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The EU, NATO and Europeanisation: The Return of Architectural Debate

STUART CROFT

In international relations, ideas matter. Not only are ideas important, and rooted in a relationship with interests, but present ideas are shaped by the outcome of past ideational battles. It is the impact of conflict between the ideas of the early 1990s upon the present that concerns this article. The first section of this article suggests that ideas matter. The second then examines the interplay of those ideas of European security in the early 1990s. The third and fourth sections trace the inevitable move to NATO enlargement that arose as a consequence. And the conclusion will examine how this contemporary history has shaped the debates of today.

The beginning of the new century has brought with it the return of an old debate in European security: what is the most appropriate institutional architecture for the security arrangements of the continent? Europeans are working towards the development of a Common European Security and Defence Policy as part of the construction of Europe.¹ Americans, and some European conservatives, worry that this European identity will inevitably undermine the centrality and effectiveness of NATO.² The form of the debate may have changed, but of course we have seen this before: in the 1960s, in the early 1980s, and again in the early 1990s. Indeed, despite changing threat perceptions, or perhaps because of them, this is the second major debate about architecture since the end of the Cold War.

There is an important difference, however, between the architectural debates of the early 1990s and that of the late 1990s–early 2000s. In the prior debate, one that emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War, four alternative and mutually exclusive ideas were put forward. The French and Belgians, among others, articulated a view of a defence identity for the European Union that would be separate and separable from that of NATO. The Germans and Czechs supported the development of a pan-European collective security arrangement, based on an enhanced C/OSCE. The Russians argued in favour of a concert of powers idea, manifested through a European security council. And the Americans and British supported the

centrality of a relatively unchanging NATO. Each idea sought superiority over the other.

Ten years on, those four ideas have boiled down to two: NATO, and a European Identity. And whereas ten years earlier the four ideas were mutually exclusive, in the early 2000s a Europeanised NATO and a European Security and Defence Policy should look remarkably close together. That they may not is perhaps at least in part down to the hangover of the institutional debate of the early 1990s.

In international relations, as in all other areas, ideas matter. This is not to suggest that ideas are free floating, for they are rooted in interests in very direct ways. Ideas and interests are mutually constituted. There are interest based reasons why the Russians have articulated an idea of European security based on a notion of a European security council; and there are ideational reasons why the Russians perceive these interests, based on a belief in great power status, in the significance of Russia, and in this respect,³ ideas and interests are intertwined.

Not only are ideas important, and rooted in a relationship with interests, but present ideas are shaped by the outcome of past ideational battles. And it is the impact of the conflict between the ideas of the early 1990s upon the present that concerns this article. As will be argued subsequently, the NATO idea emerged from the interplay of alternatives as the dominant institution from the architectural debate of the early 1990s. The Alliance then successfully reached an agreement with Russia, enlarged, adapted itself to the changing circumstances of European security, and then fought and won a military campaign. NATO should be in a very powerful position: but it is not. It is vulnerable and weak. As Ivo Daalder put it, 'Ten years after the Berlin Wall came down, the spectre of decoupling is once again haunting trans-Atlantic relations.'⁴ And this is because the NATO idea has not been persuasive to all, and because it has been subject to change. As Ewen MacAskill put it 'Victory over the Serbs...appeared to be NATO's finest hour. Today it is struggling to find a new role...Added to this...a rift is developing between European members and the US...'⁵

There is the problem of exclusion from the NATO order of the Russians, of those who oppose that order such as Serbia, and of those outside likely circles of admission to the alliance, such as Ukraine. Then there is the problem of finding an acceptable role for the Alliance, and of tailoring its military systems accordingly. And there is the problem of transatlantic balance, identified ever-so-delicately by the British and French in the St Malo Declaration.⁶

NATO's perceived weakness raises the stakes of all of these debates. At the core, there is no clearly identifiable purpose for NATO (beyond insurance for the future), and no clear concepts on who should be a member,

and who should not. Of course, these two issues themselves are intertwined. Enlargement gives NATO a purpose, in spreading stability to Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, in a very real sense, management of the process of enlargement has and will shape the future of NATO. If a partnership of the EU and NATO cannot be fashioned, then these dilemmas will remain.

The enlargement of NATO has arisen, in the form that it has, because of the outcome of the competition of ideas in the architectural debate of the early 1990s. Indeed, this article will suggest that enlargement of the Alliance became an inevitable, although for its members largely undesired, by-product of that debate. The emergence of the NATO idea as dominant, and the consequent lack of an alternative for non-members to participate in the dominant order, plus the articulation of a role for NATO in the protection and promotion of values (itself important in terms of any NATO-EU relationship) led inevitably to enlargement. This context crucially shapes current debates about Europe's security architecture.

The first section of this article suggests that ideas matter. The second then examines the interplay of those ideas of European security in the early 1990s. The third and fourth sections trace the inevitable move to NATO enlargement that arose as a consequence. And the conclusion will examine how this contemporary history has shaped the debates of today.

IDEAS IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

That the enlargement of NATO may be said to have been inevitable is obviously controversial. It is certainly not what the neo-realists predicted: and security studies is dominated by realism, is it not? Mearsheimer predicted that NATO would fade, along with the EU, to be replaced by the uncertainties of great power politics mitigated by German nuclear weapon status.⁷ Waltz was equally forthright in explaining why NATO will collapse.⁸ Rather than see the validation of the realist thesis concerning the marginality of international institutions, however, what we have seen instead is a debate over the enlargement of most of Europe's major institutions: the EU, NATO, the WEU, the Council of Europe and – although it is too often passed over – the C/OSCE.⁹ Perhaps we should not be too harsh in this assessment of neo-realism; after all, prediction is the most difficult demand of positivist social science. But the point is that the neo-realism of the Mearsheimer-Waltz variety tells us nothing about NATO enlargement; only that the Alliance will, contrary to all the evidence, fade away.¹⁰

NATO enlargement became inevitable because 'ideas' matter in international relations. Of course in a discipline so heavily influenced by the realist paradigm for so long it is easier to speak of 'interests' than it is of 'ideas'. This is particularly the case in security studies. Yet ideas are clearly

of importance. How else can we explain why, for example, the UK government and military establishment was so hostile to military involvement in the former Yugoslavia in 1991 and 1992, and yet that same government and establishment became such an important actor in the region in the UNPROFOR and IFOR operations? Did UK interests change fundamentally in that short time? Or was it the influence of ideas that led to a changing notion of how the UK should act?

The influence of 'ideas' on foreign policy is not yet widely accepted among scholars of international relations. Probably the most significant early work in this area is Goldstein and Keohane's *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, and yet that work does not really address security issues.¹¹ The influence of 'ideas' over 'interests' is probably seen to be weakest in security policy. Certainly much of the work published has been on international political economy.¹² Security and 'ideas' have really only been brought together in the literature on the issue of Soviet New Thinking.¹³

The impact of ideas on security policy and international relations has been developed much further by the constructivists. Goldstein and Keohane suggest that 'ideas as well as interests have causal weight in explanations of human action' but suggest that 'beliefs are held by individuals'.¹⁴ For the constructivists, though, ideas play a role beyond the individual. Constructivists focus on intersubjective meanings in social collectivities; Keohane and Goldstein on aggregation of meanings held by individual actors.¹⁵ As Wendt explains, interests are produced and reproduced through the discursive practices of actors. People 'act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them'.¹⁶ Onuf explains that '... the material and the social contaminate each other, but variably – and [constructivism] does not grant sovereignty to either the material or the social by defining the other out of existence ...'¹⁷

These are important insights, and allow the focus to shift from a materialist explanation of state policy, to an examination of the ideational context of policy formation. As Adler and Barnett suggest, 'Constructivism, therefore, holds the view that international actors are embedded in a structure that is both normative and material (that is, contains both rules and resources) ...'¹⁸ Thus, 'Ideas always matter, since power and interest do not have effects apart from the shared knowledge that constitutes them as such.'

COMPETING VISIONS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

If ideas matter, which were the important ones in the development of post-Cold War European security? From 1990, four distinct and mutually exclusive ideas regarding the architecture of European security were

developed. Over the following five years, three of these were rejected as insufficiently persuasive, which put pressure onto the victorious idea to change its focus, to include the enlargement of the predominant organisation. In this sense, enlargement became the inevitable result of the power of the NATO idea in the post-Cold War world. This section will examine each of these ideas in turn, and explain how in the context of the international relations of the early 1990s three fell by the wayside.

As suggested earlier, four ideas dominated in the European security debate during the post-Cold War period. These may be labelled: the German-Czech view based on the CSCE; the Franco-Belgian perspective organised around the European Union; the Soviet-Russian idea, a concert of Europe approach; and the Anglo-American position, based on a primacy for NATO. These ideas were brought into competition by the actors supporting them, and were deemed to be the alternative 'architectures' for a European security order. Attempts to pretend that there was no competition, that there could be an interlocking of the institutions advocated in the different ideas was immediately undermined by the development of the term 'interlocking institutions', which in many ways summed up the competitive nature of the period.

For the German-Czech view, European security would have been organised around the (then) CSCE. The development of CSCE structures would have had several advantages. It would have institutionalised an inclusive process based on collective security. It would have provided a basis for pan-European security, therefore incorporating not only the NATO countries, but also Russia, Ukraine and other post-communist states. And it would have provided for a place for the smaller countries, some of whom feared being ignored by the larger states in any emerging condominium of powers. NATO at best played a subordinate role in this idea, as an instrument of the overarching pan-European body, a position that it could have shared with others; although many advocated the abolition of the Alliance to match the proposed winding-up of the Warsaw Pact. Particularly in the period from July 1990 to the Paris summit of the CSCE that November, both the Germans (particularly through Foreign Minister Genscher) and the Czechs were powerful advocates of a deeper institutionalisation of the CSCE, and despite the advances made at Paris, both were disappointed by that outcome.²⁰

Although Germany, in particular, continued to argue in favour of a strengthening of the CSCE after Paris, by the time of the Helsinki follow-up conference in 1992, the momentum behind this vision had collapsed, for three major reasons. First, Germany had come under great pressure from its Western allies, who felt that the CSCE vision – Genscherism, as it was labelled – was insufficiently Atlanticist (the US and UK view), and

insufficiently Europeanist (the view from Paris). That is, the architecture issue was heavily influenced by the debate about the nature, and appropriateness, of leadership by a united Germany.²¹ Ideas and interests were in this way mutually constituted. Second, the Czechs – along with other Central European countries – moved away from the CSCE and towards the NATO solution, in the aftermath of the Soviet violence in Lithuania in January 1991, the Moscow coup and the collapse of the Soviet Union.²² And third, the unanimity principle of the CSCE seemed to make the institution less than useful in the emerging crisis in the former Yugoslavia.²³

The second perspective – here labelled Franco-Belgian – sought to develop European security structures not on a pan-European basis, but rather more on a west European basis, to be spread across the continent as the EU enlarged. As an essential public good, security takes a central role in the construction of Europe. This would have provided for a tight link between the EU and the WEU, the latter being the defence arm of the European Union in the very real sense that the EU would have instructed the WEU on operations. Such a vision would have developed the integration of the armed forces of the West Europeans, making them separable and, unlike the Combined Joint Task Forces concept, separate from NATO structures. If not necessarily outwardly hostile to trans-Atlantic relations, such a vision would have given the West Europeans the real ability to conduct military operations without the United States. Hence, again, NATO would have become a subordinate institution.

Much of the momentum behind this vision was caught up in the Maastricht process. Britain and the Netherlands – along with other states – were able to ensure that the security elements of Maastricht were a delicate compromise between the Franco-Belgian and Anglo-American perspective, allowing the rhetoric of greater Europeanisation without threatening trans-Atlantic structures. And as the Maastricht ratification and referendum process became more controversial, the prospects of revisiting these security elements at the next Inter-Governmental Conference receded. This idea was finally closed – at least until recently – by the French announcement in December 1995 that Paris would seek closer relations with the integrated military structure of NATO.²⁴

The third idea was that emanating from Moscow. Although sometimes this may have looked similar to the German-Czech perspective, there are important differences. Whereas the latter sought to develop a pan-European collective security organisation – which critics felt looked too much like a European League of Nations²⁵ – Moscow sought a management system which drew much from the Concert of Europe of the nineteenth century. Under this vision, the major powers meet in conference to discuss and settle the major problems of European security. The Contact Group over former

Yugoslavia – including Russia, the United States, Britain, France and Germany – was clearly the closest example of this relationship. However, Moscow wanted this relationship to be institutionalised, notably through a modification of the structure of the OSCE, with the possible creation of a type of ‘security council’. In this way, again, NATO would have been subordinated and marginalised.

Although this notion has been popular in Moscow, both under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, Kozyrev and Primakov, it has not been elsewhere in Europe. The major NATO powers feared that it would compromise NATO, giving Russia in effect a veto power over NATO actions. This debate came most clearly into the open at the Budapest summit of the OSCE at the end of 1994, when the NATO countries rejected Russian calls for NATO and the CIS to be put under OSCE control, to be run through a directorate of the major powers.²⁶ It is also an issue that was aired in the discussion of a NATO-Russian Charter that eventually led to the NATO-Russian Founding Act, and has cast a long shadow over the operation of the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council.

But the concert idea was also unpopular elsewhere in Europe. Post-Soviet and post-communist states feared that such a concert would lead to de facto spheres of interest, in which they would be under the influence of Moscow. And others – notably the Scandinavians – argued that such a proposal would be undemocratic, and be profoundly lacking in legitimacy.

The fourth and final idea was that of the Anglo-Americans, who emphasised the need to preserve the primacy of NATO. Privileging NATO over other institutions led to the debate over ‘interlocking’ institutions in Europe in the first part of the 1990s. The British and Americans feared that the primacy of NATO was being threatened by each of the other ideas – whether by the CSCE, the EU or by the arguments in favour of a concert system – and that they therefore had to play a role in preventing the development of each of the other ideas. But the Anglo-American idea was a profoundly conservative discourse. They sought to preserve NATO, but not to fundamentally change it. They favoured conservative responses to change: the New Strategic Concept of 1991, for example, brought about very modest changes to NATO strategy in the light of the dramatic geopolitical changes.²⁷ They also favoured establishing the North Atlantic Cooperation Council based on the principle of non-discrimination, in which *formally* Poland had the same status as Turkmenistan.²⁸ NATO had to be kept safe from the threat of change, and as an insurance against an uncertain future.

Nowhere in this Anglo-American idea was there a call for the enlargement of the Alliance. In the period from 1990 to early 1994, it is clear that in both London and Washington there was a dominant view (in

London a consensus) that enlargement would be bad, and would in itself threaten NATO. But the success of the Anglo-American idea over the other perspectives carried with it the inevitable pressure for enlargement.

THE VICTORY OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN IDEA

The essential notion behind the January 1994 NATO summit of heads of state and government was not enlargement, but delay: hence the Partnership for Peace. In the summer of 1993, with the Anglo-American idea seemingly dominant over the others, its conservatism began to face a new challenger: enlargement. Consider three pieces of evidence.

First, most notably, the reaction to the joint Russian-Polish statement on 25 August 1993, in which Russia recognised Poland's right to join NATO, stating that such membership would not be against Russian security interests.²⁹ Subsequently, the Polish Prime Minister, Hanna Suchocka, said that 'Any further delay in this question does not seem possible', a position to which the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Geza Jeszensky, immediately subscribed.³⁰ This led Senator Lugar, a key member of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to press for a statement on the inclusion of the Visegrad countries in NATO to be issued at the forthcoming January summit.³¹ Chancellor Kohl stated that 'At these talks in January I will raise the question of how we can give these countries not only the feeling but also a guarantee that they have a security umbrella.'³² A concession by Yeltsin seemed to open the way to enlargement for those who supported the enlargement in Central Europe and in the West.

Second, the publicity given to the circulation of a paper written by Ronald Asmus, Richard Kugler and Stephen Larrabee of the RAND Corporation in America, NATO and Western European government and semi-official circles illustrated an acceptance of the end of the architectural debate, and the consideration of its implications. The paper argued for the immediate expansion of NATO to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and also possibly to Slovakia.³³ A version of the paper was published later in *Foreign Affairs*, in which the authors argued that '... NACC does not go far enough. It is essentially a holding operation that provides only meagre psychological reassurance.'³⁴

Third, the defence minister of one of the most important NATO countries – Germany – was a loud proponent of a quick enlargement. The immediate expansion of NATO, argued Volker Rühle, was in Germany's interests in order to create further stability on its eastern borders. Rühle argued that 'The Atlantic Alliance must not become a "closed shop". I cannot see one good reason for denying future members of the European Union membership in NATO.'³⁵ Clearly, in the German defence ministry

also, thought was being given to the implications of the result of the architectural debate.

Institutional competition had led to NATO's pre-eminence, and the implications of this seemed to be the enlargement of the Alliance. But the momentum towards that end that seemed to have developed in the summer of 1993 was reversed by the dominant interpretation, derived from the Anglo-American idea, given to two events.

First, the repudiation of Yeltsin's acceptance that the Poles could join NATO. Yeltsin's 'official statement, however, was soon counteracted by Foreign Minister Kozyrev and other Russian politicians'.³⁶ In the aftermath of the violent defeat of the conservatives in the Russian parliament Yeltsin, perhaps to appease those in the military who had stood by him in the attack on parliament, wrote to several Western governments to suggest that the time was not right for the extension of NATO.³⁷

Second, in Poland, general elections removed the Solidarity-oriented Democratic Union government from power, and replaced it with the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), the former Communist Party. The chair of the SLD, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, had been quoted as arguing that 'There was never any debate on Poland's future security possibilities or about NATO membership and its implications ... We don't say no, but we believe it would be wise to explore other possibilities.'³⁸ Such perceived ambiguity, along with the hardening of Moscow's position, was enough to put into question whether enlargement was a necessary consequence of the victory of the Anglo-American idea of a NATO order in Europe.

But there was an additional factor. It was apparent that the French would not accept the rejection of their idea for the future of European security. Post-Maastricht, the French were still concerned that the European Union, and the Western European Union, should be allowed to play a significant role in the European security debate.³⁹ Thus, the Russians had not accepted enlargement; the Poles were moving against NATO membership; the risks of enlargement to NATO itself were too great; and other alternatives still had to be considered. None of this was 'objective reality'; each was a belief that contributed to the temporary opposition to enlargement.

This was a crucial watershed. Had the Alliance embraced enlargement at this time, it is conceivable that the process could have been limited in debate and process to the Visegrad states. But enlargement grew as an option beyond those countries over the next few years. By struggling to accept limited engagement, NATO opened itself to pressure for greater enlargement.

At the end of 1993, NATO was divided on the enlargement issue. NATO's policies towards the East at this time were determined by a need to maintain balance within the Alliance itself. The major NATO countries had

been fundamentally divided by their visions for the future of European security, and such differences threatened the very fabric of trans-Atlantic cooperation. Through adopting the PFP, the Anglo-American idea asserted its dominance not only over the Franco-Belgian idea, but also the dominance of a conservative view of this idea over a more radical interpretation being generated from within the Defence Ministry in Bonn and, of course, in Central Europe. Immediate and speedy enlargement, as advocated by R uhe, was most certainly not acceptable within the conservative terms of the NATO idea being propounded at the time by Washington and London.

In such a manner, the potential for open and bitter public argument, both within NATO, and between NATO and the partner countries, had to be minimised. Thus, the adoption of PFP at the Brussels summit was absolutely central to the continued vitality of the Alliance. At this time, NATO faced two deep problems.

First, the Alliance was deeply split over the issue of enlargement.

Second, no-one could really decide what the purpose of the Alliance was. PFP resolved both problems, for it gave a purpose to NATO – projecting stability into Central and Eastern Europe – and it offered the prospect of both opening up NATO to new members, and putting that prospect into the distant future.

Volker R uhe commented that, with the endorsement of PFP at the January summit, new members could join the Alliance by the year 2000.⁴⁰ In contrast, British Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind argued at the same time that ‘It would be a great mistake if some new line were to be driven through Europe.’⁴¹ The PFP was, thus, essentially a NATO plan to solve NATO’s internal problems – the arguments over enlargement within the Alliance, and within many of the governments of the Alliance.⁴² This was vital, as the summit was taking on ever growing importance. As George and Borawski noted at the time, ‘All governments realise that unless the Summit succeeds in rejuvenating the Alliance after the perceived failure of its member nations over Yugoslavia and its slowness in adapting by deed as well as word to the new challenges of European security, support for the Alliance will wane on both sides of the Atlantic.’⁴³

So the Summit continued the development of European security according to the conservative variant of the Anglo-American idea. But almost immediately upon the end of the summit, this conservatism was abandoned in favour of the move towards enlargement. PFP committed the Alliance to ‘expect and ... welcome NATO expansion that would reach to democratic states to our East, as part of an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe’.⁴⁴ By not setting criteria for such expansion, the conservative policy of delay was

furthered. However, by formally accepting the evolutionary enlargement of the Alliance, pressure was placed upon NATO to define criteria, and thus to move away from the delaying policy.

In the aftermath of the summit, it became clear that the Anglo-American idea was dominant, but also that the implications of dominance were that conservatism could not be maintained. President Clinton's administration began to lead the Alliance on the issue of enlargement.⁴⁵ Many stated that in terms of enlargement, the issue was not 'if but when'.⁴⁶ In January a 'sense of the Senate' resolution was passed in the US Congress by 94–3, calling on the American government to argue for NATO enlargement. This was followed in April by the introduction of the 'NATO Expansion Act of 1994' in Congress, which called for the Visegrad states to become members by 1999. Pressure was increased in May when Republican Congressman Henry Hyde introduced the Nato Revitalization Act which urged NATO 'to establish benchmarks and a timetable for eventual membership for selected countries' which were identified as the Visegrad and the Baltic states. Clinton himself promised the Polish Parliament in July 1994 that 'The expansion of NATO will surely come, and Poland's role as the first nation to participate in joint exercises with NATO troops makes Warsaw a prime candidate for inclusion.'⁴⁷

But such a clear American lead on the issue was only possible due to a bridging of the differences in the German government, and to quiescence on the part of the British. In the period immediately after Chancellor Kohl's coalition was returned to power in the German elections, agreement was reached in Bonn that NATO enlargement should be pursued in parallel with the expansion of the EU. This kept Germany firmly associated with the new American policy direction, and also enabled Bonn to maintain a strong Franco-German policy line, given that Paris had been concerned that a speedy expansion of NATO would sideline European construction. For the British, a key part of the idea was that it should involve full American engagement with European security and, if the price for that was to be the enlargement of the Alliance, then that they were reluctantly prepared to accept.

Thus, the move towards enlargement did not come in January, but later in 1994. It was revealed publicly in the communiqué for the Ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 1 December. The ministers confirmed that they 'expect and would welcome NATO enlargement that would reach to democratic states to our East, as part of an evolutionary process ... part of a broad European security architecture based on true cooperation throughout Europe'.⁴⁸ The ministers confirmed that NATO enlargement would take place in parallel to the enlargement of the European Union, and that therefore there would be differentiation in the accession of

new members. They also confirmed that no timeframe for actual admission could yet be set. Under paragraph 6, the ministers 'decided to initiate a process of examination inside the Alliance to determine how NATO will enlarge, the principles to guide this process and the implications of membership'.⁴⁹ Hence a study was authorised, under the Council, to include a significant input from the military authorities particularly on the role of PFP in enlargement, to report the following year.

The NATO Enlargement Study – which reported in September 1995 – did not provide a complex list of criteria for membership, and so did not identify potential new members, nor a timetable. Along with the needs of complying with the Washington Treaty and NATO operating and decision making procedures (paragraph 70) the only criteria set out were commitments to: OSCE norms; 'promoting stability and well-being by economic liberty, social justice and environmental responsibility'; democratic and civilian control of the military (paragraphs 72); and the prior resolution of conflicts (paragraph 6). This was an extremely permissive list as virtually all NACC states could argue that they fulfilled these criteria, or were on the road to doing so.

It is wrong, therefore, to attribute the move towards enlargement to the Brussels NATO summit, as the key moves came afterwards. However, it is right to look to the motivations of that summit to explain the inevitability of the decision to move forward with enlargement. By 1993–94, the enlargement issue was tied up with the future of the Alliance. Most members of NATO wanted to keep it, for none of the other ideas by that time seemed either viable or desirable to the majority. However, NATO members did not have a convincing explanation of why the Alliance should be maintained, still less why it required the level of American leadership and participation that had been seen during the Cold War. Enlargement thus became a convenient tool to maintain the Alliance. NATO enlargement would, it was suggested, spread stability into Central Europe.

This may or may not have been persuasive; but it was the only real justification that could be developed and, most importantly, publicly articulated, unless there was to be a formal break with Moscow. There was no consensus on this within the Alliance in early 1994; but by the middle of the year, a functioning consensus was fashioned by US leadership. For after all, the place where the utility of the Alliance would be questioned first would be in the US. It had been in America that the suggestion that the Alliance 'go out of area or go out of business' had been made. The enlargement issue gave one of only two possible rationales for NATO's continuation, and the other rationale – that which became IFOR – was at best short term, and at worst vulnerable (at that time) to failure.

THE BATTLE OF THE IDEAS: THE KEY TURNING POINT

NATO enlargement became publicly viable in 1994, once the Anglo-American idea had triumphed over its three major competitors, despite dissidence remaining in Moscow and Paris. But the key turning point in this debate comes not in the competition of the Anglo-American idea with the Franco-Belgian view, nor the Russian vision, but rather with that of the Germans and Czechs. Once the idea of a strong CSCE organised around a collective security core had been rejected, the scope for political choice was dramatically reduced, and the likelihood of NATO enlargement significantly increased. And the key to this were the events of 1991.

No-one in NATO wanted enlargement in 1991; there was an extremely firm consensus against it. Yet as soon as the Central Europeans decided that they sought membership, as soon as they developed an 'ideology' in favour of membership, that membership became only a matter of time as long as the Anglo-American idea dominated. However, this enlargement could only be accepted once that Anglo-American idea was no longer ideationally under threat.

Initially, the Central Europeans did not seek NATO membership. Instead, they sought to build the CSCE into a pan-European security structure that would include Russia. However, the goals of 1990 faded in 1991, when the Visegrad states turned from the CSCE to NATO.⁵⁰ They did so for essentially two reasons.

First, NATO members were not interested in creating a strong CSCE. It implied a lessening of NATO; why should the members agree to this, when NATO was so comfortable? And the CSCE required a very close relationship with Russia. Why would NATO members accept that, when no-one knew whether the Russian reform process would produce a stable democracy?

Second, once the CSCE route was blocked, it was inevitable that the Central Europeans would seek NATO membership, given their perception of their history. How could anyone in Warsaw argue against Polish worst-case analysis and expect to be taken seriously? This does not imply that Russia is inherently aggressive; but it does recognise that for many in Central Europe, instability in Russia is threatening.

Thus one might date the change in Central and East European attitudes to 8 January 1991, when Soviet troops were deployed around Vilnius in order to try to impose the conscription of Lithuanians into the Soviet Army which had been resisted since the Lithuanian parliament had voted on 11 March 1990 to reestablish its sovereignty. On 11 January 1991, those Soviet forces were involved in violent struggles in the streets of Vilnius during which there were several deaths.

It is difficult to understate the psychological impact that this event had on policy-makers in Central and East European and, indeed, upon nationalists in the USSR outside the Russian Federation.⁵¹ Whereas in 1990 the Soviet Union had been associated with the peaceful conclusion of the Cold War, in early 1991 pictures of the Soviet use of force alerted many in Central Europe to the dangers of being so close to Russian military power.⁵²

Thus, the failure of Western governments to seriously pursue the CSCE option in many ways led to a train of events in which NATO enlargement became inevitable. The seeds of NATO's discomfort over enlargement were therefore sown by reluctance to act on that which the Germans sought to present as a principle of enlightened self-interest in 1990. As Foreign Minister Genscher had put it, '... the CSCE offers the possibility to secure peace in Europe other than by using the dated principles of power politics, of balance of power and of spheres of influence'.⁵³

From this point, it could not have been possible for NATO to permanently defer enlargement. It was vulnerable to pressure on political grounds, notably through the potency of Havel's 'return to Europe' argument. How could NATO, as an alliance of values as well as force, have continued to reject the pressure for membership from the democratising, liberalising, Central Europeans? In terms of identity, West Europeans empathized with Central Europeans in a way that at the time they did not with former Yugoslavs, and subsequently did not with Chechens and Tajiks. The ethical pressure would always be strong to the moral crusaders in the US Congress. And in addition, NATO had a practice of enlargement – to Greece, Turkey, West Germany, Spain, and finally eastern Germany – that could always be turned to.⁵⁴

By rejecting the German-Czech idea so quickly, Western European policy-makers set in train a series of events leading to NATO enlargement. There is a real sense of irony about this. The Anglo-American idea had not sought hostility with Moscow. But the seeds of that hostility lay very much in the triumph of the Anglo-American vision, and the consequent abandonment of its conservatism. Once NATO had become the pre-eminent security institution in Europe, it had to be used pro-actively, and the two most obvious areas of pro-active policy have been enlargement and involvement in the former Yugoslavia, and with both, tension with Moscow inevitably followed. That is, the success of the Anglo-American idea has led to a situation – heightened animosity with Russia – that those who originally conceived that idea had sought to avoid.

CONCLUSION

This article has identified competition between different discourses; the means by which one discourse has developed a hegemonic position; and the implications of that for the dominant idea. That is, it has argued that four distinct ideas were in competition in the early 1990s; that the Anglo-American discourse, which privileged NATO emerged triumphant; and that the implications of that have been an ineluctable move towards the enlargement of the core organisation. This is important for current debates, because unless there is a change in the power of the dominant idea, Europe will be condemned to repeat agonising debates over NATO enlargement in the future.

The Anglo-American idea held that the maintenance of NATO was crucial, as a hedge against an uncertain future, but it did not give a positive rationale for its continuation. Perhaps surprisingly, at the height of the competition between the four discourses, it did not need one. It was sufficient to portray the German-Czech idea as naive; the Franco-Belgian discourse as federalist and anti-national identity; and the Soviet-Russian perspective as parochial, outdated and anti-democratic. But once the Anglo-American idea attained a position of dominance, NATO was inevitably asked what it would do with its institutional pre-eminence.

In this context, enlargement became the only way of giving the Alliance a task for the future. Governments and officials have looked for alternatives, while NATO Secretary General, Willy Claes tried to explain the inexplicable: that the threat to NATO from North Africa was greater than it had been from the Soviet Union. One may argue that neither posed a threat; but once one is inside the logic of threat, Claes' argument, like his political position, was untenable. Thus, the only role left was to 'spread stability eastwards' through enlargement.

The adoption of certain ideas inevitably has consequences. The adoption of the Anglo-American, rather than the German-Czech idea to build Europe's security architecture around the C/OSCE, inevitably led to the enlargement of the Alliance. The inability to develop a pan-European role for NATO keeps the focus on enlargement. That is to say that even though there may have been little interest in 1999 and 2000 on the part of NATO governments to enlarge the Alliance further, the issue is never that far away. A commitment to open-ended enlargement plays a key legitimising role for NATO.

But it is also deeply problematic. It will not ameliorate relations with Russia, at each stage it will produce disappointment on the part of those states left out, it will produce new military, strategic and organisational problems; and it will cost money. This is the future, unless the dominant idea changes.

And this is where the creation of a Common European Security and Defence Policy is so important, because it offers the prospect of a change in that dominant idea. Not a change away from NATO and transatlanticism, but towards a partnership between Europe's two major institutions. A partnership in which NATO's military prowess, and the EU's skills in humanitarian issues is one in which Europeans may be able to play a primary role in alleviating crises on the continent. An idea based on the partnership of these two institutions may be emerging. It is an idea as much in the interests of NATO as an institution as it is in the interests of the European project. The roots of a process of NATO enlargement can be traced to 1991, and the emerging triumph of the NATO idea over the others. A similar triumph today for the NATO idea over that of a NATO-EU partnership idea will condemn NATO and Europe to future NATO enlargement debates, through which the Alliance will inevitably be drawn onto former Soviet territory.

However, a partnership idea between NATO and the EU faces key ideational challenges, ones deeply entrenched by the arguments and events of the early 1990s. Western Europe's architectural debates are dominated by competition. The great contribution of the St Malo Declaration was that it sought to bring together ideas that had traditionally been seen to be competitive, and suggested that they need not be. However, debate from mid-1999 onwards has tended to refocus attention on competition and exclusivity. In Washington, there has been a tendency to portray the process which led to the announcement at Helsinki of European force goals as being aimed at undermining the trans-Atlantic link. In Paris, emphasis on 'autonomy' has tended to reinforce this. And although British diplomacy played a role in reconciling these perspectives before Helsinki, London has been unable to articulate a powerful conception of cooperation.

There have been two watersheds in the ideational construction of European security since the end of the Cold War. In 1991, the German-Czech idea, one that could have provided an alternative to the process that led to NATO enlargement, fell by the wayside. In 1993–94, the NATO idea emerged victorious, and its conservatism was opened to the enlargement challenge. A further watershed has been reached now. A NATO-EU partnership idea could be (re)fashioned; or it, too, could fall by the wayside, swamped by the pressures of traditional old thinking, of ideational competition. If the latter occurs, another vital opportunity will be missed, and all the agonies of Western policy in the late 1990s – managing demands for security guarantees, Russian hostility, and an inadequate European military contribution – will remain.

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NOTES

1. See Jolyon Howorth, 'Franco-British Defence Cooperation and the compatibility of ESDP with NATO', unpublished paper, Jan. 2000.
2. See William Drozdiak, 'US Tepid on European Defense Plan', *Washington Post*, 7 March 2000, p.A1.
3. See, for example, Derek Averre 'NATO expansion and Russian national interests', *European Security* 7/1 (Spring 1998) pp.10–54. See also Marie Mendras 'Towards a post-imperial identity' in Vladimir Baranovsky, *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda* (Oxford: OUP for SIPRI 1997) pp.90–103.
4. Ivo H. Daalder, 'Europe and America aren't divorcing', *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 10 Dec. 1999. For a counter view, see Kore Heinz Kamp, 'Recent NATO Disputes Fall Far Short of Threatening Crisis', *Defense News* 15/5, 7 Feb. 2000.
5. Ewen MacAskill, 'NATO Strives for Role After Cold War', *Guardian*, 14 March 2000.
6. See FCO website at www.fco.gov for the St Malo Declaration. For analysis, see Richard G. Whitman, 'Amsterdam's unfinished business? The Blair Government's initiative and the future of the Western European Union', *WEU Institute for Security Studies Occasional Paper* 7 (Paris: WEU 1999).
7. Most famously, of course, in John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security* 15/1 (Summer 1990) p.52. 'It is the Soviet threat that holds NATO together. Take away that offensive threat and the United States is likely to abandon the Continent, whereupon the defensive alliance it headed for forty years may disintegrate'. In 'The False Promise of International Institutions', Mearsheimer argued that 'There is still discussion about extending NATO eastward to include Poland, Hungary and the two Czechoslovakian remnant states. Russia is deeply opposed to such a move, however, and therefore NATO is not likely to expand eastward in any meaningful way.' *International Security* 19/3 (Winter 1994–95) p.34, note 114.
8. See, for example, the argument in K. Waltz, 'The emerging structure of international politics', *International Security* 14/4 (Spring 1990).
9. For an examination of the debates over enlarging five of Europe's major institutions (EU, NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe and WEU) see Stuart Croft, John Redmond, G. Wyn Rees and Mark Webber, *The Enlargement of Europe* (Manchester UP 1999).
10. In a subsequent article Waltz has changed his position in order to explain why his initial ideas regarding NATO's collapse have not come about. K. Waltz, 'NATO expansion and the balance of power in international politics', *Contemporary Security Policy* 21/2 (Aug. 2001).
11. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds.) *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1993).
12. For example, Judith Goldstein, *Ideas, Interests and American Trade Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1993); and Kathryn Sikkink, *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Brazil and Argentina* (ibid. 1991).
13. See, for example, J. Checkel, 'Ideas Institutions and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution', *World Politics* 45/2 (Jan. 1993) pp.271–300; and P. Shearman, 'New Political Thinking Reassessed', *Review of International Studies* 19/2 (1993) pp.139–58; and Iver B. Newmann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe* (London: Routledge 1996).

14. Goldstein and O. Keohane (note 11) both quotes p.3.
15. On this, see John Ruggie, 'What makes the world hang together? Neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge', *International Organization* 52/4 (?date) pp.855–85.
16. Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization* 46/2 (Spring 1992) pp.391–425.
17. Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, SC: USC Press 1989) p.40.
18. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.) *Security Communities* (Cambridge: CUP 1998) p.10.
19. Alexander Wendt, 'Constructing international politics', *International Security* 20/1 (Summer 1995) p.74.
20. On Genscher see, for example, his speech before the UN General Assembly, 25 Nov. 1991, cited in 'Rede des Bundesministers des Auswärtigen Genscher am 25/09/1991', *Aussenpolitik Nach der Einheit 1990–93* (Bonn: Auswärtiges Amt 1993) p.90. See also Peter H. Merkl, *Unification in the European Context* (Pennsylvania State UP 1993) pp.374–5; and Adrian Hyde-Price, *European Security Beyond the Cold War: Four Scenarios for the Year 2010* (London: Sage for the RIIA 1991) p.217.
21. See, for example, Andrei S.Markovits and Simon Reich, 'The latest stage of the German Question: *Pax Germanica* in the New Europe', *Contemporary Security Policy* 12/3 (Dec. 1991) pp.77–98.
22. For example, Jan Urban, 'The Czech and Slovak republics: security consequences of the breakup of the CSFR', in Regina Cowen Karp (ed.) *Central and Eastern Europe: The Challenge of Transition* (Oxford: OUP for SIPRI 1993) p.115; also, author's interviews in with officials in Prague, 1990 and 1991. For similarities in the Hungarian position, see Pal Dunay, 'Hungary: defining the boundaries of security', in Karp, *supra*, p.148.
23. See A. Bloed, 'Two decades of the CSCE process', in idem (ed.) *The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Analyses and Basic Documents* (Dordrecht: Martin Nijhoff 1993); and I. Peters, 'CSCE' in C. Bluth, E. Kirchner and J. Sperling (eds.) *The Future of European Security* (Aldershot: Dartmouth 1995) pp.67–84.
24. See Robert P. Grant, 'France's New Relationship with NATO', *Survival* 38/1 (Spring 1996) pp.58–80.
25. On this see, for example, Josef Joffe, 'Collective security and the future of Europe', *Survival* 34/1 (Spring 1992) pp.36–50.
26. See Mark M.Nelson, 'Yeltsin's sharp attack on the US casts a cloud over CSCE's agenda', *Wall Street Journal*, 6 Dec. 1994; Andrew Marshall, 'Russia warns NATO of a "Cold Peace"', *Independent*, 6 Dec. 1994.
27. For analysis, see Colin McInness (ed.) *Strategy and Security in the New Europe* (London: Routledge 1992).
28. Some 'saw the Council as a 'cheap consolation prize' for countries like Poland that had sued for NATO membership and had been rejected'. Hieronim Kubiak, 'Poland' in Karp (note 22) p.95.
29. See Bruce George and John Borawski, 'Sympathy for the Devil: European Security in a Revolutionary Age', *European Security* 2/4 (Winter 1993) p.488.
30. Quoted in Andrew Marshall, 'NATO moves to include former enemies', *Independent*, 7 Sept. 1993.
31. See William Drozdiak, 'NATO family cool to taking in Warsaw Pact orphans', *International Herald Tribune*, 2 Sept. 1993.
32. Quoted in Marshall (note 30).
33. See the report on the paper in Fred Kempe, 'NATO: Out of Area or Out of Business', *Wall Street Journal*, 9 Aug. 1993.
34. Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler and F. Stephen Larrabee, 'Building a New NATO', *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 1993, p.32.
35. This was the 1993 Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture. The text is reproduced in 'Shaping Euro-Atlantic Policies: A Grand Strategy for a New Era', *Survival* 35/2 (Summer 1993) pp.134–5.

36. Gerhard Wettig, 'Moscow's Perception of NATO's Role', *Aussenpolitik* 45/2 (second quarter 1994) p.127.
37. Yeltsin wrote to the Americans, British, Germans and French, apparently taking the '2+4 talks' as a model for communication. Yeltsin suggested that the '2+4 agreement' made NATO expansion illegal, a view rejected in the West. See 'NATO/East' *Atlantic News* No.2559, 6 Oct. 1993, p.3; and William Drozdiak, 'NATO likely to slow East Europe's entry', *International Herald Tribune*, 6 Oct. 1993.
38. Quoted in Adam LeBor, 'Polish leaders cast doubt on entry to NATO', *The Times*, 21 Sept. 1993. However, on 19 Sept., leaders of the three parties which won the Polish elections had stressed the need for Poland to join NATO 'as soon as possible'. See 'NATO Enlargement', *Atlantic News* No.2561, 13 Oct. 1991, p.1. Despite this, doubt had already been created in many minds.
39. See, for example, David White, 'Caution urged on NATO expansion', *Financial Times*, 23 Sept. 1993; Roger Boyes 'Confusion in NATO ranks as left prepares for power in Poland', *The Times*, 16 Sept. 1993; and 'Bonn wants East in updated NATO' *International Herald Tribune*, 8 Oct. 1993, which reported that French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé had suggested that the Balladur plan should be explored before NATO expanded its membership.
40. See Mark M. Nelson 'NATO officials back plan for closer ties with ex-bloc', *Wall Street Journal*, 22-23 Oct. 1993.
41. *Ibid.*
42. See, for example, 'The world sends NATO back to the drawing board', *The Economist*, 25 Dec. 1993-7 Jan. 1994.
43. George and Borawski (note 29) p.475.
44. *Partnership for Peace Invitation*, Brussels: NATO, 10 Jan. 1994, p.1.
45. See, for example, President Clinton's speech to the French National Assembly, 7 June 1994.
46. See, for example, Warren Christopher, cited in 'Christopher', *Atlantic News* No.2631, 11 June 1994, p.3.
47. Cited in 'Enlargement of NATO' *Atlantic News* No.2639, 8 July 1994. The Republican's proposed 'NATO Revitalisation and Expansion Act' in 1995 proposed that the Visegrad states should accede to NATO in one group. See, for example, Dana Priest and Daniel Williams, 'Clinton Draws Line Against Republicans on National Security', *International Herald Tribune*, 16 Feb. 1995.
48. North Atlantic Council Communiqué, 1 Dec. 1994, reproduced in *Atlantic News* No.2676 (annex), 3 Dec. 1994.
49. *Ibid.*
50. On this, see Jiri Sedivy, 'From Dreaming to Realism - Czechoslovak Security Policy since 1989', *Perspectives*, Institute of International Relations Prague, No.4 (Winter 1994-95) pp.61-9.
51. For example, Urban (note 22); also, author's interviews with officials in Prague, 1990 and 1991. For similarities in the Hungarian position, see Pal Dunay, 'Hungary: defining the boundaries of security' in Karp (note 22) p.148. Also see Adrian Hyde-Price, 'Future security systems for Europe', in McInnes (note 27) pp.49-50.
52. Immediately following these events, a decision was taken to wind up the Warsaw Pact in Budapest on 25 Feb., although this did not come into effect until 1 July. The last Soviet units left Hungary and Czechoslovakia in June 1991, while the last Soviet/Russian forces did not leave Poland until Nov. 1992 (although 5,000 logistic troops remained to oversee the withdrawal of the Red Army from eastern Germany). On this, see Adrian Hyde-Price, 'After the Pact: East European Security in the 1990s', *Arms Control: Contemporary Security Policy* 12/2 (Sept. 1991) esp. pp.280-3.
53. 'Die kooperative Sicherheitsarchitektur der KSZE bietet die Möglichkeit, Frieden in Europa anders als mit den überholten Prinzipien der Machtpolitik, des Machtgleichgewichts und der Einflussosphären zu sichern'. Genscher, 'Abschiedrede des Bundesministers der Auswärtigen, Genscher, vor dem Diplomatischen Korps am 15.5.1990 auf dem Petersberg in Bonn', *Deutsche Aussenpolitik nach der Einheit 1990-3*, p.97.

52. Under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, 'The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a party to the treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.' NATO website at www.nato.int