
Transforming the NATO Alliance to Meet New Security Needs

By

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Over the last week—in Italy, Britain, and France—President Clinton made clear once again that America's commitment to Europe is resolute. Before the French National Assembly on Tuesday [7 June 94] President Clinton set forth our shared strategic challenge in building a stronger and more integrated Europe based on security cooperation, market economies, and democratic institutions.

The President will reaffirm his vision of a broader Europe when he travels to Italy, Germany, and Poland next month [July 1994]. As the most hopeful chapter in European history is being written, the United States will continue to stand with the peoples of an undivided, democratic continent.

This past week, President Clinton reiterated the pledge he made at the Brussels summit to maintain roughly 100,000 American troops in Europe. He reaffirmed that our political engagement will continue to be reinforced by our military deployment. Our presence remains necessary to safeguard America's vital interests as well as Europe's.

The NATO Alliance will remain the core of American engagement in Europe and the heart of European security. Since the Athens ministerial [summit meeting] last June [1993], we have renewed our efforts to reinforce the trans-Atlantic bond that NATO embodies. As we move ahead with the landmark decisions taken at the summit, we are transforming the alliance to meet the security needs of the post-Cold War world.

The threat now is not invasion from the East but instability in the East. In Central Europe, new market democracies are consolidating freedom and showing promising signs of economic growth. But democracy remains vulnerable in many countries that have emerged from the Soviet empire. Demagogues have played on ethnic divisions and economic dislocation to fuel aggression. Left unchecked, such tensions will frustrate the region's progress toward reform and ultimately threaten wider European security.

As President Clinton said last January [1994] in Brussels: "This period may decide whether the states of the former Soviet bloc are woven into the fabric of trans-Atlantic prosperity and security, or are simply left hanging in isolation." We must actively embrace the opportunity to help new democracies emerge as stable partners in security and trade.

At the Brussels summit, the alliance set two central, mutually reinforcing goals. The first was to design more flexible command structures and to address new security threats, such as weapons proliferation. The second and historic goal was to deepen our ties with the emerging democracies to the East. We invited them to participate in a broad range of political and military

activities with alliance members, thereby paving the way for eventual expansion of the alliance. We have made progress toward both these goals. Indeed, 1994 has been a year of immense significance for the alliance.

To achieve the first goal of increasing effectiveness, NATO has taken important decisions to support the efforts of allies to develop a more capable European Security and Defense Identity. That identity should maintain and build popular support in Europe for meeting European commitments and responsibilities and strengthen our collective capacity to respond to future security needs. It should also reinforce the trans-Atlantic relationship. We continue to look to our allies for a more balanced sharing of responsibilities.

Another important summit decision to achieve the first goal was to create Combined Joint Task Forces [CJTF]. We are making a promising start as we work to make this innovative concept a reality. Our objective remains to renew the alliance and to strengthen the Western European Union [WEU]. We hope efforts in NATO and the WEU will enable us to take concrete decisions about CJTF at the December [1994] ministerial.

As part of advancing the same goal of improving alliance effectiveness, we are taking significant steps to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them. NATO must address this threat, both to complement other international efforts and to meet our solemn commitment to protect the security of alliance members.

I am pleased by the early work of the senior political-military and defense groups formed as a result of this initiative. We will affirm that progress today by approving an alliance policy framework on non-proliferation. This framework lays the political foundation for improving allied capabilities to protect against the threat, or use, of weapons of mass destruction. The defense group has agreed to examine threats, defense planning, and military doctrine and capabilities.

To achieve the second goal, the most significant decision reached at the NATO summit was the creation of the Partnership for Peace. The Partnership, proposed by President Clinton and adopted by the alliance, reaches out to the East in order to reassure new democracies and strengthen European security. In five short months we can recognize a remarkable achievement: the Partnership has moved from a bare concept to become a working reality, a series of concrete relationships. Twenty countries have joined. I want to highlight two among the many steps we have taken thus far to make the Partnership operational.

First, Partner states are actively engaged at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, and will soon be present at the Partnership Coordination Cell at Mons working side by side with NATO military planners. The previously unimaginable is on the way to becoming routine.

Second, we will fulfill the summit's call for Partnership peacekeeping exercises to begin in 1994. These exercises represent a remarkable transformation. Think of it: troops that for half a century faced off against each other in the Cold War will come together in joint military exercises.

This fall, the Netherlands will host a field exercise, and Poland will host the first exercise on the soil of a partner country. SACLANT [Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic] is organizing a partnership maritime exercise which will be held before the end of the year. In addition, the United States and other allies and partners will use already scheduled exercises to advance the Partnership's goals. We expect at least 14 activities of this kind to occur before the end of the year. We are also developing a robust schedule of exercises for 1995.

These exercises of NATO units with their former adversaries will send a powerful message that the old East-West division of Europe is dead. These are real, concrete steps toward the integrated Europe that President called for at the summit and again this past week.

We will also involve partners in many NATO committee and training activities. Together, alliance members and partners will develop practical means for addressing new threats to regional security. We will enable non-NATO countries to develop the habits of cooperation, such as defense planning, that are the lifeblood of the alliance.

We are committed to NATO's expansion. Effective cooperation is a critical step in preparing partners for NATO membership. I want to underscore today what the President told East European leaders in Prague last January. "The Partnership changes the entire dialogue about enlarging NATO's membership. Now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members, but when and how we will do so."

As we consider NATO's relationship with nations to the East, Russia will figure prominently in our deliberations. Russia is undertaking a difficult transformation that will have profound implications for the world. Whatever course its internal evolution may take, Russia is and will remain a vital actor in European security affairs. It is in our interest—and Russia's—to develop broad, constructive interaction between NATO and Russia. The Partnership for Peace is central to that process.

We welcome Defense Minister Grachev's recent statement that Russia will participate in the Partnership for Peace without preconditions. As NATO has said, each partner will sign the same framework document. But each partner will design its own presentation document and each will develop its unique independent Partnership program. Clearly Russia has significant capabilities and inherent strengths upon which it can draw in developing a Partnership cooperation program that will serve the Partnership's interests and enhance European security.

At the same time, Russia's size, broad interests, resources, and military capabilities provide the basis for a productive relationship with NATO in addition to the Partnership for Peace. Properly designed and conducted, the relationship can serve the interests of all European countries. We recently welcomed Minister Grachev to NATO Headquarters for an extremely valuable session. Where Russia can and is prepared to make a constructive contribution, periodic consultations and practical cooperation outside the Partnership would be natural and mutually beneficial.

For example, Russia's nuclear capabilities establish an obvious basis for a dialogue on nuclear issues such as safe and secure weapons dismantlement. Cooperation between NATO and Russia to stem the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction would advance our shared interests.

Of course, other European states also may have interests or capabilities that would warrant "16-plus-one" [i.e., all 16 NATO members plus one non-NATO country] consultations or cooperation with them outside the Partnership as appropriate. We should welcome those possibilities.

Bilateral relationships between Russia and individual allies complement Russia's relationship with NATO. The United States and other allies are developing bilateral political and military cooperation that will complement the work of the alliance.

Let me turn briefly to two important matters that have far-reaching implications for

Russia's relations with NATO and for the overall course of European security. First, European stability depends on respecting the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of all the states that emerged from the Soviet empire. We recognize Russia's legitimate concerns in this region, but we have made it clear that no country has a right to assert a role that is inconsistent with international norms.

A second key feature of Europe's stability and security is the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe [CFE]. The United States is committed to maintaining the integrity of the treaty over the long term. We welcome discussion of any implementation questions among CFE signatories in the forum created by the treaty—the Vienna Joint Consultative Group.

An important area where Russia and members of the alliance have cooperated productively is in working to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. This alliance—indeed, all nations concerned with the future of Europe and standards of human decency—remains deeply concerned about the continued fighting in Bosnia. That brutal and tragic conflict, the most savage fighting in Europe since 1945, cries out for resolution.

We remain convinced that this conflict can be resolved only through negotiations. We know that NATO cannot impose a solution. Since our last meeting, NATO has supported U.N. efforts to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. Without question, our efforts have decreased the level of violence and destruction. NATO's 9 February 1994 ultimatum ended the shelling of Sarajevo. We enforced the no-fly zone over Bosnia. NATO's 22 April 1994 decision ended the brutal attacks on civilians in Gorazde. We all recognize the leadership of the Government of Italy in providing bases for allied operations in these vital endeavors.

These and previous NATO actions, including sanctions enforcement, demonstrate our ability to make difficult decisions as 16 allies. NATO's firm actions show, as President Clinton has said, that the alliance "can still be a credible force for peace in the post-Cold War era." Those actions continue to provide crucial support to the United Nations and to the saving of innocent lives. NATO has demonstrated in Bosnia that it is the only international institution with that capability.

We are now at a critical point in our efforts to find a negotiated solution. Working together, the European Union, the United Nations, Russia, and the United States have made good progress in putting together a territorial proposal that we believe could serve as a reasonable basis for a settlement. Our hope is that this proposal will be accepted by both sides, and that yesterday's [8 June 1994] cease-fire agreement is a step toward a nationwide cessation of hostilities. If these efforts succeed, we can turn our attention and resources to the task of implementing a peace agreement and helping reconstruct war-torn Bosnia. We must expect, however, that the compromises necessary for peace will not come easily. The alliance must stand ready as before to back up the diplomatic process. And NATO allies must remain engaged in this effort.

The international community, and NATO in particular, are powerful forces helping to resolve this conflict. We must stay at it until we get the job done. We can contain the conflict. We can facilitate talks. We can help shape solutions. We can volunteer the military forces essential for implementing a final agreement. And I want clearly to reaffirm the United States to participate in this vital task.

The war in Bosnia remains a grave threat to our goal of an integrated Europe. It threatens to draw other fragile democracies into a wider war. And violent nationalism undermines the security of all European nations.

The United States is committed to greater integration among European democracies, East

and West. We are determined to extend to the East the benefits—and obligations— of the same liberal trading and security order that have been pillars of strength for the West. That is the best way to secure the gains of democracy in the East. That is the best way to ensure that a wider war never engulfs Europe again.

Yesterday in Paris, many of us were present when the OECD [Organization for Cooperation and Development] decided to start membership negotiations with the Visegrad countries. We decided to intensify OECD activities in other Central and Eastern European countries. The OECD also signed a cooperation agreement with Russia.

We have sought to extend economic institutions to the East because we understand that the quest for security in Europe cannot rely on security institutions alone. It also must rely on the political and economic reconstruction of newly democratic nations. Our experience in Western Europe after the Second World War taught us that economic integration is essential to anchor stability among rebuilding nations. That is why we must lower the remaining trade barriers that limit the East's exports and its potential for lasting growth.

With the Cold War past, the doors of the West must be open to open societies and open markets to the East. By widening the reach of NATO, the EU [European Union], and the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade], we will strengthen the prosperity of an undivided Europe and bolster the security that this alliance continues to preserve.