kaminski, “NATO Will Announce Plans to Expand Alliance in Eastern Europe Next Year”, *Wall Street Journal*, 12 June 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Frederick Kempe, “Ready for the Vilnius Ten”, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 2 May 2001. Of course the pro-Baltic Kempe also wrote that “the only serious reason not to include them in the next expansion — would be short sighted, hypocritical and reinforce anachronistic Russian ideas about spheres of influence. Kempe also pointed out that the Vilnius 10 lacked “critical backing” from Germany, now with its borders secured by the previous NATO enlargement.

<sup>25</sup> *Washington Times*, “A Vision for NATO”, 13 June 2001.

but also a Baltic state – Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania – which used to be part of the Soviet Union itself,” asked the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.<sup>26</sup>

After Bush’s historic Warsaw speech, which eliminated the “zero” option of no enlargement, most analysts began noticing the growing momentum for the “Baltic dimension” of enlargement. The influential Washington Post asks, “while Slovenia and Slovakia are the leading candidates, debate is mounting over whether the alliance should court further Russian outrage by also incorporating the three Baltic countries, which were part of the Soviet Union,”<sup>27</sup> while the Los Angeles Times, in an editorial, noted “Now NATO is eyeing one or more of the Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – as candidates for future membership.”<sup>28</sup> Going further, foreign policy expert Robert Kagan, writing in the Washington Post the same week, claimed the speech “all but endorsed Baltic membership in the next round of enlargement.”<sup>29</sup> The European media is less certain but nevertheless, in a noticeable change of tone, sounded a “wider” enlargement as inevitable; the Financial Times, in an editorial, suggested that the enlargement “would almost certainly include some parts of the former Soviet Union – notably the three Baltic republics.”<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the period, many of the “friends” of the Baltics in prominent places came out with supportive messages, ranging from the “at least one Baltic country” line of Zbigniew Brzezinski to the “tell the Russians again no veto on the Baltics” of William Safire. Long-time supporters like Edward Lucas of the Economist and former presidential candidate Steve Forbes of the magazine of the same name drafted pieces in support of the Baltic enlargement. Even some lukewarm supporters of the Baltics in the past hopped onto the bandwagon. For instance, Henry Kissinger wrote in the Washington Post, “the most immediate challenge to Russo-American relations is NATO expansion, especially to the Baltic states, which is on the agenda for 2002,” adding that “surely no group of nations is more deserving of protection by the Western democracies than these small countries incapable of posing a threat to any neighbor.”<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, “Europe is Next on Bush Agenda; He Hopes to Explain Positions During Trip”, 6 June 2001.

<sup>27</sup> William Drozdiak & Dana Milbank, “Bush Tries to Sell NATO on Missile Defense Plan”, Washington Post, 14 June 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Los Angeles Times, “NATO’s Uncertain Role”, 22 July 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Kagan, “A Good Week’s Work”, Washington Post, 18 June 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Financial Times, “Editorial Comment: Bush and Russia”, 14 June 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Henry Kissinger, “Opinion – What to Do With the New Russia”, Washington Post, 14 August 2001. Kissinger also took a swipe at Brzezinski and proponents of the “one Baltic state” enlargement: “selective membership for some but not all Baltic states would solve nothing; it raises all of the psychological and political problems and creates a festering sore.”

Despite the growing momentum, critics of enlargement in general also stepped up in the smaller media. The left-field *Newsday* (New York) called the idea of enlargement a “dumb idea” and that the Baltics dimension would be “especially humiliating” to Russia akin to “sticking a hot poker in the eye.”<sup>32</sup> A similar theme comes from the *Orlando Sentinel*, which in an editorial stated that further enlargement would “contribute to one of the most dubious foreign-policy decisions to come out of the Clinton era,” adding that the more important goal is improving ties with Russia.<sup>33</sup> The *Salt Lake Tribune* called Bush’s vision of an enlarged NATO “clouded” and enlargement would be “a lot of pain and no gain.”<sup>34</sup> The opposition of various Florida papers to NATO enlargement continued with a *Florida Times Union*’s editorial, calling the earlier round “inexplicably” pushed by the Clinton administration and suggested “rather than expanding the alliance, the administration should consider shrinking its membership by one country.”<sup>35</sup> Even the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, from the president’s backyard in Texas, questioned the enlargement: “Yet in pragmatic terms, is it reasonable, feasible, remotely conceivable that an American-led NATO would go to war over Slovenia? Estonia? Latvia?” and adding, in character, “exactly how much oil is under the Baltic states?”<sup>36</sup>

The gulf between thinking in Washington and Europe also grew at this stage, as most European analysts and media pointed out the problem of the “Baltic dimension” of enlargement. Much attention was placed in the indefensibility of the Baltics and whether the US would risk World War III for the three small countries, with the FT’s Quentin Peel putting it succinctly: “Yet it is extremely difficult to imagine how the US Congress could contemplate launching nuclear war to protect such tiny countries, so far removed from any conceivable definition of US national interest.”<sup>37</sup> The US-sceptic *Guardian* even argued the “unfettered, limitless, US-directed NATO expansion challenges the EU” and would threaten to “enrage and alienate Russia.”<sup>38</sup>

Some of the media attention looked at the growing rapprochement between Washington and Moscow during the summer. The administra-

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<sup>32</sup> James Klurfeld, “Bush’s Missile and NATO Plans Bode Poorly for Russian Summit”, *Newsday*, 14 June 2001.

<sup>33</sup> *Orlando Sentinel*, “Whoa on NATO”, 14 June 2001.

<sup>34</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, “A Bigger NATO”, 21 June 2001.

<sup>35</sup> *Florida Times Union*, “NATO Make a Sharp U-Turn”, 23 June 2001.

<sup>36</sup> JR Labbe, “Just How Many NATO Members are Necessary?”, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 27 June 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Quentin Peel, “A Fresh Look at Enlarging NATO”, *Financial Times*, 25 June 2001.

<sup>38</sup> *Guardian*, “Who Needs NATO? Europe Must Take Charge of Its Destiny”, 16 June 2001.

tion took pains to quash rumours in the media of a possible trade-off between the administration's National Missile Defence (NMD) programme and the Baltics,<sup>39</sup> a rumour that just would not go away. And when ideas of bringing Russia closer to (or even into) NATO became the media's friend for the fortnight, many brought up its incompatibility with enlargement – especially to the Baltics' point-of-view. "Imagine spending a lifetime as a captive of Moscow and then getting an opportunity to jump under the protection of the most powerful alliance in the world, only to find that one of its prominent members is the country that held you captive," argued John Hall of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, adding dryly, "Little Red Riding Hood would have been less shocked at what was under her grandmother's nightgown."<sup>40</sup>

Following on the Havel speech in Bratislava, Bush's speech in Warsaw placed the Baltics' NATO bid squarely on the top of the agenda. Professor Lawrence Freedman of King's College London said that "Mr Bush has now pushed Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to the top of the list" and "there is now no turning back."<sup>41</sup> The momentum was certainly growing, but, looking at the various media, was still one that brought up much more questions and concerns than answers and solutions.

### Then it Happened...

On 10 September 2001, the media world remained much the same. Momentum may be noticed in the major media, but the smaller, local papers continued to voice concern over enlargement. Long-time critics Salt Lake Tribune takes another shot at enlargement in an editorial, suggesting by "encroaching on Russia's border" NATO would jeopardise the stability the organisation built over the years: "driving the wounded bear further into its corner is a poor way to promote the security of the United States and Europe."<sup>42</sup> How the world changed in 24 hours...

After the attacks of 9/11, all the candidate countries – including the Baltics – queued quickly to offer their support, ranging from vocal to the practical (such as opening their airspace to US/NATO). Statements issued after major meetings and summits the fortnight after the attack

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<sup>39</sup> Dana Milbank, "Raised on Even of Summit with Putin", Washington Post, 16 June 2001.

<sup>40</sup> John Hall, "Russia's NATO Proposal Must Look Eerie to Neighbors", Richmond Times Dispatch, 22 July 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Lawrence Freedman, "The Transformation of NATO", Financial Times, 6 August 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Salt Lake Tribune, "NATO Enlargement", 10 September 2001.

sent a strong signal to Washington that all the countries were ready to help. But quieter, in the background, loomed the question of how the attacks would affect enlargement. There was little consensus amongst pundits; indeed, many analysts feared the linkage of Russian support on Bush's "war on terror" to the Baltics's NATO bids. "If the administration is busy leading a military coalition, the expansion of NATO into the Baltic must become a lesser priority," argued Charles Grant of the think-tank Centre for European Reform.<sup>43</sup> The idea was echoed by Taras Kuzio of York University: "Russia wants to take the three Baltic states off the list of potential members of the second round of NATO enlargement... Russia is hoping that, in return for its cooperation against terrorism, the US will agree to respect its Soviet "red line" as a NATO no-go area."<sup>44</sup>

The 9/11 attacks all but made Russian President Vladimir Putin one of the most relevant and credible players in the global security game. Having argued for some time that the greatest threat to Russian and global security comes from Muslim fundamentalism, he quickly became one of Washington's strongest allies in its new self-styled "war on terror." Quickly the issue of the Baltics in the media became not of a question, but of giving Russia something for its participation in the "war on terror" and to accept the Baltic enlargement. The Financial Times suggested, "pressing ahead with Nato enlargement to include not only former members of the Warsaw pact, but also the Baltic republics from within the former Soviet Union, must be matched by a willingness to involve Moscow more closely."<sup>45</sup> Momentum was also building for Russia to be linked to NATO: "Other Nato officials believe the prospect of Nato membership could prevent Russia from feeling isolated, especially if Nato decides to offer membership to the Baltic states next year."<sup>46</sup>

Despite the questions of what to reward Russia with and the intensifying efforts in the "war on terror," the momentum that was witnessed in the pre-9/11 was showing signs again. Washington began signalling to the media first that NATO enlargement would not be threatened by 9/11; rather, it would be robust. A month after the attacks, wire reports confirmed how quickly the momentum had shifted to the positive: "NATO diplomats said it looked increasingly probable that all three former Soviet Baltic republics – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

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<sup>43</sup> Paul Taylor, "NATO on Sidelines as U.S. Works on Response", Reuters, 1 October 2001.

<sup>44</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Opinion: Beware Russia's Motives", Christian Science Monitor, 4 October 2001.

<sup>45</sup> Financial Times, "Putin Joins Up", 26 September 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Judy Dempsey, "Disarray in NATO Over Russia Entry Prospects", Financial Times, 28 September 2001.

– would be invited to join, along with Slovakia, Slovenia and probably Bulgaria and Romania.”<sup>47</sup> Former Clinton administration official Richard Holbrooke explained that “the tragedy increased the urgency of enlarging NATO to take in former Soviet-bloc countries, including all three Baltic states – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – and reduced Russian resistance to such a move.”<sup>48</sup>

As Holbrooke suggested, much of this was also attributed to the “softening” stance of Russia; Newsweek magazine suggested that NATO officials were in “near ecstasy” by Putin “apparently dropping his opposition to the next stage of expansion, which will almost certainly include the Baltic states.”<sup>49</sup> The Washington Times’ weekly columnist Tod Lindberg suggested Putin’s opposition “has all but dissipated,”<sup>50</sup> while the Washington Post’s associate editor Robert Kaiser wrote that Putin has “all but eliminated the possibility that Russia will make a fuss about the admission of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.”<sup>51</sup> Even the cautious New York Times produced an editorial noting that “Moscow’s concerns about expanding the alliance would largely melt away” in a new Russia-NATO relationship.<sup>52</sup> However, some writers had also feared that the intensifying relationship between Washington and Moscow would see the Balts as sacrificial lambs; calling it a “Faustian bargain,” the Hoover Institution’s Arnold Beichman wondered whether “it may delay indefinitely the NATO applications of the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania because Vladimir Putin’s Russia has become an essential part of the anti-terrorist coalition.”<sup>53</sup>

The doubts for Baltic enlargement dissipated quickly in the minds of Tallinn and other capitals with two subsequent events. A meeting in the White House between Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar and the bunkered-down US Vice President Dick Cheney a little more than a month

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<sup>47</sup> Paul Taylor, “Bush Pushes NATO Enlargement After Attack – Sources in NATO”, Reuters, 12 October 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Taylor, “Attacks Overcame U.S. Unilateralism – Holbrooke”, Reuters, 11 October 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew Nagorski, “Too Early to Proclaim the Dawn of a New Era: Why the U.S. Needs to Proceed with Caution”, Newsweek (international edition), 15 October 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Tod Lindberg, “Russia’s Big Step”, Washington Times, 6 November 2001. However, Lindberg was still subscribing to the “at least one Baltic state” option – which was slowly melting away over the “big bang” option. This was countered by analyst Kristina Spohr of Oxford University, who suggested that “there would be no need for bargaining over and over again between NATO and Moscow if the three Baltic states are invited to join at the same time” (“Stream’ Flow – NATO’s Growing Pains”, Wall Street Journal Europe, 20 November 2001) – which is significant for someone who has been a vocal proponent of the “regatta” enlargement of NATO.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Kaiser, “Putin’s Bold Steps”, Washington Post, 10 November 2001.

<sup>52</sup> New York Times, “A Russian Voice in NATO”, 28 November 2001.

<sup>53</sup> Arnold Beichman, “Philosophical Guide”, Washington Times, 19 October 2001.

after 9/11,<sup>54</sup> as well as the now famous interview given by Russian President Vladimir Putin on National Public Radio in mid-November that vocalised the “cease to be an issue” attitude of Moscow,<sup>55</sup> gave policy-makers in the candidate capitals the message that they were essentially now the only ones that can muck everything up.

However, the media still focused on both aforementioned but conflicting themes – Russia’s “lessening” opposition to enlargement and the fears of the Balts as the trade-off. Another theme tossed up from many was to bring Russia into NATO itself. Nevertheless, the standard phrases for media sources have all but become 100 per cent clear. For instance, Reuters noted that the Baltics’ NATO entry was “all but assured.”<sup>56</sup> Very quickly, with the momentum starting to look runaway, major newspapers use terms like “all but certain,” “as Russia acquiesce”, “virtually assured” and “are now widely expected” as the description of the Baltics enlargement chances – a marked change from a few months earlier. The International Herald Tribune went further, saying “a second round of expansion to extend NATO into the Baltic states has moved from bitter controversy to broad consensus in an eye’s blink.”<sup>57</sup>

It appears the philosophical question about enlargement was finally answered in this post-9/11 period by the Bush administration, which quickly rubbed off on the media in the noticeable growing momentum for the Baltics. Though some of the opinions seem baffling to those working on NATO in the Baltics, especially those now arguing that “the terror attacks have actually made this enlargement of the NATO family more right than ever,”<sup>58</sup> the mood of *carpe diem* was grasped with enthusiasm in the candidate capitals.

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<sup>54</sup> For many analysts, the comments made by Laar after the meeting – the first in the White House with a candidate country’s leader after 9/11 – was the final signal that support from the Bush administration is now certain and final.

<sup>55</sup> The interview with Robert Siegel on 15 November 2001 was the real start of the media mood that Russian opposition has dropped over the Baltics, and was heavily quoted.

<sup>56</sup> Sean Maguire, “Reuters Analysis – NATO Set to Open Doors Wide in a Year’s Time”, Reuters, 20 November 2001.

<sup>57</sup> International Herald Tribune, “Europe is Keen and Should be Welcomed Aboard”, 22 October 2001.

<sup>58</sup> Bill Keller, “Join the Club”, New York Times, 1 December 2001. Keller, however, did add that “it is fair to ask whether Kmart parents, as Colin Powell calls the families that provide most of our military enlistees, will like committing their sons and daughters to defend Estonia,” but counters by suggesting the same could be asked about Iceland or Luxembourg despite the fact they been there since the beginning.

## The New Year and a New Debate

The media remained steadfast in its support to a larger NATO enlargement as 2002, the year of the summit, rolled around. The momentum for the Baltics continued to increase as many jumped onto the bandwagon. The previously rather cautious *Financial Times*, in an editorial, argued that the case to bring the Balts into NATO was stronger than ever.<sup>59</sup>

By the turn of the year and the now-infamous Lac Genval “off-the-record” meeting of NATO diplomats, the focus had been pushed away from the Baltics; leaks flooded the wire services about “five” or “seven” as certain. The *Washington Times*’ Helle Dale (Bering) suggested: “Current thinking in Europe favors an expansion to include five new members – Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania plus Slovenia and Slovakia. The Bush administration seems to think that a southern flank is needed, which would bring in Romania and Bulgaria, as well.”<sup>60</sup> This effectively sums up the monumental changes in debate; the question is no longer of a “Baltic dimension” to the enlargement, but rather, a “Balkan dimension.” The feared return to power of Vladimír Mečiar in Slovakia opened another debate, when some officials openly suggested the odd number of “four” for enlargement; “Diplomats and analysts believe at least four countries, and possibly up to seven” became new Reuters phrasing.<sup>61</sup>

The momentum of the Baltics grew to such an extent that some non-US newspapers openly accused Washington of playing favourites. The defence editor of *The Times* (UK), Michael Evans, wrote that “the Baltic states’ rivals for Nato membership are convinced that the US has already decided that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania must be guaranteed entry into the alliance in November and that the only remaining argument is how many other countries should be allowed to become members.”<sup>62</sup> It remains noticeable that European-based papers, such as the *Financial Times*, still discuss the issue of NATO’s encroachment on Russia’s borders<sup>63</sup> while the main US papers have moved beyond that argument.

<sup>59</sup> *Financial Times*, “Defending NATO’s Mission”, 28 January 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Helle Dale, “Yesterday’s Alliance?”, *Washington Times*, 30 January 2002.

<sup>61</sup> Reuters, “Powell Predicts a Large Expansion of NATO”, 6 February 2002.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Evans, “Baltic States ‘Are U.S. Favourites’ in Race to Join NATO”, *The Times*, 25 February 2002.

<sup>63</sup> It is truly amazing how a faulty argument has been used so many times even by the “learned” media. NATO had always had a border with Russia/USSR: with Norway since the beginning, with Turkey (until the USSR collapsed in 1991), and with Poland (Kaliningrad) since the last enlargement. And let us not forget the US and Russia face off at the Bering Straits.

It is truly a sign of the times when the cautious New York Times puts the Balts in the driver's seat and others as chasers: "NATO is likely to endorse the enlargement of the alliance this November to include the three former Soviet Baltic states – a delicate issue for Russia – as well as Slovenia and perhaps Slovakia. It is also considering Bulgaria and Romania as candidates."<sup>64</sup> An editorial followed, which clearly argued that "thanks in part to the clear message sent by Washington, the Baltics aren't even contentious anymore."<sup>65</sup> A shocking change from a year ago.

### Was 9/11 the Cause or the Catalyst?

But was 9/11 really an issue? The New York Times' Steven Erlanger dryly reminded, "A year ago, the idea that Romania and Bulgaria might join NATO this autumn in the next round of enlargement seemed laughable, and many thought that the aspirations of the Baltic nations for NATO membership might be held hostage again to relations with Moscow."<sup>66</sup> Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage continued the theme, telling Erlanger that "Sept. 11 had a riveting effect on NATO and applicant countries," adding that "a lot stepped up to the plate" The Washington Post's Peter Finn quoted an unnamed NATO diplomat elaborating that "The big bang is real... And I couldn't have imagined it possible because I couldn't imagine Sept. 11."<sup>67</sup> Finn continued by noting that the post-attack relations with Russia have "made that debate over the Baltics irrelevant."

By this time, even the FT had conceded that "membership of the Baltic states and Slovenia is all but guaranteed."<sup>68</sup> Few would have imagined major papers like the Washington Post using terms like "shoo-in" for the Baltics in a headline.<sup>69</sup> And several months into the year, nearly every major paper has endorsed the large enlargement – including the Baltics – in editorials. To finalise, even the ever-isolationist Florida Times-Union, quoted many times earlier as such, boasted a more concili-

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<sup>64</sup> Steven Erlanger, "NATO Offers Russia New Role, but Without Any Veto", New York Times, 26 February 2002. Note how quickly the momentum for the Slovakia issue built up in the media.

<sup>65</sup> New York Times, "New Alliance", 28 March 2002.

<sup>66</sup> Steven Erlanger, "Romania and Bulgaria Edge Nearer to NATO Membership", New York Times, 26 March 2002.

<sup>67</sup> Peter Finn, "Black Sea: New Focus of NATO Expansion", Washington Post, 26 March 2002.

<sup>68</sup> Financial Times, "NATO's Southern Dimension", 26 March 2002.

<sup>69</sup> Keith Richburg, "NATO Stretching Its Reach into Old Soviet Territory; Baltics Considered Shoo-Ins; Final List is Incomplete", Washington Post, 1 March 2002.

atory editorial,<sup>70</sup> while even, the anti-enlargement James Klurfeld of *Newsday* (New York) conceded: “OK, I know when I’m beaten... The point now is to make the best of a fundamentally flawed decision to expand NATO in the first place.”<sup>71</sup>

Analysing the media in the year surrounding the 9-11 terrorist attacks, the changes in attitudes towards the NATO bids of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was indeed dramatic. However, unlike a natural evolution of the debate, key events became major catalysts for the advancement of the bids. If the Bush Warsaw speech can be categorised as Suur Munamägi – the tallest mount in Estonia – the attacks of 9-11 would be equivalent to the peak of K2. The rhetoric in the media did indeed change overnight, fuelled by Washington’s reinforced support for a “robust” enlargement and Moscow’s reiterated “we don’t care” attitude. Without this catalytic “K2” event, the debate right up to Prague would have remained the same as early 2001 – right up to the early footnotes of this article.

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<sup>70</sup> Florida Times-Union, “NATO: Expand or Disband”, 6 May 2002.

<sup>71</sup> James Klurfeld, “U.S. Must Make Best of Expanded NATO”, *Newsday*, 30 May 2002.



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## Good, Evil, God, and NATO: The Bush Administration's Vision of the New Atlantic Partnership

Edward Rhodes

Though the direction and velocity of change remain hotly contested and the final endpoint uncertain, the NATO that Estonia is joining will not be the same NATO that existed during the Cold War. Plainly, an important voice in discussions of NATO's transformation will be that of the United States. The U.S. political leadership's vision of NATO – of its purpose, the functions it will serve, and the capabilities it will need to possess – is thus of interest.

For the Bush administration, as for earlier American administrations, NATO is very much the cornerstone of U.S.-European relations and, more broadly, a critical element in America's overall relationship with the world. The administration's musings about NATO thus also provide a wonderful window into its thinking about the nature of international relations, America's role in world affairs, the existential and immediate challenges faced by Western societies, and how a liberal, democratic world order is to be built. Fortunately for observers interested in these questions, the administration's musings have been extensive, public, and, to a surprising degree, internally consistent.

### *From Warsaw to Prague*

In June 2001, with the November 2002 NATO Summit in Prague already on the horizon, President Bush traveled to Europe. For a number of symbolic reasons, the President chose Warsaw as the site for his major policy address on the future of NATO. In his Warsaw address, he explained his views on the critical questions of NATO enlargement, NATO's role in the Balkans, and NATO's engagement with Russia, and

implicitly set out his administration's agenda for the Prague Summit. Both symbolically and practically, the Warsaw speech was neatly framed: two days earlier the President spoke to NATO leaders in Brussels, and the following day he flew to Ljubljana, Slovenia to meet for the first time with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In the seventeen months between Warsaw and Prague, the Bush administration developed and refined its message, but, despite the traumatic events of September 11, 2001, never departed in any significant way from the conception of a transformed Atlantic Alliance enunciated in Warsaw. The first meeting of the NATO-Russia Council in May 2002 and, more importantly, the Prague Summit – which resulted in invitations to seven eastern European nations to join NATO – represented important steps forward in putting into practice this new American vision of the Atlantic relationship articulated at Warsaw.

The Bush administration's vision of the future Atlantic relationship, the U.S. Ambassador to NATO has explained, "is at once simple and yet far-reaching: we want the Prague Summit to launch a whole-scale transformation of the NATO Alliance for the 21st century. The old NATO served us well, but our task now is to build a transformed Alliance that can extend the peace and our common security for the next generation of Europeans and Americans."<sup>1</sup> This transformation involves three "news" – new members, new relationships, and new capabilities – and a redirection of NATO's attention from continental concerns to global ones. It also involves a creative re-telling of the history of American-European relations and a new, post-Cold War map of the road ahead for the free world.

## Good and Evil

Perhaps the single most important thing to realize about the Bush administration's understanding of NATO is that in its view the struggle in which NATO is engaged is not one between social or economic systems, or between ways of life, or between civilizations, although at moments it may take any of these forms. It is not, in the final analysis, a struggle between capitalism and socialism, or between liberalism and communism, or between West and East. Ultimately, it is a struggle between good and evil.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Nicholas Burns, "Launching NATO's Transformation at Prague (Manfred Woerner Memorial Lecture)," Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Berlin, Germany, October 30, 2002, p. 1.

This struggle, humanity's epic and epochal battle against evil, is not a matter of political choice. It is not subject to nuanced judgments of moral relativism. It supercedes national and even civilizational identities. It transcends generations. It reflects a greater, indeed sacred, calling. As the President explained in Warsaw, "all these duties, and all these rights are ultimately traced to a source of law and justice above our wills and beyond our politics – [to] an author of our dignity, who calls us to act worthy of our dignity."<sup>2</sup>

In a fascinating and revealing gesture, the President chose to begin his Warsaw address by noting the world's debt to the Polish nation and hinting at some of the reasons why he had chosen Warsaw as the venue for his speech. The President observed that "some of the most courageous moments of the 20th century took place in this nation. Here, in 1943, the world saw the heroic effort and revolt of the Warsaw Ghetto; a year later, the 63 days of the Warsaw Uprising; and then the reduction of this city to rubble because it chose to resist evil."<sup>3</sup> Warsaw, the President suggested, could be used as a symbol not simply of the Polish nation's and Jewish people's struggle against Nazism, but of humanity's larger war against evil.

It was necessary for the Bush administration to return, at least spiritually, to a symbolic Warsaw because the fact that evil still exists and still must be resisted is the starting point for its understanding of the task at hand. NATO is necessary because "Great evil is stirring in the world."<sup>4</sup> What this evil threatens is not simply America but "a liberal, tolerant, and democratic future"<sup>5</sup> – that is, it threatens a future in which human beings can choose for themselves to live their lives in the full enjoyment of their natural rights. With the evil that would prevent this future, compromise is impossible, and in the fight against it, retreat is unacceptable. "We must be willing to stand in the face of evil, to have the courage to always face danger."<sup>6</sup>

The United States, the administration makes clear, has dedicated itself to this task of opposing evil, and it calls upon other peoples and nations to join in this mission. The time is opportune, and the task for

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<sup>2</sup> George W. Bush, "Remarks by the President in Address to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University," Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland, June 15 2001, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1. Emphasis added.

<sup>4</sup> George W. Bush, "Remarks to the Atlantic Student Summit," Prague, November 20, 2002, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> R. Nicholas Burns, "NATO Commemoration of September 11," NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, September 11, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> George W. Bush, "Remarks to the Citizens of Vilnius," Rotuse, Vilnius, Lithuania, November 23, 2002, p. 1.

today's generation is clear. The President opened and closed his personal preface to the U.S. National Security Strategy released in September 2002 with this credo of belief, this dedication of the American nation, and this implicit invitation: "People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children – male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values are right and true for every person, in every society – and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages... Freedom is the non-negotiable demand of human dignity; the birthright of every person – in every civilization. Throughout history, freedom has been threatened by war and terror; it has been challenged by the clashing wills of powerful states and the evil designs of tyrants; and it has been tested by widespread poverty and disease. Today, humanity holds in its hands the opportunity to further freedom's triumph over all these foes. The United States welcomes our responsibility to lead in this great mission."<sup>7</sup>

The principal manifestation of evil in our day (the "great evil" that is stirring) is to be found in terrorism and tyranny. In the struggle against them, no confusion or moral relativism or waffling or apologetics are possible, and all differences within the community of free people pale and must be set aside. "As we move forward," the American ambassador to NATO explained on the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks, "we Europeans and North Americans should remember that although we come from different parts of the world, that we have differing histories and traditions and may not always agree on important issues – we must remain united on one essential point: there can be no justification for terrorism. It is, in many ways, a question of right and wrong, good and evil."<sup>8</sup>

### *Truth and Lies*

Because the human heart – across nations, across civilizations, and across time – prefers good to evil, and because if presented with full information the human mind possesses the capacity to discern good from evil, ultimately the struggle between good and evil is also a struggle be-

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<sup>7</sup> George W. Bush, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," September 17, 2002, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Burns, "NATO Commemoration," op. cit., p. 2. Emphasis added.

tween truth and lies. When truth is told, good will in the end prevail. The task, therefore, is to speak truth. Hearing truth, individuals and, eventually, whole societies will recognize it, and turn their footsteps into the path of good and away from the path of evil.

Addressing students at the Prague summit, President Bush began his remarks by emphasizing the role of truth-telling in creating freedom, the centrality of truth in the establishment and functioning of political republics (presumably as distinct from other forms of sovereignty), and the shared bond between all those who accept the truth. Choosing words that could only be interpreted as a deliberate paraphrase of the evangelist John – thus implicitly equating the truth of liberal democracy with divinely-revealed truths – Bush mused: “Dwight Eisenhower said this of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty – ‘The simplest and clearest charter in the world is what you have, which is to tell the truth.’ And for more than 50 years, the charter has been faithfully executed, and it’s the truth that sets this continent free.”<sup>9</sup> Moments later he returned to this theme of the power of truth, this time choosing for his text the words of Jan Hus, the protestant Czech leader who occupies a central place in Czech accounts of national identity. In “this city and town squares across the Czech Republic,” Bush observed, “are monuments to Jan Hus who said this: ‘Stand in the truth you have learned, for it conquers all and is mighty to eternity.’ That ideal has given life to the Czech Republic, and it is shared by the republic I lead.”<sup>10</sup> The West won the Cold War because it told truth, and in the end truth wins the day.

In the struggle between good and evil, the moral courage and character required to speak, and act, truth to power are thus critical virtues, and in the President’s account of how the Cold War was won, these values – moral courage and character – assume a central place. In Warsaw the President spoke of how communism had been humbled by “the iron purpose and moral vision of a single man: Pope John Paul II.”<sup>11</sup> A year later, in Prague, the President returned to this theme: “in Central and Eastern Europe the courage and moral vision of prisoners and exiles and priests and playwrights caused tyrants to fall.”<sup>12</sup>

What exactly, however, is the content of this moral vision, the vision that defines “good” and has allowed – and presumably will continue to allow – mankind to triumph over evil? In Warsaw, the President was a little more explicit in explaining this than on other occasions, and his

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<sup>9</sup> Bush, “Prague,” *op. cit.*, p. 1. Emphasis added. See John 3:13.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Bush, “Prague,” *op. cit.*, p. 2.

answer is one that has profound significance for defining the Atlantic alliance. He begins, probably uncontroversially, by pointing to a belief “in the dignity of every individual: in social freedom, tempered by moral restraint; in economic liberty, balanced with humane values.”<sup>13</sup> Turning to Pope John Paul II for his source, however, he moves quickly into more interesting philosophical and political waters in his explanation of the good that has triumphed, and will triumph, over evil. “‘The revolutions of 1989,’ said Pope John Paul II, ‘were made possible by the commitment of brave men and women inspired by a different, and ultimately more profound and powerful, vision: the vision of man as a creature of intelligence and free will, immersed in a mystery which transcends his own being and endowed with the ability to reflect and the ability to choose – and thus capable of wisdom and virtue.’ This belief,” the President continues, “successfully challenged communism. It challenges materialism in all its forms. Just as man cannot be reduced to a means of production, he must find goals greater than mere consumption. The European ideal is inconsistent with a life defined by gain and greed and the lonely pursuit of self. It calls for consideration and respect, compassion and forgiveness – the habits of character on which the exercise of freedom depends.”<sup>14</sup>

Victory in the Cold War was thus not the victory of liberalism over its enemies. It was a victory of liberal communities of faith – or, in political form, presumably of liberal republics built on and united by faith – over both totalitarian rule that denied human liberty and alienation that denied meaning to life. Ultimately, this is the truth that the Atlantic community must preserve, protect, and advance, and that will prove victorious: that the good life involves both human liberty and human community devoted to the pursuit of a transcendent goal.

### *Faith and the Hand of God*

In the end, of course, moral courage to speak this truth to power must rest on faith and hope. These, therefore, are critical weapons in the struggle against evil, and they are in the end more powerful than any weapons that evil possesses in its arsenal. What the history of the Cold War shows, the President argued in Poland, and what “Poland revealed to the world [is] that its Soviet rulers, however brutal and powerful,

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<sup>13</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

were ultimately defenseless against determined men and women armed only with their conscience and their faith.”<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, it was because the people of central and eastern Europe were people of faith – in the sense that even during their years of captivity they never gave up hope and never surrendered their belief in the liberty of the human soul – that they were rewarded with victory. As certain as it is that the liberating power of truth will prevail, it is equally certain that faith will be rewarded. As the President explained to the assembled foreign ministers of the new NATO states, “this day was a long time in coming, yet there was never any doubt. Through decades of crisis and division, Europe’s peoples shared with people everywhere the same need and hope for freedom. This hope overcame the designs of tyrants and this hope overcame the tragedies of war.”<sup>16</sup>

Of course, given the fallen nature of humanity, in the end the victory of good over evil cannot be achieved without the mercy of divine intervention. To assume that this victory over humanity’s fallen nature can be won without God’s hand would be blasphemous, and the President has been careful to acknowledge the role of the Almighty in the victories achieved by humanity in its struggle to reclaim its birthright of freedom. In Warsaw, talking to the Polish people of their struggle for liberty, the President spoke openly of “the hand of God in your history.”<sup>17</sup> When, in the aftermath of the Prague Summit, President Bush flew to Vilnius to deliver the good news, he addressed the question of how it was the Lithuanian people had been freed from the hands of the Soviet occupation. The President pointed out that “near Cathedral Square is a stone commemorating that struggle. Inscribed on that stone is one word: Miracle. The recent history of the Baltic states truly is a miracle. You’ve gained your freedom; you have won your independence. You now join a great Alliance, and your miracle goes on.”<sup>18</sup>

This interpretation of the past as having involved the miraculous intervention of the Almighty necessarily implies (given the continued dangers facing the people of faith who are joined together in NATO) the future need for continued divine support, and the President in fact made this logical jump, closing his remarks with a (confident) appeal for divine intercession on behalf of those who struggled for freedom and

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> George W. Bush, “President Bush Meets with Central European Foreign Ministers: Remarks by the President with Central European Foreign Ministers,” the East Room, the White House, Washington, DC., May 8, 2003, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Bush, “Vilnius,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

those who will do so in the future: “Today on this great day, may God bless the memory of Lithuanian patriots and freedom fighters who did not live to see this moment. And may God always bless the brave and free people of Lithuania.... May God bless freedom.”<sup>19</sup>

The American interpretation of the past history of the Euro-American relationship thus implicitly assumes that God will aid humanity in its struggle to recover from its fall and to regain its birthright of freedom. Flying from Vilnius to Bucharest, the President continued his observations by underscoring the importance of God’s covenant with His world and His refusal to abandon it despite the evil in it. Speaking in the rain on the Piata Revolutiei, the President began his announcement that Romania had been invited to join NATO with an extraordinary, and meteorologically felicitous, religious metaphor: “As we started speaking, a rainbow appeared. God is smiling on us today.”<sup>20</sup> (In Judeo-Christian symbolism, the rainbow, which appeared to Noah after the flood receded, represents God’s promise not to destroy the world again. It is indeed hard to find a more appropriate symbol than the rainbow to associate with the President’s interpretation of NATO enlargement and the historic erasure of Yalta from the current and future politics of Europe.)

In Bucharest, the President then proceeded to link faith, freedom from oppression and evil, and God’s institutions. To explain how it was that two generations of tyranny and Soviet captivity had come to an end for the Romanian nation in 1989, the President took as his theme faith and its role in inspiring patriotism and the pursuit of liberty: “close by is a church,” he noted, “three centuries old, a symbol of the faith that overcomes all oppression.”<sup>21</sup>

The church that President Bush was referring to in this case was an Orthodox one. While the struggle between good and evil is by its nature necessarily a religious one, in the American analysis it is not one that divides religions. The struggle of good against evil does not pit religion against religion. Rather, it is one that ecumenically joins religions together in a shared struggle against “the murderous and criminal work of fanatics,” who are motivated by “hatred,” and who act with “intolerance and depravity.”<sup>22</sup> The “solidarity and alliance” that joins together the peoples of Europe and North America is one that “filled churches,

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> George W. Bush, “President Bush Welcomes Romania to NATO: Remarks by the President to the Citizens of Romania,” Piata Revolutiei, Bucharest, Romania, November 23, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Burns, “NATO Commemoration,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

synagogues, and mosques.”<sup>23</sup> The world’s great religions (or at least the monotheistic ones – there are no clues as to how polytheistic religions are viewed) stand shoulder to shoulder in defense of human life and liberty. The Europe that NATO (and other European institutions the United States applauds, such as the European Union) aims to create is diverse in its faith but nonetheless a single community of faith: it will be one “that is truly united, truly democratic, and truly diverse – a collection of peoples and nations bound together in purpose and respect, and faithful to their own roots.”<sup>24</sup>

As individuals and nations we may worship God differently, but what we must share in order to be part of the common enterprise against evil is an awareness of a greater purpose, a divine mystery, that calls us and empowers us to fight against the evil brought into the world by mankind’s fall. What holds Europe together, and what ties North America to Europe, is a shared belief in God-given rights and God-ordained duties associated with the protection of individual human dignity and values. As the President explained during his visit to Poland, “this belief is more than a memory, it is a living faith. And it is the main reason Europe and America will never be separated. We are products of the same history, reaching from Jerusalem and Athens to Warsaw and Washington. We share more than alliance. We share a civilization. Its values are universal, and they pervade our history and our partnership in a unique way.”<sup>25</sup>

Two elements in this formulation require comment. First, while civilizations may vary, representing different historic developments, and while civilizations may have different and special insights, the American position is that the essential values of Western civilization are indeed universal ones. Human freedom is a universal birthright. Though there may be multiple civilizations, ultimately there is no clash of civilizations.

Second, the choice of referents is important: Jerusalem and Athens represent important and very specific symbols. What the President is arguing is that human liberty ultimately rests on faith and reason. (For American political elites, though perhaps not for American students of international relations, the image of “Athens” is constructed around accounts of Socrates and Plato – that is, it is the “Athens” of the “School of Athens” as painted by Raphael in the Sistine apartments – not constructed on images drawn from Thucydides and his account of Athens’s struggle with Sparta

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” *op. cit.*, p. 2. Emphasis added. The President’s formulation here is in interesting ways reminiscent of the American pledge of allegiance: “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

for imperium.) “Jerusalem” is a simultaneously powerful and multi-traditional image of revealed truth – the “mystery” referred to by Pope John Paul II. Equally important are the symbols not invoked. There is, for example, no reference to Rome, though its impact on Polish and American civilization is surely vast. And this is understandable, as Rome was both imperial and specifically Western. The victory the President envisions is not one of imperial conquest, imposing Western values and civilization on the world as Rome imposed its values and civilization on the peoples it conquered. The victory he imagines is one in which the truth, comprehended through faith and reason, vanquishes the darkness of lies by defeating its two servants, disbelief and ignorance.

### *The Poor of Spirit and What to Do about Them*

The evil against which people of faith around the world must struggle – that is, the enemy of humanity’s “God-given” freedom which must be overcome – is therefore a poverty of spirit and a perversion of religion. “These global terrorists.... they’re obviously poor in spirit. They have no regard for human life. They claim they’re religious, and they kill in the name of religion.”<sup>26</sup>

This poverty of spirit may, of course, be nourished by other forms of poverty, and a wide range of socio-economic transformations may be useful in the struggle against evil. But in the end, the President is clear, the enemy must be understood as evil itself – humanity’s capacity to disregard human life and liberty – not the conditions in which it is most likely to be found. The President’s unscripted on-the-record thinking on this subject is enormously revealing: “poverty,” he muses, “is a tool for recruitment amongst these global terrorists. It’s a way for them to recruit, perhaps. But poverty doesn’t cause killers to exist. And it’s an important distinction to make. . . . [T]here are some breeding grounds, no question about it. . . . But I hope people don’t confuse the mentality of the terrorist leaders and economic plight, because these people are plenty comfortable. They just kill. . . .”<sup>27</sup>

The President’s next words, making the logical jump from diagnosis

<sup>26</sup> “Interview of the President by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,” November 18, 2002, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. These are points the President made more formally in the “National Security Strategy,” where he argued that “poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders.” (“National Security Strategy,” September 2002, p. 1.)

(terrorist leaders with evil minds) to prescription, are equally revealing. He finishes his thought by saying: “. . . and we’re going to get them before they get us.”<sup>28</sup> Evil of this sort cannot be cured. It must be excised. These human pathogens must be eliminated.

Secretary of State Colin Powell drove this point home in his testimony to the Senate: Americans have concluded that “terrorism must be eradicated – especially the terrorism that seeks nuclear weapons, and other means of mass destruction.”<sup>29</sup> That Powell understood the significance of his words is clear from his next remark: “Some in Europe see it differently. Some see terrorism as a regrettable but inevitable part of society and want to keep it at arm length and as low key as possible. It is our job to convince them otherwise.”<sup>30</sup> As we will discuss below, in the American view, a turning point in human history has been reached. “Old” thinking – the thinking of the Cold War years, when American and European leaders deterred, negotiated, and otherwise compromised with evil – is no longer relevant.

### *The Changing Faces of Evil*

There are, in today’s world, two faces to the evil against which NATO must struggle: tyranny and terrorism. Both deny the value of human life and human liberty, both stand between humanity and humanity’s birth-right of freedom, and both are therefore antipathetic to the good life that people and communities of faith everywhere seek.

Though some American pronouncements focus on the evil of tyrants, others on the dangers of terrorism, and some refer to both, in the American view these two are inextricably linked. As National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice has explained, “these are different faces of the same evil. Terrorists need a place to plot, train, and organize. Tyrants allied with terrorists can greatly extend the reach of their deadly mischief. Terrorists allied with tyrants can acquire technologies allowing them to murder on an ever more massive scale. Each threat magnifies the danger of the other. And the only path to safety is to effectively confront both terrorists and tyrants.”<sup>31</sup>

Tyranny and terrorism are, however, simply the latest faces that evil

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Colin L. Powell, “An Enlarged NATO: Mending Fences and Moving Forward on Iraq,” Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, April 29, 2003, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Condoleezza Rice, “Dr. Condoleezza Rice Discusses President’s National Security Strategy,” Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, October 1, 2002, p. 2.

has worn. In the past, it has had other faces – authoritarianism, militarism, fascism, communism. In every case, however, the essence of the threat and the necessary response is the same. As the President explained in Vilnius, “like the Nazis and the communists before them, the terrorists seek to end lives and control all life. And like the Nazis and the communists before them, they will be opposed by free nations and the terrorists will be defeated.”<sup>32</sup> The faces, names, and forms change,<sup>33</sup> but the underlying nature of evil is constant: it is the denial of individual freedom, carried out by intimidation and terror, against which the Atlantic partners have fought and must continue to fight. “The world has suffered enough from fanatics who seek to impose their will through fear and murder. The NATO Alliance and the civilized world are confronting the new enemies of freedom, and we will prevail.”<sup>34</sup>

This conception of the nature of the struggle in which America and its European allies are engaged logically and necessarily implies a particular interpretation of the past history of the trans-Atlantic relationship. Evil – and the Atlantic community’s struggle against it – did not begin in 2001, or 1990, or 1948, and the historic framework within which the American administration understands the current challenge and the current Atlantic alliance does not start with the end of the Cold War, or even the beginning of the Cold War. When the Bush administration explains the Atlantic relationship, the story begins with the struggle against fascism (and in some, though not all, accounts even earlier, with the First World War and that first trans-Atlantic fight of freedom-loving people to make the world safe for democracy).<sup>35</sup> The end of the Second World War – and the Yalta sell-out – left an unfinished task. It was an unfortunate pause in the war of good against evil, and a temporary accommodation with that evil. “The defeat of Nazi Germany brought an end to the armed conflict in Europe. But that victory did not bring true peace and unity to the continent. For millions, tyranny remained in a different uniform. The freedom of Bulgaria and Romania and Slovakia and Slovenia was subverted by communist dictators. And Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were wiped off the map as independent coun-

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<sup>32</sup> Bush, “Vilnius,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> The rogues’ gallery is an interesting and eclectic one: the goal has been “a Europe without Hitler and Stalin, without Brezhnev and Honecker and Ceaucescu and, yes, without Milosevic.” The exceptions are interesting, too: no Mussolini, no Franco, no Petain. Bush, “Warsaw,” *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Bush, “Bucharest,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Presumably the problem with starting history in 1917 rather than in 1941 is that it raises the historically difficult question of how to explain America’s rejection of League membership and the “isolationist” policies of the 1920s.

tries.”<sup>36</sup> In this understanding of history, the Cold War was not a new war against a new enemy: it was a continuation of a war that spanned generations, in which the enemy, evil, had simply put on a new set of jackboots. Likewise, today’s war against tyranny and terrorism is simply the new phase in this great war – but a phase in which new possibilities have opened up, given the widening of the alliance of free people arrayed against evil.

What lesson needs to be drawn from this history? On this, the President is clear: “No more Munichs. No more Yaltas.”<sup>37</sup> The lesson of these events, the President implies, is that evil cannot be appeased, nor is it possible to compromise with it. It must be opposed and eradicated.

As already noted, this task of opposing evil is humanity’s divine calling. It is therefore one that transcends and unites generations and nations. To read history in this fashion requires that superficial political facts be overlooked and a deeper reality found, but it can be done. Speaking to Polish students and explaining the desire to create a united and free Europe, President Bush asserted “our fathers – yours and mine – struggled and sacrificed to make this vision real. Now it is within our grasp. Today, a new generation makes a new commitment: a Europe and an America bound in a great alliance of liberty – history’s greatest united force for peace and progress and human dignity. The bells of victory have rung. The Iron Curtain is no more. Now, we plan to build the house of freedom – whose doors are open to all of Europe’s peoples and whose windows look out to global challenges beyond.”<sup>38</sup> In proclaiming this transcendent brotherhood, the President conveniently overlooks the fact that the fathers of many of the young members of the audience had undoubtedly been card-carrying members of the Polish Communist Party and many of them had probably worked in all good faith to oppose NATO and the domination of global capitalist “democracy.”

## Continuity and Change

As this example suggests, the Bush administration’s vision of NATO implicitly involves an interesting, perhaps plausible, but not unproblematic, reading of history. In the construction of this historic past, America’s constancy emerges as an important theme. Three interwoven threads of this claimed historical constancy are identifiable.

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<sup>36</sup> Bush, “Central European Foreign Ministers,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” *op. cit.*, p. 2. See also Bush, “Vilnius,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” *op. cit.*, p. 4.

*America's Constancy*

First, America's faith in a free Europe never wavered. While the United States may have acquiesced in evils – it may have stood aside when the Western powers appeased Hitler at Munich, and it may have joined in the division of Europe at Yalta – in its heart it always knew these were wrong and would not stand. In the end, of course, this faith was rewarded. Speaking in Vilnius, for example, the President said, “Many doubted that freedom would come to this country, but the United States always recognized an independent Lithuania. We knew that this continent would not remain divided. We knew that arbitrary lines drawn by dictators would be erased, and those lines are now gone.”<sup>39</sup>

Second, America's commitment to the Atlantic partnership, a partnership based on this common faith, never weakened and was never called into doubt – and by implication can never weaken or be doubted in the future. “These trans-Atlantic ties,” the President proudly claimed at Warsaw, “could not be severed by U-boats. They could not be cut by checkpoints and barbed wire. They were not ended by SS-20s and nuclear blackmail. And they certainly will not be broken by commercial quarrels and political debates.”<sup>40</sup>

Three hours earlier, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice underscored the logical conclusion to be drawn from this construction of history, explaining that “the point that he [the President] has been making is that Europe is changing, Europe has been changing, it's changing for the better – but the one thing that will not change is the American commitment to Europe, the American commitment to partnership with Europe, and the American commitment to the fact that that partnership gives us an opportunity to do many extraordinary things in the world.”<sup>41</sup> NATO is both the seal and the keystone of this permanent U.S. commitment to the Atlantic relationship. “There is,” Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman explained, “no greater example of the strong and enduring ties between Europe and America than the NATO Alliance. For more than half a century it has been the indispensable link between our peoples, ensuring our common security and uniting us in pursuit of a free and democratic future.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Bush, “Vilnius,” op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Condoleezza Rice, “Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice,” Warsaw Marriott Hotel, Warsaw, Poland, June 15, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Marc Grossman, “NATO Enlargement: Remarks to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations,” Chicago, September 11, 2002, p. 2.

Third, in the administration's construction of history, America's relationship with the nations of eastern Europe has always been one of friendship. In this view, the correct understanding of the Cold War is not that NATO nations and Warsaw Pact nations were pitted against each other in a potentially deadly geopolitical rivalry or competition between socio-economic systems, but that NATO and Pact nations were brothers in a struggle against evil, a struggle in which the Pact nations in fact faced the hardest part. Given this history, the nations of eastern Europe are to be honored rather than regarded with suspicion. "These heroic nations have survived tyranny, they have won their liberty and earned their place among free nations. America has always considered them friends, and we will always be proud to call them allies."<sup>43</sup> The fact that eastern European military facilities and, presumably, cities had been for decades been included in American nuclear targeting options, and that eastern European troops and American troops might well have come into combat against each other has been excised from this version of history.

Given this construction of history – this claim for America's firm, faithful, brotherly stand on the side of freedom, and in opposition to whatever face evil presented – the American understanding of the future – that is, that America can be relied upon with certainty to protect others in the community of freedom when they are threatened – follows logically. "The promises of our Alliance are sacred, and we will keep our pledges to all the nations that join us.... As a NATO ally, you can have this confidence – no one will be able to take away the freedom of your country."<sup>44</sup>

### *Transforming the Alliance*

Despite the continuity in the underlying, true nature of the adversary (evil itself) and in America's commitment to oppose it, the administration nonetheless understands its policies as representing fundamental change. As Secretary of State Powell has candidly observed, the enlargement of NATO is conceived as "part of an ambitious agenda whose goal is to transform the Alliance."<sup>45</sup>

Part of this transformation reflects the changed face of evil, from So-

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<sup>43</sup> Bush, "Central European Foreign Ministers," op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Bush, "Bucharest," op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Powell, "An Enlarged NATO," op. cit., p. 2.

viet communism to tyranny and terror. We will discuss the implications of this below. More fundamentally, however, it reflects the administration's belief that the time has come for a basic change in strategy. Mankind's struggle against evil has entered a new phase.

There are several key elements in the administration's analysis. First, although evil's ultimate defeat is sure, evil has not yet been vanquished. We have not reached "an end of history." America and NATO must not let down their guard, but must gird themselves for renewed battle. Second, at the same time we must acknowledge that an important victory has been won, celebrate this fact, and take it into account as we move forward. (It is thus logically possible for the President to assert in the same speech both that "our alliance of freedom is being tested again by new and terrible dangers" and that "the long night of fear, uncertainty and loneliness is over."<sup>46</sup>)

Third, the gains that were won in that victory are irreversible. There will be no more setbacks, like those of Munich and Yalta: one of the things the President means when he says "No more Munichs" and "No more Yaltas" is that "we will not trade away the fate of free European peoples."<sup>47</sup> The promise associated with NATO membership is that "from now on, what you build, you keep. No one can take away your freedom or your country."<sup>48</sup>

Fourth, this victory represented a watershed (not an end, but nonetheless the end of a chapter) in human history and in the struggle of free peoples to preserve for themselves, and to regain for all of humanity, mankind's birthright of freedom. As Secretary of State Colin Powell explained to the Senate in making the case for NATO enlargement, "the West's victory in the Cold War and the defeat of Soviet communism signaled a decisive turning point in modern history – a victory for freedom and democracy."<sup>49</sup>

If we are to understand the administration's attitude and policies toward NATO it is necessary to take seriously this description of the winning of the Cold War as a "turning point" in humanity's ongoing struggle for freedom. On the one hand, the struggle continues and the centrality of the alliance remains: "the troubles and tragedies of the past decade have made clear that new threats are rising. We have seen these threats take many shapes, from ethnic cleansing in the Balkans to the terrorist attacks of September 11. To deal with these new threats, the

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<sup>46</sup> Bush, "Vilnius," *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Bush, "Warsaw," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Powell, "An Enlarged NATO," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

United States has continued to rely on NATO and will do so in the future.”<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, today presents “an historic opportunity,”<sup>51</sup> as the President observed in his “National Security Strategy.” Thanks to victories over fascism, militarism, and communism (“the militant visions of class, nation, and race which promised utopia and delivered misery have been defeated and discredited”<sup>52</sup>), we now have the best opportunity since the rise of the nation-state in the seventeenth century to harness the power of the world’s great nations to pull together toward peace, rather than to work in opposition to each other.<sup>53</sup> “We will work to translate this moment of influence into decades of peace, prosperity, and liberty. . . . The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better.”<sup>54</sup> This moment, though, calls for a new strategy.

Americans are inclined to think of war as having two phases: an initial, defensive phase in which defeat is averted and core values are preserved, and then a second phase in which the enemy is rolled back and victory is ultimately achieved. At the juncture between these two phases lies the turning point. This is where we now stand.

In the administration’s reading of history, the Cold War lies in the defensive phase: “as the Iron Curtain fell across Europe, and walls and barbed wire were raised, the free nations of Europe and the United States gathered their will and courage and formed the greatest alliance of liberty. Through 40 winters of Cold War, NATO defended the security of the western world, and held in trust the idea of freedom for all the peoples of Europe.”<sup>55</sup> This phase ended when truth prevailed and human spirit triumphed over tyranny in central and eastern Europe: “it ended when the peoples of central and eastern Europe took history into their own hands and took back their rights and freedom.”<sup>56</sup> Or, as the President explained when he visited NATO headquarters on his way to Warsaw in 2001, “Our nations established NATO to provide security for the free peoples of Europe and North America; to build a grand alliance of freedom to defend values which were won at great cost. We’ve succeeded, in part. The NATO alliance deterred the Soviet Union. It provided the time and space for free peoples to defeat communism. . . . Now we have a great opportunity to build a Europe whole, free and at

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Bush, “National Security Strategy,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Bush, “Central European Foreign Ministers,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

peace, with this grand alliance of liberty at its very core. That work has begun.”<sup>57</sup>

Thus from the very start the President made clear his view that NATO’s mission now was not the defense of freedom but its extension. In terms of creating a Europe whole and free, this extension involved, first, expanding security and stability across central Europe through the admission of new members. Second, it involved reaching out to that portion of Europe that still lay beyond NATO by creating new partnerships and by dealing forcefully with those isolated corners of Europe where evil still held sway, like parts of the Balkans.

### *An Enlarged Mansion*

The first “new” that the United States has insisted must be part of the NATO transformation has thus been new members and new borders for the alliance. The rewriting of past history and re-imagining of the future that has taken place in American thinking has had critical impact on how the natural, “right” borders of NATO are conceived.

It is easy, from a post-Prague or even post-Warsaw perspective to forget that prior to 2001 the notion of a “large” second round of NATO enlargement was dismissed in most American circles, as in most European ones, as both implausible and misguided. Enlargement, if it took place, would probably, it was presumed, be limited to a smoothing out of NATO’s geo-militarily logical borders – possibly simply adding Slovenia and Slovakia to the Alliance to eliminate the geographic anomaly of Hungarian membership and to solidify NATO’s Balkan front. Admission of the Baltic states was generally regarded as geopolitical folly: it would needlessly provoke Russian hostility and (since if the Baltic states were ever attacked in force they would be nearly impossible to defend with conventional means) lower the nuclear threshold in Europe. Enlargement to include Romania and Bulgaria was typically seen as a net military loss, as the ability of these states to contribute militarily to the defense of the alliance would be more than offset by the cost of modernizing their forces to NATO standards and by the potential disputes into which they could conceivably drag it.

As Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley explained six weeks before Prague, “in the first round of enlargement we were still

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<sup>57</sup> George W. Bush, “Remarks by the President at Opening of NATO Meeting,” NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, June 13, 2001, p. 1. Emphasis added.

stuck in the Cold War logic that assume [sic] that more members meant a greater burden rather than a greater benefit. That by expanding the perimeter of NATO's defensive line we were adding to our problems."<sup>58</sup> Part of the shift in American attitude between the first and second rounds of enlargement, of course, reflected a changed evaluation of the threat, from a concern about large-scale cross-border invasions to worries about Balkan dictators and Islamic terrorists. As Hadley continued, "today we are moving beyond this old think. If, for example, Romania enters the Alliance we will spend little time worrying about defending Romania against a hypothetical Soviet threat. We will spend time finding the best possible use for Romania's capabilities such as its battalion-strength combat unit the Red Scorpions that is already serving in Afghanistan."<sup>59</sup>

Without any disrespect to the combat troops and specialized military capabilities the new allies provide, however, the desire to add these to the alliance's order of battle hardly fully explains the shift in the American position. To understand why the United States approached the Prague NATO summit arguing that "we should not calculate how little we can get away with, but how much we can do to advance the cause of freedom"<sup>60</sup> it is necessary to recognize that the administration's decision to understand the struggle as being one of good against evil, not of West against East or of liberalism against totalitarianism, had important and logically necessary implications for alliance strategies.

Given the American construction of history, the complete erasure of Yalta's division of Europe into two halves was seen as a necessary step to rectify a long-standing wrong. But it was not simply the fact that Yalta was a lie and an embodied act of evil that there was a moral duty to reverse – that is, it was not simply that "Yalta did not ratify a natural divide, it divided a living civilization. The partition of Europe was not a fact of geography, it was an act of violence."<sup>61</sup> It was also that NATO had no moral meaning or purpose if the applicant nations were barred from membership and their brotherhood in the struggle against evil were denied. If "Europe" and the Euro-Atlantic community were defined by their embrace of the essential elements of "good" political life – political freedom, economic freedom, and republican society – and not by geopolitical concerns, then the applicant nations were (at least arguably) in

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<sup>58</sup> Stephen Hadley, "Challenges and Change for NATO: A U.S. Perspective (Address at the NATO/German Marshall Fund of the U.S. Conference)," Brussels, Belgium, October 3, 2002, p. 3

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Bush, "Warsaw," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

truth part of these communities. Continuing to exclude them was acting out a lie, an injustice in itself.

Given the importance that the administration's reading of history placed on truth, moral courage and vision, and faith, and given the way it read twentieth century history to underscore the presence of these in American policy toward Europe, a "small" enlargement of NATO (or no enlargement at all) would logically be both a losing strategy (since it denied truth, lacked moral courage, and abandoned faith) and inconsistent with America's own history. Once one understands the intellectual and constructed historical framework within which the administration operated, the decision in favor of maximal expansion of NATO appears foreordained.

Correcting Europe's boundaries – done most definitively in the American view through changing NATO's boundaries – was an exercise in speaking truth to power. "Our goal is to erase the false lines that have divided Europe for too long. The future of every European nation must be determined by the progress of internal reform, not the interests of outside powers. Every European nation that struggles toward democracy and free markets and a strong civic culture must be welcomed into Europe's home."<sup>62</sup>

The administration's understanding that the war against evil had now entered the rollback phase also dictated maximal enlargement, as a means of ensuring that the victory of the Cold War was in fact irreversible and would not be subverted by evil wearing a new face. Assistant Secretary of State A. Elizabeth Jones made this argument forcefully: "As the President makes clear, U.S. foreign policies must start from our core belief in freedom and democracy 'and look for ways to expand liberty.' This is the underlying logic of NATO's enlargement, to integrate the countries to the east of NATO, [sic: presumably "and"] former members of the Soviet Union, into the community of shared Western values, and into the Western institutions – of which NATO is the most important – that define and defend those values."<sup>63</sup>

Conceptualizing the struggle as one between good and evil also meant a redefinition of who is a useful ally. The administration's intellectual construction of the situation had two consequences.

First, although the applicant countries might not, on balance, be militarily useful contributors in wars against the old faces of evil – that

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> A. Elizabeth Jones, "The Road to NATO's Prague Summit: New Capabilities, New Members, New Relationships (Speech to the World Affairs Council of Northern California)," San Francisco, October 21, 2002, p. 2.

is, they might not be net assets in a conventional interstate wars that might threaten the sovereign territory of current NATO members – against the new faces of evil they might be in fact be militarily helpful. If the evil against which NATO warred was understood in terms of tyrants (such as Milosevic in the Balkans) and terrorists, then these applicant states might possess critical military resources, either in terms of intelligence capabilities or in terms of bases and air space. Thus, after reviewing the contributions of the applicant states to the war on terror, Under Secretary of State Grossman bluntly summarized the administration’s conclusion: “Bringing in new members will extend the area of security and stability in Europe and bring new Allies into our struggle against terrorism.... If we are to meet new threats to our security, we need to build the broadest and strongest coalition possible of countries that share our values and are able to act effectively with us.”<sup>64</sup>

More important, however, if the administration’s reading of history were right and NATO’s battle needed to be understood as a moral struggle against evil in which victory ultimately went to the side with greater moral courage, faith, and claim to the truth, then the contribution of the new allies might be enormous. By virtue of their own struggles, they would bring to the alliance an important new reservoir of moral strength.

The understanding that the enemy is evil itself thus not only suggested the brotherhood existing between the “old” members of the alliance and former members of the Warsaw Pact, but also suggested the unique qualifications of eastern European nations for membership. Speaking to a Romanian audience, the President mused, “your country also brings moral clarity to our NATO Alliance. You value freedom because you have lived without it. You know the difference between good and evil because you have seen evil’s face. The people of Romania understand that aggressive dictators cannot be appeased or ignored; they must always be opposed.”<sup>65</sup>

This inflow of fresh moral strength is necessary because there is a danger that the forces of good will become complacent in confronting evil – “it’s the normal reaction for people to just kind of settle back and hope that something doesn’t exist”<sup>66</sup> – and the new allies’ vivid memory of evil represented a valuable antidote to this complacency. As the President said to the people of the Baltic nations, “You have known cruel oppression and withstood it. You were held captive of an empire and

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<sup>64</sup> Grossman, “Chicago Council on Foreign Relations,” *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Bush, “Bucharest,” *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> “Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,” *op. cit.*, p. 2.

you outlived it. And because you have paid its cost you know the value of human freedom.”<sup>67</sup>

This, from an American perspective, meant that the new members of the alliance could be counted on to join in the necessary struggle to destroy evil wherever it lurked and in the task of spreading freedom across the globe. Where the “old” Europe hesitated, the “new” Europe would be courageous and bold. It would join eagerly in the war against terrorists and tyrants. As the President explained, in acknowledging and thanking the U.S. Senate for its unanimous vote to admit new members into NATO, “in the battle of Afghanistan, nations from central and eastern Europe supplied soldiers and special forces and peacekeepers to help defeat the Taliban, to help destroy the terrorists and to bring freedom to the Afghan people. In the battle of Iraq, central and eastern European countries have stood with America and our coalition to end a grave threat to peace, and to rid Iraq of a brutal, brutal regime. The peoples of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia have a fresh memory of tyranny. And they know the consequences of complacency in the face of danger.”<sup>68</sup>

Thus, specifically in response to the question of what NATO’s new members would contribute to the alliance given the modest size of their military capabilities, the President bluntly argued: “I do believe they can contribute something really important, and that is they can contribute their love for freedom. These are countries which have lived in totalitarian states. They haven’t been free. And now they’ve seen freedom and they love freedom. Just like America loves freedom. And that’s going to be a really important [sic] – it will add some vigor to the relationship in NATO that’s healthy and wholesome.”<sup>69</sup>

### *The Russian Partnership, and the Completion of the European Project*

The first “new” in the transformation of NATO thus had to be the admission of new members. Even with this enlargement, however, victory in the great battle for Europe remained incomplete. NATO still was short of its goal of creating a single Europe, whole and free, from the Atlantic to the Urals. Another “new” element in NATO strategy was required. The second “new” in NATO’s transformation is thus the redefinition of how NATO

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<sup>67</sup> Bush, “Vilnius,” op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Bush, “Central European Foreign Ministers,” op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> “Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,” op. cit., p. 1.

deals with Europe outside its borders. During the Cold War, NATO's edge was seen as a wall. Now it is a permeable membrane, through which assistance to freedom-loving peoples is free to pass.

Completion of the European project demands changes outside of NATO's borders: it involves a consolidation of liberty in Russia and Russia's integration into Europe as a friend and, hopefully, a partner in the struggle to build peace; it involves seeing an end to tyranny in the odd corners of Europe (the Balkans and Belarus) that made a wrong turn in the post-Cold War years (that is, where evil returned under another face); it involves making sure that the Ukraine does not make a wrong turn and that it, too, becomes a friend and partner; and it involves working to see that freedom is established in the Eurasian borderlands of the Caucasus and Central Asia. For the most part, the completion of the European project thus involves politico-economic-cultural engagement with NATO's European neighbors. In the former Yugoslavia, it has called for military intervention.

Obviously, the most important element in this transformation and the completion of the European project is the first element: a new Russian relationship. "We want Russia to be a partner and an ally – a partner in peace, a partner in democracy, a country that embraces freedom, a country that enhances the security of Europe.... The definition of the relationship will evolve over time but, first and foremost, it's got to start with the simple word, 'friend.'"<sup>70</sup>

This new relationship requires changes on both sides. For the NATO allies it requires, National Security Advisor Rice has argued, recognition "that this is a new day for Europe; that the Cold War is over; that one of the most important aspects of the new Europe is a welcoming and open invitation to Russia to take a rightful place in Europe."<sup>71</sup> For its part, Russia must recognize that it "has some important choices to make about its commitment to democratic principles and institutions, about its willingness and ability to live at peace with its neighbors, about its commitment to economic reform."<sup>72</sup> Dr. Rice, however, puts both sides on notice "that the President's vision of Europe is one in which Russia belongs and fully belongs."<sup>73</sup>

The specific nature of the institutional relationship with Russia and the degree to which Russia is, at any point in time, integrated into Atlantic institutions will be based not on geopolitics but on Russia's

<sup>70</sup> George W. Bush, "Press Conference of President Bush and President of the Republic of Poland, Alexander Kwasniewski," Presidential Palace, Warsaw, Poland, June 15, 2001, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Rice, "Warsaw," *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

progress in building the domestic institutions necessary to solidify and codify freedom for its people – progress, for example, in market reforms, the expansion of civil society, and freedom of the press. That is, as Dr. Rice explains, it will depend on the extent that Russia thinks “of itself as a European power. And I don’t mean geographically a European power; I mean in terms of values, in terms of common aspirations.”<sup>74</sup>

While the American vision does not seem to stretch to include the possibility of Russia joining the NATO alliance, this understanding of a growing partnership between NATO and Russia opens the door to – indeed demands – an unconstrained and ever-expanding agenda for cooperation. “We have done more than just settle old business. We are now entering new territory... Our purpose is to build common security with Russia. Our means are the common projects we have agreed upon, such as developing a joint threat assessment and co-operation on civil emergencies. But we can and should do more. As we tend to this new relationship we must think ambitiously and creatively, asking fundamental questions. For example, should NATO and Russia develop military capabilities to work together to face terrorist threats. And as NATO works on missile defense should we develop a common missile defense system with Russia.”<sup>75</sup>

In the American view, the obstacle blocking such cooperation is not real but mental. It is memory itself that poses the challenge. “It has been over a decade since NATO and Russia viewed each other through concertina wire with hostility. Now we must overcome the habits of mind that linger over a divide of different perspectives and different histories.”<sup>76</sup>

Beyond Russia, and beyond the uncertainty of developments in the Ukraine, lie the Caucasus and Central Asia. The intellectual challenge in this case is to recognize that these now lie within the ambit of NATO’s concerns. The new faces of evil reduce the importance of geographic distance: “we must reach eastward to create new political and military ties with the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus.... As NATO seeks in the future to respond to the threat of terrorism and to instability in the arc of countries ranging from North Africa to the Middle East to South Asia, we need the active support of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgystan to protect us and them from the many dangers we all now confront. As NATO devoted itself to stabilizing Central Europe and the Balkans in the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Hadley, “Challenges and Change for NATO,” *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

1990s, we must now look east in the next decade to extend our hand in partnership to each of these countries as we seek peace and stability for them and for ourselves.”<sup>77</sup>

### *The Global Mission*

In the American perspective, a transformed NATO will not only complete the European project through enlargement and its engagement with the “other” Europe but will necessarily look beyond Europe, and beyond Europe’s borderlands. It will adopt a global perspective. In one of the few cases in which the administration has not spoken with a single, consistent voice, two entirely distinct justifications for this new global perspective have been offered. One is based on a sweeping moral imperative, the other on more narrowly self-interested realist concerns.

At times, a new global mission for NATO is explained in terms of a moral duty. Because the values of NATO are universal, rather than civilizational, they are the birthright not simply of Europeans and North Americans but of all humanity. The obligations to our fellows created by our own humanity are global, not merely continental, in scope. As the President put it to his Polish audience, “those who have benefited most from the commitment to freedom and openness have an obligation to help others that are seeking their way along that path. This is why our trans-Atlantic community must have priorities beyond the consolidation of European peace.”<sup>78</sup> The same moral imperative that drove the United States to help Western Europe in the 1940s and 1950s, and that drove the United States and Western Europe to embrace Poland in the 1990s, now impelled the United States, Western Europe, and Poland together to come to the assistance of other freedom-loving peoples. “Now, we and others can only go forward together. The question no longer is what others can do for Poland, but what America and Poland can do for the rest of the world.”<sup>79</sup>

At other times, however, the necessity for NATO to conceive of its mission in global terms is explained in terms of the new global, rather than regional, nature of the threat posed to the free Atlantic community. As Ambassador Nicholas Burns explained, “in the post-September 11 world,

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<sup>77</sup> Burns, “Manfred Woerner Memorial Lecture,” op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Bush, “Warsaw,” op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

we NATO Allies will be threatened not so much by hostile states but by failed ones. We will be threatened not by huge armies here in Europe but by the toxic mix of terrorist groups and weapons of mass destruction far from NATO's borders. The world changed on September 11. This is now the defining threat to our civilization and way of life."<sup>80</sup>

In other words, as Stephen Hadley, the Deputy National Security Advisor, explained, "NATO's core mission has not changed. What has changed is the source of the threats to our countries."<sup>81</sup> The embodiment of evil that now endangers free peoples is terrorism and tyranny ("these threats are likely to come less from massing great armies than from small shadowy bands of terrorists. Less from strong states than from weak or failed states, including those led by aggressive dictators"<sup>82</sup>), and these threats are likely to come "less from inside Europe than from exotic locales beyond Europe."<sup>83</sup>

Whether or not its allies accept the larger, moral justification for a globally focused NATO, as far as the United States is concerned, the question is nonetheless closed. Acknowledgment by the alliance in 2001 of the changed threats confronting it "effectively ended the in area-out of area debate that had burned up so much of our time and energies throughout the 1990s. A historical line has been crossed. NATO will go to the Article 5 threats wherever they are."<sup>84</sup>

### *New Capabilities*

The third "new" on the administration's transformational agenda for NATO grows both from the second enunciated "new" (the new relationship with Europe outside of NATO's borders) and from the new global mission imagined for NATO. Both of these imply a necessary transformation in the alliance's capabilities. "In devising a new Strategic Concept in 1999, NATO defined these new threats explicitly, noting that 'new risks to Euro-Atlantic peace and stability were becoming clearer – oppression, ethnic conflict, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the global spread of weapons technology and terrorism.' ... In order first to deter and then to defend ourselves against these new threats, NATO needs to be able to deploy at short notice flexible and

<sup>80</sup> Burns, "NATO Commemoration," op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Hadley, "Challenges and Change for NATO," op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

well-armed forces capable of conducting sustained operations anywhere in the world.”<sup>85</sup>

It is not simply the new interventionary or expeditionary character of NATO forces and the new, global, geographic domain in which they will have to operate that creates a challenge. It is also the sheer unpredictability of the circumstances under which these forces will be needed. For all the difficulties posed by the Soviet-communist face of evil, at least it was predictable in a way that tyranny and terrorism are not. The lesson of recent history drawn by American leaders is that NATO will need to develop greater military and political flexibility. “We need to think hard about the lessons of the Afghanistan campaign, and what we might need in the future. In addition to new capabilities we need new NATO structures that will allow us to package capabilities to fit new sorts of missions.”<sup>86</sup>

What goes unsaid, of course, is that the sort of transformation of capabilities that is being pressed by the United States is likely to require a fundamental political transformation, one that presumably deepens trans-Atlantic interdependence, or at least the interdependence between European members of the Alliance. Meeting the U.S. demand for “new capabilities” will require increasing national specialization and a pooling of resources among NATO members, since individual member-states will, typically, be unable to afford all of the critical capabilities identified by the United States (e.g., “defenses against nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, both protection and detection;” “better counter-terrorism capabilities;” “ground surveillance;” “strategic air lift;” and “precision strike capabilities, meaning more unmanned aerial vehicles, more precision-guided munitions”<sup>87</sup>). As (most of the) allies become increasingly specialized providers of niche capabilities, they will inevitably have to sacrifice the most essential element of sovereignty: the capacity to defend oneself without assistance from others. Indeed, as American policymakers have suggested, affording the new capabilities is likely to demand that members abandon what has been both a symbol and a pillar of the modern nation-state: mass conscript armies.<sup>88</sup>

Where the obstacle faced by the United States in advancing the other two “news” has been (from the American perspective) a failure of imagination, the obstacle in the case of the third “new” has been a failure of will and resolve. As American spokesmen repeatedly point out, what

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<sup>85</sup> Grossman, “Chicago Council on Foreign Relations,” *op. cit.*, p. 4. Emphasis added.

<sup>86</sup> Hadley, “Challenges and Change for NATO,” *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> Burns, “Manfred Woerner Memorial Lecture,” *op. cit.*, p. 2.

needs to be done has been identified. NATO members, however, have been reluctant to pay the necessary price – economic and political – to carry through on their verbal commitments.

## Conclusions

A careful reading of American documents thus suggests a fascinating, intellectually coherent, if not necessarily intellectually convincing, vision of a new Atlantic partnership. Starting with a framework that emphasizes good and evil, the essentiality of the struggle between them, and the role of truth, moral courage, and faith in this struggle, the Bush administration has constructed a history that emphasizes American constancy (American faith in a Europe whole, free, and at peace; American partnership in the Atlantic Alliance; and American friendship with all the nations of Europe), the changing face, though not fundamental character, of the evil confronted, and the notion that we now stand at a great turning point.

This conceptualization of the world and this account of Atlantic history logically imply both the continued centrality of the NATO alliance and the need to transform that alliance. The three “news” articulated by the Bush administration – new members for NATO, new relationships with non-NATO Europe, and new capabilities – as well as the administration’s insistence on globalizing NATO’s perspective all follow directly from this understanding of reality.

Ironically, it is the very coherence and consistency of the American vision of a world of good and evil that is likely to prove problematic for the alliance. These qualities of coherence and consistency are likely to lead the Bush administration to presume the vision is also accurate and universally accepted, at least by people and communities of faith. But allies beginning with a different conception of the nature of world politics, or of good and evil, or of the history of the Atlantic relationship are likely to find themselves challenging not only American policy preferences but the entire American cosmology. The injunction: “No more Munichs. No more Yaltas” is likely to have very different meanings to different audiences.

Whether the United States will be successful in translating its vision of a transformed Atlantic partnership into reality remains to be seen. If Estonia seeks to understand American behavior, however, it will need to take this vision seriously.

# Nordic–Baltic Defence Cooperation and International Relations Theory

Lauri Lepik

## Introduction

For years Europe's North and especially the Baltic Sea region reflected a security environment vastly different from that of its erstwhile Cold War setting. Individually and collectively, states in the region have been challenged to re-conceive the political, military and economic boundaries of their respective relationships with intra-regional, European, trans-Atlantic and bilateral partners. Perhaps the most basic change brought about by the end of the Cold War was of a new geopolitical orientation that eroded, if not eliminated a Nordic sense of separateness from the travails of European integration and the building of a transatlantic security system. The same goes for the Baltic states, whose main geopolitical orientation since regaining independence has been integration with and inclusion in European and Trans-Atlantic security structures, as embodied by the European Union and NATO.

As Swedish observer Bo Huldt puts it, "the region is a meeting place of NATO, EU, Russian, Baltic, Nordic and Central European interests".<sup>1</sup> Taking this observation a step further, it might be suggested that because of these unique circumstances, the region as a whole comprised a security environment in transition during the 1990s. This situation challenged many analysts and theoreticians to follow closely the developments in the region and to offer a variety of different explanations and solutions to resolve the transitory nature of the problem.

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<sup>1</sup> Bo Huldt, "Nordic Security – A Historical Perspective", in *Approaching the Northern Dimension of CFSP: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU in the Emerging European Security Order*, ed. Mathias Jopp and Riku Warjvaara, Helsinki & Bonn, 1998, pp. 37-49.

There were two reasons for this widespread interest: First, the Nordic–Baltic realm was rightly seen as a microcosm of Europe’s post-Cold War security problems.<sup>2</sup> Second, because none of the security issues in the Nordic-Baltic region was seen to have reached the critical point of violability – that explosions could result from experiments gone wrong – the region was seen, in the words of Tapani Vaahtoranta “as a laboratory for solutions” to European security problems.<sup>3</sup>

The region’s very diversity, its openness and its unresolved security situation drew international relations scholars from all three major branches of theory (neorealists, postmodernists and institutionalists) to contribute to discussions about post-Cold War security arrangements in general, and about those for the region, in particular. As a result, there is a vast and rich literature published since the 1990s about the Baltic Sea region in security transition.

I have three aims in this article. First, I attempt to analyse the competing theoretical explanations of the Nordic–Baltic defence cooperation in the 1990s. Theoretical preferences are often disguised, and thus must be exposed before empirical analysis can reliably present evidence for various kinds of policy behaviour. This recognition leads directly to the paper’s second purpose, which is to test the propositions advanced by different theories against observable behaviour.<sup>4</sup> Testing theoretical propositions can reveal the circumstances under which states conform to policy expectations proposed either by neorealists, postmodernists or institutionalists.

I use the case of BALTBAT (Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion) to test observable behaviour against the theories. BALTBAT was a multinational project in which the Nordic countries and the Baltic states were the most actively involved. Secondly, the project also captured the imagination of some countries that were outside the centre of region by virtue of their global reach or historical interest. Nonetheless, they were in a position to influence the region’s security agenda (USA, UK, Germany). BALTBAT serves almost as an ideal testing tool because the project, having lasting for nearly a decade, has a fixed starting point as well as a fixed end. The whole course of the project is extremely well documented by official sources.

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<sup>2</sup> Charles M. Perry, Michael J. Sweeny, and Andrew C. Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region: Implications for U.S. Policy*, Herndon, 2000, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with T. Vahtoranta, as quoted in Perry et al., 2000, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander L. George, “The Casual Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behaviour: The “Operational Code Belief System”, in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski, Boulder, 1979, pp. 95-124.

The paper's third purpose is to apply the insights gained through the testing of theories against the observations in order to further theoretical discussions.

The first flush of elation after the fall of the Berlin Wall seemed to bring universal agreement on what should be the right road to peace and security. The common objective was to extend that security concept that prevailed in the European Community to the eastern half of Europe. The idea was to promote political stability and economic prosperity and thereby create a reliable and lasting basis for the security of Europe as a whole for both halves. No one spoke of any new role for NATO in this connection.<sup>5</sup> Cooperation, inclusion and integration became the political concepts de jour, a development that supported the notion that "soft security" would be the main tool with which the new foundations of the international security system would be built. Consequently, the traditional mainstream approach to international relations – or, realism – was labelled as representing "Cold War thinking" and, moreover, was seen by many as a destructive way of explaining the new realities.

The origins of the term "soft security" itself are hard to pin down.<sup>6</sup> After the end of the Cold War, there was widening of what security was widely understood to mean. The new governments in Central and Eastern Europe (the Baltics included) placed great emphasis on "hard security guarantees" in the early 1990s; this emphasis inevitably brought with it a companion concept of "soft guarantees".<sup>7</sup> The idea of "soft security" achieved considerable standing in Nordic discussions mainly because of the growing importance of the Copenhagen School.<sup>8</sup> Still, it would be a mistake to say that realism lost its importance in discussions about the future of the European security architecture. The Central and Eastern European countries saw their future security arrangements very much in realistic "hard security" terms. This applies to the Baltic states, as well, even though some authors in the early 1990s sincerely worried that:

There was a prospect that the Baltic States could, in the bifurcation of world security, find themselves in the periphery where the "realist" perspective of security dominated.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Max Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe*, Westport & London, 1998, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Barry Buzan, who has given a first-rate survey of the topic, does so without once mentioning "soft security", see Barry Buzan, "Rethinking Security After the Cold War", *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 32, 1997, pp. 5-28.

<sup>7</sup> Olav F. Knudsen, *Cooperative Security in the Baltic Sea Region*, Chaillot Paper 33, Alençon, 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Buzan (1997), pp. 5-28.

<sup>9</sup> James M. Goldiger, Michael McFaul, "A Tale of Two Worlds: Core and Periphery in the Post-Cold War Era", *International Organisation*, vol. 42, 1992, pp. 467-91.

In the following parts of this article I show that the Baltic states never left the “periphery of realism” although they went along with different “soft security” initiatives of the time. Moreover, it is relevant to state that because the Nordic countries had to respond to the major change in their security environment represented by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and re-establishment of the Baltic states’ independence, they did it on purely neorealist grounds. It has been argued that these strategic changes provided a wider framework for the Nordic countries to re-evaluate their concepts of security and to act accordingly.<sup>10</sup> Thus, “realist” thinking still mattered in the North, although it was not as celebrated as “post-modernism.”

The end of the Cold War also caused a change in the institutional framework. On the regional level, new institutions such as the Baltic Council (1991), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (1992), The Barents Council (1993) and the Arctic Council (1996) were established. After Finland and Sweden joined the EU in 1995, the EU turned into the main political actor in Northern and Northeastern Europe. NATO also started to play an important role in Northern Europe. This became obvious with its first post-Cold War enlargement to the East, that is, to the area of the former East Germany, as well as with NATO’s ever increasing forms of cooperation with non-member states (Sweden, Finland, the Baltic states and Russia) through the Partnership for Peace process and its later modifications. The efforts of the Baltic states to achieve NATO membership kept the organization very much on the regional security agenda.

The reorganization of long existing Nordic institutions, in addition to completely new dimensions of Nordic cooperation – namely cooperation in the fields of foreign, security and defence policies as well as the extension of Nordic cooperation to the Baltic states, bolstered those studies based on the institutionalist paradigm. This school saw solutions to the question of regional security architecture in the merger of Nordic and Baltic institutions, which, as the argument goes, would thus create a new Northern European identity based on cooperative security. As Olav Knudsen has put it:

The adoption of the Baltic states as new, fully fledged members of the Nordic institutions under the 1962 Helsinki Agreement would be a fitting contribution on the part of the Nordic countries to the stabilization of their “near abroad,” and the cost would be very small compared with gains of integration.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Clive Archer, *Nordic Involvement in the Baltic States Security: Need, Motives and Success*. COPRI Working Paper. Copenhagen, 1998, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Knudsen (1998), p. 31.

This view treats the Baltic states as passive objects of international relations instead of being active subjects. It also emphasises the role of international institutions in creating norms and values that would guide the actions of member states. The gains mentioned are not realist ones – the relative power of states – but rather those related to economic (financial) factors. The Baltic states have on numerous occasions stated their interest in joining or coming closer to the Nordic institutions. This is well illustrated by the regular 5+3 format meetings at the prime, foreign and defence ministers levels. It is vital to note, however, that neither the Nordic nor the Baltic states have stated their primary goal to be the creation of a new Nordic-Baltic institution or the merger of existing ones.

### **Institutionalism and Nordic-Baltic cooperation**

The institutionalist school of international relations highlights the importance of international institutions – they may mitigate fears or cheating among states, allow cooperation to emerge, alleviate fears from unequal gains from cooperation, provide for reciprocal flows of information, create issue linkages, and allow for more effective retaliation against cheaters.<sup>12</sup> Like neorealists, institutionalists consider the interests of states as a pre-existing given. They argue that national interests can be tamed by the civilizing effects of international institutions, but that institutions matter only “sometimes,” and they depend on an evident self-interest of the states.<sup>13</sup>

This school of thought has identified four main motives for the Nordic institution building that emerged after World War II: first, the common historical and cultural traditions of the Nordic countries, combined with the fact of their closely related languages, have enabled transnational contacts on all levels of society.<sup>14</sup> The second motive centers on the advantages that follow from a division of labor organized by common Nordic institutions. The third motive lies in the immediate neighborhood that some Nordic countries share with major European military, economic and cultural powers. The Nordic states were eager to

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<sup>12</sup> Robert O. Keohane & Lisa L. Martin, “The Promise of Institutional Theory”, *International Security*, vol. 20, 1995, pp. 39-51.

<sup>13</sup> Keohane & Martin (1995), p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Tom Schumacher, *The Emergence of the New Nordic Co-operation*, DUPI Working Paper 6, Copenhagen, 2000, pp. 4-5.

balance unequal relationships to third countries by emphasizing their Nordic identity and strengthening Nordic co-operation.<sup>15</sup>

The fourth motive was that Nordic cooperation could support the individual aspirations of its member states. By pooling political efforts, the states acting as a group could play a more influential role in world politics than could each state acting independently. By promoting the Nordic Model as a “Third Way,” for instance by coordinating development policies in the United Nations and other international institutions, the Nordic states eventually stumbled upon a strategy to maintain peace and stability in the Nordic region itself.

The four motives described above – which, according to the institutionalists, propelled Nordic cooperation during the Cold War – were still considered to be relevant in the new situation, at least to a certain extent. However, the motives were not believed to be sufficient for keeping the Nordics together. The pull of the European Union and NATO in resolving existing security questions in Europe was simply too strong. The Nordics saw a solution to this quandary in the idea that the Five should seek more influence in the adjacent areas to the East, i.e., in the Baltic states and, to a certain extent, in Russia. This aim found clear expression in the 1991 “Mariehamn Declaration on the Future Nordic Co-operation” adopted by the five heads of government. In the declaration, they agreed, “on the interest and needs of their citizens, the Nordic countries must try to influence developments in Europe and among their neighbors. This will require a renewal of the forms of Nordic consultations among other things, in international questions.”<sup>16</sup> The Nordic countries certainly regarded the Baltic drive to join the European Union and NATO to be in their own interests, too, and thus took a united stand in promoting these Baltic aspirations.

Some observers have argued that the center of gravity of Nordic cooperation shifted toward the East because this new geographic focus provided the Nordic countries “not only with a profile (and influence-L.L.) in the wider institutions such as NATO and the EU, but also with a justification of their way of dealing with the security issues.” (author’s italics).<sup>17</sup> In this context, “their way” refers to “soft security measures,” but in the final analysis one can say that all the Nordic countries were interested in and saw they had something to gain in the “hard security solutions” (meaning NATO membership) for the Baltics.

<sup>15</sup> Hans Mouritzen, “The Nordic Model as a Foreign Policy Instrument: Its Rise and Fall”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 33, 1995, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Nordisk Råd, Session 41, Stockholm 1992, translation and quotation from Schumacher (2000), p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Clive Archer, “Norden and the Security of the Baltic States”, *The Norwegian Atlantic Committee Security Policy Library*, no. 4, Oslo, 1998, p. 13.

## Post-modernism and Nordic-Baltic cooperation

Karl Deutsch was the first analyst to define the Nordic states as constituting a pluralistic security community. This was so, Deutsch believed, because disputes among the Nordics would not be resolved by war. Deutsch further pointed out that pluralistic security communities are dependent on two qualities: 1) the existence of like-minded political values within the community and 2) the ability of community states to uphold a dialogue with other governments and to anticipate other states' future political, economic and social actions.<sup>18</sup>

Some authors like Pertti Joenniemi have taken Deutsch's connotation further by arguing that the Nordic states do not, in fact, constitute a security community at all. According to Joenniemi, security does not determine Nordic relations because those relations are founded upon a common Nordic identity, among other things. As Joenniemi notes,

Another way of putting this is to say that security has, in the first place, not been a joint Nordic concern. Norden has actually been 'a community of security.' The Nordic project has not emerged as a way of handling security; such an impact has emerged more or less inadvertently. Nordicity has by and large resided in the sphere of culture....As the emergence of joint Nordic identity across the borders of the nation-states has been there, there has not been any need to insert issues of security in the traditional sense on the joint Nordic agenda.<sup>19</sup>

In short, Nordic "we-ness", "fellow feeling" has prevailed over the traditional balance of power. The concept of Nordic security community as a "Nordic asecurity community" is organically related to the constructionist argument that the very meaning of "security" has been widened. As Kari Möttölä argues: "the policy of common security has a broader and deeper meaning in the post-division Europe than in the détente periods of the bipolar era, when it was primarily driven by the common interests of survival against military threats."<sup>20</sup>

Barry Buzan and others have proposed a system of concepts linking traditional concepts of security with the wider view. According to this framework, security is about existential threats and emergency measures. The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary

<sup>18</sup> Karl W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1957.

<sup>19</sup> Pertti Joenniemi, "Norden as a Post-Nationalist Construction", *Neorealism or Regionality: The reconstruction of Political Space Around the Baltic Rim*, Copenhagen, NORD REFO, 1997, p. 202.

<sup>20</sup> Kari Möttölä, "Security around the Baltic Rim: Concepts, Actors and Processes." *The NEBI Yearbook: North European and Baltic Integration*. New York, 1998, p. 199.

measures to handle them. Security should be seen in the negative, as a failure to deal with issues in the course of normal politics.

This construct can be a way to attract sufficient attention to problems that normally would not warrant the attention accorded security concerns, for example, for environmental problems. But in the long run, according to Buzan, “de-securitisation” is the optimal solution, since one is not compelled to couch issues in terms of “threats against which we have to countermeasures.” Instead, such issues can be transferred out of this threat-defence sequence and back into the ordinary public sphere.<sup>21</sup> In the Nordic case, this has led to a greater focus on soft aspects of security, such as economic security, environmental security and social security. As Lassinantti points out: “military ‘hard’ security can no longer totally dominate the region’s security debate. The ‘soft’ aspects of security must increasingly replace or supplement ‘hard’ security”.<sup>22</sup> As Finland’s former Foreign Minister and current President, Tarja Halonen, argues, “today...most security risks are to be found in the areas of ‘soft’ security. They include problems such as ethnic strife, social upheaval and lack of democracy.”<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Sweden’s former Foreign Minister Hjelm-Wallén has stated that,

for many years, security in this region had an almost purely military- or hard- focus: bloc confrontations, deterrence doctrines and intense armaments....Today, the situation is entirely different....Instead of focusing on the need to avoid the immediate threat of war between countries, we are able to focus on the possibilities of creating sustainable peace. The building blocks for this work are...soft security.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, many analysts and Nordic politicians themselves argued that at the heart of Nordic foreign policy lay the value of international solidarity. This solidarity found expression in such practices as maintaining high levels of participation in UN peacekeeping and administration, making budget commitments to high levels of overseas development assistance as well as supporting mediation and metaphorical bridge-building in areas of conflict.<sup>25</sup> The Nordic engagement with the Baltic states

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<sup>21</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Japp Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Colorado 1998, pp. 21-29.

<sup>22</sup> Gunnar Lassinantti, *Hard and Soft Security in the Baltic Sea Region*. The Olof Palme International Center. Stockholm, 1997.

<sup>23</sup> Tarja Halonen, “What we have done, what we can do?”, in *Hard and Soft Security in the Baltic Sea Region*, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Lena Hjelm-Wallén, “Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”, in *Hard and Soft Security in the Baltic Sea Region*, p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Lawler, “Scandinavian Exceptionalism”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1997, pp. 565-94.

served as one of the most convincing examples for the postmodernist's arguments. Among observers of this ilk, there is a widespread notion that Nordic involvement in the Baltic states generally, and in defence cooperation specifically, was influenced by a broad Nordic tendency to pursue internationalist foreign policies, policies informed by norms and values such as international solidarity and justice.<sup>26</sup>

From the very beginning, the Baltic states didn't make a big secret of their ultimate goal – to obtain security guarantees from NATO. Amusingly, a majority of researchers saw this very fact as a main justification for Nordic involvement in Baltic security developments. Annika Bergman is one of many who argued, "Through their involvement in Baltic security, the Nordic states have actively attempted to change this frame of mind (old Cold War thinking-L.L.) and contribute to a wider understanding of the security concept, which corresponds to the Nordic vision of the post Cold war security situation in the Baltic Sea region".<sup>27</sup>

This notion was amplified further by the engagement of the United States and the EU in the region. The US Northern European Initiative and European Union's Northern Dimension were interpreted as initiatives

that can create a complex regional community in which individuals are linked by variety of economic, political, cultural, and practical ties. While conflicts of interests within this community will surely exist, they are not and will not be primarily or necessarily military, and the bulk of the critical challenges facing the region require cooperative solutions.<sup>28</sup>

So the mode was set from Westphalia to Hansa. As US Ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter declared in 1997, "We are trying to do nothing less than to repeal and abolish that most failed principle of international politics of the last 350 years, which is the balance of power itself".<sup>29</sup> The Hanseatic League metaphor was consistently utilized by policymakers to the extent that some analysts of the post-modern school concluded that,

since the Hansa extended to Russia as well, it encourages the actors to think regionally, to re-conceptualize national identities in regional terms and, in that process, to under-

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<sup>26</sup> Annika Bergman, *BALTBAT- the emergence of a common defense dimension to Nordic cooperation*. COPRI working paper 22, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Edward Rhodes, *Rethinking National Security: The US Northern European Initiative*, COPRI Working Paper, Copenhagen, 2001, p.7.

<sup>29</sup> Robert E. Hunter, *Address to the Second Annual Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Baltic*, Stockholm, December 1997. Downloaded from <http://www.usis.usemb.se/bsconf/hunter.html> on 10 October 2003.

mine the previous tight link between the nation and the state's territorial sovereignty that has been characteristic in the region for much of the last century.<sup>30</sup>

The same analysts who lauded the Hansa regarded the Baltic states' refusal to give up their search for "hard security" as one of the main "obstacles" of achieving the "soft security" goals of the Northern Dimension and Northern European Initiatives. As Clive Archer expressed it,

It may be that the Baltic states still prefer the more "zero-sum" choice of NATO membership, which in itself would probably terminate the Northern Dimension and CBSS soft options (by Russian withdrawal). To that extent, the hard security of NATO can be seen as a threat to the soft security offered by Northern Dimension.<sup>31</sup>

### Neorealism and Nordic-Baltic cooperation

Neorealism, making its four basic claims that: a) the international system is anarchic; b) states are potentially dangerous to each other; c) states can never fully trust each other; and d) states act instrumentally and rationally<sup>32</sup> is a suitable tool for explaining defence and military cooperation in the region. The neo-realist approach to the Nordic-Baltic defence and security cooperation is based on the assumption that "the Nordic states have recognized that the security of the Baltic states form an important part of their own security in the post-Cold War Europe."<sup>33</sup> As a result, the Nordics have seen taking an activist approach to the political development of the Baltic states to be in their own interests.

Neo-realists argue that the involvement of the Nordic states in Baltic defence reforms has been motivated by the Nordics' desire to maximize their own security and regional influence. In discussing the new orientation, the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* captured the essence of neo-realist thought: "... a little charity and a lot of politics lie behind the project, whose core function is to give the Baltics a military tie to NATO, without promising them too much—and without provoking the

<sup>30</sup> Christopher S. Browning, *Competing or Complimentary Policies? Understanding the Relationship between the NEI and NDI*, COPRI Working Paper, Copenhagen 2002, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Clive Archer, "The Northern Dimension as a Soft-Soft Option for the Baltic States' Security" in *The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?*, Helsinki & Berlin, 2001, p. 207.

<sup>32</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions", *International Security*, vol. 19, 1994/95, pp. 5-49.

<sup>33</sup> Clive Archer, *Norden and the Security of the Baltic States*. Security Policy Library no. 4, 1998. The Norwegian Atlantic Committee. Oslo, 1998.

Russian Bear.”<sup>34</sup> *Aftenposten* sagely adds: “BALTBAT almost functions as a preparatory school for NATO membership”.<sup>35</sup>

As a matter of fact, Baltic officials never denied a close linkage between Nordic-Baltic defence cooperation and their own aspirations to join NATO. As the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence points out:

BALTBAT’s objectives cover more than just peacekeeping operations. Plans approved by the BALTBAT Steering Group provide for the following tasks: to develop a force which is compatible and interoperable with NATO and to spread the BALTBAT experience into the rest of the national armed forces of the Baltic states... to increase the self-defence capability of the Baltic states...<sup>36</sup>

In the same fashion, the Estonian Foreign Ministry underlines that BALTBAT has led to

...transfer of skills and knowledge and nurturing the reform and development of the three countries’ defence forces. The exposure to NATO’s high level of procedural discipline and standards will assist in ensuring that reforms in the defence forces will endure, and benefit the societies as a whole.<sup>37</sup>

While the policies of the Nordic states may be seen from outside as having strong elements of similarity, a detailed analysis demonstrates considerable elements of disparity in their dealings with the Baltic security issues. One of the best examples of such neo-realist analysis is by Clive Archer who argues that both Norway and Sweden have had elements of a “Russia First” policy in dealing with the Baltic states. This does not imply that Russia’s wishes were placed before those of the Baltic states, but only that Norway and Sweden saw their own relations with Russia as being of first order importance and not to be damaged by their actions in the Baltic states. Archer writes: “Norway considers its Barents cooperation with Russia to be the priority but is content to participate in various forums of the Baltic regional cooperation, not least to preserve it against any tendency of marginalisation after its (Norway’s.-L.L) EU referendum.”<sup>38</sup> In Sweden, the conservative Moderate party adopted the attitude that Russia’s actions in the Baltic were the touchstone for Russian acceptability. That attitude fit into a wider

<sup>34</sup> *Aftenpost*, 29 January 1997.

<sup>35</sup> *Aftenpost*, 17 January 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Lithuanian Ministry of Defense, Vilnius, 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion. Regional and International Cooperation in Action*, 1995.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

(mostly social democratic) Swedish view that Baltic states was manageable in an East-West framework, with only non-security or “soft security” issues being open for regional treatment. That view was partly shared by Danish decision makers with their emphasis on NATO as a means to deal with Baltic “hard security” and the EU as the main instrument of “soft security” questions.

Archer notes that “Denmark has accepted the need for a regional aspect to Baltic security, as long as there is a back-up from the major Western powers. Denmark has been much bolder in its Baltic policy than Norway or Sweden, with considerations of Russian sensitivities being less prominent, given the Danes’ strategic distance from Russia. The country’s membership of NATO and the EU, and as well as the Nordic and Baltic regional institutions, have provided it with extra leverage in the form of diplomatic instruments.”<sup>39</sup> After 1991 Finland moved quickly from a cautious “Russia first” policy to one that reflected the definite shift westward of its external policies. Finland has focused its main attention towards its relations with Estonia and has seen Estonia’s membership in the EU as being an important element in advancing Baltic security.

## The Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion

### *Phase One 1994-1997*

In terms of security and defence policy there was a mutual desire to avoid the mistakes of the pre-war period – one of which was seen to be the countries’ relative isolation. So among themselves, the Baltic states shared the objective to scramble onto the international scene quickly and to demonstrate full independence. There was also a wish to demonstrate to Russia that the three countries could and would work together. The threat perception was very clear – Russia was the threat. But the Baltic states also felt a need to tread carefully to avoid precipitating delays on the Russian troop pullout.

In June 1992, the Baltic states signed a “Protocol on Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Defence”. This document laid down the foundation of future Baltic co-operation-co-operation. In 1993, Lieutenant General Alexander Einseln, at that time Commander of Estonian Defence Forces, introduced the notion of a joint Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion at a meeting of Baltic Defence Ministers. The Ministers announced their commitment to advance concrete co-operation in a

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

number of areas, including “a joint peacekeeping unit” that would enable “participation in the UN and other international organizations’ peacekeeping missions.”<sup>40</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> November 1993, the three Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) agreed that the joint unit should be of battalion size (consisting of infantry companies from each Baltic state) and should adopt English as its language of command and control.

From the start, the Baltic states began seeking international support for the project. At the same time, the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, launched at the Brussels Summit on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1994, provided extremely useful and well timed backing by explicitly highlighting to the United Nations (UN) and CSCE<sup>41</sup> peacekeeping capabilities and interoperability with NATO.

The Nordic–Baltic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was agreed among Defence Ministers from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden in June 1994. This MOU stated that Nordic assistance would be made available for a period of three years in the areas of organization; training and recruitment; administrative and legislative preparatory work; equipment and other materiel.

The International Support MOU concluded in Copenhagen on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1994 (with the addition of the UK) envisaged support “to put in place mechanisms by which the Baltic states can themselves in the future maintain a peacekeeping capability.” This later MOU also established arrangements for sharing responsibilities. The Baltic states were to be responsible for providing personnel and facilities for training, including pay, allowance and travel. Nordic countries and the UK would assist with organization, recruitment and training, as well as planning of logistics and the provision of training equipment to “maximise opportunities for operational comp ability.” BALTBAT was planned to perform standard peacekeeping tasks such as supervising and controlling agreements between parties in order to prevent armed conflict and supervise an armistice after an armed conflict.

In 1995, the Supporting Countries decided that weapons donations would now be politically acceptable. These donations, however, were directed solely toward BALTBAT (and were not channelled to the national armed forces). Furthermore, the donations were intended to be used for self-defence by members of the battalions commensurate to their peacekeeping role.

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<sup>40</sup> Trilateral (Baltic) Declaration in the Field of Security and Defense, Tallinn, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

<sup>41</sup> Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the forerunner of the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe).

By late 1997, it became evident that the deployment of the full battalion was unlikely; at that time, there was no international requirement for that size of unit and problems associated with operational sustainability were not fully solved. As an alternative, BALTBAT constituent companies were deployed alongside Nordic units in UN/NATO operations.

#### *Phase II (1998–2000)*

There were two objectives during the second phase of the project. First, BALTBAT was to be transformed from a peacekeeping battalion into a trained, formed and organized infantry battalion, with implementation increasingly having a Baltic character. The Political Guidance paper for the second phase of the project recognized that the sustainability of the battalion would not be achieved unless the units that comprised BALTBAT were treated as elements of national defence forces rather than as bodies adjacent to them. Second, national training battalions were to be established within the structures of national defence forces of the three Baltic states.

#### *Phase III (2001–2003)*

Initially phase three was planned to last till 2005 and further. The objective of the third phase was full “Baltification”<sup>42</sup> of the project as well as the progressive establishment of the national battalions and a systematic rotation of personnel. The project was now seen in wider terms: as a catalyst for improving overall military standards; as a focus for cooperation; and as a practical contribution to wider security.

On 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2003 the three Baltic Defence Ministries issued a press release that the project of the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion BALTBAT has been closed because it had successfully fulfilled its goals. The flag of the battalion was for the last time lowered and given to the Latvian Military Museum. The story of BALTBAT was over.

What happened? What are the explanations for closing one of the most visible and best-known Nordic – Baltic defence projects? Explanations are to be found in all three major schools of thought in international relations.

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<sup>42</sup> “Baltification” means handing full responsibility for the project over to the Baltic states.

## A Post-modernist explanation

Post-modernist authors paid considerable attention to the development of the BALTBAT. It supported their argument that a Nordic security community was based on values and norms that spread to the Baltics because of the traditional active internationalism on the part of the Nordic states. “There is a reason to believe,” Annika Bergman argues, “that Nordic involvement in the Baltic states generally and the project of BALTBAT specifically has been influenced by a general Nordic tendency to pursue internationalist foreign policies, informed by norms and values such as international solidarity and justice.”<sup>43</sup>

Given that BALTBAT was a peacekeeping unit, post-modernists draw a parallel to the long traditions of Nordic peacekeeping practices that stem from the Cold war period. The post-modernists argue that it is through their involvement in the BALTBAT project that the Nordic states have been able to advance their commitment to international peace and norms. The view that the Baltic states will become partners in the Nordic internationalist project is not left unstated.

On the theoretical level, there were attempts to identify new forms of humane internationalism, which reflected the Nordics particular commitment to the Baltic states – namely adjacent internationalism.<sup>44</sup> Proponents of this idea argue that Nordic involvement in Baltic security stems from “ethical and ideological factors that, in a way, externalized what the Nordic states saw themselves as representing.”<sup>45</sup> Post-modernists also posited that the growing importance of the intra-Nordic and Nordic-Baltic cooperation in the field of security and defence has had a strengthening effect on Nordic unity and solidarity. As Iver Neumann argues, “Nordic security co-operation has two things to offer. First, it may put an end to the present sclerosis of Nordic cooperation by signaling new deal. Second, it may lend legitimacy to an internationalization of Nordic security policies.”<sup>46</sup>

While admitting that political and “hard security” motives may lie behind Nordic or, for that matter, Baltic involvement in BALTBAT, the post-modern school of analysis dismisses almost all of them as being too simplistic. The most common view of the post-modernists is

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<sup>43</sup> Bergman (1999), p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>45</sup> Clive Archer, “Nordic Swans and Baltic Cygnets”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 34, 1999, p. 62.

<sup>46</sup> Iver Neumann, “Nordic Security Cooperation in a Homogenized Political Setting”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 31, 1996, p. 429.

...that the project of BALTBAT provides a platform for the unification of Nordic commitments to international, European and regional expressions of solidarity, international peacekeeping as well as a general commitment to the Baltic states. It is questionable whether BALTBAT should be considered primarily as a generator of national security in the Baltic states. While acknowledging that BALTBAT has been beneficial to national defence in the Baltic states, by lending them international experience, it should also be noted that its primary objective has been to be a provider of international peacekeeping. As has been noted above, it can be a risky business to link BALTBAT too closely to national defence and NATO since this discredits the good will of the Baltic states.<sup>47</sup>

How to interpret the Nordic involvement in the BALTBAT project as well as wider Nordic engagement in the Baltics is a ongoing debate within the ranks of post-modernists that shows no signs of being resolved.

In analyzing the post-modernist arguments one can notice several tendencies. First, post-modernists often try to mirror the concepts of “soft security” and “Nordic peace” onto the situation of the Baltic states. This false analogy is insufficient as an explanation for two reasons: a) the circumstances in the Baltic states were politically, economically, socially as well as historically quite incomparable with the Nordics; and b) the concepts of the Nordic peace or Nordic security community seem to stem mostly from the Cold War period and by mid-1990s were hardly compatible even with the situation in the Nordics. One has to agree that the meaning of security has widened in the post-Cold War period, just as soft security has become an important factor in international relations.

But in the case of the Baltic states and particularly the BALTBAT, this approach cannot explain the motives of the Baltic states during the different stages of the BALTBAT project. To a certain extent, post-modern arguments can explain the First Phase of the project, when BALTBAT was introduced as a peacekeeping unit. Indeed, Baltic politicians of that period took pains to stress the peacekeeping function of the unit. But the Second Phase of the BALTBAT set a goal to reorganize the peacekeeping battalion into a combat infantry battalion and during the Third Phase a combat infantry battalion was to be created in each of the three national armed forces using their rotation to man BALTBAT. The closure of the project from the post-modernist point of view would mean that the whole concept of widened security has been thrown into reverse.

At least in the Baltic states, the process started from soft security and ended up at hard security. At the same time, the Nordic countries con-

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<sup>47</sup> Bergman (1999), p. 24.

tinue to participate actively in other joint multilateral defence projects which, from the very start, set their goal as increasing hard security. To name but a few – BALTRON,<sup>48</sup> BALTNET<sup>49</sup> and BALTDEFCOL.<sup>50</sup> Some post-modernists have criticized the BALTBAT project from the onset. They argue that it was domestic conditions in the Baltic states—the post-communist mindset; a strong Soviet military culture which clashes with the professional culture of expatriates and western advisors; frequent changes of the governments, etc—not other factors that determined the security policies.<sup>51</sup> Thus, this treatment supports the post-modernist argument that regional cooperation is unlikely to occur if it is not conducive to sustain a certain self-image.<sup>52</sup>

That does not necessarily mean that the Baltic states have given up their commitment to peacekeeping and peace-enforcement. On the contrary, the number of missions has increased over the years. The only difference lies in the fact that now, the Baltics use regular infantry units for those missions instead of specific units trained for peacekeeping.

Using post-modernist reasoning, one can argue that exclusive national discourses about security altered under the impact of increased international changes, both with NATO and Russia. Discourses and cooperative practices began to reshape the Baltic states' security identities—from the assertion of national sovereignty to transatlantic and European commitments. Yet transnational communication did not undermine the cornerstones of the Baltic states' self-images: the overwhelming sense of vulnerability, historical victimization, the negation of Russia's Europeaness, and the primarily national instead of common Baltic identity. The friction between transnational and national self-understanding turned into a systemic feature.

## An Institutional explanation

From the institutionalist's point of view, the boom of new institutions in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and the transformation of the wider in-

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<sup>48</sup> Baltic Naval Squadron – a naval force with mine countermeasures capabilities.

<sup>49</sup> Baltic Air Surveillance Network – air-surveillance information system.

<sup>50</sup> Baltic Defense College – joint military educational institution for training senior staff officers and civil servants.

<sup>51</sup> Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, "Small States – Big Worries: Choice and Purpose in the Security Policies of the Baltic States." Brief 21, Bonn International Center for Conversion, Bonn, 2002, p. 46.

<sup>52</sup> Wendt (1992), p. 419.

stitutions, namely the EU and NATO, represented a heyday. “The intensity of co-operation is dictated by institutional changes in the region itself, as well as by the overall triumph of institutionalism in Europe,” writes Zaneta Ozolina.<sup>53</sup>

Despite this optimism, institutionalisation of Nordic–Baltic defence cooperation remained relatively modest and low-key. From the Baltic side, the level of institutionalisation was considerably higher because of the joint, trilateral defence projects to which the Baltics were dedicated.

A legal framework and a set of institutions were established in the Baltic states for the management, coordination and planning the joint defence projects. The Baltic Defence Ministerial Committee serves as the highest political authority in all projects with responsibilities for project development, policy guidance and final approval of activities.<sup>54</sup> The highest military authority is vested in the Baltic Military Committee, consisting of the CHODs of the Baltic states. In order to enhance the implementation and co-ordination of the projects, the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian defence ministers have decided to appoint a lead nation for a fixed term for each of the projects. Lower-level joint management groups exist for all joint projects.

From the Nordic side,<sup>55</sup> the framework resembled the practice of the Cold War experience, when defence and security matters were discussed in informal and ad hoc settings (with the notable exception of United Nations peacekeeping operations).<sup>56</sup> The questions of international support were initially discussed in a variety of fora at the political and official levels—including the so-called “Stockholm Group” of Defence and Foreign Ministry representatives and (minus the UK) in the NORDSAMFN.<sup>57</sup>

The International Steering Group for the BALTBAT was established in order to supervise and have overall control of the multinational program of the assistance. Steering groups co-ordinate international assistance, give guidance, and supervise implementation. Since the whole

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<sup>53</sup> Zaneta Ozolina, “Baltic Sea Region – A Test For European Integration”, in *The Impact of European Integration Processes on Baltic Security*, NATO Fellowship Programme Final Report, Brussels, 1999, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> Baltic Defense Co-operation, Estonian Ministry of Defense, 10 January 2002, pp. 4-5. Downloaded from [www.vm.ee/eng/nato/aken\\_prindi/3158.html](http://www.vm.ee/eng/nato/aken_prindi/3158.html) on 7 June 2003.

<sup>55</sup> The United Kingdom took from the beginning a very active stance in the project as well.

<sup>56</sup> The core of Nordic cooperation consisted of two annual meetings of Defense Ministers and the establishment of various training centres under the auspices of Joint Nordic Committee for UN Military Matters (NORDSAMFN).

<sup>57</sup> *Lessons Learned from the BALTBAT Project. An evaluation of the multilateral project supporting the Baltic Battalion between 1994 and 2000.* Ministry of Defense of Denmark, Ministry of Defense of the United Kingdom, Copenhagen, 2001, p. 18.

project was initially about military assistance, an obvious donor-recipient relationship existed between the Baltic countries and the Nordics, not to mention the other participants in the program. Although the Baltic countries were active participants of the project's First Phase, they had little influence on its general direction.

As the Second Phase of the BALTBAT project was launched in 1998, the general security situation in Europe had changed drastically. The NATO Madrid summit in 1997 had opened NATO by inviting Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to join the alliance. For the rest of the applicant countries, "the open door" policy was announced and the leading NATO country, the US, started thinking seriously about how to lend the "open door" some substance. The Baltic states felt that there was a real chance to join NATO if their national defence forces met the criteria, and the overall political climate were right.

That also reflected upon the Baltic states' attitude towards BALTBAT. Far from being an advantage, the "peacekeeping" label now led Baltic military authorities outside the project to grow critical of it. BALTBAT came to be seen as a political creation that reaped political benefits but represented minimal military relevance to overriding national defence issues.<sup>58</sup> The Baltic states also stressed that the BALTBAT project should add to national defence development and the NATO integration process, and restated Baltic ownership and responsibility for the project.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the Baltic states clearly wanted to have a bigger say and more influence in this multinational project in order to gain in prospective hard security solutions i.e. future NATO membership. As one analyst mused,

both the Baltic states and also some of the supporting countries have clearly shown a lack of interest and will to support the project. I have seen a tendency to go more and more bilateral. This is from a military and economic perspective a better solution, but dangerous if we forget to set common standards and interoperability.<sup>60</sup>

The Baltics finally decided to opt for the better military and economic solution.

On the international level, a certain competitiveness, rivalry and uneasiness among the supporting states appeared. According to Danish Brigade-General Clemmensen, the Commandant of the Baltic Defence College,

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<sup>58</sup> Robertas Sapronas, "BALTBAT and the Development of Baltic Defense Forces", *Baltic Defense Review*, no. 9, 1999, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> *Lessons* (2001), p. 50.

<sup>60</sup> Möller, "BALTBAT: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead", *Baltic Defense Review*, no.3, 2000, pp. 38-42.

There are cases where a supporting country state's representative has simply left the Baltic state with two choices: either it copies the supporting state's proven system fully (ignoring and compromising all previous developments) or loses the opportunity for support. There have been too many cases of supporting states' representatives actively undermining each other's support projects, creating serious problems and delays for the Baltic state.<sup>61</sup>

In an institutionalist interpretation, this phenomenon clearly reflects the tendency of states to have more influence on others through institutions.

As a way of overcoming institutional shortcomings, the supporting states established the Baltic Security Assistance Forum (BALTSEA) in Oslo in 1997 from amongst the fifteen<sup>62</sup> participating states. The aim of BALTSEA was to focus on the enhanced exchange of information and co-ordination of defence related support to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in order to develop more effective and rational ways of rendering assistance to the development of their respective national forces.<sup>63</sup>

Within the established regional and sub-regional institutions, the Baltic states struggled for more influence. In multilateral defence cooperation, the Baltics introduced the concept of "Baltification," meaning that they would be eager to take over more responsibility and also have more influence on decisions. Their goal in the Baltification process was to eliminate the need for separate international steering groups (where the supporting states gathered) in the future.<sup>64</sup> The frustration that arose from knowing that supporting countries discussed Baltic matters over Baltic heads certainly reached its peak when then-Estonian Foreign Minister Toomas Hendrik Ilves announced at a speech in Stockholm in December 1999:

...let me mention the so-called 'Stockholm Group', also known as the 'Friends of the Balts'. Ten countries come to discuss issues directly affecting the fates of eight million people. Of those three countries, no representatives are invited. To discuss us without inviting us is simply bound for us to recall the past.<sup>65</sup>

The Baltic states were clearly interested in making the institutions more transparent, thus decreasing the chances of being cheated. At the same time, the Balts sought more influence within the institutions.

<sup>61</sup> Michael H. Clemmesen, "Supporting States Activism and the Defense Development", *Baltic Defense Review*, no. 4, 2000, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Estonia, Canada, Germany, Poland, United States, Latvia, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Lithuania, Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Norway, United Kingdom.

<sup>63</sup> BALTSEA Homepage [www.baltsea.net](http://www.baltsea.net), downloaded on 7 June 2003.

<sup>64</sup> *Baltic Defense Co-operation* (2002), p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Speech to the Swedish Institute for International Affairs, Stockholm, 14 December 1999. Downloaded from [www.mfa.ee](http://www.mfa.ee) on 8 September 2003.

As subsequent development in the regional defence institution BALTSEA shows, the states involved were interested in adapting it to the new European security environment. After the NATO Washington summit in 1999, where the idea of NATO Membership Action Plans (MAP) for candidate countries was introduced, the BALTSEA forum reoriented itself from developing purely Baltic projects to focusing “on the requirements stated in the Baltic states’ long term defence plans as part of their preparation towards full accession to NATO in 2004.”<sup>66</sup>

One can also explain the proposals put forward in January 2002 by the Baltic states concerning the future of the BALTSEA by using the Institutional framework. By that time, the Baltic states had achieved the common position that

BALTSEA is a unique body to co-ordinate the co-operation in the Baltic region. We consider BALTSEA to be an ideal format to keep two of our very active non-NATO partners states, Finland and Sweden, continuously engaged in the Baltic co-operation projects under BALTSEA. Until now BALTSEA has been widely known as an institution between ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’ of assistance. Taking into account our efforts and achievements in developing equal partnerships and ‘Baltification,’ we see the future of BALTSEA forum as a meeting of equal states. Moreover, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania seek to further enhance their role as security and defence assistance providers to other countries and regions.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, the Baltic states saw it to be in their advantage to be accepted as equal partners within the institution. More importantly, they saw the potential for mutual gain in further engaging Finland and Sweden as well as in expanding the institution’s scope to the new states and regions (mainly the Caucasus).

As has been shown above, institutionalism as a theory can to a large extent explain the behavior of the states in the context of Nordic-Baltic defence cooperation.

## A Neorealist explanation

The basic neorealist explanation for Nordic-Baltic defence cooperation would be that all the participant states acted as separate players. Every state conducted its policy in a rational way and according to its national

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<sup>66</sup> BALTSEA Homepage (2003).

<sup>67</sup> Future of BALTSEA: Baltic Perspective, A Position Paper of the Baltic States, 2002. Downloaded from [www.baltsea.net](http://www.baltsea.net) on 6 June 2003.

interests, where those national interests were seen to be best achieved by using cooperating with others in institutions, the states did that. But co-ordination and cooperation was never seen as a goal in itself.

As the Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari pointed out in 1994:

Although our societies and cultures have many similar traits, we have after all found ourselves in different situations geopolitically. This has influenced our international position and our foreign political choices. The meaning of geopolitics does not disappear as quickly as the picture presented to us by media seems to indicate.<sup>68</sup>

One might add that geopolitics doesn't seem to disappear at all or at least has not done so during the 10 years since Ahtisaari made his remarks. It's quite simple: geopolitics matters. Geopolitics matters in the same simple, even linear way, that threat presumptions based on historical experience matter.

After regaining independence, the threat for the Baltics was presumed to come from only one direction – Russia. The only counterbalancing power was seen to in NATO and its leading nation – the United States.

Between 4-21 November 1991, just four short months after the Balts regained independence, the Potomac Foundation conducted a series of interviews with those newly appointed Baltic officials responsible for the defence and foreign policies. The foundation's methodology was to pose formalized questions to the respondents, such as "Under which military arrangement could each republic's security interests be best assured?" or "Is there an overall pattern for European security perceived in each republic?" etc.<sup>69</sup>

The answers to the questions were farsighted. For example, Raivo Vare, Estonian State Minister (responsible for defence), answered with the following sober assessment: "The Soviet Union and Russians never keep their promises, the best solution would be direct military guarantees from the West....the only real possibility is NATO." Kalev Stoicescu, then First Secretary at Estonian Foreign Ministry, later Estonian ambassador to the OSCE and the US, replied: "we want to start with Baltic security, then enlarge these security issues to a subregional security system, and then to an all-European security system." Martins Virsis, then Deputy Foreign Minister of Latvia, currently Latvian ambassador to Germany, was of the opinion that "... if Latvia becomes neutral, it will only be because this is forced upon us," since the majority view among

<sup>68</sup> Quoted after Iver B. Neumann, "Nordic Security Cooperation in a Homogenized Political Setting", *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 31, 1996, p. 420.

<sup>69</sup> Philip Petersen, "Security Policy in the Post Soviet Baltic States", *European Security*, vol. 1, 1992, pp. 13-49.

Latvian politicians is that “the county must join with NATO. Norbertas Vidrinsaks, Chief of Staff of the Defence Ministry of Lithuania, was even more explicit: “if we speak on the scale of all-European security, we see that the guarantee could only be the expansion of NATO.” Jonas Gecas, Head of Staff of Voluntary Service of National Defence of Lithuania, was succinct: “most likely the first association will become among the Baltic states. The next union will likely be with the other states on the Baltic (Sea). The third step will be union with NATO.”

Already as early as November 1991, there was no doubt in the minds of Baltic decision makers as to what the ultimate goal of their security policy should be – joining NATO. 13 years later, in 2004, that goal will be realized – the Baltic states will join NATO. From the neorealist perspective, one can argue that all the activities the Baltic states undertook during those 13 years served but one central aim: to facilitate the goal of joining the defence alliance led by the US. Already in the very early years, sub-regional (Baltic) and regional (Nordic-Baltic) cooperation were seen as instruments in accomplishing that goal. The Nordic approach to Russia – namely a policy of reassurance, was also earmarked by the Baltics as a necessary precondition for enhancing the security environment.<sup>70</sup>

Geopolitics mattered to the Nordics as well. Certainly they were interested in supporting the Baltics’ claim for a place in Western structures. As long as the Baltics remained outside, the region as a whole would remain unsettled and the role of, for instance, Sweden and Finland in the European security order would remain a subject of speculation.<sup>71</sup>

There were other calculations as well. The presence of three small states at the eastern end of the Baltic Sea increased the strategic distance from the forces of the Russian Federation, though the “breathing space” they provided was marginal. Nevertheless, the armed forces of the Baltic states could be built up to resist any potential takeover in their states. The presence of three functioning democracies with market economies in the vicinity was seen by the Nordic states as being preferable to having collapsing societies and dysfunctional economies in the neighbourhood. There was also feeling that “new insecurities” – those related to crime, drugs, waves of migration – were better dealt nipped in the bud in the Baltic states rather than when they would encroach on the Nordic region.<sup>72</sup> In other words, it would be worse for the Nordics if they held back from involvement. So for the Nordics, the Baltics mattered, but were not the first priority in a new unipolar world.

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.42.

<sup>71</sup> Jakobson (1998), p. 137.

<sup>72</sup> Archer (1999), p. 11.

Sweden and especially Finland were interested in new security arrangements for themselves and decided to join the European Union as the less controversial option for Russia. In his memoir, Finnish President Mauno Koivisto wrote that his decision to advocate Finnish membership for the European Union had been based primarily on considerations of national security, rather than economic interest, but he had refraining of saying so publicly before Finland actually been accepted as a member. Had something gone wrong and had Finland's bid to enter the Union failed; it could have been argued that the country was less secure than before.<sup>73</sup>

Norway's primary concern continued to be Russia. Norway's goal was to multilateralise its dealings with Russia to as great an extent as possible. As one concrete result of this policy, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council was established in 1993. For Denmark it was necessary to balance German domination after that country's reunification in 1990. Copenhagen's entire defence and security thinking had to be reconsidered. From being nearly a frontline state during the Cold War, Denmark was now strategically the most distant from Russia. In order to balance what it saw as potential German domination, Denmark tried to identify itself more with the Nordics. Because of the Danish opt-outs in European Common Foreign and Security Policy, Copenhagen saw opportunity in raising its profile within NATO and consequently with the United States. That goal guided Danish "activism" in the Baltics.

During BALTBAT Phase I (1994-1997), the Baltics and Nordics (and other supporting nations)<sup>74</sup> set differing priorities for themselves. From the Baltic states' view, early deployments of BALTBAT units had a clear political significance. Thus, beginning with the Lithuanian national platoon in August 1994, a total of eight Baltic platoons (three Lithuanian, three Estonian and two Latvian) served with the Danish Battalions in the UNPROFOR<sup>75</sup> mission in Croatia and subsequently with IFOR<sup>76</sup> in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Those deployments were used as examples that the Baltic states were able to operate in the international environment, were able to work cooperatively, and moreover, that they were able to contribute to overall European security and thus ought not to be portrayed as consumers of security only.

Thus, the idea of BALTBAT became the best-known and most frequently cited co-operation projects in the Baltic states, and served at the

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<sup>73</sup> Jakobson (1998), p. 111.

<sup>74</sup> In broad terms the split of responsibilities was based on the Nordic countries concentrating on peacekeeping training and the UK on basic military training and English language training.

<sup>75</sup> United Nations Protection Force

<sup>76</sup> Stabilization Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina

same time as a symbol of Nordic-Baltic defence co-operation. BALTBAT became an international success story; it placed the Baltic states on the security map and served as an example for the other countries to follow.

From the Nordic and other supporting countries perspective, although they were interested in promoting the project, the picture from the project management prospective did not look so rosy. Because the political imperative to begin quickly in order to produce early and visible results was strong, a number of important aspects of military implementation remained vague: in particular the question of how the various elements of BALTBAT should be knitted together as a functioning battalion.<sup>77</sup>

By the end of the Second Phase (1998-2000) of the project, a number of supporting states had become deeply frustrated with the sluggish input from the Baltic states on sustainability and management issues.<sup>78</sup> The Baltic states had clearly lost interest in the project. The reasons for that loss of interest can be explained by the new and active role that the United States had assumed in coming to terms with the Baltic security problem.

In his book "Opening NATO's Door," Ronald Asmus, then Deputy US Assistant Secretary of State responsible for NATO enlargement as well as for the Nordic and Baltic states, recalls the turning point in the US Administration's attitude toward the Baltic aspirations to join NATO:

On June 12, 1997 US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott summoned three Baltic ambassadors to inform them that Poland, Hungary and Check Republic will be invited to join NATO during the upcoming summit in Madrid. During the conversation with the ambassadors he stated: "We will not regard the process of NATO enlargement as finished or successful unless or until the aspirations of the Baltic states are fulfilled. We are aware of the implications of that in the near term, middle term and long term." No US official had previously made such a statement. It had not been in the talking points either. As we walked out of Talbott's office, I turned to the Department's Baltic desk officer Trevor Evans and said: "I want that sentence inscribed in that memcon. It is now US Policy."<sup>79</sup>

The Balts took Talbott's words seriously. The US policy was reinforced at the highest level on 16 January, 1998 during the signing ceremony of the US-Baltic Charter where President Clinton underscored that the United States were "determined to help to create conditions under which Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania can one day walk through that door (NATO's open door-L.L.)."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Lessons Learned, p. 29.

<sup>78</sup> Lessons Learned, p. 35.

<sup>79</sup> Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era.* New York, Columbia UP, 2002, p. 236.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

Practical work followed. Under the Charter, joint military working groups were established where issues of force planning, military reform, budgeting, command and control issues were discussed. In general, the Baltics felt that the United States backed up its promises in a serious and meaningful way. As a result, the main focus of the Baltic military and defence establishments turned towards the implementation of the military reform, which aimed at creating national NATO forces.

Thus the BALTBAT project became isolated and neglected. After the initial battalion-building phase, Baltic military and political decision makers had largely lost interest in the project. The rapid growth of bilateral military contacts and co-operation with major Western powers, especially with US, accelerated this process.<sup>81</sup>

Still, the project was kept alive for several years. In May 2003 (after Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had received an invitation to join NATO on 22 November 2002), the three Baltic Defence Ministers issued a laconic press release that stated: "The Ministers of Defence decided to conclude the BALTBAT project on 26 September 2003, because it had fulfilled its objectives and missions."<sup>82</sup>

Neorealist analysts would argue that during this endeavour, all participating states acted purely out of self-interest. Security and the survival of the state were the prime motivations of their behaviour. BALTBAT was used as an instrument by the Baltic states in achieving their ultimate security goals: to join NATO and, by being part of a collective defence unity, thus be able to balance against the threatening country – Russia. When that goal was reached there was no further rationale for keeping BALTBAT active. In the new security context (Baltic membership in NATO), BALTBAT as a multinational peacekeeping unit no longer had added value for the Balts, that is, the battalion could not add to the Baltic states security any more. On the contrary, BALTBAT siphoned off already limited financial and manpower resources that could have been otherwise utilized for the modernization of the national defence forces. In this way, neorealism is able to explain the behaviour of the Baltic and Nordic states and other actors on a wide security scene as well as taking into account developments over time.

The test study of BALTBAT shows that post-modernist arguments cannot always explain developments that occurred during the BALTBAT project. Post-modernism does not have trouble explaining the First

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<sup>81</sup> Lessons Learned, p. 50.

<sup>82</sup> BNS Newswire, 6 May 2002.

Phase of the project, when the military objective of the project was strictly set on peacekeeping. The active involvement of the Nordic countries is explained by the post-modernists as a transfer of the Nordic or “security community” values to the Baltics.

The post-modernist explanations of the Second and Third Phase of the project are more fragile. The restructuring of the BALTBAT from a multinational peacekeeping unit into a national infantry unit was explained by the post-modernists as an example of the Baltic states immaturity or inability to sustain a certain self-image. This, in turn, was seen as the reason for the failure of closer regional cooperation. It clearly shows that post-modernism as a theory is in development itself, and at present contains very different and somewhat incoherent lines of thought. The variety of arguments is very wide, enabling promoters of the theory to explain opposing developments while still maintaining a post-modern framework. This does not ease explanation, rather renders the search for common explanations to the Nordic-Baltic defence cooperation difficult.

Institutionalist analysis of the BALTBAT supports their argument that for states, institutions provide a forum for agreements. The analysis also shows that all the states used institutions to promote their security interests as well as to promote cooperation. All the states used institutions to enhance their influence on others. Finally, institutionalism is certainly right when arguing that the increased number of transactions among the states over time lengthens the “shadow of the future.” BALTBAT Steering Groups and later BALTSEA forum certainly increased the number and frequency of transactions between the Baltic states and the supporting countries. The defence cooperation in a “shadow of a future” sense had a very clear meaning – it aimed to find a solution for the security dilemma. Thus, the institutional framework of Nordic-Baltic defence cooperation helped states to pursuing their goals.

Neorealism holds that states are rational units that react to the structural changes in their external environment. The test of neorealism on the BALTBAT case could serve as an almost perfect example. Neorealism is thus able to explain the behaviour of the Nordic and Baltic states after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In the changed environment, states started to bandwagon (initially the three Baltic states) and balance against the perceived threat (Russia). In a new world structure they saw only one dominant power – the US – and started to bandwagon with it. The US was not only seen as the leading power in NATO, but also as a leading European power. In that endeavour, all the states involved behaved in a self-interested manner.



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