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Rebecca Johnson

Micah Zenko

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All Dressed Up and No Place to Go: Why NATO Should Be on the Front Lines in the War on Terror

REBECCA JOHNSON and MICAH ZENKO

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Following the 2000 American presidential election, some analysts worried that transatlantic relations would be strained by the policies proposed by the incoming Bush Administration. From disagreements over the Kyoto Treaty to the decision to proceed quickly with the deployment of ballistic missile defenses, a functional split between America and its European allies threatened to emerge.¹ While the attacks of 11 September 2001 changed US interests and priorities overseas, these disagreements will not dissolve completely. They have receded, however, in immediate importance to the American goal of fighting terrorists with a global reach. As European officials were quoted to have told an American official after 9/11, “Kyoto is an issue you argue about when all else is well.”²

Retaining the commitment of a broad-based coalition is critical to the success of America’s evolving war against terrorism. Although the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an obvious hub from which to organize this coalition, and alliance members have shown their eagerness to respond to common threats such as terrorism, Washington has held true allied support at arm’s length. While officials in Washington have endorsed NATO’s invocation of Article 5 for the first time in the alliance’s history and accepted limited contributions of troops and equipment for the military campaign and later support for the restricted peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan, they have refused to allow NATO to engage in the sort of operations the alliance embraced when it affirmed its Article 24 commitments in April 1999. This refusal, while puzzling given the consistent willingness of the European allies to contribute troops and resources, is even more surprising

when one remembers that it was the United States, not Europe, that initially pushed for the inclusion of Article 24 during the Washington Summit in April 1999.³

This article argues that the United States should work with its NATO allies in fulfilling their Article 24 commitments. It is organized in three sections. First, we examine the decisionmaking procedures immediately following 9/11 to determine the reasons behind the Bush Administration's opposition to a muscular NATO presence in the war against terrorism. In this section we answer Washington's objections that an active NATO role would undermine US operational autonomy and reveal stark inequalities in alliance readiness.

In the second section we argue the advantages of coordinating the war through NATO under the auspices of Article 24. First, given the undeniable links between al Qaeda and terrorist networks operating in Europe and elsewhere around the globe, it is important that the US campaign is not isolated to a few obvious spots in Afghanistan and Iraq. To do the job right, American military, diplomatic, and intelligence services will need serious, coordinated support from their allies, and working through—rather than past—NATO would help to ensure that important information does not slip through the cracks. Second, in its capacity as the preeminent institution for collective defense, NATO provides the support the United States needs to conduct such a comprehensive campaign. NATO has the mandate through its Article 24 provisions; it has the experience of running a coordinated campaign through its missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia (where alliance troops face many of the same issues of porous borders, trafficking, and militancy that must now be addressed in Afghanistan); and it has the will of its European members. Finally, in the conclusion we offer suggestions for what a NATO-centered effort would look like in practice, drawing from the alliance's ongoing operations in the Balkans.

NATO's Newest Challenge

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO has undertaken a series of missions unprecedented in the alliance's history. The alliance conducted military strikes and later provided ground forces for peace support operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, created institutional arrangements to engage with former Warsaw Pact countries, and expanded its membership to include three historically pivotal states of Central Europe—the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland.

Some have debated whether this expansion of NATO's responsibilities, combined with the disappearance of the unifying threat portrayed by the Soviet Union, could harm the centrality of NATO's mission—providing for the collective defense of all its members.⁴ NATO's response to 9/11 has shown how quickly the alliance can refocus its sprawling interests when one member faces a direct attack.

Rebecca Johnson is a Research Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and Micah Zenko is a doctoral candidate at Brandeis University. They both were contributors to the US Department of State's 1999-2001 study, *The Kosovo History Project*.

Within 30 hours of the attacks on New York and Washington, the alliance invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Article 5 states quite simply that “an armed attack against one or more of” the NATO members “shall be considered as an attack against them all.” Though its original intent changed dramatically with the end of the Cold War, it has remained a core element of NATO’s *raison d’être*. The new rationale for Article 5 was found in the Strategic Concept statement released during NATO’s 50th Anniversary Washington Summit in April 1999. An update of the first Strategic Concept publicly released in 1991, the 1999 version went further than the alliance’s previous doctrinal declarations in embracing out-of-area operations of a sort that differed from the traditional understanding of defending against a Soviet invasion. Article 24 of the Strategic Concept declared:

Any armed attack on the territory of the allies, from whatever direction, would be covered by Articles 5 and 6 of the Washington Treaty. However, alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including acts of terrorism, sabotage, and organized crime, and by the disruption of the flow of vital resources.⁵

While far-reaching, the declaration was actually a scaled-back compromise from language that the United States initially hoped to introduce regarding the declaration of new purposes.⁶ European governments sought to limit the Strategic Concept to deal with threats directly related to Europe—including those originating in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The United States pushed for an expansive declaration to consider threats from organized crime, terrorism, and especially weapons of mass destruction.⁷

When NATO officials met in Brussels on 12 September 2001 to discuss the alliance’s response to the attack on America, 18 of the 19 NATO nations were prepared to fulfill the commitments laid out in Article 24. While the attacks were carried out on the territory of the United States, alliance members recognized that they were all vulnerable to future acts of terrorism. America absorbed the attacks, but the loss to the world included citizens of 80 countries. Within the alliance itself, all but three of its 19 member nations lost citizens either in Washington or New York. Direct threats to the European continent and its periphery included the US Embassy in Paris, synagogues in Strasbourg and Tunisia, Jewish and American properties in Germany, the water supply system in Morocco, and several other sites not revealed by European police for fear of making them more attractive.⁸ Furthermore, there is evidence that NATO itself was threatened. Quoting sources within the German police agency (BKA), the newsmagazine *Stern* reported that NATO headquarters was itself the target of an attack similar to the ones committed on 11 September in the United States.⁹

The War Against Terrorism: NATO on the Sidelines

The only state that hesitated to embrace NATO’s decision was the United States—the same state that had lobbied so forcefully for the creation of

the new NATO mandate two years earlier. Two concerns featured prominently in the minds of decisionmakers in Washington: Washington's reluctance to cede operational autonomy, and its concern that the European allies lack the capabilities to conduct a military campaign outside the North Atlantic theater.

Washington's hesitancy to jeopardize operational control was evidenced in its response to the alliance's decision to invoke Article 5 in September. According to one NATO official, the allies requested "a commitment to be consulted by Washington before anything happens" in return for invoking Article 5.¹⁰ European governments had sought enhanced consultations from the United States over a number of international issues long before the arrival of the Bush Administration, and they did not waste this opportunity to increase their leverage.

The reaction in Washington was quick and decisive—NATO could not be allowed to reign in any US response. According to a senior State Department official speaking to reporters after the first emergency meeting on 12 September, the United States was pushing for a resolution that would mention that the article could be invoked, without actually voting on the measure itself. A senior Administration official said that it was the Europeans who were "desperately trying to give us political cover and the Pentagon was resisting it." Eventually, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld relented and agreed to accept the clause.¹¹

Even in agreeing to the invocation of Article 5, Secretary Rumsfeld tried to distance himself from the NATO alliance, however, stating publicly to its members, "The mission determines the coalition. The coalition doesn't determine the mission."¹² The reason for America's tentative approach to accepting the invocation of Article 5 is most certainly related to the US desire to retain maximum flexibility in its military planning and operations. This concern would turn out to be overblown in that even after Rumsfeld relented, the alliance left it up to Washington to determine the nature of the response and whether the United States would need NATO assistance.¹³

Since it began planning a global response to the terror attacks of September 2001, the Bush Administration has worked from the assumption that at some point in the future America might have to operate alone.¹⁴ During the Afghanistan operations, the United States relied primarily on its own capabilities for conducting the military strikes and allowed European peacekeepers to oversee the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the stability force sanctioned by the UN Security Council.

While placing NATO on the sideline may have been necessary for military efficiency and to avoid politically difficult decisions, Europe's ancillary role has meant that since the initial outpouring of support immediately following the attacks there has been less sympathy and support from mainstream society on the continent. As the war against terrorism verges further from one of specific military goals in Afghanistan to one of crucial global financial, intelligence, and legal cooperation, European governments may feel less attachment to what has been largely a unilateral American mission. Consequently, the United States

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may not be able to quickly enlist the support of its allies whenever its needs to, as some have suggested.¹⁵ This has been most clearly visible in the allies’ stark opposition to America’s stated intention to pursue Saddam Hussein as part of its broader campaign.

Overriding and related to the American decision to operate outside of NATO’s command structure is the fact that few NATO allies have the military capability to conduct combat operations outside the North Atlantic theater. None of the European allies possesses long-range strike attack aircraft that do not require forward basing, such as the American B-52H, B-1, and B-2 bombers. Meanwhile, the United States maintains over 150 such bombers in service.¹⁶

Europe also has severe limitations in its power-projection capabilities, with few assets in the fields of strategic air and sealift, air-to-air refueling, and reconnaissance and strategic intelligence. A recent RAND study of European support to American-led out-of-area operations found that in a specific operation modeled against a Middle East adversary, “allied air contributions would be of marginal importance.”¹⁷

Even if the United States had provided the transport for ground combat forces in an Afghanistan campaign, Europe would not have had the capacity to maintain those forces in high-intensity combat operations without American assistance.¹⁸ Because of this discrepancy, Washington has focused on the benefits of nonmilitary or ancillary military support from NATO, such as logistics and intelligence support, but not collective military action.¹⁹ As Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz noted, “If we need collective action, we will ask for it; we don’t anticipate that at the moment.”²⁰

This is not to say that the European NATO members have had no military role in the first stages of the campaign against global terrorism. The most significant contribution has come from the NATO ally with the greatest capacity to provide the United States support for its operations in Afghanistan—the United Kingdom. Reflecting their long-standing special relationship with the United States, the British have been the most vocal American ally in the aftermath of the attacks, with Prime Minister Tony Blair at times appearing out in front of Washington in his condemnation and demands of the Taliban and the al Qaeda terror network. Militarily, the British provided three nuclear-powered submarines

armed with precision-guided munitions, tactical fighter aircraft, 600 Royal Marine Commandos, and permission to use its strategically important air base on Diego Garcia. All told the British have contributed more than 6,000 military personnel to the South Asian theater of operations during the military campaign, with 1,700 infantry troops committed to Operation Jacana in the mountainous regions along the Afghan-Pakistani border.²¹ The British also led the initial International Security Assistance Force that provided stability during the transition period for the interim government in Kabul.

The importance of this contribution should not be overlooked. According to Anthony Cordesman, senior scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, “The US and British experience in Afghanistan may indicate that the US and NATO have overstressed the high technology and high investment aspects of coalition warfare and interoperability, and paid too little attention to the value of being able to draw on a pool of highly trained lighter forces, like the SAS, or their Australian, Canadian, German, and other equivalents.”²² Not only have British troops played a critical role in strategic operations on the ground in Afghanistan, they also have taken the lead in reconstruction efforts and are responsible for rebuilding airfields, de-mining large segments of land in and around Kabul, and rebuilding roads from the capital to the countryside.²³

The rest of the NATO alliance also has participated in the war against terrorism in smaller though still important ways.²⁴ Although they were not included directly in combat operations in Afghanistan, as Colin Powell noted, “Not every ally is fighting, but every ally is in the fight.”²⁵ As a part of this participation, the alliance decided to operationalize Article 5 in support of US efforts at the 4 October 2001 North Atlantic Council meeting. The council reached consensus on an eight-point strategy, based on a list of the eight formal requests that the US Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns, made of the alliance.²⁶ The strategy omitted any statements about NATO connections to the command and control of the operations in Afghanistan. It also omitted the need for directly declaring that collective defense of NATO was necessary. However the eight requests did provide a crucial role and clarity of purpose for the alliance in support of the American-British military strikes by compelling member states to enhance intelligence sharing, backfill assets that are diverted to support the military campaign, and provide overflight clearance and access to airfields.

The European military contribution has been useful to backfill those US forces that are needed to operate in the theater surrounding Afghanistan. Seven German-based AWACS planes, with Germans composing one-third of those on board, were deployed to America to relieve similar US assets, providing air interdiction support on the East Coast and other areas of interest.²⁷ Before the mission’s termination in late April, the alliance’s crew, including ground support for the AWACS operation, reached 830 personnel from 13 countries.²⁸ NATO also has dispatched seven frigates, a destroyer, and an auxiliary oiler to the Mediterranean to take the place of American naval assets there that moved into the

Indian Ocean closer to Afghanistan.²⁹ And NATO forces will likely replace low-intensity, high-demand American forces in the Balkans in order to free them up for operations elsewhere.³⁰

Wasted Potential

But NATO's contribution to the evolving effort should be greater than providing special forces for reconnaissance and limited combat in Afghanistan, and for keeping the peace in Afghanistan's capital. The alliance publicly codified its need to adapt its capabilities in the new fight against terrorism in its 18 December 2001 statement, but its troops and assets have largely been made to cool their heels.³¹

One need look only to alliance efforts in the Balkans to understand NATO's capacity to undertake operations like those needed to eradicate terrorist networks. Currently, NATO has troops involved in peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia, with European members providing roughly 80 percent of the forces for these missions.³² The United States contributes around 5,000 of the 42,000 troops in KFOR,³³ and 3,100 of the 18,000 troops in Bosnia.³⁴ NATO's deployment in Macedonia is far smaller; a 3,000 troop, British-led operation finished in September 2001; that was followed by a 1,000 troop, German-led follow-on mission; in late June 2002, the mission was extended through October, with the number of German troops being reduced and the Netherlands taking over the lead nation role. Each of these missions must coordinate with the other international agencies at work in the area in order to control the region's porous borders and corrupt institutions that facilitate the development of transnational organized crime and extremist groups.

These missions are no longer combat missions; they more closely resemble the sort of low-intensity, on-the-ground, long-term engagement the United States has committed itself to in the current phase of Operation Enduring Freedom and must undertake in other areas if it realistically hopes to eradicate terrorism. It is important to be clear on this point. There are two components to the current war against terrorism, just as there were two components to NATO's interventions in the Balkans: a large-scale military engagement, and a long-term policing and reconstruction mission.

NATO has been criticized by many for being an imperfect warfighting machine—its command and control structure has been deemed burdensome and the security of the planning process has been shown to be questionable. That may be true, but a few factors should be kept in mind before dismissing NATO's military effectiveness. First, the perception from all the allies, including their politicians, diplomats, and the military planners at Mons, was that Operation Allied Force would be a quick "punch in the nose" to coerce Milosevic to capitulate to allied demands. The fact that it then stretched into a 78-day campaign surely led to strains in the planning and execution of air strikes. This was exacerbated by the fact that Allied Force was NATO's longest sustained military campaign. Second, according to European sources, the difficulty of planning and conducting a war

through NATO was complicated by the dual chain of command established by the United States. The presence of “US only” rooms and documents, and the fact that much of the planning for Allied Force was conducted in Heidelberg, not Mons, contributed a great deal to the perceived disconnect between the United States and its NATO allies.³⁵ While it is certain that the US military wants to control planning as much as possible in order to maximize its leverage and protect its troops, it bears some responsibility for the cumbersome command and control system itself. Third, imperfect is a far cry from unsuitable. Allied Force convinced Milosevic to stop his atrocities in Kosovo, and the alliance maintained a unity of purpose that was absent in the face of much greater bloodshed just a few years earlier in Bosnia. The war might have been difficult to fight as an alliance, but that is not a sufficient condemnation to conclude it should not have been fought as an alliance, or to predict that future missions would be as difficult to conduct. Finally, when speaking about NATO’s follow-on role in constructing stability and peace in the Balkans, the alliance’s missions have done commendable work.

The links between terrorist organizations like al Qaeda and regional crime syndicates in southeastern Europe have been trumpeted by specialists in Washington at luncheon talks and in the news since 9/11.³⁶ But the NATO troops on the ground in the Balkans realized long ago that these networks are the main obstacles to peaceful and sustainable reconstruction. Indeed, these networks are even more corrosive to the region than any lingering ethnic radicalism. According to British defense sources, “All NATO troops in the Balkans will be contributing to the campaign [against terrorism] because a lot of terrorist activity is funneled through the region in terms of arms-trafficking, money-laundering, and drugs.”³⁷

In addition, these troops themselves are targets in the region. According to a report from the International Crisis Group, “Given the presence of ex-mujahidin in Bosnia, the tens of thousands of former military and paramilitary fighters in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia who are Muslims by tradition, if not for the most part by observance, and the large deployments of US and other troops in the region, some (though by no means all) senior Western sources describe the potential terrorist threat as significant.”³⁸

So long as these criminal networks are allowed to operate in the Balkans, Western Europe remains vulnerable to attack. One common practice, “identity laundering,” allows potential extremists to slip into Western Europe virtually unseen. In one striking example, British peacekeepers in Bosnia helped track down Bensayah Belkacem, one of Osama bin Laden’s key associates who may have been responsible for obtaining the Western passports used by the terrorists in the attacks in the United States.³⁹

Al Qaeda singled out Europe as the launching point for its terrorist attacks against the West. Islamic militants targeted ghetto Arab immigrant communities to propagate the radical message of bin Laden, recruited foot soldiers in slums and mosques, and used this foothold in Europe to plan their attacks.⁴⁰ Once mid-level al Qaeda officials had fomented sufficient human and financial support

inside a city, compartmentalized sleeper cells were left in place awaiting opportunities to strike.⁴¹ Despite vigorous efforts by local law enforcement officials in Germany, Spain, Italy, Britain, and the Netherlands, many of these cells may still exist unnoticed and be awaiting their signal to act.⁴²

Europe has pursued its investigations on terrorism with an eye to integrating Muslim communities and protecting civil and human rights. National and continental-wide police forces have made renewed efforts to target potential suspects and break up radical Islamic networks. Despite these increased investigations into Islamic fundamentalism on the continent and arrests of suspected terrorists, however, after three months of the policing effort, an estimated 60 percent of radical Islamic networks were yet to be discovered, according to Western European intelligence officials.⁴³ Furthermore, law enforcement officials believe that European-based militants who trained and fought in Afghanistan have returned to the continent with the intent of conducting additional terrorist operations.⁴⁴

Lord Robertson has called Afghanistan a “black hole” that lacks any sustainable state structure, and has argued, “That is why NATO is engaged in South-East Europe—to prevent such black holes from emerging on our doorstep.”⁴⁵ He is right, and in order to avoid having the Balkans serve as the same sort of fertile breeding ground for extremism that is present in Afghanistan, a coordinated approach must be developed to respond effectively to these concerns.

This approach exists in the Balkans. NATO troops operate alongside representatives of the UN, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the European Union (EU), as well as aide workers from numerous international relief agencies. In Bosnia and Kosovo, NATO takes responsibility for security, policing, and border monitoring.⁴⁶ The UN runs civil administration; the OSCE is in charge of democratization and institution-building; and the EU takes the lead in reconstruction and economic development. One can see how these missions overlap—civil administration and effective institution-building rely on security, and economic development relies on effective policing. For all the criticism levied against civil reconstruction campaigns in Bosnia and Kosovo, the parties are closer to a peaceful, stable existence than at any time in the past decade. NATO security forces are conducting an effective campaign to combat criminal and extremist networks in the region.

But localized success in some areas in the Balkans is not sufficient. If either mission—the war on terrorism or peacekeeping in the Balkans—is to be successful, the two need to be better integrated, not dissociated. The United States needs to remain active in both, not just in the assault on Afghanistan, and the European allies need to coordinate planning and intelligence on a scale larger than the Balkans. They should employ the lessons they have learned from their operations in the Balkans to coordinate efforts with other international institutions. This means capitalizing on strong communications networks, launching an aggressive outreach campaign with Muslim countries through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), and retaining operating autonomy to ensure that in-

dividual missions can be carried out with minimal bureaucratic delay. In brief, they should take their experience from the Balkans—both the successes and the failures—and adopt operational procedures that closely resemble the procedures and structures witnessed in the terrorist networks they are trying to combat.

Putting NATO on the Front Lines

The first of these procedures that should be adopted is operational autonomy. Effective coordination will be the linchpin of the international war against terrorism, and this coordination will fail unless each of the components is allowed to carry out its tasks unimpeded. By making NATO the hub that synchronizes the array of international institutions that will contribute to this effort, operational autonomy will be enhanced.

Skeptics will argue that the need for unimpeded action is precisely why the United States should lead the international effort. They will contend that placing NATO front and center in the international response will only stymie action. But while the United States may be able to carry out a military campaign in Afghanistan largely on its own, it is not able to fight the kind of war that is needed to cripple international terrorism. This “war” has many fronts, arguably the least important of which is being conducted south of Tajikistan today. An effective campaign against terrorism requires accurate and timely intelligence to locate cells and their planned activities. It requires alert, trained law enforcement, immigration services, and border patrols, as well as flexible teams ready to respond when important information is revealed. Finally, it requires time, dedication, and resources. With its membership, partners, and shared experience, NATO can commit each. The alliance might not be the most efficiently run organization, but it has both the breadth and depth to make it the best suited for the job of ringleader.

What does this mean in practice? John Arquilla and David Ronfelt have released a new edited volume on networks and “netwars.”⁴⁷ A network is a distinct organizing concept that has developed along with technological advances. It requires not just that individuals’ interactions link them in a network, but that they recognize and foster their form of organization (in contrast to a traditional, hierarchical form of organization). A network is generally characterized by diffuse clusters of individuals who relate to one another through hubs. The authors of the RAND study argue, “The West must start to build its own networks and must learn to swarm the enemy, in order to keep it on the run or pinned down until it can be destroyed.”⁴⁸ “Swarming” refers to attacking the enemy in different ways simultaneously. Small, nimble networks are key to this endeavor, which means that NATO will be called on to operationalize smaller, more adaptable units operating with a large degree of autonomy to respond to their environments. This is not to advocate the abolition of traditional military force structures (corps, divisions, brigades, regiments, etc.), but to suggest NATO can best fulfill its Article 24 provisions by positioning itself at the center of the war against terrorism within its existing commitments. NATO forces tracking small arms in Bosnia should be given the discre-

tion to make changes to their mission to respond to developments on the ground. Likewise, NATO troops working with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan on border security through the Partnership for Peace program should be given leeway in how they carry out their missions.⁴⁹ So long as the contingents that are deployed to any one mission are all of the same nationality, there should be few problems concerning how changes in orders travel up the chain of command.

While the OSCE and the EU will likely fight having some of their core responsibilities usurped, NATO should take the lead in military, anti-crime, and border activity. The OSCE's track record on combating trafficking is poor, and a concerted policing effort is needed to counter the trails of drugs, arms, and people that snake across Central Asia, Russia, and the Balkans into Western Europe. NATO, with contributions from its member countries and support from its partners, has the heft that is needed to undertake this important job. Without question the alliance should consult closely with the OSCE and the EU to ensure that their security, political, and economic programs reinforce, not undermine, each other, but the programs all should be engineered with attention to shutting down transnational crime and building stable governments and economies. The OSCE lacks the institutional capacity to carry out this critical task, and NATO should take it over. While some may worry that EU and OSCE countries would resist NATO's enhanced role, these countries recognize that they are out of the loop in the war against terrorism. By positioning NATO at the hub of European anti-terror efforts, it would provide them with a voice in the planning and implementation of these efforts, as well as bring them in contact with the alliance's substantial assets and capabilities.

Working through NATO also gives the alliance the opportunity to continue to build strong working bonds with Russia. It is true that many in Russia still hold lingering suspicions about the alliance's true intentions, but NATO and Russia have been able to work very well together on joint missions in Bosnia and Kosovo. SFOR and KFOR are enduring examples of the good that can come from NATO-Russian cooperation, and the West should not shrink from using NATO as the center for the international response merely because they fear opposition from Moscow.

Luckily this is precisely what the alliance has undertaken with the new relationship that will be embodied in the NATO-Russian Council, or "NATO at 20."⁵⁰ The West can learn much more from Russia than the lessons of its military experiences in Afghanistan. Russian police also face traffickers transiting their territory; they contribute soldiers to secure Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan; and they still retain intelligence sources across the globe. NATO should work with Moscow to help neutralize the networks operating in Russia at the same time that they employ Russian assets to the larger military, police, and intelligence effort.⁵¹

Seen in this way, NATO would serve as the hub of an international network against terrorism. It would coordinate its own military and policing missions within Europe and offer training, intelligence, and potentially troops or

logistical support to out-of-area efforts. For example, modified Partnership for Peace exercises could be conducted in Central Asia and the Caucasus that train the policing and intelligence-gathering techniques needed to combat trafficking or to track insurgency movements. Furthermore, NATO would serve as the clearinghouse to make sure that efforts undertaken in the EU or OSCE do not work at cross-purposes. This sort of function is already carried out informally through diplomatic networks, but tasking NATO with the job gives one organization with a vested interest in success the responsibility for making sure it is done well.

The effectiveness of this coordination will rest on intelligence sharing. Before 9/11, NATO members were already providing relatively good intelligence estimates about terrorist threats to the United States. French intelligence experts provided an in-depth report on bin Laden's financial networks to the FBI, which unfortunately waited a month before translating it. French officials also provided a warning to the United States about a 33-year-old French Moroccan man, Habib Zacarias Moussaoui, who was on a special French immigration watch list of suspected Islamic extremists. Moussaoui was detained in mid-August 2001 and has since been the only person charged with a direct connection to the 11 September attacks.⁵² Moussaoui has since also been linked to the attempted "shoe bomber," Richard Reid. Likewise, Canadian and British intelligence officials had been providing intelligence information about terrorist threats to the United States before 9/11.

The future burden will be on the allies to more quickly process the analyses provided by US and European intelligence sources. Institutionally, the alliance needs to create mechanisms that assure such sharing will not be done in an ad hoc manner, in response to specific threats and crises, but as a part of the normal operating procedure of a network that faces transnational threats. The alliance currently lacks these arrangements that might lessen the chance that such attacks will occur again. According to NATO's Secretary General George Robertson, intelligence sharing within the alliance has intensified since the attack, but without improvements in processing information, the added data just increases the possibility that important pieces of intelligence will be lost in the mountains of information passing among countries.⁵³

Attention must also be paid to protecting sources and minimizing leaks. NATO has witnessed a series of embarrassing leaks over its history, and increased intelligence sharing threatens to make this worse. Such leaks do not just put the sources and methods of intelligence collection at risk, but alert suspected terrorist networks that they are under surveillance. The alliance needs to develop new ways to share information without jeopardizing the integrity of the information and investigations under way.

NATO should not hesitate to step outside its organization for this purpose. Lord Robertson was correct when he noted that "terrorists blur the line between criminal and combatant."⁵⁴ Most of the information that is pertinent to the current missions relates to organized criminal activity and illegal migration, and

Interpol can manage the response to this activity. Headquartered in Lyon, France, Interpol has the experience, the communications network, and the analytical depth to process large quantities of sensitive material. All of the NATO allies are already part of the Interpol system; the only difference would be that, rather than having a cacophony of competing intelligence reports gathering dust in national capitals, the intelligence would be filtered through Lyon. This would allow analysis to take a larger scope and not remain contingent on someone in Paris realizing that a piece of information might be useful to someone in London.

NATO's ability to work with the other dominant European institutions has been battle-tested and improved throughout the 1990s with the alliance crisis management efforts in the Balkans. This high level of coordination will need to be even further enhanced by expanding ties outside Europe.

One of the most important institutions that NATO will need to coordinate with is the OSCE. Mircea Geoana, the Romanian Foreign Minister and former holder of the OSCE's rotating chairmanship, announced that the 55 OSCE member states had adopted an action plan against terrorism at their meeting in Bucharest on 3-4 December 2001.⁵⁵ While this plan was little more than a gesture, it can have important symbolic meaning in enhancing solidarity in the American-led campaign. Speaking at the meeting, US Secretary of State Colin Powell called the document "a resolute expression of our collective will."⁵⁶

Reports are growing more insistent that in the war against terror, "Washington employs the rhetoric of political multilateralism, on the one hand, and the reality of military unilateralism, on the other."⁵⁷ If the operation in Afghanistan becomes associated with mere retaliation, or even worse, aggression, US goals become compromised and US interests become even more endangered. The Muslim countries in the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Caucasus are all members of the OSCE. Incorporating their support of this effort through their commitment to the action plan at the December 2001 meeting was an important step to gaining greater legitimacy.

Furthermore, encouraging the support of Muslim countries is an important component of creating a policy framework that engages the regions from which Islamic terrorist groups arise. Another way to do this is through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). This council was established in December 1991 to encourage cooperation and consultation with former communist countries. EAPC members meet regularly at various levels to discuss political and security issues, and their geographic and religious span makes them an important group to engage in ongoing efforts. According to Lord Robertson, NATO has "not yet exhausted the potential for cooperation with our partners against this menace. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council has much to offer in this respect. The EAPC might focus more specifically on issues that relate to combating terrorism. Effective border control, for example, is a problem particularly for some of our Central Asian Partners."⁵⁸ As Robertson notes, "If we could use the EAPC to address such issues more thoroughly, we would make life for terrorists far more difficult."⁵⁹

It has been said (by Russian President Vladimir Putin among others) that NATO is becoming more political than military in character.⁶⁰ The expanded Article 24 commitments certainly edge NATO in this direction. The alliance's embrace of non-NATO members through the EAPC and Partnership for Peace programs are even greater indications of this trend. Both the transnational nature of many of the current threats facing alliance members and the expanded scope of NATO's partnerships with former Soviet states validate NATO's adopting this new, expanded role in the war against terrorism.

Conclusion

Although the 9/11 attacks on the United States were horrific and unprecedented, a worst-case scenario could arise in which America's European allies remember 11 September as an once-in-a-lifetime event. Even only a few months after the attacks there was evidence that Europe was viewing them as "an aberration that is now behind us."⁶¹ Should the world be so fortunate that another large-scale unconventional attack does not occur, Washington will have to reinvigorate allied enthusiasm to make sure Brussels does not lose focus in the fight against terror. If no more attacks happen, and Europe loses its concentration, the American-led campaign could look increasingly like a global version of the decade-long enforcement of the no-fly-zones over Iraq, where all the allies dropped out except for Great Britain. For America's European allies to express outrage against terrorism but then forget the horror would send the wrong message to the world, and could be the source of the perpetually feared rift within the alliance.

A better course of action would be for the NATO allies to endorse a mission that retains transatlantic cohesion and that builds on the strengths of the alliance—its ability to work in conjunction with other organizations, its strong communications network, its reach into the Muslim world through the EAPC, and its ability to provide wide operating autonomy to coalition partners. To combat transnational terrorist networks effectively, NATO should more closely resemble a network itself. It has taken the initial steps in this direction following the end of the Cold War, and it should make further progress now and after the coming Prague summit if it is to retain a central role in the new security environment.

It has always been a central maxim of Brussels that the solidarity of the alliance is more important than the concerns of any single country. The threat of terrorism is a threat to the entire world, let alone NATO, and the victory over global terrorism is not inevitable, nor probable in the short-term. Thus, the alliance needs to maintain its solidarity in the face of this threat. It should find a way to do so, however, that does not undermine NATO's current missions or long-term health. This will require that the United States dedicate significant attention and resources to the alliance at precisely the time that its attention is being pulled elsewhere. For the continuing stability of Europe and lasting strength of the alliance, one hopes that the United States will make this necessary investment.

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