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512

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The 21st Century

By W. Bruce Weinrod



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European Security in the 21st Century

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With the end of the Cold War, we are entering a new era in European security. During this period of transition, we need to think carefully about the types of institutions and processes which can best assure the security of America and Western Europe, encourage the consolidation of democracy and economic freedom elsewhere in Europe, and discourage future conflicts of the type that has been ongoing in the former Yugoslavia.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been Europe's preeminent security institution for over four decades and the most successful alliance in history. However, given the dramatically changed European security climate, it is not unfair to ask, as have some NATO critics, whether NATO is still necessary.

My own view is that NATO can still be a useful instrument both for European security and for U.S. interests. The existence of NATO could be important in any of the following situations:

- ✓ A belligerently hostile authoritarian regime suddenly appears in Moscow or elsewhere;
- ✓ Free European nations are threatened or intimidated by such a regime, perhaps as a result becoming unstable, regressing politically and economically, or adopting international policies hostile to the West;
- ✓ An expansionist power in the Persian Gulf takes military action affecting energy supplies;
- ✓ Tensions between Greece and Turkey appear likely to result in imminent conflict;
- ✓ Instabilities or conflict in regions such as the Balkans begin to spread;
- ✓ Proliferation of missile technology signals an increasing threat of chemical, biological, or nuclear attack;
- ✓ Destabilizing tendencies emerge as European nations revert to the old European pattern of shifting alliances and power blocs while keeping military information plans and capabilities secret.

I suspect some on the left and right in America, who have a narrow reading of security threats, would argue that we need not be particularly concerned about any of these developments. For those who hold this view, the help that NATO could provide is irrelevant.

But for those of us who believe that some or all of these situations could raise real security problems, NATO as a coalition defense organization can provide significant advantages for the U.S. in pursuing its international objectives.

A vivid example is NATO's role in expelling Iraq from Kuwait. While NATO did not officially involve itself in the Gulf conflict, NATO's expertise, supplies, bases, and other infrastructure were made available to the allied coalition. These resources, as well as the

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equipment compatibility and common training of the NATO participants in the coalition, made carrying out the allied military effort simpler, quicker, less costly, and more effective than would have been the case if a completely *ad hoc* coalition response had to be developed after the invasion had occurred.

It is true that, as a result of changing security interests, as well as the situation in Bosnia, there are strains in the Alliance. Certainly, NATO must meet the test of serving American interests, and its relevance should come under scrutiny.

But jettisoning NATO at present would diminish both American and European security. NATO is an organization which provides significant military advantages, reinforces cooperation among national militaries, offers a framework for diffusing historical animosities, and provides a key building block for extending the West's democratic security culture eastward. At the same time, NATO must continue to adapt, and also allow others to take advantage of its capabilities even where NATO itself chooses not to be involved, such as with the Persian Gulf conflict or possible Western European Union missions.

A EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE IDENTITY

As the European Community has coalesced economically and politically, many in Europe have worked to develop a European defense capability so that Europe can address at least some security problems on its own. As a result, Europeans have begun efforts to give the Western European Union (WEU), which is a Europe-only security organization, capabilities to respond to perceived security threats.

As a practical matter, the only way the WEU can work militarily in the near future is if NATO's multinational military forces can be structured so as to allow detachment of a portion of these forces for WEU military action. This difficult challenge is being addressed by NATO and the WEU by means of a concept known as "Combined Joint Task Forces" (CJTF). While the objective is desirable, it is not yet clear whether military planners will be able to develop or maintain multinational forces which can be separated as required for WEU missions, and yet still retain their military effectiveness for major NATO operations.

The emergence of a European defense capability is an inevitable and positive development. It may eventually provide a way for a new U.S.-European security relationship to develop. But, at least for the present, it is important that the WEU develop militarily in ways which do not fundamentally undermine NATO's overall military cohesiveness and effectiveness or the involvement where appropriate of the U.S. in European security matters.

CLOSER TIES WITH THE EAST

The relationship between NATO and the newly emerging democracies of the East is crucial both for NATO's future and for European stability. NATO, from my perspective, is overdue in stating criteria for the admission of new members.

Reasonable conditions for membership include:

- ✓ Acceptable standards and practices with respect to democracy and minority rights;
- ✓ Compliance with NATO military requirements and standards in areas such as equipment interoperability, quality of military units and compatibility of such units with NATO forces, as well as the allocation of sufficient financial resources to NATO-related activities and participation as agreed in NATO military actions;

- ✓ Agreement to actively support other NATO priorities, such as in the area of non-proliferation;
- ✓ The acceptable resolution of territorial or ethnic disputes, and the existence of positive security relationships with other nations within the prospective member's region.

NATO has thus far proceeded slowly in considering these and other important membership-related questions. The sooner NATO addresses these issues, the sooner a public debate can begin in NATO countries concerning the admission of new members. Such a debate, as well as parliamentary review, is inevitable and necessary. This is especially true since full membership means that current NATO members would, in accordance with the NATO Treaty's Article Five, have to be prepared to come to the military defense of such new members under specified circumstances.

Full membership for those who meet NATO's requirements should be the objective. But this may take time because all NATO members must be supportive. Thus, consideration in the short run could also be given to establishing an "Associate Member" status. Such membership could encompass most NATO rights and duties with the key exception of Article Five of the NATO Treaty. It is worth noting, however, that while Article Five requires a NATO response to attack on a member's territory, there is nothing that would preclude NATO from voluntarily choosing to respond to a security threat to an Associate Member even without the authority of Article Five.

Separately, the Partnership for Peace (PFP) should be granted meaningful funding by NATO nations. The PFP is a NATO program which includes joint training and other military-related efforts, and is intended to bring the defense establishments of the former Warsaw Pact nations closer to the West. If handled properly, the PFP can be the gateway for new members to enter NATO. Last but not least, the EC in particular must lower trade barriers. This action would help increase Central European prosperity, which in turn would make NATO membership easier to accomplish.

A crucial and difficult question is how Russia should fit into the European security equation. The starting point is to accept the fact that Russian interests and those of the West are likely to diverge on key issues and in other instances are likely to be parallel at best.

Given this reality, European security policy toward Russia should be calibrated to Moscow's behavior. To the extent that Russia moves in a positive direction, the West should seek, as it did with Germany after World War II, to bring Russia into a web of processes and institutions which reinforce the positive aspects of its politics and of its internal political dynamics.

At the same time, Moscow's recent policies raise real concerns. The U.S. and the West have to do a better job of making clear to Russia what constitutes unacceptable behavior, and also to make clear that there will be real costs when such behavior occurs. We also have to be prepared for the possibility that Russia may take a fundamentally different course that is inimical to the interests of the West.

Russia should in any event not be permitted a veto over the admission of new members into NATO. Indeed, Moscow should be told that, assuming Russia is genuinely committed to democracy and a Western orientation, a NATO role in reinforcing democracy and stability in Central Europe is actually in its own interest and clearly poses no security threat to a peaceful Russia.

At the end of the day, the fundamental key to Russia's relationship to the West is Russia itself. The West will not isolate Russia but Russia can isolate itself. Ultimately, Russia will have to decide whether it wishes to be part of the West and, if so, to act accordingly.

SECURITY STRUCTURES FOR THE NEW EUROPE

The broadest European security question concerns the overall contours of a European security structure and the roles to be played by various multilateral institutions. Looked at from the viewpoint of American interests, I believe that a reasonable outcome would be as follows:

NATO should assume the changed role I described earlier, which means its functions should include: 1) serving as a counterweight to the possible emergence of a hostile power seeking regional hegemony; 2) being ready to support short-notice response to major military threats in adjacent regions such as the Persian Gulf; 3) offering an overarching framework for the establishment of a common European democratic security culture, as well as a secure environment for a democratic consolidation in the East; 4) providing as needed military resources for *ad hoc* coalitions; and 5) assuring a way for the U.S. to remain engaged as appropriate in European security.

The WEU — in political linkage with the European Union (EU) — should be a vehicle for security-related actions by the European democracies in circumstances where NATO chooses not to become involved.

The CSCE can play a useful role in highlighting norms of international behavior and internal political standards. The CSCE can also seek to prevent, diffuse, or resolve conflicts through such mechanisms as the deployment of observers or mediators and through efforts to address ethnic minority rights issues and cross-border ethnic tensions in Europe. What the CSCE should not become, however, is an all-European security structure, and it most certainly should not be given its own independent military authority or capability; nor should NATO accept micromanagement of its military actions by the CSCE.

Consideration should be given to enhancing the role and visibility of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council as the passageway for potential new NATO members, as an institutional framework for dealing with Russia on security matters, and as a vehicle for discussion of security concerns of non-NATO member nations located near Russia. It could also serve as a mechanism for integrating non-NATO nations into appropriate NATO military actions. The NACC, which includes all former Warsaw Pact nations, is an organization created by NATO after the end of the Cold War in order to provide a framework for NATO's overall political-military relationship with these countries.

The U.N. role in European security should be very modest; under limited circumstances, it can provide international legitimization for response to a security problem. At the same time, it should be made clear that NATO has the right where necessary to undertake military actions even without U.N. approval. Whenever the U.N. is involved, it should delegate military decisions to NATO or the WEU, since, as has been demonstrated in the Bosnian situation, the U.N. is not capable of focused military decision-making—nor, in my view, should it be given such a capability. Furthermore, NATO should under no circumstances agree to U.N. micromanagement of military decisions or their implementation.

THE U.S. AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

As with Northeast Asia and the Persian Gulf region, developments in European security can directly affect vital U.S. interests. The U.S. properly expends far fewer resources in dealing with European security than it did during the Cold War, and it can be somewhat less involved, but America remains an important element in the European security equation.

The U.S. must not make the mistake of ignoring European security until a direct and immediate threat to U.S. interests occurs. Thus, the U.S. should remain actively engaged, offering strong and consistent leadership in helping to shape the new security structures that will emerge at the end of the current transition era. By doing so, the U.S. will make it more likely that threats to U.S. security will not emerge out of the Europe of the 21st century, and that Europe will be both peaceful and free.

