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Review Essay

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European Security Revisited

VICTOR GRAY

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Much has changed since the literature on European security was surveyed on these pages two years ago. The Russians and East Central Europeans have come a long way on the path to democratization and economic stability, and the threat of Russian recidivism has receded. So, too, has the push in Western Europe for a European-only defense arrangement as a free-standing alternative to NATO. The prospects for such a European Security and Defense Initiative foundered on the shoals of Bosnia and a certain loss of confidence in the European Union integration process. In the end, it was NATO, not the EU, that proved its worth in Bosnia. It now appears clear that NATO *will* survive into the next century as the primary vehicle for organizing security in Europe, albeit in greater concert politically with the Western European Union and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe than originally anticipated. It is also being reorganized militarily to meet the threat that all now agree is more likely: brushfire intra-state ethnic conflicts on the southeastern fringes of the continent. The *de facto* merger in June 1996 of NATO and the WEU around the flexible and mobile Combined Joint Task Forces is indicative of the emerging consensus.

Much, however, has not changed. A security vacuum persists in East Central Europe, a vacuum that a more inward-looking EU refuses to fill politically or economically. Meanwhile, Germany, increasingly disenchanted with its partners' failure to share its concerns about the East, is moving in the direction of a more independent, more assertive foreign and defense policy. As Timothy Garton Ash predicted three years ago, Germany is being pushed increasingly in the direction of being forced to shoulder the Eastern burden alone "in Europe's name." Faced with that prospect, Germany and the East Central Europeans have increased their pressure on the United States to take the lead in moving NATO toward expansion into Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

The Clinton Administration has taken up that challenge within the Alliance and in negotiating the acquiescence of an apparently more relaxed Russia. It has not, however, expended nearly enough energy on convincing the American people that this is the way to go. It was one thing for then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher to proclaim categorically as he did in March 1996 that "NATO enlargement is on track and will happen," or for the President to say as he did in August that "NATO will expand into Eastern Europe." It is entirely another thing to convince the United States Senate, which may be asked to vote on it in 1997, of the validity of that proposition. True enough, the United States, using NATO, pulled the Europeans' chestnuts out of the fire in Bosnia with surprisingly little reaction from the American public. But that exercise, the endgame for which remains unclear, makes it all the more unlikely that the American people or Senate will want to formalize future such obligations.

As we look ahead, there seems to be considerable agreement on the main threat to European security--not Russia but ethnic turmoil--and on NATO as the appropriate response. There is also considerable agreement within Europe, including in Moscow, that continued and even expanded American involvement is needed to ensure success. But there remains precious little consensus in the United States about such American involvement. This is the central question about prospects for European security, one that despite its centrality is curiously absent from current analyses. It hovers over those analyses like a specter, fearsome because of the growing suspicion that Americans may answer the question with a resounding "No!" It is a question that must be answered in the affirmative, but getting to that answer will require a lot of work.

In *The International Politics of East Central Europe* (1996), Adrian Hyde-Price provides a primer on the area destined to be the cockpit of European security concerns in the decade ahead. He notes that the very description of the area-- East Central Europe--centers not on geography but on identity, not on territory but on ethnic kinship. The concept of statehood therefore appears not so much based on Western traditions of civic society as on older notions of *Volks* derived from German romanticism. Consequently the boundaries of the state are both more fluid and less important. Given the geography of the area, dominated by the Polish plain, it could hardly be otherwise. It is a geography best described by terms such as "permeability," "buffer," and "borderlands." When geographical fluidity has in the past been combined with ethnic rigidity and exclusivity, the mix has proved explosive. With the demise of Soviet-enforced "brotherhood," it threatens to be so again. Hyde-Price's overview of geopolitics, culture, and the roots of ethno-national conflict is superb in its concise attention to what is important.

But Hyde-Price is generally optimistic that despite its "baleful influence," the area's ethnically based nationalism need not lead to future conflict. "National identities," he argues, are today "being redefined in the context of a Europe transformed by political integration and economic globalization. More than at any previous time in the long history of East Central Europe, domestic developments are intimately bound up with broader developments in Europe and the wider international system." Much, of course, will depend on how willing the West is to integrate the area into a larger Europe and how willing Russia is to tolerate such integration. If one accepts Hyde-Price's analysis, Russian toleration may prove greater than Western openness. The Russians, he argues, have made a virtue of the necessity of their current weakness. They have demanded only two things from their erstwhile allies: pay in dollars for previously subsidized goods, and don't join NATO. And, as noted above, there has been a softening of the latter requirement. The response of the West, however, remains problematic.

Looked at from the internal perspective adopted by Hyde-Price, democratization is the "central domestic political task" facing the countries of the area, and membership in the European Union is their "ultimate foreign policy goal." Thus far, however, "fierce protectionist pressures" within the EU and, it should be added, a certain loss of nerve with double-digit unemployment on the eve of the European Monetary Union, have led to "disappointed expectations" in East Central Europe. The EU, Hyde-Price correctly observes, faces a "real test of commitment." Failure to accommodate the East Central Europeans' desire for a "return to Europe," particularly if accompanied by a decrease in a "strong and assertive US presence in Europe," can only lead to the growth of Germany as a benign hegemon in the neighborhood. The dangers in such a development are obvious, particularly given the still-ambivalent relations between Germany and its eastern neighbors, especially the Czech Republic. A more independent-minded Germany could cripple European integration and raise warning signals in Russia, all of which would leave the East Central Europeans once again to fend for themselves between powerful and suspicious neighbors. Thus, Hyde-Price concludes, Germany's continued integration in the EU and NATO remains the *sine qua non* of European security. And that integration will more and more depend on the EU's willingness and, to a lesser degree, NATO's, to integrate East Central Europe.

NATO's Eastern Dilemmas (1994) edited by David G. Haglund, S. Neil MacFarlane, and Joel J. Sokolsky of Canada's Centre for International Relations, tackles NATO's response to this challenge from the internal perspective of the West. The essays, in three sections, describe the nature of the Eastern challenge, Western interests, and the institutional adaptations to the new environment. It is the sort of organic approach of challenge and response that is far preferable to treatises on "security architecture" that too often try to squeeze round problems into square institutional holes. Thus, as the editors stress in their opening essay, the purpose of the book is not to discuss "prospects for NATO" but rather "prospects for NATO in dealing with its new security environment."

Haglund and his colleagues argue that in the new environment, collective defense, the initial rationale for NATO, is obsolete, and that consideration should be given to a broader collective security alternative. They immediately point to two conceptual problems: collective security concerns inter-state relations rather than the sort of intra-state domestic strife so prevalent today, and it presupposes not just a community of states but a community of values. The latter arguably exists in NATO and Western Europe but hardly at all in Europe as a whole. They conclude, therefore, that at least for the immediate future, NATO's response to its eastern dilemma will take the form of ad hoc operations as, for example, the "UN's iron fist" as a peacekeeper in European areas of instability such as the former Yugoslavia.

They note, however, that NATO is on dangerous new ground in undertaking such tasks. "Instability" is an insufficient

replacement for the unifying impulse of a common threat; choosing sides in conflicts in Eastern Europe could well give rise to unacceptable intra-Alliance strains. Second, NATO has never before had to deal with the failure of deterrence as it has had to in Bosnia. This poses yet another dilemma: failure to act in such situations threatens Alliance credibility; acting threatens escalation. And, they insist, such action *must* include the United States; otherwise, they ask, why not rely on just the WEU? Fortunately, this conundrum was eliminated by the amalgamation of NATO and WEU tasks and responsibilities at the June 1996 NATO Summit.

Haglund and company conclude that collective defense is "difficult to defend," collective security "appears unattainable," and NATO peacekeeping is "fraught with problems" for Alliance cohesion. They propose that NATO content itself with *supporting* UN peacekeeping operations designed to contain conflicts within areas removed from member states. This would seem, at least implicitly, to rule out NATO expansion to those East Central European states closer to areas of ongoing conflict--e.g., Hungary, which borders Serbia--and begs the question of what is meant by "support." It is, moreover, increasingly doubtful whether the American public will continue to abide truly robust support--i.e., American troops on the ground--for UN-directed peacekeeping. For all these reasons, one must conclude that the authors' proposal is too modest to be useful. However, the success to date in Bosnia and the June 1996 NATO Summit action vis-à-vis the WEU demonstrate that NATO is evolving very rapidly toward a more robust peacekeeping capability of its own. Given continued success in Bosnia and continued commitment by our European allies, it may be the sort of organic development that would win American public support. One would then have to ask whether collective security in Europe would remain as "unattainable" as the editors of this volume concluded two short years ago.

Most of the other essays in *Eastern Dilemmas*, while sound and interesting, add little to the "Whither NATO?" debate. There are three exceptions; those covering the United States, Germany, and France. The essay on US interests by Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Donovan, USAF, is especially worth reading, because it is one of the few in all the literature that asks the defining question "Should the United States care?" Donovan's answer is "Yes!" He correctly observes that "the consequences of volatile nationalism may create conditions that place the vital interests of America's European allies at risk." The perceived "righteousness" of the cause is relegated to the category as a "motivating force" for action, albeit a "powerful" one. Concerning US capabilities to do anything "useful" about such conflicts, Donovan concludes that they are considerable but constrained by an attenuation of interests and the reluctance of the American public to countenance a "return of body bags carrying America's young." In this reiteration of a fact of life now paramount in any President's consideration of the commitment of American force, one cannot but hear echoes of the Powell/Weinberger Doctrine. Donovan is right to conclude that the willingness of the United States to respond will remain "limited and highly contingent on the nature of the conflict." Encouraged and impressed by success, Americans might develop the will to support interventions in the defense of interests less than vital.

The outlines of that debate are clearly and concisely summarized by the editors in their concluding discussion of NATO's dilemmas about nuclear weapons, internal divisions in the Alliance, and an inability to agree on the nature of the threats from the East. They insist, however, that the security situation of today is the "best it has been in the 20th century." "Operating from a favorable security environment," they add, "NATO might appear to have the luxury of choice." And their choice? The authors, somewhat presciently (given the June 1996 Summit) suggest a new version of flexible response, a palette of capabilities to choose from in addressing an equally diverse palette of contingencies. It is a conclusion that is both optimistic and realistic.

While *NATO's Eastern Dilemmas* focused on the West, Professor Regina Cowen Karp of Old Dominion University has edited a collection that looks within Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. *Central and Eastern Europe: The Challenge of Transition* (1993) does so very broadly, covering not just the security but also the social, economic, and political dimensions of transition in a series of essays by an impressive array of experts.

Karp notes in her introduction that the end of the Cold War gave Europe a chance "to re-create itself, to cast aside decades of division and ideological struggle" but quickly adds that this won't happen. We are, she argues, in a transitional period of geopolitical upheaval--neither peaceful nor totally conflictual--marked by the rise of ethnic conflict which has the "potential to develop into a security problem of the first order." She suggests that not enough "credit" has been given to the role of the Soviet Union in keeping a lid on such conflict; she also posits that there can be no return to that Russian *Ordnungsmacht*. And because the internal organizing efforts within Eastern Europe are

insufficient, the Eastern Europeans are left with NATO/EU membership as their "strategic goal." Like Hyde-Price, however, she concludes that the response of the West is "not encouraging."

Karp is perhaps overly optimistic in two respects: when she asserts that Germany, surrounded by friends, has "never been more assured than at present" of its physical security, and when she concludes that *de facto* unification of Europe has been achieved. She is correct, however, in her assessments that security depends more on stable political relationships than on a stable military balance, and that there is a synergistic relationship between internal and external security and a need, given the importance of Eastern Europe, for the EU to widen and deepen simultaneously. Against this background, she posits five options for a "new security order" in Europe. The first is the reemergence of a new balancing of alliances, with the Eastern Europeans "naturally" aligning with Russia. The second is a "re-nationalization" of defense, something she fears is already happening in Germany, France, and Britain as NATO "lingers on as an increasingly less relevant relic." The third is a new "concert of great powers." The fourth, collective security, is the only "truly pan-European path to security" but a goal that, while desirable, will remain unachievable. Finally, Karp contends that a continuation of the current "collective incrementalism," with all the uncertainty that entails, is by far the most likely outcome of changes already under way.

Most of *Transition's* authors take country-specific looks at the prospects for security. Those on the three countries of East Central Europe--Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, the most likely candidates for NATO expansion--are the most rewarding.

The outgrowth of an April 1994 conference at Kent State's Lemnitzer Center, *NATO in the Post-Cold War Era: Does It Have a Future?* (1995) presents the usual hodgepodge of perspectives, edited by Kent State professors S. Victor Papacosma and Mary Ann Heiss. About half of the 15 essays are well worth reading. Among these are three historical assessments of NATO's first 45 years. Lawrence Kaplan's counterfactual history makes fascinating fiction with its "Fourth Reich," Soviet-German confrontation, isolated Britain, and autarchic America. In the end, however, it is just fiction--fun for the armchair strategists seized with video games replaying famous battles of yore.

Real strategists should immediately turn to his last few pages, which are devoted to a "counterfactual future": projections of a new European-only security system without NATO or America. Kaplan, Director Emeritus of the Lemnitzer Center, points out that the trouble with such European-only projections is the "turbulent aftershock" of the end of the Cold War. Faced with ethnic conflict and rampant insecurity in Eastern Europe and the specter of a possible revival of Russian imperialism, the EU alone is unable to offer the same psychological and military security as NATO. The EU's promise of Maastricht 1992 remains unfulfilled--crippled, he argues, by vacillation over Bosnia and fear of German economic domination. According to Kaplan, however, a continuation of the "transatlantic bargain," the historic source of NATO unity, is the only sure insurance against instability arising from an irredentist Russia and a unified Germany. In other words, NATO should survive because its Cold-War *raison d'être* has: keep Russia out, Germany down, and America in. But, he insists, survival will require more than a token presence in the Balkans.

In the end, Kaplan is an optimist. He sees hope in the Partnership for Peace that has provided some comfort to the Eastern Europeans, and in the growing Russian discovery that America's presence in Europe through NATO is a stabilizing force. He predicts Article 5 coverage under NATO for Poland and Hungary, placing them outside NATO's military structure but inside its security system. Interestingly, statements from Moscow suggest this is a future that Russia might accept.

In his examination of the "Limits of Victory" over the Soviet bloc, University of Akron Professor Walter S. Hixson uses revisionist history of the Cold War to question euphoric vindications of 45 years of NATO strategy. He claims, for example, that NATO planners had sacrificed "opportunities for an even more peaceful and integrated world" on the altar of Western unity, and finds "plausibility" in the argument that "had the United States pursued negotiations in the wake of successful implementation of the Marshall Plan, liberalization may well have come sooner to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union." One does not have to buy such arguments to understand that an irreverent review of Cold War history can be a useful exercise in ferreting out the real root cause of the conflict of interests between Russia and the West--a conflict of interests that may yet have validity in the post-Cold War era.

Steven L. Rearden's look at "NATO Strategy Past, Present, and Future" is a straightforward history of the evolution of

NATO that recognizes the limitations of a straight-line extrapolation of the Alliance's past into the future. He underscores that the end of the Cold War represents an unprecedented caesura for NATO and that Western strategists now face an "almost wholly unfamiliar set of challenges"; he applauds their refreshingly rapid and robust response to those challenges.

Rearden suggests that the downsizing of Western forces has been too rapid and too deep, leaving the Alliance unable to "count on having the manpower and other available resources to cope with a lengthy conflict in the Balkans." He points to the need in this regard to maintain sufficient ready forces. He is right, of course, but such assertions beg the questions whether the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) meets the ready force requirement and whether, given the backdown of Serbia and its puppets in the face of a long overdue Western show of force, we need still contemplate a "lengthy conflict" in the Balkans. It is hard to disagree with Rearden when he asserts that NATO still possesses two "valuable strategic assets" that are hard to reproduce elsewhere: its command and control capabilities and its pre-positioning and lift capabilities.

Rearden acknowledges that "further refinements in military strategy" likely must "await the emergence of a new, or at least refurbished, political strategy." Meeting the new needs of peacekeeping *and* enlargement, not Rearden's timid either/or, requires the development of the political will to maintain sufficient ready forces and to understand that sometimes one must accept casualties in the pursuit of national interests. Ways must also be found, not just within NATO, but among NATO, the EU, the OSCE, and the United Nations, to agree on the concerting of interests and the physical resources to protect them. If there is anything we should learn from NATO's history of success in the Cold War, it is the power created by a synergy of shared values.

Disconcerted Europe: The Search for a New Security Architecture (1994), edited by Alexander Moens and Christopher Anstis of Simon Fraser University, examines the institutional framework of European security. It begins with an introduction to the panoply of overlapping, increasingly concentric European security organizations and a history of how those organizations have interacted during and since the Cold War.

As in the other books, ample attention is devoted to the interests and roles of the major Western powers. Most satisfying in this regard are Professor Charles Krupnick's dissection of American ambivalence toward a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) and Professor Roy Rempel's masterful discussion of the motivating factors in German security policy. The latter is must reading for those who would understand German discomfort with the Atlanticist-ESDI debate, their felt need to be both good Atlanticists and good Europeans, and the reasons why Germany's drift from the former to the latter had already begun in the mid-1980s. Paramount among those reasons were the perceived short shrift given to German interests by the United States and NATO, particularly during the INF modernization tension, and growing doubts--shared by other Europeans--about the constancy of American commitment to extended deterrence.

In their concluding "Proposal for a New Strategy," Moens and Anstis correctly identify weakened political purpose as the "most dangerous gap" in the debate over European security. Echoing German fears, they note that the Clinton Administration is particularly "sensitive to the domestic constraints on a US military role in Europe." They do find grounds for hope in "French recognition that NATO assets (and an American role) are absolutely necessary in the management of the Bosnian crisis" and in Washington's willingness to take a more active role in that crisis. They place great stock in the 1993 Balladur Plan for a stability pact that would encourage Central and Eastern European countries to resolve ethnic conflicts and consolidate borders with the help of EU/OSCE mediation of disputes. Such a mechanism would, they argue, fill the perceived gap in political purpose and provide a rationale less threatening to Russia for the use of the more flexible capabilities of the Combined Joint Task Forces. While the "Balladur Plan"--like the Balladur government in France--is ancient history, the melding of purpose and capabilities proposed by Moen and Anstis remains a sound prescription for the future. Indeed, it seems to have been adopted at the June 1996 NATO Summit.

Finally, there is *The New European Security Disorder* (1994) by Penn State's Professor Simon Duke. It is provocative, iconoclastic, rich in factual detail, and sweeping in scope and intent. It takes issue with nearly all of the foregoing discussion, contending that other "experts," mired in old paradigms and creating new bogeymen by way of justification of "more of the same," have avoided or obscured the real security problems facing Europe. Duke is equally harsh on

the leaders of the Alliance, accusing them of a lack of leadership that has led to "institutional chaos" in the security realm. Instead of producing a "network of interlocking institutions," they have allowed the emergence willy nilly of a new security architecture "characterized by overlapping responsibilities which may lead either to paralysis as each waits for the other to respond, or to institutional turf battles." And what is Duke's prescription? It is a gradual phasing out of NATO and its replacement by a pan-European security structure centered around the OSCE that "stretches not just geographically but functionally beyond any current arrangement."

One is inclined to dismiss Duke's criticism and proposals as pie-in-the-sky. The detail and clarity of his analysis, however, does not allow such an escape. Duke argues, for example, that the two threats most commonly identified-- "Back to the Future" recidivism in the east and the reemergence of a Muslim threat from the south--are exaggerated, perhaps deliberately so, thereby shifting attention away from the real threats of proliferation, nationalism, and migratory pressures. These, he asserts, "demand non-military responses" and a "wider-based notion of security." He also attacks concepts of power based on the state and defined solely in military terms. He agrees with Joe Nye that power today is "less coercive and less fungible" and contends that states are less relevant in an era when conflicts are more likely to be fought *within* rather than *between* states.

Duke does not shy away from the central issues of European security nor the implications of his answers, no matter how distasteful. He identifies American neo-isolationism as a major post-Cold War development that, if unchecked, could lead to the unraveling of NATO and a re-nationalization of German security policy. He also faults the Germans and other Europeans for focusing on their own navels and not carrying their fair share of the security burden outside Europe. The nexus of these two isolationisms must be addressed if we and the Europeans are to resolve our mutual security concerns.

RAND's Ronald Asmus and F. Stephen Larrabee and Harvard's Robert Blackwill attempt to do so in a Spring 1996 *Washington Quarterly* article in which they propose a "new transatlantic bargain." Condensed to its core, that "bargain" comprises a "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" agreement according to which "the United States would support the enlargement of NATO to Eastern Europe and . . . participate in future peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions" and "the allies would enter into a long-term partnership with the United States to address key dangers to Western vital interests outside Europe." One cannot fault the strategic arguments on which such an agreement rests, not the least of which is the probable inadequacy of "*ad hoc*cracy" for future Gulf Wars. Neither can one dispute the authors' conclusion that the agreement would require "US leadership of the kind that created the North Atlantic Alliance in the first place," requiring, in turn, Washington's making "the transformation of NATO . . . its top security policy priority." While recognizing the need to "forge bipartisan US domestic support--especially in Congress," the authors offer little advice on how to go about this admittedly urgent task.

If this task is to be accomplished in the three- to five-year time frame posited in the article, strategists in and out of uniform will have to provide convincing answers to American voters. And our politicians, who would ensure a military force that is "second to none," will have to start making the case that sometimes there are interests which require the use of that force. Security in Europe must rank high among those interests. If we do not participate in forging that security, we cannot seriously claim the mantle of global leadership.

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