A RAND NOTE

How Will NATO Adjust in the Coming Decade?

Marten van Heuven
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Marten van Heuven

Prepared for the Joint Staff
PREFACE

RAND is examining new security concepts as part of a research project sponsored by the Joint Staff. At issue is the appropriate way to size, structure, and deploy U.S. forces in the post-Cold War era. Key to this planning effort are expectations about the sort of world we will face and the degree to which important American interests will be affected by global trends. This Note attempts to sketch various possible roles that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization could play in the next decade and to judge the implications for U.S. interests.

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SUMMARY

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) faces a doubtful future. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, its organizing principle has disappeared, and other organizations are seeking security roles in Europe. NATO seems to stand aside from the main security threat to Europe, in Yugoslavia. Moreover, the United States seems to be drawing back from its European commitments.

NATO heads of state and government sought in November 1991 to redefine NATO's task. Yet, external factors will heavily influence NATO's future: the possibilities of a recurrent Soviet threat or trouble on NATO's periphery, other organizations, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the European Community (EC), the roles of Germany and the United States, and the state of trade relations between the EC and North America.

NATO members have now opened the door to the possibility of NATO performing security functions at the request of CSCE. But the possibility of conflicting mandates persists between the NATO Cooperation Council and the CSCE, and between NATO and the Western European Union. The French-German Corps also raises questions.

How Washington handles U.S. force reductions, what rationale it advances for the continued presence in Europe of remaining U.S. forces, and how it deals with European efforts to create an effective security role will all determine the ability of the United States to help shape a new role for NATO. NATO's future will also depend on the size of its membership and whether it is seen as dealing with security crises, such as that in Yugoslavia.

The outlook is subject to many variables. However, it may well be that, unless the United States makes an active effort to maintain NATO as the key organization safeguarding European security, NATO will inevitably decline.
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1. THE SETTING

NATO faces a bleak future, even possible extinction. The key organizing factor of the Atlantic Alliance has disappeared and the political and military threat of the Soviet Union to Western Europe has mostly vanished with the collapse of Soviet communism and the breakup of the Soviet empire. Europe does not have to fear a bolt from the blue; a massive thrust by Soviet armies across the northern German plain is a concern from the past. Nuclear attack is no longer a realistic expectation; hence public concern about nuclear war has sharply receded. Moreover, with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and with the unification of Germany, the European political center of gravity has moved from Moscow to Berlin. The fact of Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe is a thing of the past. With the threat of Soviet political dominance gone, NATO seems left without a mission.

Moreover, the European landscape is increasingly marked by other organizations that see the pursuit of European security as their task. West European countries are displaying a growing interest in organizing European security around the European Community (EC). Though prospects for a European Union remain at best cloudy, the EC, at Maastricht in December 1991, designated the Western European Union (WEU) as the potential security arm of the European Union foreseen in the draft treaties on Economic and Political Union. Furthermore, at the Paris Summit in October 1991, the countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) decided on concrete steps to enhance the ability of that organization to start making a contribution to the maintenance of European peace and security.

In addition, it has not escaped the notice of Europeans that NATO has hardly been involved with what is the most serious crisis affecting European security—that in Yugoslavia. NATO’s involvement has been limited to the deployment of some European and American ships in the Adriatic, in concert with the WEU, to monitor violations of sanctions on Serbia. (At the time of writing, in August 1992, the NATO Council is
reportedly considering the issue of dispatching forces to support the U.N. effort in Bosnia.) This is in marked contrast to the highly publicized though only marginally effective efforts by the EC to contain the fighting, to the CSCE call on the EC to continue to pursue peace in Yugoslavia, and to the introduction of a U.N. force into Croatia and now also Bosnia to keep warring factions from resuming their fratricidal conflict and to safeguard the provision of humanitarian assistance. The irony that the organization created to protect the security interests of the members of the Atlantic Alliance is slow to join the effort when other organizations are trying to deal with a situation that is seen as a potential threat to European peace and security has not been lost on Europeans.

Finally, the highly visible reduction in U.S. forces in Europe has heightened the perception that the United States is largely removing itself from the continent, leaving NATO as a hollow shell, run mostly by Germans. To other Europeans NATO now begins to look like a less desirable organization than European security organizations such as the EC, the WEU, and the CSCE.
2. THE TASK REDEFINED

The collapse of the Soviet empire, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the unification of Germany, and the moves at Maastricht by the EC countries toward a European Union have provided both the backdrop of and the impetus toward a reassessment by NATO of its role. This took place at the Rome Summit of Heads of State and Government on November 6-7, 1991.1

Rome reaffirmed the purpose of the Alliance: to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means in accordance with the principles of the U.N. Charter, and to work for a just and lasting, peaceful, democratic order in Europe.

Rome also restated the common and mutual commitment to the security of its members, the indivisibility of security, and the transatlantic link tying the United States to European defense and providing strategic deterrence and defense.

More important, however, the Alliance at Rome tackled several new subjects. First, it abandoned the doctrine of forward defense and flexible response in favor of smaller, more flexible, mobile multinational forces, sharply reduced emphasis on the role of nuclear forces, and greater reliance on reserves.

Second, it added to the former elements of defense and dialogue a new one--cooperation. Rome took steps to institutionalize in a new structure called the NATO Cooperation Council (NACC) a pattern of consultative relationships with the members of the former Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union (early in 1991 it took steps to include also most other states of the Confederation of Independent States--CIS). Subjects of consultation will be defense planning, democratic concepts of civilian-military relations, civil/military coordination of air traffic

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management, and conversion of defense production to civilian purposes. Thus, the new security policy is based on dialogue, cooperation, and collective defense. It remains to be seen whether this agenda can acquire significant substance in practice. It also remains to be seen whether in dealing with these issues the NACC will run into competition with CSCE, which may attempt to tackle the same issues.

Third, NATO leaders explicitly acknowledged the role of other organizations--specifically the EC and the CSCE (and also the WEU)--in the search for European security and recognized that the roles of these institutions and of the Alliance are complementary. Rome, however, stressed that NATO would remain the essential and primary forum for consultation among its members and the venue for agreement on policies bearing on the security and defense commitments of the Allies under the Washington Treaty. At the same time, the Rome Declaration was careful to reaffirm the consensus of NATO ministers at Copenhagen (in July 1991) that the development of a European security identity and defense role, reflected in the further strengthening of the European pillar within the Alliance, will reinforce the integrity and effectiveness of the Atlantic Alliance. These statements, carefully constructed to embrace a variety of views, will be tested for meaning as the practice of dealing with European security issues evolves.

Fourth, an important feature of the Rome meeting was that, for the first time since its withdrawal from the integrated military command structure, France participated in the decisions involving allied military forces, agreeing with both the Declaration and the new strategy. President Mitterrand asserted that the future European defense identity would be compatible with the Alliance.

The redefinition of NATO's tasks, moreover, has been accompanied by indications that the old distinction between NATO and "out of area" missions may be losing force, opening the way for a NATO security role outside the geographic parameters set by the Washington Treaty.
3. EUROPEAN VARIABLES

The Rome redefinition of NATO's role notwithstanding, external factors will heavily influence NATO's future. Some will tend to create a political and economic climate favorable to the continued relevance and utility of a reoriented and perhaps restructured NATO. Others will tend to put increasingly into question whether the organization has a meaningful role to play in a Europe undergoing a process of fundamental adaptation to the new circumstances following the period of the Cold War and the division of Europe.

A recurrence of a Russian military threat would powerfully underline NATO's continued mission to deter aggression and defend the territory of its members. It would also reinvigorate the U.S. position as leader of the Alliance. Even though at present there is no likely Russian nuclear threat, as long as Russia retains a capacity to threaten with nuclear weapons, the members of the Alliance will look to the United States to take the lead in efforts to control and reduce Russian nuclear potential. Moreover, NATO will remain the logical choice as the security organization best suited to shape and execute Alliance policy in this field. On the other hand, NATO's role in meeting a Russian conventional threat has been overtaken by events. Eastern Europe, long a Moscow ally and potential launching point of a Soviet military threat, has realigned itself politically and economically with the West. A conventional threat to NATO territory from Russia does not exist today. It could be reconstituted only gradually and under circumstances that for now appear unlikely if not inconceivable. Hence in this realm, NATO's role will increasingly fall into desuetude.

In contrast, the possibility of a threat to NATO's periphery continues to exist. During the Gulf war, Turkey invoked NATO military assistance against possible Iraqi hostile actions. The unsettled situation around Turkey's borders with Iraq, Armenia, and the Balkans could lead again to the invocation by Turkey of NATO assistance. In addition, the political situation in the Balkans will remain tense and
unsettled for as long as is presently foreseeable. Given the large
Islamic population in these regions, Turkey is likely to maintain
historically based strategic, political, and economic interests in
contiguous areas which could affect its security and trigger invocation
of NATO assistance.¹ More generally, the security interests of NATO's
other members are likely to be affected by unrest in the Balkans, which
will generate claims on NATO members for assistance of one sort or
another, including in the matter of refugees. These issues are capable
of energizing NATO political consultation and military planning
machinery if members of the Alliance wish to do so. There are signs
this is beginning to happen.

The Rome NATO Summit of November 1991 recognized that NATO will
exist alongside other European organizations that will also assert and
play a role in the maintenance of European security. The Rome Summit
made a point of underlining the need for cooperation among NATO and
these other organizations—the European Community, the Western European
Union, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the
Council of Europe (CoE). Yet these relationships are not just
cooperative, they are also competitive. As the Yugoslav crisis grew in
scope and intensity, the EC Council of Ministers and the CSCE appeared
more occupied with the effort to find a solution than did NATO. Thus, a
security crisis in Europe not directly threatening NATO territory is not
bound to strengthen the Alliance role. Indeed, even in the face of lack
of success on the part of the EC and the CSCE, the perception that the
Alliance is not principally involved in managing what is patently the
most serious threat to European security weakens NATO.

A key factor that will help determine the future efficacy of NATO,
as one organization among others committed to safeguarding European
security, is the role that Germany will play in NATO and German
preferences for the role NATO should play. One issue is whether Germany

¹See Ian O. Lesser, Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West After
the Cold War, RAND, R-4204-AF/A, 1992. The author points out that
Turkey has replaced Germany as the leading "consumer" of security within
the Alliance, and that most Germans do not find this situation
reassuring.
will support the automaticity of the NATO mutual security guarantee, that is, whether Germany will act on the proposition that an attack or threat of attack against the territory of a NATO ally automatically triggers the mutual support provisions of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. German policy has long been based on the assumption that it could count on allied support in the event of such a threat against or attack on Germany. However, the reactions in Bonn in late 1990 to the Turkish request for Alliance assistance against a possible Iraqi threat has left some doubts. In that case, the Bundestag did not assume that Germany would automatically validate the Turkish request for the dispatch of the air element of the ACE Mobile Force but felt it necessary to examine the origin of the Turkish request to see if perhaps Turkish actions had triggered the Iraqi threat. This position carried the clear implication that if this were the case, Article 5 did not apply. In the end, the German government agreed to dispatch allied air units to Turkey. But if in another case Bonn claims the right to subject the invocation of Article 5 to a domestic political test to determine that it is indeed within the category of an "Allied case" ("Buendnissfall"), the effect would be to weaken the structure of mutual commitments among NATO members for common security.

A second issue is whether Germany will permit its forces to participate in common actions outside NATO territory. The dispatch of medical military personnel as part of U.N. peacekeeping actions to Cambodia has been agreed on. The German government has also joined the WEU naval patrol in the Adriatic, though in doing so it has set off bitter political criticism from the Social Democrats (SPD). In due course, the government will propose a constitutional amendment designed to permit more extensive participation of German military forces out of area. Whether this will be only as part of a U.N. "Blue Helmet" operation or, more broadly, as part of a European military effort remains to be seen. The establishment of a Franco-German Corps suggests that the latter option remains open. But reluctance to be involved militarily in anything but deterrence and defense of national territory remains a strong part of the post-World War II political makeup of
Germany. The current position of Bonn's leading opposition party, the SPD, does not go beyond "Blue Helmet" functions. While the new German Foreign Minister (a member of the Liberal Party) has strongly argued for having Germany use its forces alongside those of other EC members in peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts, any involvement of German forces outside Germany is likely to be subjected to the most profound political scrutiny. Thus, German participation in any military action outside Germany remains hemmed in by profound political reservations that will persist for a long time.

The prospects for NATO's continued relevance also depend in large part on the role of the United States in the organization. This in turn is tightly linked to the level of U.S. forces remaining in Europe. That level will be decided in Washington. However, it will also be circumscribed by the willingness of European countries, and Germany most of all, to accept the presence of U.S. forces on its territory. Notwithstanding German government assurances that U.S. forces should stay and will remain welcome in substantial numbers, German public tolerance for the continued presence of a substantial U.S. military force is doubtful. Empirical evidence\(^2\) suggests that popular acceptance of foreign forces on German territory is limited. It will be more limited yet after Soviet forces have left Germany in 1994. Thus, congressional disposition in Washington to reduce stationed forces may well be strengthened by growing indications that Germans would just as soon see most American service personnel depart. Such a development would ultimately limit the residual U.S. presence to the European periphery and accentuate the reduction of American influence on European security policy. It would also reduce the significance of NATO.

Moreover, a NATO with a lessened American component will increasingly be seen as an organization reflecting German policy preferences. In a situation of continued effective U.S.-German cooperation--"partnership in leadership" in the phrase of President Bush--this shift in emphasis might not be disturbing to Washington.

However, it could well have an unsettling effect on the continental European countries which would rather handle European security issues in a relationship of greater equality with Germany afforded in the context of other organizations such as the EC.

At this juncture it does not seem that European assumption of the position of SACEUR would enhance the relevance of NATO. A French SACEUR could make Paris more interested in NATO. However, this is by no means a certainty, particularly since the French government has already focused on the EC and CSCE as its preferred focal points of European security in the face of an expected American withdrawal. It is conceivable that Paris would see new opportunities for leadership if France were to name a SACEUR, and adjust its priorities, but such a change is not likely.

Finally, NATO’s future will be affected by the evolution of trade relations between the EC and North America. A competitive, tense relationship in matters of trade and commerce, and mutual instances of protectionism are likely to affect adversely the climate of security cooperation. The Cold War made security cooperation a necessity and permitted trade disputes to remain fenced off from the larger issues of international security cooperation. With the pressures of the Cold War removed, transatlantic relationships have become more of a mix in which the state of relations in one area more easily affects the other. Successful though painful progress in the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade toward gradual elimination of trade barriers will help maintain a positive atmosphere for security cooperation. Failure of the Uruguay Round and of the GATT process of liberalizing trade, on the other hand, will have the opposite effect.
4. NATO IN THE SERVICE OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The Rome Summit has opened the door to the possibility of NATO performing security functions not just on its own but also at the request of groups of states, including but not limited to the members of NATO.

The notion of the coexistence of a variety of cooperative international organizations, each seeking to perform some European security tasks, is now well established by West European governments. It is also recognized even if not eagerly accepted by Washington. Chancellor Kohl has noted that, while the EC is becoming the center of gravity in European political and economic affairs, NATO and the U.S. military presence are the anchors of European security.

The discussion about European security is occasionally characterized by a distinction made by some between security and defense. Thus, the Coordinator for German-American Cooperation has suggested two alternatives to meet what he calls the prospect of a phase of extreme instability in Europe.¹ Either NATO remains the Western instrument of collective defense, in which case the CSCE should be developed into an effective system of collective security, or NATO turns into an Atlantic/Pan-European system of collective security, in which case collective defense of Western Europe has to be provided by the EC or the WEU. The distinction, while possibly helpful to analysis, seems of limited use. Collective security is not likely to exist without a parallel capacity to defend and to back up a security policy with military force. At present, NATO has this capacity. If it does not exercise it, there will be efforts to replicate this capacity on the part of the EC, through the WEU and in other combinations, such as the French-German Corps.

NATO Secretary General Woerner has hinted at the possibility that the Alliance may put itself at the disposal of CSCE. NATO ministers have now followed up in their Spring 1992 meeting in Oslo by adopting this suggestion. Thus, the CSCE could give expression to a European political will to use security measures, including the use of military forces, for peacekeeping and possibly peacemaking functions in situations such as presented today in Yugoslavia. NATO could also make available logistics, transport, and intelligence for a European effort led by another organization. This would parallel CSCE's call on the EC to help find a political solution to the Yugoslav crisis. This evolution would extend the procedures under which NATO exists as a regional organization under the U.N. Charter.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognize that NATO in the exercise of its functions could well bump into the CSCE. The current agenda of the NATO Cooperation Council (NACC), in which NATO ministers meet with their colleagues from the former Warsaw Pact countries and from the Confederation of Independent States (CIS), comprises conversion from a military to a civilian economy and military controls. It is not inconceivable that CSCE could become involved in similar activities, all the more given the fact that its ranks include the formerly neutral and nonaligned countries.

Neither should the significance of possible conflicts between NATO and the WEU be underestimated. As the United States reduces its share of the European defense burden, European members of NATO will be carrying a proportionally greater share. The WEU, which comprises the main EC countries, can serve a useful role for NATO and for the EC, as the European pillar of NATO and as agent for the European Union outside the NATO geographic area. A report of the Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute suggests that, to facilitate ties between NATO and the WEU, their memberships should be coordinated and dovetail.\(^2\) Under this concept, NATO countries that do not belong to the WEU (presumably even

\(^2\)The United States and the European Community, The Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, April 1992.
including the United States) would receive associate status in the WEU\(^3\) whether they belong to the EC or not, and WEU countries that do not belong to NATO should receive associate membership in the organization. In addition, the report suggests, France should rejoin NATO. Clearly, a structure of parallel memberships would facilitate the coordination that will be essential to avoid conflicts between the WEU and NATO, though it would leave the issue of duplication. A French return to NATO, however, remains at best speculative. But NATO will need to address the issue of whether to offer association to future members of the EC, such as Sweden, Austria, Finland, and perhaps Switzerland and others.

The establishment of the French-German Army Corps raises fundamental questions about its relation to NATO. Given Germany’s current constitutional position on the use of German military forces out of country, these issues are for now largely hypothetical. Moreover, the Corps is not expected to be operational for several years. But in the longer run, and barring a major political reversal, there will be fewer forces in Europe, not more, and at least the German part of the Corps will be triple hatted—NATO, WEU, and Corps. The former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, General Galvin, has observed that one commander can command more than one force but one force cannot have several commanders. These issues will be managed if not clarified over time, though at present they have triggered a divisive discussion of principle among some of NATO’s major members.

A far-reaching suggestion has been made to turn NATO into the military arm of the G-7.\(^4\) This, the author suggests, would require NATO’s transformation from a military organization focusing on the Soviet threat in Europe to an instrument of a broad political-economic as well as military alliance, trying to promote peace in the world at large. Implementation of this suggestion would require a profound transformation of the Alliance. On a global basis, such a prospect is

\(^3\)Turkey regards the extension of associate status in the WEU as a slight. It is interesting to speculate on the effect of granting similar status to the United States.

\(^4\)See David Calleo, "NATO, Reconstruction as Dissolution," The Foreign Policy Institute Paper, The Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, 1992.
likely to meet with skepticism, since NATO is perceived as a primarily military instrument. Countries in the developing world and elsewhere will be understandably suspicious of efforts to transform the Alliance along these lines. Furthermore, the suggestion may be seen as a thinly disguised attempt at American hegemony.

Finally, NATO could serve the United Nations. As a regional security organization under the Charter, this possibility has existed since NATO's creation. It could respond to a call by a U.N. Security Council in the absence of a Russian veto. Such a call would provide the political legitimacy under the U.N. Charter for any action NATO would undertake in response in a Security Council mandate. This possibility for NATO engagement out of area, but with respect to security problems in Europe, now reflected in essence in the current NATO/WEU naval deployment in the Adriatic, remains largely unexplored.
5. THE AMERICAN FACTOR

NATO’s future will also depend to a significant degree on the way the United States, as the traditional leader in the organization, plays its hand.

At present, the most important element will be the pace, nature, and handling of U.S. force reductions in Europe. Europeans now have the perception that the United States is about to leave Europe. French thinking about European security, in particular, is based on the premise that the United States will leave the continent altogether. This impression does not correspond with the fact that in mid-1992, the United States still maintains a force strength of 150,000 in Europe, that the U.S. presence in the Mediterranean will be durable, that the discussion in Washington about eventual force levels—from 120,000 down to perhaps 50,000—will not be settled for a while, and that whatever decision emerges will not be implemented until 1995 or later. U.S. force levels will, of course, also be influenced by the acceptance, particularly in Germany, of the continued presence of stationed U.S. forces.

The nature of force reductions, and in particular the rationale for the role of the forces that remain, will also be a factor determining the future of NATO. Europeans are inclined to continue to see U.S. forces as a hedge against a possible nuclear or other military threat from the East. Many European officials and politicians also appreciate the additional and significant role of a U.S. force presence as a factor that facilitates relations between Europeans themselves and in particular that makes acceptable the new and powerful German role on the continent. These objectives are usually summarized by referring to the U.S. role as a balancing factor in Europe. The rationale that Europeans hear in Washington, however, lays stress on the role of U.S. stationed forces in Europe as a springboard for engagement elsewhere, out of the NATO area. If that were the rationale the U.S. Administration chooses to give prominence, it is likely to lead to misunderstanding and a
reduced European disposition to welcome a continued sizable U.S. force presence. The way the United States handles the discussion and implementation of U.S. force reductions will therefore matter, since it will shape European perceptions about U.S. intentions in Europe. In any event, the effect of U.S. force reductions will be to reduce U.S. influence and this will in turn affect the ability of the United States to shape a new role for NATO.

Another key element that will determine NATO’s future is the American approach to European efforts to create an effective European security role. The long and insistent American effort to obtain a relatively greater European contribution to common security has begun to show results. American emphasis on burdensharing, now complete with the prospect of significantly lower U.S. force levels, will leave European members of NATO with a relatively greater contribution to common defense and security. However, Washington has been slow to accept that as a logical consequence of the fact that the Europeans are doing more, they will also want more influence. Within NATO, the shift in relative burdens and influence has been gradual and on the whole smooth, even though France remains outside the NATO integrated command. However, Washington has at times been openly skeptical if not critical of European efforts to deal with European security in other organizations, outside NATO. Washington has viewed with skepticism the Western European Union as a possible competitor, even if at Rome it joined the description of the organization as potentially strengthening the European pillar of the Alliance. Plans for a Franco-German Corps have received a cold reception in Washington. But perhaps it is unwise and even unnecessary to assume a potential dichotomy between Alliance efforts in European security and those of the EC. Europeans are hardly likely to become engaged in serious European security planning and implementation without recognizing the imperative need to consult closely with the United States. Moreover, in a number of potential cases, Washington may find it useful to have the option of letting the Europeans carry responsibility when American interests do not suggest a
major American role. It has been suggested\(^1\) that the wisest course for Washington would be for the United States to meet new contingencies in a pragmatic way, and thereby convey to its European allies a sense of confidence in their ability to carry out the tasks we have asked them to share more heavily.

A third factor that will bear on NATO's future is the American approach toward other key allies in meeting the challenges of European security. With London, Washington has always had a "special" relationship. The phrase, though vague, alludes to special shared values, outlooks, and experiences which go back a long time. With Bonn, Washington now has a "partnership in leadership" which, though declared before German unification, has been given added content with the arrival of the new Germany as the most powerful country on the European stage.

It is important to recognize, however, that no effective or lasting European security system is possible without the participation of France. The location of that country, its size, its military and industrial competence, and its place within the EC all compel the conclusion that France must be an essential part of any effective effort to deal with European security. During the past decades, in matters of foreign policy and international security, French relations with the United States as with its European allies have often been marked by sharp differences and a frequently high and occasionally vocal level of dispute. The background and the nature of these issues are complex. Suffice it to say here that it will be difficult to envisage a durable and effective role for NATO as the principal Western organization trying to guarantee the security of its members in the absence of an effective mutual understanding between France and its partners, including the United States.

A fourth element that will shape NATO's future role will be the size of its membership. Since Rome, membership in the WEU has been opened up to all members of the EC. In the foreseeable future, Sweden, Austria, Finland, and possibly other countries, including Switzerland,

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the Baltics, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and others, will be joining the EC. Some will become members of the WEU. The issue for NATO will be whether to admit new members with all that implies in terms of extending the mutual commitments of Articles 4 and 5 of the NATO Treaty. Enlargement will not be an easy matter given the fundamental nature of these mutual security commitments, though there is precedent. To maintain NATO at its current size, however, implies a growing patchwork of security arrangements within Europe that, as the EC enlarges, could reduce the significance of NATO.

Last, NATO's future as an effective security organization will depend on whether Washington will want to use it in dealing with obvious security problems, such as the crisis in Yugoslavia. In that case, the CSCE and the EC have tried to manage the situation, and the United Nations has provided a peacekeeping force, all with limited success. NATO, however, has been seen by Europeans and Americans as standing aside. An approach that leaves NATO visibly uninvolved unless NATO territory is directly endangered, in spite of the fact that the security interests of all members are affected, carries the risk of marginalizing the Alliance. NATO has the political machinery for discussion and decision. It has a military capability that can be engaged at a moment's notice. It can act at the request of the CSCE or other organizations if it wants to. How the United States uses NATO, therefore, will be highly relevant in shaping the future of the organization.
6. OUTLOOK AND IMPLICATIONS

Just how NATO will adjust in the coming decade is thus subject to a host of variables. While some of them may be predictable—such as continued instability as Europe adapts to a wholly new set of political conditions, the continued potential of Russia to harm Western interests, and the European desire to have a greater hand in their own security—the interrelationships among them are not. So NATO’s future remains speculative, depending on a complex interaction of some distinguishable but also many unforeseeable factors.

As an aid in contemplating the future of NATO, two models follow. Neither is likely to occur as described. Indeed, the mix of factors may well be more complex and ambiguous. However, they stake out two possible directions and suggest different outcomes.

In the first model, NATO retains a position as the indisputably most effective security organization in Europe simply because no other organizations can challenge it. The WEU remains without a security strategy and without an effective force structure. The CSCE remains hortatory. The French-German Corps is not the center of a European defense force. With a leaner, effective, and mobile international force ready to act under the existing integrated command structure, NATO has the visible means to back up its word, and as a result the political influence it can bring to bear on Alliance security issues is considerable. The NATO Council serves as the leading European forum for dialogue and consensus building among NATO members. Picking up on the Rome theme of a broad definition of Alliance security, the Council is the place where NATO countries not only discuss security issues arising out of the commitments of the Washington Treaty but where they also bring to the table, for an exchange of views—and possible diplomatic or other action—European security issues affecting their security interests even though they may not involve direct threats to Alliance territory. The United States plays a leading role in setting the agenda and energizing NATO activity, as it has in the past, but is encouraging
the evolution of a European pillar which it sees as enhancing the effectiveness of the Alliance. Germany occupies additional positions of influence in the Secretariat and at NATO Military Headquarters, but the International Staff and the International Military Staff remain broadly reflective of the organization's membership. Working closely with Germany, France increasingly involves itself in the NATO Council, not hesitant to offer alternative views but willing to join a broad consensus in most cases. While France remains apart from the integrated military command, it practices a pattern of parallel planning, realizing that it has to return to the integrated command if it wishes a French SACEUR. The NACC proceeds to build relationships with East Europeans and CIS officials which, while far from extending NATO's security guarantees, nevertheless add to their sense of security.

In the other model, NATO limits itself strictly to security issues arising out of the commitments of the Washington Treaty, and is seen to shy away from security crises on the continent that other organizations, particularly the EC and the WEU, are trying to tackle. The WEU grows into a structure comprising a planning staff and assigned forces ready to respond to political direction from the EC Council of Ministers, particularly in so-called out-of-area cases which it is recognized NATO will be hesitant to touch. The German-French Corps has been beefed up with Belgian and perhaps other forces, and is ready to respond to national direction or to that of the EC through the WEU. Coordination with NATO, such as exists, is pro forma. A number of new members--Sweden, Finland, and Austria--have joined both the EC and WEU, but keep their distance from NATO. The United States, while insisting on seeing NATO as the institutional vehicle for the expression of U.S. security interests in Europe, is nevertheless not disposed to push NATO into considering security issues that do not directly impinge on NATO territory. The NACC turns out to be an empty shell as East Europeans become aware that it does not provide meaningful security. Furthermore, the United States remains wary of progress by the European members of NATO--now supported by new members of the EC--toward a European security identity. This attitude has the effect of accelerating European efforts
in this direction. It also tends to marginalize U.S. influence in European security thinking and behavior. The United States continues to reduce the level of forces stationed in Europe at a rapid rate toward a ceiling of 20,000 to 30,000, limiting its presence mostly to the Mediterranean and asserting that the Europeans should now bear most of the burden of their own defense. As U.S. influence in NATO declines, German influence strongly increases, with the Germans holding either the position of Secretary General or of SACEUR, and many senior jobs besides. Seeing NATO increasingly as a German organization, other European countries prefer to deal with Bonn in the context of the EC, where they have relatively greater influence. Paying lip service to the Alliance, France increasingly turns away from NATO as an instrument of European security, making clear it prefers to conduct its European security policy in other organizations, preferably CSCE.

While countless other variables are possible, this analysis suggests that on balance, and absent a special effort, the second model is more plausible than the first, that despite failures the Europeans will continue their haphazard but determined efforts to provide for their own security, and that this effort will take place in the context of the EC and the WEU, not NATO.

Thus, the conclusion emerges that an active effort will be required to maintain NATO as the key organization trying to safeguard European security, that the United States must play a key role in this effort, and that the United States should look for ways to accommodate rather than to oppose European efforts to provide for their own security.

Finally, the analysis indicates the need for more organic U.S. relations with the other European security organizations, particularly the EC and the WEU, and genuine collaboration and partnership. In the absence of such an approach, NATO will inevitably face decline and possible extinction.

For Washington, two implications emerge from the foregoing considerations. The first is that an effort to maintain NATO as an instrument of European security, which also effectively serves American interests, will not succeed without American engagement and leadership.
Thus, NATO must remain a leading forum for consensus-building on political and strategic objectives whether affecting NATO territory or "out of area." NATO must be ready and seen to be ready to tackle security issues affecting Europe. At the same time, Washington must recognize the fact that its interests will be served by continuing to support European efforts to deal with security through European organizations. Washington should also be open to imaginative efforts to associate new EC members with NATO in a meaningful way, even if short of NATO membership.

The second implication is that an eventual disappearance of NATO would not necessarily be detrimental to basic U.S. interests in Europe or to European security. There would, of course, be a need to create a new security arrangement or structure between the United States and Canada (and perhaps Mexico) with the new Europe. Since NATO would not disappear overnight, there would be time for developing stronger relations with the EC and the WEU in whatever stage of development they might be, possibly including some sort of associate membership encompassing security, drawing on and possibly adapting the highly useful integrated military structure and lessons learned by NATO. Any attempt to sketch such an arrangement now will necessarily be fuzzy, but the fact is that, for as long as one can see ahead, virtually every European country will want a security relationship with the United States and North America. Since U.S. interests in Europe will also endure, the cement for a viable security structure is available. It will take imagination and leadership to shape it into an effective European security system.