

911: A Wakeup Call for NATO and the EU?

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There is nothing like a common terrorist enemy to unite organizations. The September 11, 2001 attacks have proven to be a catalyst, not only for closer NATO-EU relations, but also for tighter US-Russian cooperation. Russian President Putin has not grumbled too loudly about U.S. abrogation of the ABM treaty, nor objected to the construction of U.S. military bases in the "stans" like Kirghizstan. Since September 11, he has started to cooperate closely with the United States in the struggle against *al Qaeda* (alluding often to the Russians' own struggle with Chechen "terrorists") and has softened his rhetoric against NATO expansion. In October 2001, Putin said that if NATO were to continue "becoming more political than military," Russia might reconsider its opposition to enlargement. He has not objected to NATO's stated plans to launch the next round of enlargement at the Prague Summit in November 2002. At their November 2001 summit in Crawford, Texas, Putin did not press Bush on the issue. In fact, earlier in the summer of 2001, Putin opined that Russia might itself want to join NATO. The new NATO-Russia Council, created on May 28, 2002, will probably encourage Russian leaders to accommodate further NATO expansion, a development they do not like but know

they cannot stop. Although the new NATO-Russia Council does not give Russia a veto over independent NATO action, it does give Russia a voice in specific areas, including crisis management, peacekeeping, air defense, search-and-rescue operations, and joint exercises.

Whereas anti-expansionists argue that Washington's need for Russian cooperation in the war on terrorism gives Moscow added leverage in its dealings with the United States, the reverse proposition is probably more persuasive: Russia's urge to join the Western anti-terrorism coalition will lead it to seek a modus vivendi on controversial issues like NATO enlargement. Thus, the war on terrorism, like all wars, cold or hot, has the potential to bring former adversaries together.

Given the kaleidoscopic concatenation of events, the relative paucity of books about NATO enlargement, specifically the linkage between EU and NATO enlargement processes, is surprising. Approximately twenty-five major books on the subject have been published in English since April 30, 1998, when the U.S. Senate ratified by a vote of 80 to 19 the Clinton Administration's decision to enlarge NATO. (Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were welcomed into NATO as the "first wave expansion" during a ceremony held in Independence, Missouri on March 12, 1999.) More than half of these books are edited collections of essays that primarily examine the consequences of enlargement on the international system and on the policies of individual countries in particular: NATO's oldest member states, the three new members (Viségrad states), and the rest of the NATO "wannabes." While some analysts and political leaders writing these books oppose NATO expansion, few if any

of them would deny that the post-Cold War European security community should be extended eastwards if at all possible. (Indeed, some public figures such as Czech President Vaclav Havel stress the *moral* imperative to expand.) Such opponents simply doubt whether enlarging NATO's membership is the *best* way. They have favored alternative methods of expanding the underlying security community to include both East Central Europe and Russia, maintaining that failure to do so will exacerbate the latter's historical phobias about encirclement.¹

Four recent books about NATO expansion deserve special attention. The three books by Smith and Timmins, Sperling, and Carpenter *inter alia* benefit readers by examining the linkage between NATO and the European Union. The book edited by Rauchhaus is to my knowledge the only book that applies International Relations (IR) theories to the phenomenon of NATO expansion.

In Building a Bigger Europe: EU and NATO Enlargement in Comparative Perspective, Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins adopt a refreshingly neutral (not pro-American) tone. Both authors teach at British institutions--Smith at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, and Timmins at the University of Huddersfield. They explain that the book developed from the realization that a gap exists in the comparative literature on the EU and NATO enlargement processes, which is surprising, given the number of countries that belong to both organizations. No single state, except perhaps Germany, has tried to forge policy or to try to link the EU and NATO policies, they explain (p. 21). Although both the EU and NATO are under the

rubric of European Studies, few scholars have an equal depth of knowledge about both the EU and NATO” (pg. viii).

The authors stress the need for a broader definition of security than the one that prevailed during the Cold War bipolar military division of Europe. Military security alone will not suffice. Citing Barry Buzan’s five-dimensional definition (military, political, economic, societal, and environmental), they stress that more diffuse security challenges will emerge in the twenty-first century, within which economic issues will play a more vital role (p. 14). In 1989 the Cold War security order was suddenly transformed. It altered the structure of the European state system, intensified the relationship between military and economic security and possibly inverted their relative importance, they explain. Overcoming the continuing division of Europe and assuring the future stability of the European security order are contingent, they claim, upon the successful transition of the central and eastern European states to the market economy and multi-party democracy (p. 11).

Some aspects of the formal democratization process can be externally supported and directed, such as the constitution, party-system, elections, and marketization. However, establishing a civil society as a whole is a different story. The authors claim that the creation of a “public participatory and supportive political culture depends upon the political legitimacy that Central and Eastern European electorates afford to the post-communist regimes.” (p. 5). Smith and Timmins aver that the EU can foster political legitimacy and economic stability—i.e. “comprehensive security”---better than NATO can. They believe that a security community in Western Europe was developed within the common military structure of NATO, but “is

politically and societally distinct from it” (p. 16). It is much easier to earn membership in NATO than in the EU, since the former insists only upon civilian control of the military. According to the authors, NATO does not actually restrict its membership to countries with democratic regimes; member countries such as Portugal and Turkey both had dictatorial regimes, for example.

From the EU’s perspective, the end of the Cold War represented a great opportunity to continue the process of trading and building pan-European unity as envisaged by its founding fathers in the 1940s and 1950s (p. 1). NATO, on the other hand, was established in 1949 out of European division. Western states viewed it as a necessary means of resisting the Soviet military threat. Unlike the EU, NATO was compelled to justify its continued existence after the collapse of the USSR amidst expectations of a “New World Order” and the anticipated peace dividend it would yield (p. 1).

Efforts after the Cold War to broaden NATO’s functions beyond the military arena have met with no significant success, according to the authors. They write:

Since the deployment of NATO-led international forces to police and supervise the implementation of the Dayton peace accords in Bosnia at the beginning of 1996, and the deployment of a similar force to Kosovo in June 1999, it has become clear that NATO’s future utility lies mainly in a revised, but still essentially military, role of deploying and commanding peace enforcement operations in conjunction with the UN in Europe, and perhaps elsewhere (p. 16).

Hence, as a fundamentally military-based institution, NATO cannot address the full range of security needs, either of its existing members or of prospective new ones, the authors claim. NATO thus falls shy as the sole institutional foundation of a European security community (p. 15).

Smith and Timmins adopt the controversial view that both NATO and the EU need to expand to the east if a wider European security community can be developed (p. 14). That is, a pan-European security order will be based on both NATO's "hard security" or military role, and the EU's "soft security" or economic and diplomatic roles (pp. 11, 14). Neither of these two institutions, however, can provide the other two types of security Buzan listed, societal or environmental security.

Some critics of NATO expansion attribute the Clinton Administration's decision to enlarge the alliance to factors in U.S. domestic politics, such as the 1992 presidential election campaign and concomitant desire to appease U.S. citizens of Central European descent in exchange for votes; the vigorous lobbying of the Visegrad countries; and the lobbying of the U.S. defense contractors who stood to gain from arms sales to these new NATO members.² Smith and Timmins alert the reader to the probability that NATO expansion also came about in part out of NATO officials' fear that the EU would expand eastward first, thus outshining NATO and presaging its decline as a player in European politics.

Because Smith and Timmins are pioneers in the analysis of EU and NATO enlargement within a comparative framework, they have had to start "from scratch," carefully developing the organizational concept of "incremental linkage" between the two organizations. They refer to two types of linkage: event linkage and issue linkage. "Event linkage refers to particular developments in one institution's enlargement process which were followed within a finite period of time—usually six months or under—by a corresponding development in the other's" (p. 11). One example of event

linkage is the EC's Maastricht summit in December, 1991 (leading to the landmark 1992 treaty establishing the EU and introducing the euro currency) and NATO's summit in Rome in November 1991, announcing the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). Examples of issue linkage include: financial costs of enlargement; the sequence in which applicants join the EU and NATO; the impact on decision-making processes; and various forms of institutional adaptation (p. 11).

The EU might have admitted new members sooner than NATO did, had various "export wars" between Central Eastern European (CEE) states and EU member states not delayed the process, as well as the internal reservations of the larger, older states such as Great Britain and France. The latter worried about: 1) the challenge of integrating the economies of the EU member states and those of the CEE states; 2) the sizeable financial transfers flowing out of their states into CEE states; and 3) the fact that the majority of these accession states will be net beneficiaries from the European Union budget (p. 3). Smith and Timmins remind the reader that Greece is the EU member with the lowest per capita GDP (\$8200), while the states soon to be admitted have a GDP of \$3300, and states working on their qualifications have a GDP of less than \$1800 (pp. 130-1).

Also problematic in the view of the older EU members are: 1) the accession states' different historical experiences concerning socio-economic development, and 2) representation rights in the Commission and voting power in the Council of Ministers (p. 131). Meanwhile, the CEE states fumed at the delay and looked to membership in NATO as a palliative. Speaking to the General Assembly of the Council of Europe in October 1993, the Czech President, Vaclav Havel, condemned what he perceived to

have been an “overly bureaucratic attitude of the West” in responding to Central and Eastern Europe (pp. 1-2).

Nevertheless, Smith and Timmins end on a positive note, observing that the long-term prospects for democracy in the region are basically healthy (p. 7). Although the electorates concerned support membership in both the EU and NATO, a 1998 poll conducted by the European Commission cited by the authors reveals that the electorates clearly favor membership in the EU more (p. 4). This further reinforces the authors’ view that EU expansion is as important, if not more, than NATO expansion, since the EU promotes economic and diplomatic security, as opposed to just military security. The authors found that popular attitudes towards post-communist society are generally more positive among the “ins” (EU jargon for prospective members) as opposed to the “pre-ins” (those with less prospect of joining). Generally, Poles and Romanians are the most positive about the EU, while Slovenians, Hungarians, and Czechs are more negative (pp. 6-8).

The authors ominously warn, however, of a so-called “expectations gap” among the electorates of the CEE states. Just as in 1989 the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe collapsed because the command economic system imploded and the political elites failed to satisfy the material aspirations of the masses, so also in the early 21st century, the masses could become disillusioned if their countries are not admitted into the EU and/or NATO soon enough, or if membership in either of these institutions does not benefit the given country as much as previously imagined. According to Smith and Timmins, “The danger is that an expectations gap will develop that cannot be satisfied

by pro-western post-communist political elites and that disenchantment will foster the creation of less amenable and undemocratic political systems (pp. 5-6).”

Two Tiers or Two Speeds? is a useful collection of ten essays edited by James Sperling, professor of political science at the University of Akron, Ohio. Like *Building a Bigger Europe* by Smith and Timmins, this book also fills a significant gap in the scholarly literature on the dual enlargement processes of the EU and NATO. They agree with Smith and Timmins that both EU and NATO enlargement are necessary to build a viable European security community. While both the EU and NATO have their origins in the cold war, the disappearance of the Soviet threat in the 1990s in no way undermined the cohesion and purpose of these institutions, as John Mearsheimer and other political scientists predicted a decade ago, Sperling notes. He emphasizes that the original purpose of the EU and NATO was to contain Germany and Russia. Even in the late 1990s, according to the author: 1) Russia still had the ability to disrupt the European order both economically and militarily; 2) the absence of ideological enmity between Russia and the United States did not alter the balance of nuclear power substantially, nor did it reduce German power in Central Europe. Therefore, “if nothing else the EU and NATO will retain the residual function of containment into the third millennium” (p. 4).

Like Smith and Timmins, Sperling stresses that the EU is an economic and political entity, whereas NATO is a military machine. He somewhat dourly concludes that “EU enlargement will remain a tortuous process with an uncertain outcome owing to an array of institutional, financial, and political liabilities of the accession states and constraints within the EU (p. x).” In contrast, NATO

enlargement has been “a relatively swift and painless process because there have been no compelling reasons not to proceed” (page x). In this way, Sperling takes a more optimistic view than Smith and Timmins of the expansion of NATO and its post-Cold War military achievements. The book is evenly divided---four essays on NATO and four on the EU. The contributors include: Erik Jones (University of Nottingham), Thomas-Durrell Young (Naval Postgraduate School), Emil J. Kirchner (University of Essex), Gale A. Mattox (U.S. Naval Academy), Daniel Whiteneck (Towson University), Michael Huelshoff (University of New Orleans), Clay Clemens (College of William and Mary), and others.

NATO Enters the 21st Century, a compilation of eight essays, differs from most other edited volumes on NATO expansion published since 1998, in that all authors are American and critical of the organization’s move eastward. Other books, like those edited by Rauchhaus and Sperling, examine the perspectives of other countries and either approve the “enlargement” of the alliance or evenly debate its pros and cons. Edited by Ted Galen Carpenter (Vice President for Defense and Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute), this book examines the internal discord in NATO since its expansion and conveys a sense of urgency: disagreements among NATO members are increasing in intensity, now that there is no Soviet threat imposing unity on defiant members of the alliance. Dr. Carpenter intended for the book to become the “basis of a searching debate about the future of European security.”

Besides Carpenter, other contributors to *NATO Enters the 21st Century* include Alton Frye (senior fellow, Council on Foreign Relations); Alan Tonelson

(research fellow, US Business and Industry Council Educational Foundation, Washington DC); Amos Perlmutter (political science professor, American University); Christopher Layne (visiting professor, University of Southern California); Richard Rupp (visiting assistant professor, Purdue University); and Kori Schake (research professor, National Defense University).

Two of the most interesting essays are those written by Carpenter and Tonelson. Carpenter argues that NATO's new Strategic Concept, which was presented at the 50th anniversary summit in April 1999, is more of a "conceptual muddle" rather than a "coherent blueprint" (p. 7). This plan for the future, he claims, was designed to "appease certain self-seeking parties" within the alliance, but it turned out to be nearly irrelevant (p. 177). Dr. Tonelson's essay deals with the contentious issue of burden-sharing. He posits that the European allies have not helped to shoulder the financial burdens because the United States has never given them sufficient incentive. Rather, U.S. leaders send mixed messages; they complain about European "free riding," but simultaneously proclaim that European security is of paramount importance to the United States. Like Smith and Timmins then, Tonelson emphasizes the rivalry between NATO and the EU and the latter's determination to remain the predominant player in the European arena. Also like Smith and Timmins, Tonelson is critical of NATO's military achievements, pointing out that the Bosnian and Kosovo crises were clearly not Article 5-type threats and that the United States had no obligation to get involved. The fact that it did, Tonelson argues, signaled to the Europeans that the Americans will always rescue them. Quoting Representative Barney Frank (Democrat—Massachusetts): "America's European allies are

threatening to become foreign policy ‘welfare recipients.’ Unless compelled to do so, they will never pay their own way.” (pp. 53-54).

Like the books by James Sperling and Ted Galen Carpenter, the fourth book, *Explaining NATO Enlargement*, is also a collection of essays. The editor is Robert Rauchhaus, an international business consultant and doctoral candidate at the University of California, Berkeley. However, as mentioned above, this book is unique in its honest attempt to apply IR theories (e.g. neorealism, alliance theory, organization theory, and neoliberal institutionalism) to the decision to expand NATO eastward. As Rauchhaus points out, there have been surprisingly few efforts to apply IR theory directly to this issue. “Even when leading IR theorists have participated in the debate, they have been prone to discard their analytic tools, offering *ad hoc* explanations that rest on historical analogies or normatively grounded arguments” (p. 9).

The contributors to this volume include Kenneth Waltz, Ernest Haas, Gale Mattox, Charles Kupchan, Steven Weber, Beverly Crawford, and Vinod Aggarwal. They write with clarity, posing and answering the questions: Why did NATO expand after the Cold War, when alliance theory predicts that alliances dissolve after they have achieved their purpose? When the USSR and Warsaw Pact collapsed, why didn’t NATO? Furthermore, why didn’t the intra-alliance tensions (e.g. the disagreements over leadership and burden-sharing discussed by Tonelson, described above) cause the European members of NATO to balance themselves against the sole hegemon and superpower—the United States? Ironically, while NATO is flourishing today, most policymakers and political pundits just a decade

ago were debating whether the alliance could survive at all. The conventional wisdom about NATO's future was very pessimistic. Even the experts who were optimistic about NATO's role in the post-Cold War world had only modest expectations. Indeed, the debate was "not between NATO optimists and NATO pessimists, but rather between different individuals with varying degrees of pessimism" (p. 7).

Waltz in his essay "NATO Expansion: A Realist's View," explains where realists may have gone astray. NATO is not a typical military alliance, but instead a highly institutionalized organization that deals with "a variety of important issues, not simply deterring specific threats" (pp. 12-3). Moreover, Waltz argues, most neorealists underestimated the degree to which the United States was, and still is, NATO. Normally, military alliances emphasize the principle of "all for one," but NATO was from the start more about "one for all." Today, Washington still finds NATO desirable because it provides a way for 'maintaining and lengthening America's grip on the foreign and military policies of European states.' Most neorealists underestimated the degree to which the United States was, and still is, NATO. The issue, therefore, is not just whether NATO will deter and defend against external threats, but whether NATO serves America's 'perceived or misperceived interests' in Europe. Given the lack of any coherent foreign or military policy for the European Union, NATO still serves Europe's interests too" (p. 13).

Indeed, in the wake of the September 11 tragedy, NATO is even more desirable to the United States because it may provide a way to fortify its war against terrorism. The European members of NATO are more apt to regard a terrorist

attack against the United States as an attack on NATO. The unprecedented attacks have galvanized the public opinion of traditional adversaries of NATO, increasing their desire to strengthen the post-Cold War European security community, condone the admission of NATO's "second wave" applicants, and even to join NATO themselves.

All four books summarized above contain many more insights than can be covered here. Graduate students and advanced undergraduates with some knowledge of U.S.—European relations will find each of them cogent and well researched, if not a bit "overcome by events."

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¹ See Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins, *Building a Bigger Europe: EU and NATO Enlargement in Comparative Perspective* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate

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² See, for example, James M Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: the U.S. decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington, D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 1999).