

## NATO Transformed



# **NATO** *Transformed*

**The Alliance's New Roles in International Security**

**David S. Yost**



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*Cover photograph:* A convoy of troop carriers and tanks in NATO's Stabilization Force enters Bosnia in 1996. Photo courtesy of AP/Wide World Photos; used by permission.

The views expressed in this book are those of the author alone. They do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace.

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To the memory of my father and mother

Albert Scott Yost (1921–1971)

Lois Marie Yost (1926–1969)





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## Foreword

A half-century after its creation, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization wrestles with an existential crisis. Seemingly overnight, the Alliance's Cold War *raison d'être* vanished, as the East European communist regimes of the Warsaw Pact were swept up in the democratic revolutions of 1989–90 and the Soviet Union collapsed under the weight of its own political and economic frailties. Yet NATO still exists. Not only does it exist, but with the Soviet Union's demise, it has embarked on a grand experiment—"to create something better than the balance of power" as the new architecture of transatlantic security.

As any student of international relations knows well, such an endeavor has few successful precedents, but it is not without its formidable historical and political foundations. David Yost, professor of international relations at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and a senior fellow in the Jennings Randolph Program at the United States Institute of Peace during 1996–97, begins this timely and ambitious study with a masterful disquisition on how nations have sought to manage the international order over the years, from traditional balance-of-power arrangements to the more elaborate (and as yet unrealized) designs of collective security regimes—states drawn together in an obligatory pact to police themselves against any member's possible aggressive behavior.

In *NATO Transformed*, Professor Yost attempts to answer a simple, yet profound, question: Has NATO transformed itself from a strictly collective defense alliance—states drawn together to defend against an external threat—to an organization that has embraced the much broader and more demanding functions of a collective security organization? In answering this weighty question, Yost delivers what foreign policy analysts

and historians may come to consider an exemplary treatment of NATO's basic difficulty in defining its rationale in the post-Cold War era.

Lord Ismay, NATO's first secretary general, once quipped that the organization's fundamental purpose was "to keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down." Obviously, there are significant differences between then and now in this tripartite distinction, but these three powers continue to form the prism through which NATO's major security concerns can be viewed. Any change in one is bound to affect the panorama of transatlantic security. Within the past decade, all three have undergone major change.

Following the USSR's collapse, the United States began a profound reassessment of its leadership role in maintaining international security. When American foreign policy was structured around the cardinal tenet of Soviet containment, defense commitments and military spending encountered few domestic critics—and even fewer among America's allies that benefited from the stability and prosperity U.S. security guarantees provided. Today, in contrast, Washington hears a rising chorus of opinions—domestic and foreign—encouraging a more "multipolar" international order. To our allies, such multipolarity means more of a say in alliance decision making and greater scope for European autonomy in addressing security challenges. To Americans, it has come to mean that our NATO allies should shoulder more of the costs and potential casualties in future peacekeeping missions and be prepared to join with the United States in conducting operations in defense of common interests beyond Europe. Much of the early debate in the United States over NATO enlargement was revealing in this regard: Much of the concern centered not only on how enlargement would impinge on Russian sensitivities, but also on how much of the tab the U.S. would have to pick up to bring new members into the Alliance. The lack of a domestic consensus on the kind of leadership required for maintaining international security in the post-Cold War era has led Richard Haass to characterize the new U.S. role as "The Reluctant Sheriff."

Germany's reunification has rekindled anxieties in some quarters about the country's potential disproportionate influence across the continent. At the same time, Germany and France together have served as the engine of postwar European economic and political integration; and France, in particular, has stood as the voice of an "independent" (some

would say “Gaullist”) European security policy. Indeed, since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1991, the European Union’s members have endeavored to forge their own distinctly European Common Foreign and Security Policy. Yet, the fact that they have decided to pursue such a policy within NATO’s Atlanticist confines speaks to just how much Europe still relies on the United States for its security. Nevertheless, there are several issues that divide the Allies, and Russia’s role in the new architecture of European security is foremost among them.

Clearly, the largest and most powerful Soviet successor state does not pose the same type of military threat NATO was established to defend against, but the question of the country’s potential membership in the Atlantic Alliance remains perhaps one of the more contentious issues among the NATO Allies, with the dividing line of opinion running down the middle of the Atlantic. Russia and the United States are trying to pursue additional arms reduction treaties, and Russian efforts to democratize continue, giving the Clinton administration enough reassurance to envision Russia’s eventual membership in a “common security alliance.”

NATO’s European members are not so sanguine, some viewing Russia’s commitment to democracy as tenuous at best, and waiting to see the course of the country’s political development, especially in the post-Yeltsin era. The Alliance’s prospective new members—countries that were part of the Soviet bloc not so many years ago—are drawn to NATO for its collective defense guarantees to counter a possible Russian neoimperialist impulse in the future. As Yost warns, Russian membership in the Alliance could very well empty NATO of its collective defense substance and lead to a renationalization of defense, as the European Allies attempt to satisfy their own security requirements against historical threats on their continent. Viewed in such a light, one must ask whether European security would be enhanced by a return to the kind of intra-European balance-of-power configurations that proved to be so unstable and so destructive in the past.

As the author of this work explains, NATO remains essentially a collective defense organization, protecting its members from external military threats or coercion. Yet evidence of the Alliance’s recent preoccupation with collective security functions is manifest: NATO is expanding its scope in various ways, extending the penumbra of security to its former Cold

War adversaries through various gradations—from the three prospective new members of the Alliance, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, to the twenty-seven nations in NATO's auxiliary group, the Partnership for Peace. Collective security aspirations are also evident in NATO's recent peacekeeping missions, again with varying gradations—from its leading the Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia as a result of the Dayton Accords, to the most recent warning actions in the skies over Serbia's province of Kosovo. NATO's expansion and enlargement—territorially as well as functionally—belies the notion that NATO remains just a collective defense organization.

If it is no longer solely a collective defense organization, can one call NATO a collective security organization? As the author of this work argues, NATO is trying to have it both ways: committed to collective defense as a hedge against Russian revanchism and other potential external threats, but also determined to pursue a new role in promoting a more secure post-Cold War Euro-Atlantic order. In fact, adapting to the new European security environment by assuming collective security functions may be the only way NATO can retain its vital collective defense role. More to the point, though, Yost also discusses the dilemmas in NATO's assuming these new functions. In trying to have it both ways, NATO risks surrendering its military effectiveness in a relatively small, close-knit collective defense pact at the expense of the inclusiveness collective security requires. NATO also risks a crisis of legitimacy by pursuing this dual purpose. When it seeks a mandate from the UN Security Council or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for its peacekeeping missions, the Alliance acknowledges the advantages of Russia's concurrence and participation—as well as the limits this implies for NATO's autonomy. Indeed, as Professor Yost concludes, collective security may come to be defined by the limits of a major-power consensus on shared interests.

If Bosnia serves as the bellwether of NATO's new collective security role, the international community must realize how constraining and frustrating those limits can be. Not only is it the venue of NATO's first "out-of-area" peacekeeping mission, but it is also the first case in which U.S. leadership in NATO peacekeeping has had to actively accommodate the interests of Russia—as a participating country in IFOR and SFOR and as a traditional ally of the same Serbian regime that has

wrought so much destruction in ex-Yugoslavia. As Professor Yost concludes from his examination of the Bosnian case, the need for joint decision making and consensus among NATO Allies and Partners in collective security missions can paralyze a rapid response to an urgent situation. Surely, the Alliance's hesitation to act in the face of the brutal Serbian repression in Kosovo, and its flagging response to the chaos in Albania in early 1997, suggest that NATO may be relying on a looser—and less effective—form of collective security than its obligatory, all-embracing designs.

Yost's examination of NATO's involvement in Bosnia is perhaps the best reflection of the Institute's current work in studying the responses to contemporary conflict. Its Bosnia in the Balkans Initiative has examined ways of implementing the civilian aspects of the Dayton Accords, looking at what the region's political leaders can do to stop ethnic groups from lapsing back into conflict, including the consolidation of democratic institutions, reconstruction, and reconciliation. Through this program, the Institute has published a series of compelling reports on the ethnic and social chaos spreading across southeastern Europe and ways to resolve it, including *Dayton Implementation: The Return of Refugees; Serbia: Democratic Alternatives; Kosovo Dialogue: Too Little, Too Late; Kosovo: Escaping the Cul-de-Sac*; and *Croatia after Tudjman*.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Institute regularly convenes a panel of experts on regional politics and international security in its Working Group on the Future of Europe, devoted to exploring ways of improving cooperation among the region's states and within regional and international institutions to strengthen the foundation of the transatlantic security architecture and possibly to prevent future Bosnias. The group has also supported a number of equally compelling studies, ranging from James Goodby's book *Europe Undivided: The New Logic of Peace in U.S.-Russian Relations* (also published by the United States Institute of Peace Press) to Zbigniew Brzezinski's special report on *Managing NATO Expansion*.

As Brzezinski has acknowledged in a recent article, "The basic lesson of the last five decades is that European security is the basis for European reconciliation." The crises in the Balkans have cast a pall over the European ideal of an integrated continent that is free from irreconcilable national goals and interests. David Yost's impressive study of NATO's



evolution and its current challenges will give its readers a profound insight on whether this organization can provide the requisite foundation of security to continue to pursue that ideal.

Richard H. Solomon  
President  
United States Institute of Peace



## Preface

This book originated in my research during the 1996–97 academic year as a senior fellow in the Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace at the United States Institute of Peace. The original focus of the project was France and international security, particularly in Europe. As I investigated French views on the development of NATO's new Combined Joint Task Forces, which are intended (among other functions) to support the Atlantic Alliance's involvement in crisis management and peace operations, it became clear that it would be artificial to isolate French policies in this regard from the larger debate within the Alliance about NATO's new missions. This led to a decision to broaden the subject to the Alliance's new roles in international security.

These new roles have been accompanied by ambitious declarations about establishing a new security order for the Euro-Atlantic region, defined as Canada and the United States and all of Europe, Turkey, and the former Soviet Union, including Siberian Russia and the former Soviet republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Much of this rhetoric, such as the "security is indivisible" principle, and many of the concepts, such as promoting democratization and transparency in military plans and capabilities, are drawn from a tradition of thinking about international order that became known as collective security earlier in this century. Collective security aspirations have a much longer history, however, and they have inspired some famous works of political philosophy and noteworthy experiments in the organization of international order. The Introduction to this book therefore briefly discusses Immanuel Kant's famous essay on "Eternal Peace" (the wellspring of much of the collective security tradition since the Enlightenment), Woodrow Wilson's

thinking about the Covenant of the League of Nations, the United Nations Charter, and other landmarks in the history of efforts to give concrete form to collective security designs.

Despite the vague aspirations voiced in some Alliance documents (and the advocacy of some commentators), this study concludes that NATO is not engaged in an effort to build a Kantian or Wilsonian system of collective security. In practice, to date the Allies have supported only what is sometimes termed the “major-power-consensus” approach to collective security—that is, interventions with the approval of a quasi-universal international organization, global or regional—and so far all the crisis management and peacekeeping operations conducted by the Alliance have been under UN Security Council mandates. Whether the Allies will someday conduct operations in support of collective security outside the framework of a quasi-universal international organization nominally dedicated to that purpose remains to be seen. The more urgent questions concern the relationship between the Alliance’s long-standing (and continuing) collective defense functions and its new roles in international security. This book argues that collective defense remains the only solid foundation for Alliance cohesion and strength, an essential hedge in the event of political setbacks in Russia or elsewhere, and the most reliable basis for undertaking selected operations in support of collective security.

Not even a long book can claim to be comprehensive in dealing with such vast topics, but in this work I have attempted to illustrate the relevance of theories of international political order to the operational demands of NATO’s new and traditional functions. This book does not discuss various NATO activities—for instance, the Alliance’s new programs regarding topics such as environmental security, civil emergency planning, air traffic management, and science and technology. Some of these activities represent extensions of the NATO Science Program, first established in 1957, and the work of the Alliance’s Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society, founded in 1969 and now redirected to involve participants from non-NATO countries, including former adversaries.

In this book, the terms “NATO” and “the Atlantic Alliance” or “the Alliance” are synonymous, unless otherwise indicated. I add this caveat because some French politicians, civil servants, military officers, and



analysts like to distinguish between the Alliance, referring to the collective defense coalition established by the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, and NATO, meaning the many institutional mechanisms the Alliance has set up over the years, including the civilian International Staff, the Defense Planning Committee, the Nuclear Planning Group, the integrated military command structure, the International Military Staff under the Military Committee, and various agencies, boards, committees, organizations, schools, and research centers. France has always been a full member of the Alliance and has thus participated fully at all times in the work of the Alliance's supreme decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, which was established by Article 9 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Since 1966, however, to a greater extent than other member states France has pursued an *à la carte* approach to participation in other NATO institutions. The distinction between the Alliance and NATO, carefully preserved by some of the French, is generally not significant to people in other member states, and no effort has been made in this study to respect it. Sometimes, however, reference is made to "the Allies" to remind the reader that the Alliance is a coalition of independent sovereign states, an intergovernmental enterprise, and that it cannot do anything unless the member states agree to take action.

The United States Institute of Peace gave me a great sense of freedom and latitude, not only to conduct research on a broader topic than originally envisaged, but also to place the study in the context of theories of international political order, such as collective security and the balance of power. Richard Solomon, the Institute's president, kindly took an interest in this project, as in the projects of other fellows, and offered encouragement. Indeed, the Jennings Randolph fellowship program's administration proved to be sensible and helpful in every way imaginable. Joseph Klaitz, the program director, was always welcoming and positive, and he invariably offered timely advice and support. John Crist, my program officer, was most thoughtful, understanding, and encouraging whenever questions arose—for instance, regarding the project's change in focus. Sally Blair was most congenial and supportive about the project and other professional activities and goals. Colleen Dowd and Kerry O'Donnell, members of the fellowship program staff, were always courteous and efficient.

Several other people at the Institute offered help that was sincerely appreciated, particularly Pamela Aall, Cynthia Benjamins, Sheryl Brown, Jim Cornelius, David Little, Timothy Sisk, Dave Smith, David Smock, Dan Snodderly, and Lauren Van Metre. Diana Duff Rutherford was an outstanding research assistant—not only patient and uncomplaining about my requests, but also exceptionally resourceful and effective in responding to them. Above all, Peter Pavilionis has been an extraordinary editor, astute in suggesting themes that deserved fuller development, diplomatic in raising queries about obscure passages, and tireless and meticulous in reviewing and improving various drafts.

The Institute also has my thanks for commissioning three helpful external reviews of the manuscript. While two of the reviewers remain anonymous, Richard Kugler revealed his identity, and I would like to thank him warmly for his extensive and valuable suggestions.

The year at the Institute would not have been feasible without the assistance and encouragement of my home institution, the Naval Postgraduate School. I would therefore like to express appreciation to the provost, Professor Richard Elster; the cognizant deans, Professor James Blandin and Professor Peter Purdue; and the department chairman, Captain Frank Petho, USN. The first draft of the book was extensively revised during the 1997–98 academic year, and the librarians and library staff at the Naval Postgraduate School—particularly George Goncalves, Mike Hanson, Michaele Lee Huygen, Ethel Jose, Greta Marlatt, Kate McCrave, Susan Miller, and Jeff Rothal—often furnished advice and assistance, for which I am most grateful.

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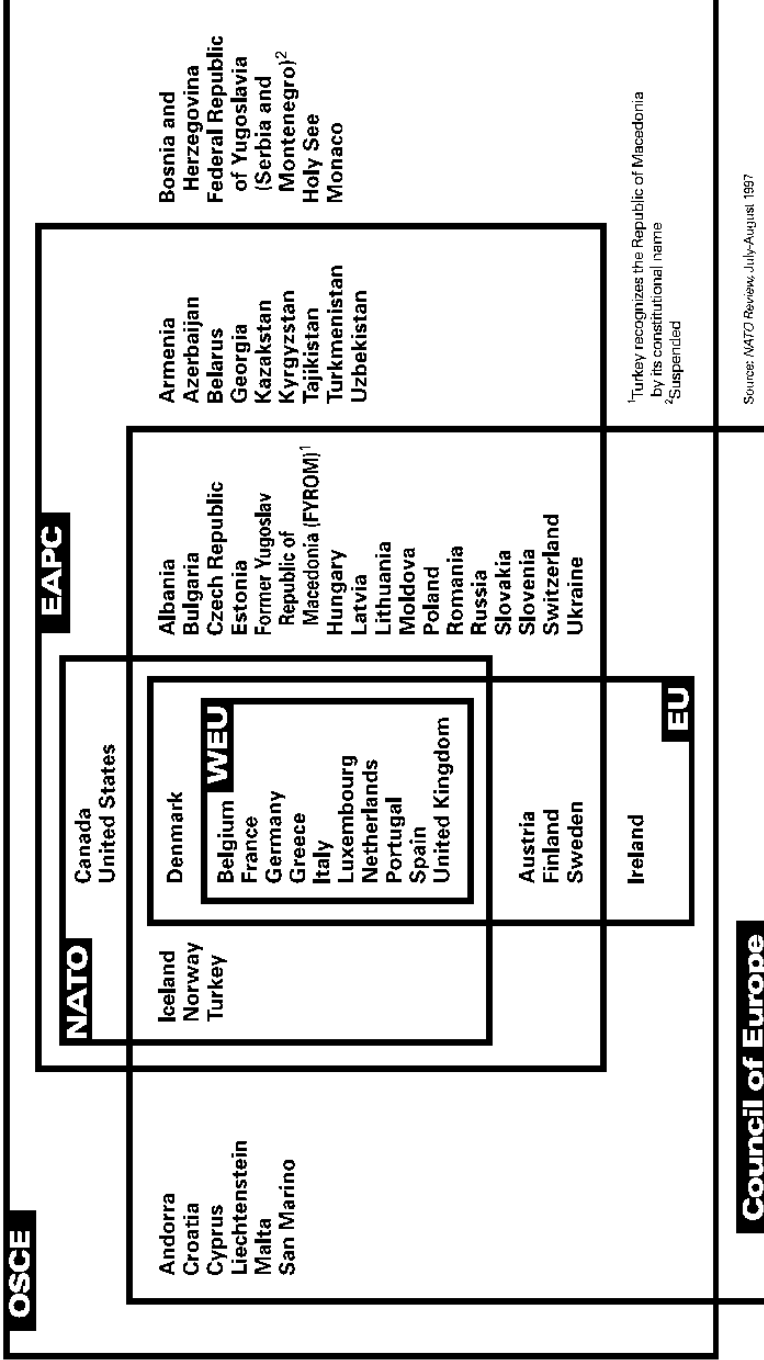
In addition, parts of the manuscript were presented in forums that elicited useful comments. I am particularly grateful for the suggestions provided by the editors and reviewers for *Survival*, the journal of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Part of the book appeared



in the Summer 1998 issue of *Survival*, in an article entitled “The New NATO and Collective Security.”

Those generously providing advice or assistance naturally bear no responsibility for the book’s shortcomings or for the views expressed. Indeed, the views expressed are mine alone, and should not be construed as representing those of the Department of the Navy, the United States Institute of Peace, or any other U.S. government agency.

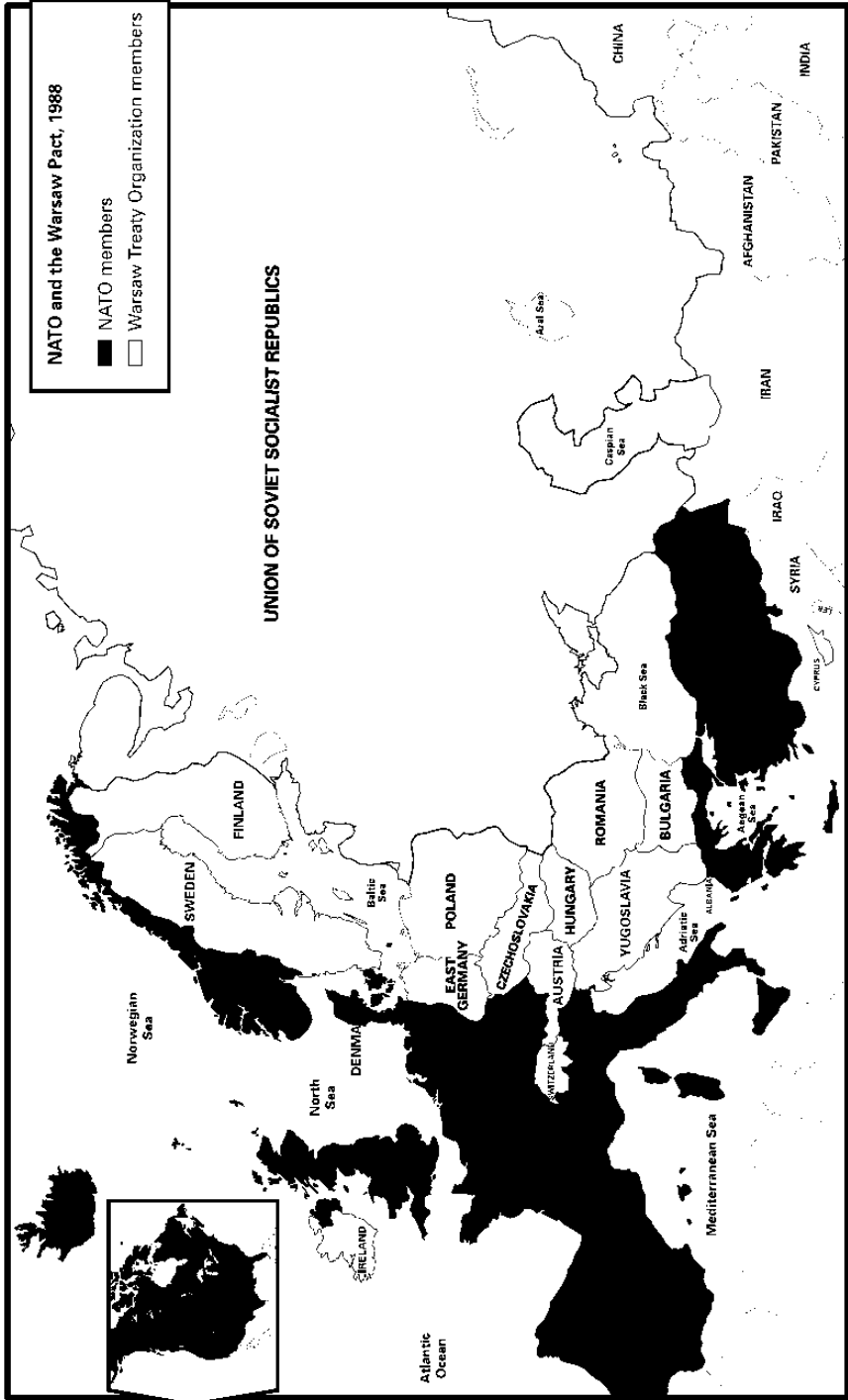
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<sup>1</sup>Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name  
<sup>2</sup>Suspended

Source: NATO Review, July-August 1997

The European Security Architecture



Post-Cold War Eurasia, 1998

- NATO members
- Prospective new NATO members
- Partnership for Peace members

