As this introduction illustrates, this book takes a holistic approach to security. Rather than focus on one specific aspect of the security agenda in relation to enlargement, this volume tackles a range of different security issues. The book also adopts a broad geographical scope, by examining key security relationships with states and regions in the EU's self-declared neighbourhood, namely Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, the Greater Middle East and the Balkans.

This volume aims to analyse these fundamental functional and geographical security priorities. Underlying this critical survey of Europe's security is a core theme: the impact of enlargement on the security of the EU. The central question is whether the EU is more or less secure post-enlargement. By addressing the range of contemporary security issues facing the EU, from traditional state-centred, military issues to new, transnational issues, focused on the security of the region, community or individual, this book highlights the substantive issues at the core of any future EU security policy.

These issues and threats facing the EU can no longer be simply labelled internal or external and therefore the EU, as well as the new member states, will have to adjust to this evolving security environment. Most importantly, to tackle the range of security issues facing the EU, the community needs to improve its political will, sense of leadership and material capability. The EU will have to ensure that enlargement does not further disrupt its internal cohesion and adds to, rather than detracts from, its ability to externally project security and stability into its neighbourhood. Donald Rumsfeld's conceptualisation of 'old' and 'new' Europe must not be set in stone, nor must the EU allow its perception of security to remain static. Nevertheless, the EU must be realistic in its objectives and maintain a balance between constantly trying to stay relevant in the field of security and ensuring it fulfils its existing expectations. While the EU has widened its security community, contributing to the stability of a large swath of Central and Eastern Europe, security concerns remain and are an ever-increasing priority on its policy agenda. This security agenda focuses on the EU's efforts to secure the community's values and interests, as well as its ability to project stability and security outside of the security community. Having raised expectations on both fronts, the EU needs to work hard to establish its credentials as a provider of security.

Notes

1 Christopher Hill, 'The capability–expectations gap, or conceptualising Europe's international role', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31:3 (1993), pp. 305–28.

2 See David Allen and Michael Smith, 'Western Europe's presence in the contemporary international arena', *Review of International Studies*, 16:1 (1990), pp. 19–37.

3 See C. Cosgrove and K. Twitchett (eds), *The New International Actors: The UN and the EEC* (London: Macmillan, 1970); Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor* (London: Routledge, 1999); Karen Smith, *EU Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (London: Polity, 2003).

1

EU enlargement and NATO: the Balkan experience

Martin A. Smith[1]

During the 1990s, both the EU and NATO enlarged their memberships: the EU by taking in Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995 and NATO by admitting the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland four years later. These two enlargement processes were not officially linked. In the wake of the developing EU enlargement process in the early 1990s, NATO members had apparently contented themselves with the inclusion of a paragraph in their own 1995 'Study on NATO Enlargement' (the document that can be said to have officially begun NATO's enlargement process). The study stated that:

> The enlargement of the two organisations will proceed autonomously, according to their respective internal dynamics and processes. This means they are unlikely to proceed at precisely the same pace. But the Alliance views its own enlargement and that of the EU as mutually supportive and parallel processes, which together will make a significant contribution to strengthening Europe's security structure. Thus, each organisation should ensure that their respective processes are in fact mutually supportive of the goal of enhancing European stability and security. While no rigid parallelism is foreseen, each organisation will need to consider developments in the other.[2]

In fact, the EU and NATO enlargement processes during the 1990s were characterised by what Smith and Timmins have called 'incremental linkage'.[3] Although not formally or structurally linked, it was apparent that a move forward in one institution's enlargement process would, within a relatively short period of time, produce an 'answering call' from the other, in terms of a corresponding move. As a result, in practice, neither institution's enlargement dynamic was allowed, by its member states, to move decisively ahead of the other.

On the NATO side, the main impetus for the creation and maintenance of this informal incremental linkage came from the US and its Atlanticist allies in Europe. They were motivated, firstly, by concerns that, if EU enlargement was allowed to proceed into Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkan region significantly ahead of NATO's own enlargement process, then what US officials had called 'underlapping security guarantees' might develop.[4] In other words, EU members might find themselves being drawn into conflicts in these relatively unstable regions and, not having an established system of security guarantees through the EU itself, might then call on

NATO to intervene, even though the states directly concerned might not themselves be NATO members. In addition, there was also, undoubtedly, a sense at the time of what might be called 'institutional Darwinism', namely a feeling that the two institutions were in a kind of competition with regard to embracing non-member countries in Europe. It was felt that there would be potentially debilitating consequences for the 'loser' if one was allowed to get too far ahead of the other in this 'great game'. Hence, there was an innate reluctance to allow either to do so. In sum, the motivation behind the development of incremental linkage was essentially competitive, rather than co-operative.

Enlargement in the new millennium: incremental linkage continued?

The very fact that the most important enlargement rounds in the histories of both organisations were completed within one month of each other, in the spring of 2004, lends weight to the proposition that the member states of both institutions remained concerned to ensure that neither got significantly ahead of the other in the enlargement stakes. An examination of key agreed statements by EU and NATO ministers provides additional support for the contention that incremental linkage between their respective enlargement processes has been maintained into the twenty-first century.

Within less than a week of each other, in December 1999, the two institutions' senior decision-taking forums – the European Council and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) respectively – committed their members in principle to moving ahead with enlargement. The European Council declared that 'the Union should be in a position to welcome new member states from the end of 2002, as soon as they have demonstrated their ability to assume the obligations of membership and once the negotiating process has been successfully completed'.[5] Four days later, the NAC, meeting at foreign minister level,[6] reaffirmed NATO's 'commitment to remain open to new members'. It added that 'the Alliance expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership'.[7] The EU's declared choice of 2002 as the target year for signing accession agreements with prospective new members was also significant. In April 1999, at a summit meeting called to mark NATO's fiftieth anniversary, its members' leaders, having agreed that the door remained open to further enlargement, also stated that they themselves would 'review' progress towards that goal 'no later than' 2002.[8]

Thus, by the beginning of the new millennium, the members of both institutions had established an in-principle commitment to moving ahead with further rounds of enlargement within a directly comparable timeframe. The rhetorical (and practical) pace quickened from 2001. In June of that year, the European Council declared that 'the enlargement process is irreversible' and reaffirmed the 2002 date for the completion of accession negotiations. These types of EU statements had also begun to add another date – 2004 – as the deadline for the new members to actually join the institution and assume the obligations of membership (this date was chosen so as to

enable them to take part in the European Parliament elections due that year).[9] Thus was born the *de facto* 2004 deadline for the enlargement of *both* institutions' memberships. At the end of 2001, NATO members duly issued their answering call. They declared at their December foreign ministers' meeting that the next NATO summit, in Prague in November 2002, would 'launch the next round of NATO enlargement'.[10] It duly did do, with a stated commitment that the NATO process would be completed by May 2004.[11]

During 2002, as anticipated, both the EU and NATO officially identified those states that their members wished to invite to join the ranks and invited them to conclude negotiations on accession.[12] There were multiple points of comparison between the would-be new members on the respective guest lists. Both the EU and NATO had identified the three Baltic States, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria as candidates for accession. In addition, the EU was also negotiating with NATO's three newest members: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Their accession would enable the EU to catch up with NATO, in terms of enlarging into former Soviet bloc territory in Central Europe. The only differences between the EU and NATO were that Cyprus and Malta were negotiating for membership of the former, but not the latter.

It is clear from this brief discussion that distinct, informal but, at the same time, noticeable and important linkages between the two enlargement processes were in evidence through the 1990s and leading up to the 2004 enlargements. In spite of this, the absence, to date, of *formal* linkage between them has concerned some observers. For them, this deficiency opens up the possibility of what Adrian Hyde-Price has called 'antinomies' developing in relations between the EU and NATO and in their overall approaches to Europe's security challenges.[13] The discussions in the sections that follow aim to assess whether such antinomies are, in fact, observable. They will focus on what has been Europe's most significant region in terms of security challenges and international responses since the end of the Cold War: the Balkans.

The Balkans: competition or complementarity?

The region under consideration here is, in NATO parlance, generally referred to as 'South-eastern Europe' and, in EU speak, as the 'Western Balkans'. Essentially, these descriptors cover the successor states of the former Yugoslavia,[14] together with Albania. Other neighbours, being either EU and/or NATO members or slated to join, are usually diplomatically excluded from descriptive association with these strife-prone states.

NATO's interest in this region can be traced back to 1992 and the first deployment of its collective military assets in support of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) during the civil war in Bosnia–Herzegovina (BiH). During the course of the 1990s, its military contribution became extensive. In 1995–96, a multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) of 60,000 troops was deployed to Bosnia, within a NATO command and control framework, to help police the implementation of the

recently signed Dayton peace accords. A further 40,000 soldiers were sent to Kosovo as part of the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in June 1999, following Operation Allied Force, the coercive air campaign which forced the Serbs to relinquish *de facto* control over that province.

Following early, abortive, diplomatic efforts to prevent the break-up of Yugoslavia degenerating into civil war in 1991–92, the EU was relatively quiescent in the region until the end of the NATO-Serb conflict over Kosovo in mid 1999. Thereafter, it became significantly more proactive. Firstly, in June 1999, the 'Stability Pact' was launched for the states of the region, embracing negotiations on security, democratisation and economic reconstruction.[15] Later that same year, Javier Solana, who had been NATO Secretary-General during the Kosovo conflict, was appointed to be the EU's first 'High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy'. He displayed a strong personal interest in the Balkan region and, by the summer of 2002, was reported to be spending about 60 per cent of his time dealing with it.[16]

In every sense, the 1999–2004 round of enlargement played an important role in bringing the EU closer to the Balkans than it ever had been before. In 2004, Slovenia became the first former Yugoslav republic to join both the EU and NATO. NATO also admitted Bulgaria and Romania, neighbouring states of the former Yugoslavia, both of which are also slated to join the EU in 2007. As part of the process of preparing the ground for enlargement, the EU sought to further enhance its relations with the former Yugoslav states. The main fruit of this renewed interest has been the so-called 'Stabilisation and Association' process. This holds out the ultimate prospect of states in the 'Western Balkans' being allowed to join the EU, on condition that they prove willing to make extensive reforms to their economic and political structures and are co-operative in helping to apprehend remaining indicted war criminals from the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s.[17] NATO, for its part, has declared that 'the door remains open' to future enlargements and has specifically identified Croatia, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) as states that are working towards eventual membership.[18]

The cumulative effect of this state of affairs is that the Balkan region has increasingly been emerging as the place 'where theory becomes reality in the NATO–EU relationship'. The same analyst also rightly added that 'whatever the discussion in Brussels is regarding NATO and the EU, the place where the relationship is most put to the test is the Balkans. A smoothly functioning relationship there will have positive ramifications at a more political level.'[19] That is why it is appropriate here to assess the nature and character of contemporary EU–NATO activities and relations in the Balkan region.

Until the end of the 1990s, the two institutions essentially had little formalised contact with each other in any respect. The peace agreements for both Bosnia and Kosovo had set in place a basic division of labour approach to the international pacification and stabilisation efforts in both these places, with a similar structure for each. The UN sat on top, nominally at least, and tried to provide a sense of overall strategic direction. Underneath it, the NATO forces undertook peace-keeping duties and also dealt with specific military tasks, such as searching for illicit arms caches and indicted war criminals. The EU, meanwhile, took the lead in seeking to promote

economic reconstruction and development, whilst the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) headed up election supervision responsibilities.

This situation has begun to change in the new millennium. The first change came with the EU takeover of the UN Police Mission in Bosnia in January 2003. The most obvious and important consequences of the change for EU-NATO relations have been the transition from NATO to EU-led peace-keeping and stabilisation forces in, firstly, FYROM, in the spring of 2003 and, subsequently, Bosnia at the end of 2004. This has necessitated a significant increase in operational co-operation between and across the two institutions, based on the hitherto unused Berlin Plus arrangements.[20] It has also led to suggestions that the EU is in the process of 'taking over in the Balkans', as NATO and the US increasingly focus their interests outside Europe, as part of the Bush administration's global 'War on Terror'.

In December 2004, for example, just as the EU was preparing to assume peace-keeping duties in Bosnia, a report published by the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU) (which now bills itself as the 'Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly') asserted that:

> Althea [the EU military operation in Bosnia] is more than simply a military crisis-management mission, or the substitution of a NATO force by an EU one. It marks a stage towards the EU's political objective gradually to take over the crisis management of all aspects of Balkan affairs: political, security, economic and social. This aim is clearly stated in the European Security Strategy adopted by the European Council in Brussels, on 12 December 2003.[21]

Elsewhere, this same report argued that the EU operation in Bosnia, 'while it takes account of the US view of Balkans security, is independent of the United States'.[22] A quasi-conspiratorial interpretation of developments – suggesting that EU members in some way 'aim' to progressively diminish NATO's role in European security affairs – has also been put forward by some, on the basis of their reading of the proposed EU Constitution. Jeffrey Cimbalo, for example, has argued that, if the Constitution is ever finally adopted (now a very sizeable 'if' in view of its rejection in the French and Dutch ratification referendums in the summer of 2005), 'the new Europe would focus on aggrandising EU power at the expense of NATO'.[23]

These concerns are exaggerated. The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) referred to in the WEU report is clear that 'one of the core elements of the international system is the transatlantic relationship. This is not only in our bilateral interest but strengthens the international community as a whole. NATO is an important expression of this relationship.' Lest there still be room for doubt, the basic point is reiterated later in the same document. Here, it is asserted that 'the transatlantic relationship is irreplaceable'.[24]

Old-style Atlanticists might be perturbed to see NATO referred to as 'an' rather than 'the' institutional embodiment of the transatlantic relationship, yet this formulation does no more than reflect objective realities. The EU has a distinct transatlantic relationship of its own, via a programme of institutionalised summit meetings between the US President and senior administration officials, on the one hand, and the Commission

President and current EU Presidency state on the other. Some might also argue that the OSCE serves as an additional transatlantic consultative and discussion forum.

One has to work very hard, even reading between the lines, to detect any 'clear statement' in the ESS about an EU aim to take over in the Balkans. On the contrary, the text of the document seems clear in recognising that the EU cannot realistically aspire to bring long-term peace and stability to the region on its own. Thus, it is stated that:

> Our task is to promote a ring of well-governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations. The importance of this is best illustrated in the Balkans. *Through our concerted efforts with the US, Russia, NATO and other international partners*, the stability of the region is no longer threatened by the outbreak of major conflict [emphasis added].[25]

And again, later:

> The European Union has made progress towards a coherent foreign policy and effective crisis management. We have instruments in place that can be used effectively, as we have demonstrated in the Balkans and beyond. But if we are to make a contribution that matches our potential, we need to be more active, more coherent and more capable. *And we need to work with others* [emphasis added].[26]

In July 2003, five months before EU members endorsed the ESS, NATO and the EU had agreed to pursue a 'concerted approach for the Western Balkans'. What this meant in practice was agreement on the core areas of concern that needed to be addressed, together with outline agreement on the main roles that each institution would undertake. There was also a pledge to step up inter-institutional consultation and co-ordination.[27] It has been described as 'the only formal agreement between the two organisations'.[28] Although it is not, in fact, the only co-operative agreement *per se* (a number of accords have been put in place to give practical effect to the Berlin Plus arrangements), it is certainly true that the 'concerted approach' represents a precedent for theatre-specific operationally focused understandings between the organisations and their respective member states.

The catalyst for the agreement seems to have come about as a result of some problems in the handover from NATO to the EU of the stabilisation mission in FYROM. These reportedly related to the sharing of information and co-ordination issues.[29] It seems likely that they were the product, not of deliberate obstruction or ill-will on either side, but rather of the simple fact that this was the first occasion in practice when NATO members had agreed to formally hand a military operation over to another international institution. It was also, of course, the first time that the EU had undertaken to be responsible for a military operation. No template for a smooth transition existed, therefore, on either side. The July 2003 agreement can thus be seen as an attempt to establish ground rules, both for FYROM and also for other theatres in the region. As such, it pointed clearly towards acceptance of the view, on both sides, that NATO and the EU were likely to be working *together* in the Balkans for the foreseeable future.

It is, however, in relation to the practicalities of the EU-led operations in FYROM and Bosnia that the lack of substance in suggestions that the EU might wish to

displace NATO from the Balkans can most clearly be seen. In both operations, the EU-led forces have been crucially dependent upon NATO military assets and resources. As noted earlier, they operate under arrangements that are known in NATO-speak as Berlin Plus. In practice, this means that the EU forces have relied largely on NATO command and planning structures, with a chain of command leading from NATO's senior military headquarters in Belgium and the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR). Although the DSACEUR is, by tradition, always a European national, the command chain also reportedly runs through the NATO southern command, which is a US-led headquarters. The command structure has evidently been carefully designed to avoid the appearance of EU forces being placed *directly* under US command.[30] Yet, it is not the case that the operations have been conducted, as the 2004 WEU report referred to earlier appears to suggest, *completely* independently of the US. Whilst they may be formally politically independent, in the sense that they have been placed under the overall direction of the EU Council, by agreeing to utilise the Berlin Plus arrangements, EU members have accepted 'logically, the United States having some influence over the operation[s]'.[31]

In addition, suggestions that either NATO or the US are in the process of *withdrawing* (as opposed to *drawing down*) their presence and force levels in the Balkans are wide of the mark. By far the largest military deployment in the region – over 20,000 troops, which are still committed to KFOR – remains under NATO command. When it was first deployed in 1999, 15 per cent of KFOR was made up of US troops. The ratio had fallen to 9 per cent by 2004 (the last full year for which figures were available at the time of writing). However, this still represented a US commitment of over 2,000 troops.[32]

NATO has also retained military headquarters in both FYROM and Bosnia, following the formal handover to EU-led forces there. Both NATO headquarters Sarajevo and NATO headquarters Skopje are small (with around 200 personnel in each) and their presence may thus be said to be mainly symbolic. However, the symbolism is potent, in several respects. To begin with, the continued NATO presence is a tangible demonstration on the ground of the implementation of the July 2003 EU–NATO agreement on tackling key Balkan challenges together. The NATO headquarters thus have specific assigned tasks. Chief amongst them, in both Bosnia and FYROM, is working with governments to secure defence sector reforms. In Bosnia, in addition, the NATO force is tasked with continuing the quest to apprehend remaining indicted war criminals and with tracking any attempt by militant Islamists to establish a foothold in that state.[33]

A continuing NATO and US presence has also been required in order to provide an underlying degree of reassurance to the locals that EU forces by themselves cannot provide. This has been the case in Bosnia especially, where the record of the 1990s conflict implies for many Bosnians, of all ethnic backgrounds, that the EU on its own is unable to deal effectively with a serious security breakdown and the carnage that can result.[34] Therefore, in Bosnia, in addition to the NATO headquarters in Sarajevo, the US also retains a national military base at Tuzla, primarily to enable it to airlift in additional military forces, should it decide that the security situation in future makes reinforcement necessary.[35]

All told, around 250 US military personnel continue to serve in Bosnia, at either the national or the NATO headquarters. Their numbers are down from the 1,000 or so who served with the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) at the time that it was replaced by the EU force in December 2004.[36] This obviously represents a notable drawing down of the US presence. It is likely that one reason the Bush administration embraced the idea of the EU replacing SFOR was that this US draw-down would enable the US to assuage those amongst its own supporters who believed the 2000 Bush presidential election campaign had pledged to withdraw from the Balkans altogether.

What is also striking, on the other hand, is the extent to which there has been a dearth of pressure from within the EU – or amongst European members of NATO – for the US and NATO to turn the Balkans over entirely to the EU. Voices supporting this could sometimes be heard back in the late 1990s, before EU members had found agreement on operationalising their rhetorical commitments to create a viable ESDP. Since the EU actually began to make tangible military commitments to the Balkans, however, these voices have largely fallen silent. Instead, there has been a reiteration of what became a *de facto* mantra during the second half of the 1990s: the US and Europe went into the Balkans together and they will leave together.

A new division of labour?

An interim conclusion can be drawn here from this analysis of the recent record of the EU and NATO in the Balkans. Michael Clarke and Paul Cornish have argued that 'the "competition" between them for a defence role is greatly overdrawn in a highly charged political debate in the UK'.[37] This sound judgement can also be applied to the debates in other EU and NATO member states. As the discussions above have demonstrated, the record since the start of the new millennium has, in fact, been one increasingly marked by co-operation rather than competition between the two institutions.

Some have seen the increasing lack of rancour in debates about the roles of the EU and NATO as being due to a growing *de facto* division of labour between them. This term has been used in two distinct senses. Firstly, it is sometimes employed to describe the perceived situation within the Balkan region. In this scenario, the EU has taken on quasi-military tasks in relatively stable and secure environments in Bosnia and FYROM, with NATO retaining control in more volatile Kosovo. NATO has retained a baseline presence in Bosnia and FYROM too, as noted above, so that it can bring a harder military edge to bear effectively and efficiently should necessity dictate in the future.

This view has much to commend it. The July 2003 agreement between the two institutions did indeed lay out a framework for a division of labour between them and the complementarity of approach that the agreement sought to entrench appears, thus far, to have been solidified in practice. This has been most apparent in Bosnia, where the small NATO force has existed alongside the larger EU one for the purpose of undertaking a number of agreed and specified military tasks.

What is less clear, however, is whether the increasing EU commitment to operations in the Balkans is helping to promote the second kind of division of labour that is sometimes mentioned. This sees security roles and tasks within Europe as a whole coming increasingly within the purview of the EU, whilst NATO focuses mainly on threats and challenges in other regions. The view is also sometimes expressed that one side of this equation feeds directly into the other, because the EU's Balkan commitments help to free up NATO resources and attention for the wider global tasks.[38]

Over the course of 2002, NATO members effectively decided to eliminate the remaining vestiges of the Cold War understanding, which held that NATO had no institutional roles to play outside of Europe. They formally recognised international terrorism and the proliferation of WMD as being core security threats. In addition, they adopted elements of US thinking on 'effects-based operations', a significant part of which rests on the premise that military power should be projected quickly and effectively to trouble spots beyond the territory of NATO member states. In this respect, the most important practical decision, taken at the NATO Prague summit in November 2002, was to begin to create a multinational NATO Response Force (NRF), which could be deployed 'wherever needed' around the world. This force is due to be fully operational by the autumn of 2006.[39]

Developments on the ground since 2002 may also indicate that NATO is increasingly focusing its interests and efforts outside of Europe. In August 2003, it began to provide a multinational headquarters facility in Kabul, Afghanistan for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that was based there. This was the first time in its history that a formal NATO operation (that is, one involving deployment of its multinational military assets) had been mounted outside Europe. Over the course of 2004 and 2005, agreement was also reached amongst member states to use NATO multinational teams to assist in the training of indigenous security forces inside Iraq.

There is little doubt as to where the major impetus behind these developments has come from: the US. Many prominent US officials and analysts have articulated and developed the view that international security threats and challenges in the post-September 11 era necessitate NATO refocusing on extra-European commitments. In congressional testimony in April 2003, for example, Nicholas Burns, the then US Ambassador to NATO stated that:

> If NATO's past was centred in countering the Soviet threat to Western Europe, its future must be devoted to meeting the greatest security challenge this generation faces – the toxic mix of terrorism, states that sponsor terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction far from Europe's shores. NATO needs to pivot from its inward focus on Europe – which was necessary and appropriate during the Cold War – to an outward focus on the arc of countries where most of the threats are today – in Central and South Asia, and in the Middle East.[40]

Well-known analyst Ronald Asmus told the same hearings:

> The core question facing NATO today is simple: what should be this Alliance's main mission in a world where Europe is increasingly secure and many if not all of the major threats we are likely to face in the future will come from new sources beyond the

> continent? Should NATO's job be limited to maintaining the peace on an increasingly secure continent – a worthwhile objective but hardly America's only or most important concern? Or should the Alliance retool itself to address new threats to its members' security irrespective of where they emanate from? To be blunt, do we and our allies want NATO to have a significant role in the future Afghanistan and Iraqs that we will inevitably face?[41]

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that it is simply a question of the US pushing for NATO to move outside Europe and leaving the EU to deal with remaining security challenges in the Balkans. The discussions above have demonstrated that the US has deemed it important – for political, security and operational reasons – to continue to retain both a NATO and a national military presence in the Balkan region. While this is at a historically low level in terms of numbers of troops on the ground, NATO has developed the capacity to move in reinforcements quickly if required, as happened at the time of serious ethnic disturbances in Kosovo in March 2004.

In short, there has been an enduring sense, in both the US and amongst NATO members in Europe, that security tasks in the Balkans remain sufficiently important as to justify continued US and NATO interest and engagement. The priorities of both NATO and the EU's new member states have reinforced this sense of importance. Hence, as noted above, the Bush administration has persevered with the 'in together, out together' doctrine first propounded by its predecessor in the 1990s.[42]

The US has also been consistently interested in trying to persuade a broad cross-section of its allies in Europe to contribute militarily to its major campaigns in Afghanistan and, especially, Iraq. To this end, there has been official US reluctance to see any division of labour arrangements being formalised *within* NATO. As Ambassador Burns noted during his congressional testimony in April 2003, 'we do not want to see it develop. We do not want to see a two-tiered alliance where the United States is uniquely capable of projecting force, of doing the fighting, and our European allies cannot be with us'.[43] This thinking lay behind the US initiative to create the NRF. In purely military terms, the US, with its unrivalled national force projection capabilities, surely has no need of another, multinational, expeditionary formation. The point of the NRF, therefore, is mainly political – to provide a framework and a means for attempting to ensure that a cross-section of NATO allies participate alongside the US in military operations outside Europe. It could even be argued that there has been a *de facto* trade-off between continued US involvement in the Balkans and (albeit in some cases tentative) European support for NATO's growing portfolio of extra-European operations.

Conclusion

To return to an underlying theme of this book, how important has EU enlargement been in helping to explain its greater involvement in the Balkan region since the turn of the millennium? It would be foolish to suggest that it has played no role. The 2004 round of enlargement extended the EU's membership into the Balkan region, after all. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that the EU and its member states were moving towards taking on more significant roles in the Balkans in any event, due to two other factors. The first has been the personal interest in the region of High Representative Solana who, it may be recalled, had also been preoccupied with Balkan issues during his tenure as NATO Secretary-General in the second half of the 1990s. His time in office saw the first deployments of NATO peace-keeping forces to Bosnia, as well as the Kosovo war. The second causal explanation for greater EU interest in the region in the present decade can be found in the formal creation of the ESDP in 1999 (a development inspired partly by reactions to perceived European over-dependence on the US during the Kosovo conflict). Once the member states had declared that the EU was prepared to take on certain military tasks (largely relating to peace-keeping and humanitarian operations) and identified force goals, a process was set in motion whereby it became reasonable to expect them to begin to seek out opportunities to test their new capabilities. Thus, in spring 2003, the EU took the relatively 'easy first step'[44] in FYROM and followed that up in Bosnia at the end of 2004. This latter commitment is undoubtedly more demanding. Yet, EU members have had the assurance that NATO and the US remain 'on the horizon' in the region and can be expected to become involved promptly if anything goes seriously wrong.

NATO's own 2004 round of enlargement mirrored that of the EU by moving its membership deep into the Balkans. It is, thus, hardly surprising that it has not withdrawn from the region. Given the EU's enhanced degree of involvement, and in terms of overall security in the Balkans, it is essential that the EU and NATO develop means and methods of co-operation, in order to ensure that each makes a worthwhile contribution and relations between them do not become either duplicative or competitive. Thus far, concerns about a competitive situation developing have proved to be without foundation. Given the politicking and sometimes public bickering and expressions of rivalry that were apparent on occasion during the 1990s, this might appear to be surprising. The 1990s were a time of rhetorical posturing, however, especially for the EU, which did not then have any actual operational defence and security capability. The current decade has witnessed a transition to such an operational capacity and, as this has developed, the rhetoric has been increasingly replaced by a realisation that successful operations on the ground require both effective demarcation and efficient co-operation with NATO. The 'Atlanticist' perspective of the 2004 and likely future enlargements will reinforce this approach.

Notes

1 The views expressed here are personal and do not represent the opinions or views of the British Government, Ministry of Defence or the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.
2 *Study on NATO Enlargement* (Brussels: NATO, 1995), p. 8.
3 Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins, 'The European Union and NATO enlargement debates in comparative perspective: a case of incremental linkage?', *West European Politics*, 22:3 (July 1999), pp. 22–40 and Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins, *Building a Bigger Europe: EU and NATO Enlargement in Comparative Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).
4 Author's interview with a member of the US Mission to NATO, October 1993.

5 Council of the European Union, *Conclusions of the Helsinki European Council* (Brussels, December 1999).
6 The North Atlantic Council can meet in any one of four different formats: permanent representatives, defence ministers, foreign ministers and heads of state and government.
7 NATO Press Release M-NAC-2(99)166, www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-166e.htm.
8 NATO Press Release NAC-S(99)64, www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm.
9 Council of the European Union, *Conclusions of the Göteborg European Council* (Brussels, June 2001).
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