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EXERCISE NEW HORIZONS/EXERCICE NOUVEAU HORIZONS

The NATO Response Force – Transformational or Traditional

By /par LCdr/capc Robert Lewis-Manning

ABSTRACT

This paper contends that the NATO Reaction Force (NRF) has not accounted for the experience gained from NATO operations since the end of the Cold War. Accordingly, it challenges the transformational objectives of the NRF. Although many analysts point towards the increasing gap in technology between American and European Armed Forces, experiences in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate that the capability aspect of transformation is much more complex and multi-faceted. The lessons learned also indicate that political will, common funding, and command and control could all influence the evolution and employment of the NRF, and if permitted to complicate the deployment of the force, eventually lead to such a high level of inefficiency that member nations would not support this expeditionary capability. As such, the fundamental adhesion of the Alliance is at stake.

Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is subject to increasing pressure to demonstrate its relevance in a post-Cold War era. Various analysts have contended that NATO enlargement Eastward would dilute its political unity, and its corresponding capability to use force in a modern battle environment. In light of growing criticism, the NATO air campaign in Kosovo epitomized the inadequacy in member-nations' capabilities. American fighters and bombers delivered almost 90 per cent of the - precision-guided munitions, whilst lesser powers were relegated to force protection duties principally. It is not only the newer NATO nations which were pressured by the scope of military challenges. The Ministère de la Défense de la France purported that the enormous technological gap, combined with overwhelming numbers of combat equipment, made any contribution from other nations irrelevant and subsequently left little opportunity for other nations to influence the campaign design.[1] As a result of many similar outcomes in other recent operations, it becomes increasingly evident that NATO's capabilities, designed originally to combat the Warsaw Pact on a grand scale, are unsuitable for contemporary and projected threats and mismatched for prospective NATO missions. As James Wither has stated,

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[1] Ministère de la Défense de la France, *Lessons from Kosovo,* (Paris: Ministère de la Défense, 1999), 22-23.

> …in the early 21st Century, political, technological and societal developments have again combined to change the prevalent character of armed conflict. A complex and unpredictable security environment has replaced the threat of large-scale interstate war.[2]

Subsequent to the realisation that NATO was poorly positioned for the 21st century, it mandated a plan at the Prague Summit of 2002 to transform the Alliance. Member-nations agreed that the vehicle to attain a transformed military capability for the Alliance would be an expeditionary response force. Consequently, the NATO Response Force (NRF) was activated in October 2003.

Although this force has attained its initial operational capability, its focus for operational development has failed to entirely account for experiences realised during the last decade of Alliance operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Furthermore, the reality is that the European NATO-member nations spend nearly US$220 billion on defence and have regular forces of almost 2.2 million personnel, but are nevertheless ill equipped to use this capability beyond the borders of Europe.[3] Clearly, the operational objectives of the NATO Reaction Force (NRF) do not take into account the experiences of operations by NATO-member nations, and the NRF consequently risks not being appropriately prepared for future operations. The objective of this essay is to examine the critical vulnerabilities of the Alliance's capabilities and then put them in the perspective of the NRF's development. These lessons transcend all levels of warfare, and in many instances originate at the political level. Specifically, the current

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[2] James Wither, "Expeditionary Forces for Post Modern Europe," Conflict Research Centre (January 2005); available from http://www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents/Special/05%2804%29-JW.pdf; accessed 12 January 2005.

[3] Anthony H Cordsman, "Rethinking NATO's Force Transformation," *NATO Review* (Spring 2005); available from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/art4.html; Internet; accessed 7 April 2005.

challenges facing the NRF's successful development involve the political will of its

member nations, its war-fighting capability, its command and control, and its funding.

The challenges faced by NATO in each of these topic areas will show a trend that, if

disregarded by the Alliance, could lead to the ultimate failure of the NRF's

implementation.

NATO's Evolution

It is imperative to place the development, challenges, and opportunities of the

NRF in context. Accordingly, this section will highlight the key aspects of the Alliance's

recent transformation.

Naturally, the single largest circumstance that has influenced NATO's evolution

has been the geopolitical changes following the break-up of the Soviet Union. A period

of uncertainty plagued the Alliance during the first half of the 1990s, but in general the

threat remained European-centric, or at the very least accounted for failing states on the

European borders.[4] The threat of transnational terrorism became apparent as early as

1995, and developed into headline news as two airliners were used as missiles to strike

New York's Twin Towers in 2001.

NATO's most current strategic review occurred at the Washington Summit of

1999. At this summit, Alliance representatives sought general agreement on the current

and projected threats to NATO nations, and developed a strategic concept of operations.

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[4] Robert McCalla, "NATO and the End of the Cold War," Individual Democratic Institutions Research Fellowships 1994-1996; available from **http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/94-96/mccalla/3b1d.htm**; Internet: accessed 27 January 2005.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), especially in the hands of failing states or paramilitary organisations, was recognised to be of utmost importance.[5]

Although it was the Prague Summit of 2002 which solidified the foundation for transformation, it was the Washington Summit where leaders of member nations launched the Defence Capabilities Initiative. This proposal targeted the improvement of capabilities that support expeditionary operations outside of the typical NATO operating areas of Western Europe, and against anticipated threats of the 21st century. Not surprisingly, the NRF would become the prime vehicle to effect this change. Along with the NRF initiative, came additional ideas. The increased threat of terrorism also brought with it the threat of asymmetrical warfare, and NATO dealt with this threat by developing the new multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defence Battalion.

NATO continued to value its emergent relations with former Warsaw Pact countries, and increased its size to 26 nations, while also increasing dialogue and cooperation through the Partnership for Peace, the NATO-Russia Council, and Mediterranean Dialogue programmes. The Alliance has also looked inward by reviewing and restructuring it command and control hierarchy to form a truly joint construct, which strives to reduce inefficiencies.[6] Although the restructuring has occurred, there remain some elements of inefficiency and duplicity.

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[5] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*, (Washington: 24 April 1999, 7.

[6] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, "NATO Command Structure." Available from http://www.nato.int/issues/military_structure/command/index-e.htm; Internet; accessed 22 April 2005.

The NRF's Evolution

In September 2002, the US Secretary for Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, put forward a proposal to create a NATO rapid reaction force, and accordingly, it became a high priority. The significance of the November 2002 NATO Summit in Prague was two-fold. Firstly, it saw the invitation of seven new countries to join the Alliance. Secondly, the need for enhanced military capabilities to deal with modern threats was a dominant theme.

> …in order to carry out the full range of its missions," the NATO heads of state and government underlined, "NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed, upon decision by the North Atlantic Council, to sustain operations over distance and time, including in an environment where they might be faced with nuclear, biological and chemical threats, and to achieve their objectives.[7]

The summit approved seven actions associated to the transformation and adaptation of NATO's military forces. The fourth of these was a declaration to create the NRF; "a flexible and technologically advanced land, air and sea force, capable of deploying swiftly upon a decision by the North Atlantic Council (NAC)."[8] The deadline for initial operational capability was set as October 2004, with full operational capability by October 2006. It was expected that lessons learned from the training and experimentation of this force until 2006 would serve as a catalyst for NATO and national transformation. Furthermore, the summit declaration stated that the NRF and related work under the EU Headline Goal, were to be mutually reinforcing without impacting on

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[7] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, "Prague Summit Declaration." available from http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm; Internet; accessed 12 April 2005.

[8] *Ibid.*

the independence of NATO and the EU.[9]

When it attains its full operational capability in the fall of 2006, it will consist of upwards of 24,000 personnel from all services, and elements of the force should be deployable within five days of being alerted. Furthermore, it should be capable of operating without resupply for thirty days. A deployable joint task force (DJTF) headquarters of approximately 90 staff, commanded by a flag officer of at least two stars, will exercise operational-level command and control, and plan, coordinate and conduct effects-based operations. In theory, the DJTF HQ will be drawn from the three permanent NATO operational commands, namely Joint Force Command North, South, and Lisbon. Component commander responsibilities could be delegated to permanent NATO commands, especially in the case of the Air Component Commander, or be drawn from national commands identified in a force generation process. The Alliance assumes that this force could fulfill both traditional Article Five operations, and out-of-area operations as well.

A key part of the NRF concept is flexibility. The NRF is composed of forces from the member states that will:

> …rotate through periods of training and certification as a joint force, followed by an operational "stand by" phase of six months. Allied Command Operations (ACO) will generate the NRF through force generation conferences. ACO will also be responsible for the certification of forces and headquarters. Allied Command Transformation (ACT) will develop future capabilities and further refine the NRF concept based on

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[9] *Ibid.*

joint lessons learned.[10]

ACT has been conceptually linked to the NRF since the two were conceived at the 2002 Prague Summit. ACT experiments with new technology, concepts and equipment, and disseminates new ideas and practices across NATO member forces. The NRF will become the "tip of the spear" of this process, turning these experiments and exercises into concrete plans of action.[11]

Initially, efforts to secure contributions to the force were more successful than projected, with fourteen nations assigning some of their most elite units to the NRF. The total strength of the NRF stood at 9,500 in December 2003, far more than the 2,500-6,000 that NATO officials had expected. The troops in the first NRF came from a range of countries, but the largest contributions were from Spain (2,200) France (1,700), the UK (1,200), and Germany (1,100). This more than fulfilled the requirements for the initial operational capability of the force and was a positive development towards attaining its full operation capability by 2006.[12]

The Lessons
Origins of Lessons Learned

Lessons learned that impact the NRF have two general origins. Since the NRF's activation in 2003, NATO identified numerous lessons learned in the course of force generating, training, exercising, and deploying. These are relatively simple to identify as

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[10] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, "The NATO Response Force – At the Centre of NATO Transformation," available from http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/; Internet; accessed 20 April 2005.

[11] John Smith, "The Development of Response Forces in NATO and the EU and the Evolving NATO-EU Relationship," a Report Prepared for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2004 Annual Session. available from http://natopa.ibicenter.net/default.asp?SHORTCUT=488; Internet; accessed 4 March 2004.

[12] *Ibid*.

they have occurred typically in benign training environments. This grouping of lessons illustrates the inadequacies of the NRF's operations, taking into account established operational procedures in NATO. The second category of lessons reaches further into NATO's past, and seeks to identify previous failings in NATO and other NATO member's operations. This second set of lessons is extensive, and will only be addressed in this paper if they have a direct effect on the development and employment of the NRF. It is this category of lessons that is often the most complex to capture and apply to current operations. Frequently, both types of lessons are closely associated, but often the correlation is difficult to appreciate and corresponding solutions complicated to realise.

Capabilities

The luck-luster performance of some NATO forces to the more demanding peacekeeping tasks in recent operations has already provoked trepidation concerning their combat readiness. In many of these situations, contingents have operated within an environment of overly restrictive rules of engagement, which have been imposed by governments eager to avoid casualties that could weaken domestic support for their policies. This aspect of "usability" will be examined later in this paper under the auspices of national caveats. Notwithstanding, increasing the effectiveness of fighting troops remains a stated priority for the Alliance.

Almost without exception, NATO operations have been lacking capabilities in some capacity in order to fulfill the objectives of their respective missions. In the air campaign of Kosovo in 1999, "few of the Allies could even carry out secure air-to-air

communications, forcing NATO formations to transmit on open channels." [13] The United

States also provided all of the jamming capability, 90 per cent of the air-to-ground

surveillance, and 80 per cent of the air refueling tankers. [14] More recently, the Kosovo

Force (KFOR) was plagued with ineffective resources; a situation which nearly became

critical during an uprising in March 2004. In an independent report tabled by the

International Crisis Group, KFOR was criticized for having ineffective training,

equipment, and command and control.

> …regional security implications are serious and widespread. KFOR and
> NATO have lost their aura of invulnerability and invincibility. The
> perception of international weakness and lack of resolve will not be lost on
> extremists. [15]

In the 2004 Kosovo uprising, KFOR troops were identified as having insufficient

training to conduct riot control, and the failure of Italian, French, and German KFOR

units to confront Albanian mobs intent on attacking the Serbian minority was

emphasised.

Fewer governments emerge which are willing to pay the financial and political

cost of diverting resources from healthcare, education, and other social priorities in order

to enhance military capabilities in an age of unparalleled peace in Europe. As a result,

James Wither judges that the majority of the European soldiers may be ill prepared, both

technically and psychologically, for the type of high intensity combat that might be

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[13] Robert G Bell, "NATO's Transformation Scorecard," NATO Review (Spring 2005); available from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/art3.html; accessed 12 March 2005.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] International Crisis Group, "Collapse in Kosovo," Report No. 155 (Brussels: April 2004); available from http://vranet.com/govte110/Docs/155_collapse_in_kosovo_revised.pdf; Internet; accessed 15 March 2005, i.

necessary during an expeditionary operation nominated to the NRF.[16] The British experience in Iraq has indicated that soldiers must be ready to handle humanitarian tasks, stabilisation functions and combat operations concurrently, which adds another dimension to the NRF which is not seemingly addressed.

The other observation, which has been sighted in numerous reports of operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq, is the necessity for the timely transfer of information. These

poorly linked to the force-planning process. It is alarming that the NRF force generation process has fully fulfilled it mandate well into 2006, whilst currently "no NATO mission is fully resourced and fully force generated."[19] Steve Strum emphasises this gap between contributing nations for operations and other events and highlights that, "Allies struggled to provide just a handful of helicopters for ISAF, [whereas] the same nations were prepared rapidly to make a hundred or so available in the immediate aftermath of the Asian Tsunami."[20]

The inauguration of an annual global force-generation conference that provides a more comprehensive and longer-term view of NATO's operational requirements is a positive development in this respect. It should be easier for NATO members to provide forces with 12 months warning time, especially when one nation may observe other nations bearing significant operational burdens and may be assured that its forces will be adequately replaced in a timely manner after the initial contribution. The first such annual conference was held at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in November 2004, and research is now being conducted to see how the potential contributions of Partners and other non-NATO nations can be included in this process.[21]

Funding

The current out-of-area operations of the NRF demonstrate the need to fundamentally revise how NATO organises and funds future operations. The current doctrine of funding is "cost lie where they fall", meaning that the country contributing

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[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Steve Strum, "Matching Capabilities to Commitments," NATO Review (Spring 2005); available from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/military.html; Internet; accessed 27 April 2005.

[21] *Ibid.*

forces for an operation also bears the price of deploying those forces into the area of operations and maintaining them for the duration of the deployment. Although this formula has worked in the past, it will be increasingly problematic because of the nature of the NRF. The NRF is composed of forces from the member countries on a rotating basis, but it will be deployed based on a decision taken by all 26 member nations. Notwithstanding, the costs for this decision will fall only on the nations currently participating in the NRF.

National Caveats

Many a mission commander has been incapable of fully employing assigned forces due to the imposition of national caveats. Caveats are placed on participating forces by their national commands and governments in order to restrict the types of operations in which they participate. Although it would be naïve to expect that NATO could abolish national caveats, Julio Miranda-Calha points out that caveats are having an extremely devastating effect on the Alliance's current operations, especially when field commanders are not aware of restrictive caveats in advance. [22] It is unlikely that caveats will be eliminated, but NATO should consider how they could be minimised and made more transparent so that commanders on the ground understand up front the capabilities and limition on the forces that they have under their control.

NATO has had many recent examples of this challenge in both Afghanistan and Kosovo. The International Crisis Group described the regional security impact of a spring 2004 uprising in Kosovo as "serious and widespread," and that it ultimately led to a point

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[22] Julio Miranda-Calha, "NATO's Out of Area Operations," a Report Prepared for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2005 Spring Session; available from http://natopa.ibicenter.net/default.asp?SHORTCUT=670; Internet; accessed 04 March 2004.

where NATO forces were so discredited that they had little or no influence on the general population.[23] "During the two-day rampage, in which Serbs were killed and Orthodox churches burned, a number of KFOR units stayed in their barracks," completely restricted in their capacity to react.[24] Undoubtedly, much of the ineffectiveness of the military commanders in Kosovo was the consequence of national stipulations. Although KFOR consisted of approximately 19,000 troops in the spring of 2004, nationally imposed caveats affected nearly half of the force, and specifically restricted them from conducting riot control, or from conducting inter-sector movement.[25] KFOR was nearly incapable of repositioning assets to protect the population that it was tasked to defend.

The Application of Lessons

Capabilities

Analysts exert a substantial effort analysing the subject of NATO's capabilities. Frequently, they are critical of the gap between American and European technology and the shear disparity in numbers of troops and equipment. Nonetheless, the inability of many European nations to field a brigade-size expeditionary force supported by sea-launched cruise missiles and stealth fighter-bombers may not truly reflect the nature of warfare in the foreseeable future.

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[23] International Crisis Group, "Collapse in Kosovo," Report No. 155 (Brussels April 2004), http://vranet.com/govte110/Docs/155_collapse_in_kosovo_revised.pdf; Internet; accessed 7 April 2005, 27-28.

[24] Adam Ward, "NATO's Instanbul Summit," *Strategic Comments*, vol 10, no.5 (June 2004); available from http://www.iiss.org/stratcomfree.php?scID=379; Internet; accessed 6 March 2005.

[25] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, *Text of speech by General Jones, SACEUR at workshop on Global Security*, (Berlin:May 2004); available from http://www.csdr.org/2004book/Gen_Jones.htm; Internet; accessed 8 March 2005.

Anthony Cordesman challenges traditional concepts of transformation in his

article *Rethinking NATO's Force Transformation,* and attempts to prove that NATO's

transformational objectives are based on mistaken strategic assumptions. He contends

that the Iraq War demonstrated that the quality of intelligence, surveillance, and

reconnaissance was of greater importance to a successful campaign, than was having "the

most advance aircraft."[26] He adds that in conflicts such as in Afghanistan and Iraq,

where an enemy will attempt to exploit the limit of legal and moral conventions against

an overwhelmingly capable Western coalition, "the importance of human skills, area

expertise, civil-military units and a host of "human-centric" capabilities," will be of more

value than highly technological equipment. The British Armed Forces undoubtedly

captured this sentiment in a report of Lessons Learned from Iraq. The report aimed to

identify trends applicable to future operations, and placed an emphasis on the human

dimension of war fighting.

> The agility of UK Service personnel is arguably their greatest strength, but
> it invariably brings a high individual training requirement and attendant
> resource implications. The "moral component of fighting power is also
> derived in part from the ethos and cohesion of individual units, putting a
> premium on unit and Service identity.[27]

An observation of lessons from the conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan

also reflect the value of human skills and information. A report regarding Information

Operations in Bosnia suggested that the military battle during Operation Joint Endeavour

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[26] Anthony H Cordsman, "Rethinking NATO's Force Transformation," *NATO Review* (Spring 2005); available from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/art4.html; Internet; accessed 7 April 2005.

[27] British Ministry of Defence, *Operations in Iraq: Lessons for the Future*. (London: December 2003), 13.

was comparatively straightforward; however, it was the forces' capacity to influence the

population that was crucial to success.[28]

All of these observations form a trend, which should be interpreted as an

indication that technology is not necessarily the priority towards NATO's transformation.

Evidently, NATO and other coalitions have faced asymmetrical war-fighting scenarios

frequently in the past decade, and in each situation, two large components supporting a

successful battle were the forces' ability to gain positive public support, and the capacity

to gain knowledge quickly, both regarding enemy actions and the general state of the

battle space.

Another aspect of capabilities and their impact to the NRF is far less tangible. The

expeditionary structure of the force will favour the capabilities of some nations over

others. Traditionally continental-minded member states may find the evolution to a sea or

air-based expeditionary force excessively difficult. The consequence of such a situation

might be that countries with long-standing expeditionary capabilities would bear the

lion's share of responsibility for delivering this capability to the Alliance, further

alienating other nations from the military command structure of NATO. This in itself has

a destructive element that could adversely affect the Alliance in the long term.

Finally, the requirement for a timely command and control architecture implicates

both NATO's technical capacity to transfer communication and data, but perhaps even

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[28] Pascale Combelles Siegel,"Target Bosnia: Integrating Information Activities in Peace Operations," *A report for the Command and Control Research Program* (Washington:1999), 171.

more importantly, to engage member nations at the strategic and political level in near real time. There is currently no indication that this is possible, or that mechanisms will be established to deal with this eventuality.

Political Will – Commitment/Resource Gap

It is absurd that only 2% of the collective military assets of NATO-member countries are deployed in NATO operation in the Balkans and Afghanistan, yet both of these operations are currently under resourced.[29] NATO has even struggled to provide adequate helicopters to support to its International Stabilization and Assistance Force (ISAF) operation in Afghanistan.[30] In contrast, the NRF force generation has been extremely successful and has fulfilled the Statement of Requirement well into 2006. There are few differences in the commitment required in both operational theatres, as compared to that of the NRF. Consequently, it may be assumed that the benefits to participating in the NRF are much greater than that of deploying for operations, or that the risks of deploying into theatre are much greater.

Regardless of one's perception, the concern is apparent that there appears to be a disincentive for nations to deploy forces for anything but nearly benign training. This should be of great concern to NATO planners. What would occur if a security situation were to arise which demanded using the NRF with little advanced notice? It is likely that

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[29] United States House of Representatives. Sub Committee on International Relations, "US Initiatives at the Istanbul Summit," (Washington: 16 June 2004); available from http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa94281.000/hfa94281_0.HTM#7; Internet; accessed 5 March 2005.

[30] James Wither, "Expeditionary Forces for Post Modern Europe," Conflict Research Centre (Jan 2005). Available from http://www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents/Special/05%2804%29-JW.pdf; Internet; accessed 2 March 2005.

An expeditionary force at a high readiness state is expensive to maintain, and many

nations do not have either the fiscal position to finance such an expense, or the political

support domestically. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the Secretary General to the NATO, made

it clear that the impediment of a lack of common funding must be overcome in order to

facilitate the contribution of all Alliance nations to the NRF.[33] However, is there a vision

of how this can be accomplished? The answer is apparently no, as generally it is the

wealthier of the NATO nations which are also carrying the financial burden. It would

appear that a two-tier system of NATO capabilities is inevitable under current constructs.

National Caveats

The impact of national caveats is in many respects similar to that of a lack of

political will. The undue restrictions on a unit's employment results in tremendous

inefficiencies, as commanders seek alternative solutions to create desired effects. As was

witnessed in Kosovo in 2004, an urgent situation can rapidly evolve into an emergency

without the proper pre-meditated and authorised rules of engagement. The end result can

be the failure to meet mission objectives. Furthermore, the NRF cannot afford to lose any

credibility, as the contributing nations will grow weary of the financial strain and political

damage instigated by its ineffective employment.

Conclusion

During the Cold War, European security depended on the guarantee of support

from the United States', which was afforded through the construct of the NATO alliance.

Nevertheless, there has been a growing divergence in strategic thinking between America

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[33] North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, *Text of speech the Secretary General at the Annual Conference*, (Brussels:14 April 2005); available from www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050414.htm; Internet; accessed 20 April 2005.

and European allies since 1990, and this has had an increasingly negative effect on NATO's transformation. Notwithstanding NATO's current programme of military transformation, the deep divisions within the transatlantic partnership over Iraq illustrate that it might be complicated in the future to realise the essential political consensus to deploy the Alliance's new icon of transformation in a timely and effective manner.

A survey of previous and current operations indicates that NATO's challenge to transform its member nations' capabilities is multi-faceted. It is overly simplistic to describe the issue of capabilities as only pertaining to maintaining pace with the technologically superior Untied States. The modern battle space is inherently complex, and demands forces that are both combat capable, intellectually engaged, and have superior capabilities to transfer information and make decisions.

NATO must be careful collectively to ensure that the NRF force generation process is equitable to all of its members. NATO nations are not equal in their political will, fiscal position, or military capability. Nevertheless, defense planning must compel member nations to promote an equitable level of responsibility, whether it is in hard military capabilities or in common funding. There is no evident solution to this dilemma, but a formal construct would go a long way.

It should now be further apparent that a qualitative comparison of the NRF's objectives, as compared to NATO's experiences in operations, is indispensable. This necessary review should be accomplished on a nearly continuous basis, as current political differences often cloud the lessons learned of past operations. Regardless of any current differences in political thought amongst Alliance members, the objectives of the

NRF and its capabilities remain relevant to the Alliance. It evident that the NRF

possesses the potential to fulfill its mandate, but also that the Alliance should

acknowledge and address it shortfalls as soon as possible, so as not to provoke its failure

through ignoring its inherent vulnerabilities.

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