THE FUTURE OF NATO

NATO has once again a vital role to play in the new era we are in, as the security organisation of choice. Therefore, it must maintain its effectiveness across the full spectrum of its missions ranging from collective defence to crisis management. The fight agains terrorism has assumed a totally new dimension in the aftermath of September 11th. NATO should adapt its framework to effectively counter an assymmetric threat as such. Developping NATO capabilities to deal with weapons of mass destruction is also of utmost importance. Even now, NATO is harvesting the fruits of more than 50 years of joint planning, training and operations. Moreover, enlargement process presents a historic opportunity for the Alliance to enhance its contribution to the Euro-Atlantic security, as does the new context of NATO-Russia relationship

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The future of NATO and whether it is still relevant in today's changing world appears to be a very popular question within the community of political scientists and particularly among the transatlantic skeptics. However, this has not been the first time that the existence of NATO has been subject to this kind of questioning, nor will it be the last. Indeed, even at the height of the Cold War, there were those who questioned whether or not NATO was the right instrument to deal with totalitarianism in the countries behind the Iron Curtain and with the threat they posed to the free world. However, NATO proved its rectitude over time and survived as the single most effective mechanism in bringing to an end decades of Cold War by providing a strong collective defense and deterrence, and subsequently unprecedented opportunities for a free and whole Europe to enjoy a period of peace.

Then it happened again, during 1990s; this time it was argued that NATO has exhausted its utility and that in the post-Cold War environment, where there is a decreasing risk of an all-out war, the heavy military machinery or the political convenience of the Alliance was no longer needed. This argument too proved to be wrong for two main reasons. First, crises emanating from the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, both in Bosnia and Kosovo, starkly demonstrated that Europe is not yet and will not be for a long time free from instability, and that a strong security organization is still needed to deal with conflicts of wide-ranging consequences, affecting all parts of the Euro-Atlantic area. Secondly, NATO did evolve and change following the end of Cold War, refusing to announce its much-expected demise and adapting its roles and missions to take deal with the urgent problems of instability and conflict in Europe. Not only that, but NATO has acted decisively and successfully on both occasions through its unique integrated military structure, helping to enforce a peace agreement in Bosnia, going to war to halt and reverse ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and subsequently helping to provide security en-route to a viable environment which would ensure lasting stability.

Against this backdrop, it is only natural to see a resurfacing of the same type of questions and arguments about NATO's purpose in the aftermath of September 11, a devastating moment in human history, when the whole planet seemed to shudder and shift on its axis, and after which an overwhelming sense that the world is now forever changed seemed to dominate. Although such a strong depiction of what happened and its implied consequences can only be vindicated in time, it is an undeniable fact that NATO now finds itself in a perceptibly different security environment, in which all its actors struggle to grasp the magnitude and requirements of change, as well as to define their own roles and responsibilities therein.

In this regard, NATO has, once again, a vital role to play in this new era, as the security organization of choice; as the collective provider of forces capable of meeting the challenges of a fast-changing strategic setting and as the principal conduit for the transatlantic relationship. Therefore, it must maintain its effectiveness across the full spectrum of its missions, ranging from collective defense to crisis management. This, however, requires a continued adaptation on the part of NATO, as is the case for everybody in the security business since September 11. Accordingly, the war against terrorism, enhancement of capabilities, enlargement, relations with Russia and refocusing

the Partnership's activities will be the main parameters of this adaptation process, and will consequently by defining NATO's future. In this regard, the Prague Summit was in a very real sense "the ribbon-cutting ceremony" for the new, transformed Alliance along these lines.

However, before dwelling upon these matters in detail, I would like to stress that the elements that should continue are equally, if not more, important than the elements that should and do change. In that regard, one cannot overemphasize the continued need for a credible and deterrent collective defense. Particularly in light of the September 11 syndrome, whereby the homeland defense gained a new and qualitatively more demanding character, the Alliance should continue to be at the heart of our defense efforts, so that we can rely on a collective and effective response whenever needed.

Likewise, our commitments in the Balkans should continue unabated. Despite considerable progress achieved at all fronts, we are still a long way from reaching a lasting stability. The countries of the region, including Macedonia, still need our active and constructive involvement, particularly in terms of providing a secure environment for reconciliation and development to take root deeply. Therefore, NATO has to sustain its visible and effective profile in the region not only to provide security, but to ensure a rapid and smooth transition from dependency to self-sufficiency in that respect.

Turning back to novelties rather than the constants, the fight against terrorism has inescapably assumed a totally new dimension in the aftermath of September 11, and become one of the main dimensions of our security environment. Accordingly, while reflecting on NATO's future, one is forced to take this vitally important dynamic into consideration.

In fact, it all starts at the national level, and it is first the national governments themselves who must act promptly and effectively to mount their own defenses: a battle which requires not just military means, but also political, economic, financial, legal and social measures. However, national solutions have never been enough on their own, and it is far better to wage this combat within an institutional and international context. Overcoming this new challenge will require the broadest possible coalition and the deepest possible cooperation.

In this context, we must harbor no delusions regarding this scourge on our peace, thinking that it will, with the passage of time, gradually fade away from our political radar screens. Therefore, NATO must either play a key role in the long term fight against terrorism or risk fading away itself as a guarantor of transatlantic security and stability. We have to understand that we are probably faced with the most dangerous, unpredictable and vicious menace that the human race has ever seen. Hence, in the new "War on Terror", the international community in general and the Alliance members in particular should be prepared to show the same determination and solidarity they demonstrated at the height of the Cold War.

Then, the question is whether NATO has so far been or would be able to rise to the challenge? In fact, our response to September 11 demonstrated that this Alliance is already capable of dealing with uncertainty and uncharted territory. Indeed, by making the historic Article 5 decision on 12 September and in its aftermath, the Alliance has once again proven itself a flexible instrument adapting even as the challenges it faces change dramatically. Furthermore,given the fact that this campaign will not be just military, but one that integrates all elements of power, the politico-military character of NATO confers upon itself an important comparative advantage. However, this does not ensure success. We have to build upon the solid basis and renewed determination within the Alliance in order to establish a sound and concrete security framework, relying not only on deterrence and defense but also active prevention.

First and foremost, NATO should continue to review and adapt, as is the case, its conceptual and operational framework, in order to be able to effectively counter an asymmetric threat. In that respect, the comprehensive package of measures approved in Prague to strengthen our ability to meet the full range of challenges, including the threat posed by terrorism and by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, constitute an important step in the right direction. Particularly, the concept of military defense against terrorism, which we have endorsed during the Prague Summit, provides for an unambiguous indication of our determination to protect our populations, territory and forces from any terrorist attack. In so doing, we reconfirmed and clarified our political will to combat this scourge in all its forms and manifestations for as long as necessary and renewed our determination to deter, disrupt, defend and protect against any attack on us even when it strikes in its most sinister form. Now looking at the future, we should remain united in our efforts to carry through on this commitment, so that we will not find ourselves in a position whereby we have to look for more “flexible coalitions” in order to ensure our own collective security. In effect, the Allies should continue to be able to depend on the Alliance and their fellow Allies, who should then be fully ready for the consequences of their solidarity, including countering retaliatory attacks from terrorists.

However, political determination in itself cannot be enough to defeat terrorism and/or the evolving threats of modern era. In order to meet such a substantial new commitment, NATO will need substantial new capabilities. In fact, many Allies have already made great strides since the end of Cold War in developing forces, which can be used effectively in the changed strategic setting. That progress has not been fast enough, and it is a long way from being complete, but the Alliance has established a direction—towards modern, flexible, deployable, sustainable and interoperable forces—which is irreversible for the foreseeable future. September 11 only awakened us to the need to work faster and harder to acquire these capabilities, with a particular emphasis on those related to counter-terrorism.

And on that front too, major transformations are underway. The Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) has achieved much, but has not been the success we had hoped for when it was launched in 1999. Therefore, the Allies agreed on the need for a new, more focused effort to develop essential Allied capacities, and they adopted a

methodical, effective roadmap to ensure that this effort delivers. Thus, in Prague, we launched the new Prague Capabilities Commitment initiative, which is not only relevant to the fight against terrorism, but requires ownership at the most senior levels in capitals, clear objectives, time-frames and completion criteria, as well as a strong multi-national dimension.

In this regard, it is true that we will concentrate on large transport aircraft, precision-guided munitions and secure communications, but we will also work on options like creating more developed intelligence assets and give due consideration to the formation of dedicated operational units that can swiftly respond to those threats whenever and wherever they arise, the NATO Response Force (NRF) being an important case in point. Here, I should also like to point out that the NRF is expected to be a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities.

Furthermore, developing NATO capabilities to deal with weapons of mass destruction is also of utmost importance. Indeed, on September 11, we learned what terrorists can do with commercial aircraft, in a way that seemed remote and hypothetical before. However, we cannot afford to wait until we have a visceral understanding of what terrorists can do with weapons of mass destruction, before we act to prevent it. On this point, it is again reassuring to see that NATO has already started to translate these needs into action, as evidenced by the concrete initiatives that are underway to ensure a flexible and agile Alliance able to act rapidly. The measures under discussion envisage collective capabilities, such as mobile detection teams, mobile expert response teams and vaccine stockpiles, just to mention a few.

Finally, another measure taken to beef up NATO's capabilities is the ongoing reviews of NATO's force and command structures. While implementation of the new force structure has been underway for some time, the Allies have also agreed to initiate a comprehensive review of the command structure in order to provide for modern command and control of our forces, coherent with its new structure and capabilities. In this regard, Turkey fully supports the ongoing efforts, as outlined in President Bush's new national security strategy, "to streamline and increase the flexibility of command structures in order to meet new operational demands and the associated requirements of training, integrating and experimenting with new force configurations". In our view, the implications of the changing strategic circumstances and of the associated risks and potential threats for NATO's ability to fulfill the full range of its missions must be fully taken into account in the course of this work. Furthermore, the future command structure should, inter alia, ensure the cohesion of the Alliance; maintain a strong transatlantic link; reinforce multi-nationality; ensure the Alliance's military credibility; respond to the full range of threats; and maintain an early warning capability via monitoring potential areas of instability.

I believe these bold decisions and comprehensive initiatives constitute a clear response to those who argued that NATO has either been sidelined or remained ineffective in the fight against terrorism. These concrete examples demonstrate that NATO gets the big picture and moves forward with a sense of urgency to retool itself in

order to tackle new threats. That is crucial not only to survive future crises, but also to duly respond to the widening gap of capabilities between the US and its European Allies, which, if unchecked, may threaten the transatlantic solidarity and/or risk emergence of a new American unilateralism.

Nonetheless, even now, as we wage this war on terrorism, we are already harvesting the fruits of more than 50 years of joint planning, training and operations within the NATO framework. Today, NATO as an Alliance, and its members and Partners individually, are playing important roles in the war on terror. A prime example is in Afghanistan, where NATO members and partners are contributing thousands of troops to Operation Enduring Freedom and to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, which is currently led by Turkey. Both represent daunting, but rewarding challenges, where we could not possibly have achieved what we have so far, had it not been years of disciplined and dedicated training and collaboration in NATO with a view to achieving interoperability.

I will turn now to another important aspect of NATO's future, the enlargement process, which presents a historic opportunity for the Alliance to enhance its contribution to the Euro-Atlantic security. Indeed, enlargement gets to the heart of what NATO is about—spreading the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law; widening stability; cooperation rather than confrontation. NATO is a force of good, and enlargement sends a signal to the wider world that the Cold War is no more, and democratic way is the better way.

Therefore, we have always believed that enlargement is a responsibility, not an option, for NATO to be responsive to its larger mission, as well as to the needs and aspirations of these countries, all of which are already full partners. In other words, a sound enlargement process is believed to serve much wider interests than enlarging the Alliance, it has a view to ensuring a coherent perspective on Euro-Atlantic security. Furthermore, the tragic events of Septembe 11 have also clearly vindicated the logic behind the enlargement process, which demonstrates that security is indeed indivisible and that the international community needs to form the widest possible coalition around the same values and ideals in combating the modern scourges of this era, such as terrorism.

It was with this conviction that we greatly welcomed the decision in Prague to invite Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to begin accession talks to join our Alliance. As has been stressed in the Prague Summit Declaration, the accession of these new members will strengthen security for all in the Euro-Atlantic area, and help achieve our common goal of a Europe whole and free, united in peace and by common values.

However, the enlargement process presents an important challenge for NATO as well, not only because of the stakes involved, but also for the practical implications it entails for Alliance structures and working methods. One of the main reasons for the success of our organization is the operational/functional effectiveness displayed by the

Alliance throughout difficult times and its ability to adapt to evolving politico-security situation. Now, particularly at a time when NATO is facing new and more demanding challenges and subsequently taking up new responsibilities, this becomes ever more crucial. Therefore, we are carefully studying the impact of the enlargement from a functional as well as financial point of view, so as to have the opportunity to reflect on and consequently make the necessary decisions on all the relevant issues before we actually enlarge. In this regard, provision of the necessary resources appears to be particularly imperative for a successful enlargement and thus all Allies should be ready to assume a fair share of the related cost.

It is also essential that we stand firmly by our commitment to keeping NATO's door open for all those democratic nations, who are willing and able to fulfill the responsibilities of Alliance membership. In this respect, both Albania and Macedonia, which were not able to receive an invitation in Prague have already taken impressive strides despite the difficulties of the transition period they are undergoing, and thus we are committed to render all support for them, and Croatia, to continue to press forward along this path and achieve the objective of NATO membership as soon as possible.

Then again, I should also like to stress that we have never seen enlargement as an end in itself, but only as a means, and that it is not merely a selection exercise, but a constant integration and development process towards the achievement of our common objectives. Therefore, we also expect the newly invited countries to continue to advance in this direction not only up to accession but also in the years ahead.

In a wider perspective, on the other hand, continued engagement with all our Partners, whether they aspire to NATO membership or not, is another element of NATO's future, which requires continued enhancement and adaptation of the Alliance's political and military Partnerships with countries across Europe and into Central Asia.

This acquires even greater significance given the fact that, after the second round of enlargement, the membership profile of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) will change to a large extent, whereby we will probably have more Allies than Partners for the first time. Therefore, in order to preserve and further develop the dynamism and momentum of the partnership relations, we need to bring further substance, breadth and depth to the Partnership. In doing so, the basic principles of the Partnership, such as transparency, self-differentiation and flexibility should continue to be the guiding tenets of this new layout. We also believe that "issue-oriented" approaches may well serve the different expectations of the partners as well as the interests of the Alliance. However, any such approach should be open ended in order to avoid creating new dividing lines.

Within this Partnership scheme, Caucasus and Central Asian countries should be given a particular emphasis. These regions are still going through political and economic transitions of historic dimensions, and thus they hold a significant potential for instability, which would certainly not be confined to the areas of origin, given manifold channels of spillover. As geography no longer acts as our shield—something which was in fact never true for Turkey anyway—we have to build sound mechanisms of cooperation that extend

to these regions, in order to lead them in the right direction and to minimize the effects of the inescapable convulsions of change.

Much of what is said of the need to broaden and deepen cooperation with Caucasus and Central Asia is true for Mediterranean Dialogue countries as well. The main differences are that these countries are even more prone to instability and, at the same time, more alien to cooperation with NATO. Therefore, we have to be equally careful and creative in crafting a closer and forward-leaning relationship, with well-defined objectives to provide a real added value.

Those mechanisms, if well nurtured and supported, can make a vital contribution to a new quality of security within and beyond Europe. An enlarged NATO, with wider and deeper Partnership relations extending from Algeria to Uzbekistan, from Egypt to Georgia means a stronger NATO and better prospects for a lasting Euro-Atlantic stability.

That brings me to another important aspect of the debate on NATO's future, which goes hand in hand with Partnership portfolio, which is the continuing redefinition of NATO's relationship with Russia. In this regard, NATO as an Alliance has a crucial role to play in integrating Russia into the framework of European security, and the chances for that have increased considerably in the aftermath of September 11, when an entirely new context for NATO-Russia relations has been created.

Indeed, we are now entering new territory, and the NATO-Russia Council that was founded in May is a tangible expression of this fundamental fact. Our purpose is to build common security with Russia. It is not an easy task, but if NATO can bind Russia closely to the Alliance and to what it stands for, this will be a strategic contribution to Euro-Atlantic security. Therefore, we should not miss the present window of opportunity and must build on the momentum gained in the wake of September 11, not only to merely enhance existing NATO-Russia cooperation in rhetoric, but to constructively and effectively address our common concerns. The challenge now is to face the problems of history, and to demonstrate to the wider world that this really is a step towards fundamental change in our strategic relationship with Russia.

However, it is also essential that NATO retain its independent ability to decide and act upon important security issues, when necessary. Also, the enhancement of NATO-Russia relations should not be to the detriment of our cooperation with other Partners. Furthermore, we should also harbor no delusions as to the difficulties inherent in this process. Much will depend on the sustainability of the present Russian policies, as well as the degree of cooperation they will be willing to make at various levels. Nevertheless, the path we have embarked upon with Russia is in itself a great achievement in terms of breaking the conceptual limitations of the past, and this new relationship certainly holds much promise for a stronger and undivided European security.

Last but certainly not least, NATO-EU relations also appear high on our transformation agenda. In this regard, we warmly welcome the strategic partnership established between the two organizations in crisis management, founded on our shared values, the indivisibility of our security and our determination to tackle the challenges of the new Century. While NATO remains the foundation of the collective defense of its members, we firmly believe that continued and strengthened cooperation between NATO and the EU will be one of the most strategic assets of the Euro-Atlantic security. Indeed, in today's strategic environment, military, political and economic challenges have become too intertwined to be met by a single institution, and the EU certainly has an enormous political and economic potential to contribute within the framework of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), either in assistance to NATO and other organizations, or through EU-led operations within the scope of the Petersberg tasks, for which NATO pledges its support in accordance with the relevant Washington Summit decisions, when the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily.

Therefore and in light of the joint NATO-EU declaration on ESDP, the vision we have for the future of NATO-EU cooperation is an effective and mutually reinforcing relationship, based on partnership, consultation, dialogue, cooperation, transparency and due respect for the interests of their member states. Along the same lines, ensuring the participation of non-EU European Allies in ESDP as stipulated in the Nice implementation text, and securing a coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the capability requirements are of utmost importance.

In short, the two organizations should be able to, and hopefully are set to, develop and act upon a common strategic framework, through which the gaps of not only capabilities, but also of threat assessment and policies existing among Europeans, as well as between the two sides of the Atlantic shall be overcome, and thus the international community's ability to deal effectively with the threats it faces will be expanded.

The opportunities presented by such a vision gain even further significance in light of the perceived rift emerging in the transatlantic relationship. We believe that much of it is overstated, but considering that international politics is mostly a policy of perceptions, we cannot turn a blind eye to this phenomenon and therefore have to address these concerns with great care and determination. In fact, there have always been problems and differences of views between the two sides of the Atlantic, and they have always been overcome thanks to the unbearable weight of shared values, ideals and objectives. However, more important than that, we have always had the appropriate forum to discuss our differences, consult with one another on the best way forward and finally reach a consensus. Until today, the only forum for such negotiation was no other than that of the Alliance. Today, this crucial and central role of the Alliance should not be impeded, but on the contrary must be reinforced in order to prevail over our practical differences. In this regard, we believe that a sound and healthy NATO-EU relationship will greatly contribute to reaching such common policies and actions based on shared values, ideals and objectives.

In conclusion, these are the essential elements of a transformed NATO that continues to live up to the high purposes of its founding fathers. Indeed, if we had not had NATO , we would be in the process of inventing or reinventing it today. Therefore, the future holds great prospects for our Alliance, with a clear and sound roadmap currently being outlined.

The Prague Summit was a crucial moment when we renewed this great undertaking and presented to our peoples a promise for their future safety and security. Now is the time to unity with each other around this great promise and put it into action with determination and dedication. This is indeed a strategic endeavor that holds great potential for the future and thus we are looking forward to being an active participant in this honorable journey.

Filename: TPQ-2002-4-Uzumcu.doc
Directory: C:_Turkuaz Marketing\clients__TPQ\archive\TPQ 2002 - Vol 1\2002 Vol. 1 N.4
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Eser Turan\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: FUTURE OF NATO
Subject:
Author: SAYGILI
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 12/17/2002 10:31:00 AM
Change Number: 46
Last Saved On: 11/7/2007 12:56:00 PM
Last Saved By: Eser Turan
Total Editing Time: 60 Minutes
Last Printed On: 11/7/2007 1:20:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 10
Number of Words: 4,534 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 23,989 (approx.)