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## Defense Transformation and the New Allies

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I have chosen to focus today on defense transformation and unconventional warfare—particularly as this relates to our cooperation with the new NATO member states in Eastern and Central Europe.

In 1999, the National Defense University published a very cleverly titled book, *Mind the Gap*, which is what you hear from the conductor every time you step off a train on the London tube. Yet it is also a caution about the growing concern of an emerging technological gap between the United States and its NATO allies.

When the book was published, we were celebrating the end of the first decade without a Cold War. We were lamenting the fact that the instruments we had used to ensure technical congruency within NATO—common standards, common equipment and munitions, and joint exercises—were proving woefully inadequate to meet the challenge of an emerging defense transformation within the United States military, a plethora of new and different kinds of military missions (some of them out of theater), and increasingly miserly European defense budgets and shrinking capabilities.

Thus, the title *Mind the Gap*—putting a European label on the strategic challenge of operating with allies who have very disparate capabilities—was extremely appropriate. In the last five years the strategic challenge has only grown. The expansion of NATO has brought the United States new and very important allies, but it has also exacerbated the difficulties of managing forces with very different tech-

### Talking Points

- Addressing the technological gap between the United States and its new and necessary allies will be one of the most important strategic challenges we face in the years ahead.
- The United States will have to “cherry pick” how and where it will engage with NATO allies to best close the technology gap. We must determine where we share common interests and where U.S. engagement and assistance can provide improved military capabilities that serve common interests.
- Additionally, East European allies need to sustain their commitment to building and maintaining military institutions that can adapt to transformation technologies.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:  
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nologies. This is particularly true because many of our new NATO allies are even less engaged in the race for defense transformation than our traditional European partners.

The pace of American defense transformation is unlikely to change: Indeed, it will likely accelerate in the years ahead. At the same time, I would argue that our new East European allies will become even more important to the United States—both in ensuring peace and stability in Europe and in addressing unconventional challenges in the global war on terrorism, as well as other military missions that may see U.S. and European forces standing side by side around the world.

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### **The Challenge**

In April 2004, NATO received an infusion of new blood. At this time in the half-century of the old alliance's lifespan, this is exactly what NATO needs. The inclusion of seven new members, most from the old Warsaw Pact and some formerly part of the Soviet Union, was a huge boost to morale. If anyone remembers why NATO still has a purpose after the end of the Cold War, it is the Bulgarians, the Romanians, the Estonians, the Lithuanians, the Latvians, the Slovaks, and the Slovenians.

"As witness to some of the great crimes of the last century, our new members bring moral clarity to the purpose of our alliance," said President George W. Bush at the White House ceremony welcoming representatives of these seven nations along with NATO's new Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. "They understand our cause in Afghanistan and in Iraq . . . because tyranny for them is still a fresh memory. And so now as members of NATO they are stepping forward to secure the lives and freedoms of others." Next to seek NATO membership will be Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia.

New member nations will help NATO find its vision in a world faced with so many emerging challenges. Unfortunately, among our "old" allies

in Western Europe, fighting and squabbling has broken out about Iraq between Europeans and Americans and between Europeans and Europeans. These disagreements have taken their toll during the past year and have gravely undermined international relationships.

Yet it is worth remembering that strains and fractures in the fabric of the NATO alliance predated Iraq, Afghanistan, and the 9/11 attacks. Almost as soon as the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and the former Warsaw Pact members started knocking on NATO's door, there were those who predicted the end of NATO. Without an opposing military alliance in Europe and without the Cold War, what purpose could NATO possibly serve? This was their argument.

Today, the imminent threat to the West is not Russia, but the modern threats of radical fundamentalism, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. NATO has recently undertaken its first out-of-area mission in Afghanistan and would have taken control in Iraq, had it not been for entrenched French opposition.

In that fight, the eastward and southward-facing bases in the new NATO countries will be important logistical assets. So will the determination of the new members to be valuable partners in the alliance that they have worked so hard to join.

### **The Worth of NATO's New Allies: Cooperation in Iraq and Afghanistan**

NATO's new allies have contributed a significant amount to the global war on terrorism, and their support and participation is extremely valuable. For instance:

- In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Lithuanian authorities have taken several concrete steps in supporting the U.S.-led forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Lithuania immediately expressed its support for the statements of the North Atlantic Council and the decision to apply Article 5 of the Washington Treaty in regard to the terrorist attacks against the United States. In December 2001, Lithuania also implemented the National Program Against Terrorism and allocated an additional 7 million Litas (\$2 million) in the

2002 state budget for the fight against terrorism. Lithuania has also provided humanitarian support in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

- Slovenia has shown support for the global war on terrorism through its active participation in pertinent international counterterrorism conventions, protocols, and policies of the U.N., NATO, the European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the Council of Europe. Slovenia also actively partakes in the activities designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Slovakia has provided the United States and all coalition partners with blanket overflight and basing rights. Slovakia also deployed an engineering unit into Afghanistan in September 2002.
- Bulgaria, NATO's newest coalition member, has been lauded by the United States for its continued participation in the global war on terrorism, despite the instability in that country. The Bulgarian government has 470 soldiers stationed in Iraq and has sent 66 troops to Afghanistan.
- As one of the four leading countries in the "Coalition of the Willing," Poland has been present from the very beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom's major combat operations—efforts that successfully toppled one of the most brutal tyrants the world has known during the past 50 years. To this day, 2,600 Polish troops are bravely serving on the front line as Poland leads multi-national stabilization and reconstruction efforts in southern Iraq.
- Hungary has equipped three Afghan National Army battalions with armaments and supplies (medical, clothing, etc.). Hungary has also granted \$1 million in aid to Afghanistan. Additionally, Hungary has provided the United States with bases to train Iraqi opposition forces.
- The Czech Republic installed a nuclear/biological/chemical defense unit in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and a field hospital in support of the International Security Assistance Force. The Czechs are involved in train-

ing Iraqi diplomats in Prague and are training Iraqi police in Jordan.

### What We Have Learned

All this experience has taught us a lot about our new allies. What have we learned? They have a lot of useful expertise in areas such as urban operations, training security forces, and anti-terrorism. On the other hand, they, like us, have had to learn as they fight—developing new capabilities to conduct post-conflict operations and counter-insurgency warfare, simultaneously, using forces largely designed for conventional combat on European battlefields.

What has been lacking from the outset are important enablers, such as widely proliferated, reliable, and integrated "friend or foe" identification systems to help limit fratricide and minimize civilian casualties with a large capacity to transfer information back and forth—not just traditional combat data, but all kinds of information, from lists of critical cultural sites to rosters of wanted criminals. Also lacking were the means to adapt all the sensors and intelligence systems available for conventional war to the special needs of operations in an urban environment with an active terrorist insurgency—higher fidelity information and situational knowledge that needed to be distributed to the lowest levels. Additionally missing were active and passive protection systems to deal with a wide range of low-tech or even no-tech threats, as well as more useful non-lethal weapons. Perhaps the biggest shortfall was the capacity to rapidly and effectively train and equip indigenous security forces.

The bottom line is that while the new allies have done a lot, with the right technologies they could have done much, much more.

### The Wrong Answer

Although NATO's new allies have already demonstrated their value, ensuring that they continue to be relevant will, in part, require that they have the technical capabilities to meet new missions in new places. There are both good and bad ways to achieve this end.

One route that is clearly the wrong answer is for Europe to attempt to pool all its resources and create a common European defense force. A common

European defense force will not, in itself, be a security risk for the United States. Nonetheless, the mere idea of a EU military does make American officials uneasy. U.S. NATO Ambassador Nick Burns called plans for an EU military headquarter “the most serious threat to the future of NATO.”

While it does appear that the EU will continue its effort to create an independent military structure, there are already clear signs that this is little more than a paper tiger. It will not generate significant new capabilities. It will not free up resources to pursue transformational technologies and it will not help new NATO members to quickly close the technology gap.

### The Solution

The United States will have to “cherry pick” how and where it will engage with NATO allies to best close the technology gap. We must determine where we share common interests and where U.S. engagement and assistance can provide improved military capabilities that serve common interests. For instance:

- Extending missile defense capabilities to new European allies is clearly one area where cooperation might be profitable.
- Joint work on anti-terrorism technologies and the means to conduct urban operations are other important areas.
- Enhancing military operations to conduct post-conflict activities—such as those undertaken by our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan—should be another important priority.
- Developing joint technologies that will prevent fratricide is essential.
- Improving capabilities to support the employment of the Proliferation Security Initiative and the means to prevent the spread of—as well as the ability to respond to—weapons of mass destruction should also be high on the list.

- Sharing information technologies—the lifeline that will enable future commanders to communicate with one another, share information, and coordinate the employment of disparate sensors and systems—must also take high precedence.
- Fielding effective non-lethal weapons that could be used for a variety of operational tasks, from hostage rescue to crowd control, is another important task.

Finally, closing the gap has to be a shared responsibility. It cannot be a case of the United States simply giving technology to new allies. First, there must be joint consultation about determining the most important areas of common interest. This consultation should be bilateral, but with NATO’s needs, capabilities, and missions kept firmly in mind and with NATO allies and Russia kept in the communications loop.

Second, East European allies need to sustain their commitment to building and maintaining military institutions that can adapt to transformation technologies. This includes transparency, democratic and civilian control, adequate funding for forces, education for leaders and soldiers, and domestic support for meeting their responsibilities as partners in ensuring the security and interests of the NATO nations. Additionally, when possible, we should rely on free-market solutions to allow countries to obtain the right technologies at the right price. Free markets are the best way to ensure that we close the gap between the supply and demand for defense transformation technologies.

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