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A Brief Look at the Recent History of NATO's Future

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"(NATO) is directed against no one; it is directed solely against aggression. It seeks not to influence any shifting 'balance of power' but to strengthen the 'balance of principle'."¹

"An alliance such as NATO (...) has to be an alliance designed not merely for the protection of the power of this or that party but for the protection of values in the service of which this power is employed. These values include, in particular, respect for human rights, the rule of law, democracy, the freedom of expression, and a market economy. Such an alliance protects not state sovereignty or anyone's geopolitical interests, but a certain type of human culture and civilization. By implication, the main glue of this alliance is not simply a calculation of mutual advantage or the accident of geopolitical interests or of a potential common adversary, but rather something incomparably more profound: namely, solidarity. Indeed, NATO for me is a commonwealth-in-solidarity of those sharing common values, with its principles of solidarity and openness being implied by the very nature of these values."²

"NATO is a disappearing thing."³

"I believe in NATO."⁴

The dominant narrative of the history of transatlantic relations centers on the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after World War II as a significant break in established patterns of American

1 "Difference between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Traditional Military Alliances", Appendix to "The North Atlantic Treaty", Hearings before the U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, 81st Congress, 1st Session, pt. I., Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949, pp. 337, quoted according to Kissinger 1994: 458.

2 Havel 1999: 25.

3 Waltz 1990: 210.

4 George W. Bush, quoted according to Sciolino 2004: 1.

as well as European geostrategic thinking. In this reading the creation of NATO in the late 1940s marked a revolution for each of the two sides to the Washington Treaty: For the United States it amounted to a radical break with its long-cherished tradition of isolationism, for Western Europe, it symbolized a similarly radical breakout from centuries of loosely knit and quickly shifting alliances in a multipolar system.⁵ In contrast an alternative (though less fashionable) narrative stresses continuities rather than discontinuities. Whereas in this reading the creation of NATO also appears as a significant new step in America's engagement with Europe this narrative nevertheless emphasizes "a continuous stream of mutual engagement between the United States and Europe over decades" throughout the 20th century as the distinguishing feature of transatlantic relations.⁶ The first narrative stresses the security/power dimension of the foundation of transatlantic relations; the second embeds the transatlantic alliance in a broader and more densely knit network of political, economic and societal relations. The resulting expectations of these competing narratives as to the future of the relationship after the end of the Cold War predictably point into different directions: revolutionary realists expected increasing tension if not a break up of the alliance whereas evolutionary liberals expected a rather smooth transition given the density of mutual interdependence. Irrespective of these differences in interpretation, the adherents of both schools seemed to agree at least on one thing: that NATO has been the most successful alliance in the history of the modern state system. Therefore, even though significant differences exist as to the *likelihood* of the alliance's persistence, there was far less disagreement as to its *desirability* – at least until the Iraq war brought about a major rupture within the alliance.⁷

Since revolutionary realist accounts dominate, the history of the alliance is usually told as a history of its crises. It is thus not surprising that analyses of NATO's demise have been proliferating once again in

5 Cf. Kaplan 1999: 7; Kissinger 1994: 457.

6 Kahler 1995: 35; see also Link 1995.

7 For a sample of recent views propagating the "irrelevance" of NATO see, among others, Hulsman 2003; Meyer 2003/2004; Donnelly 2004; for a critique see Campbell 2004; for an assessment among the traditional East coast elite that Europeans remain America's "indispensable allies" see Haass 2004 and Council on Foreign Relations 2004.

the aftermaths of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, and especially after the intra-alliance crisis on Iraq in 2003/2004. Although the alliance was quick in the fall of 2001 to invoke article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in its history, the fact that the US largely relied on national resources or bilateral contributions in the military campaign against the Al Qaeda network and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan rather than the military apparatus of NATO was widely interpreted as one more indicator of the marginalization of the most potent military instrument at the disposal of the states making up the transatlantic community.⁸ More than anything else it seemed to prove that NATO remained at its core what it has been ever since its inception in 1949: a "one-sided American security guarantee for Western Europe".⁹ To be sure, the US always had a vital interest in seeing Western Europe not falling into the lap of the Soviet Union, but the transatlantic bargain (in trading security for loyalty) has remained an asymmetrical one ever since.

With Europe being much less depended on the US for its survival and with America facing an unprecedented threat itself which is not emanating from Europe, the very basis of this bargain has been called into question once again. The decision by the Bush administration to go to war against Saddam Hussein in 2002/2003 was a clear enough proof that the attacks of September 11 combined with the morale boost of quick victory in Afghanistan, unrivalled American power and a bullish neo-conservative administration unwilling to be lectured about the benefits of multilateralism by "old Europeans" and determined at the same time to change the power equation in the "Broader Middle East" made it seem unlikely that what had been a "Western" alliance for more than 50 years would remain unaffected by the new turbulences of the international system. Yet as in the past, judgments differed (and continue to differ) as to *how* NATO will be affected.

Studying NATO

Inquiries into the future of NATO can be approached from different angles. For much of the past two decades, the predominant mode in International Relations (IR) has been to place the question of the

8 For more positive interpretation see Tuschhoff 2002.

9 Haftendorn 1987: 405.

alliance's future in the context of established theoretical debates. Realism and a diverse set of liberal (or – as anti-realists used to be called before – "idealist") counterparts have been at the core for much of the 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁰ During the 1990s the new wave of constructivist theorizing has been joining the debate.¹¹ It focused mainly on three aspects suggested by the theories in question: whether NATO would persist or unravel given the new international environment of threats and risks; to what extent the internal dynamics of a well established and highly praised security institution would provide for institutional adaptations to the changing circumstances; and whether the ideational foundation of "the Euro-Atlantic pluralistic security community"¹² was strong and sufficiently deeply embedded to counter centrifugal tendencies in geopolitical outlook or economic conflicts.

This chapter is based on the premise that these disciplinary encounters with NATO's future are indicative of a major strand of IR scholarship. A brief version goes something like this: Given the paradigmatic fixations¹³ of the discipline there is a tendency among a particular segment of "mainstream" scholarship to single out key phenomena of international politics for paradigmatic treatment, i.e. for "demonstrating" the (presumed) superior explanatory power of some paradigm in comparison to one or more rivals. The rhetorical strategy usually applied relies on deriving predictions from a set of (more or less fixed) paradigmatic "core assumptions"¹⁴ which are then "tested" against the empirical "evidence". If one can establish a convincing fit between the "evidence" and the predictions the explanatory power of the paradigm has been demonstrated and victory can be declared. However, since empirical "evidence" is hardly as incontestable as the rules of the game of paradigmatic rivalry seem to suggest, paradigmatic encounters are never conclusively decided along this route. Usually all the combatants leave the battlefield more or less intact although in some cases some combatants may look stronger than others. However, there are always effective strategies available for all parties concerned to limit the

10 Hellmann/Wolf 1993; Glaser 1993; McCalla 1996; Haftendorn 1997; Theiler 1997; Wallander 2000.

11 Risse-Kappen 1995, Risse 1996; Schimmelfennig 1998.

12 Adler 1998: 119.

13 Hellmann, et al. 2000 and Hellmann 2003.

14 Cf. Legro/Moravcsik 1999.

potential damage to paradigmatic claims to "superior explanatory power". One such strategy is to (more or less openly) readjust the predictions in the light of incontestable "evidence". This is the reverse move to the one mentioned above. Rather than fitting the "evidence" to the theory in order to be able to claim superior explanatory power the theory is here readjusted to some irritating and compelling evidence, which cannot convincingly be explained by the initial version of the theory. Another is to silently declare a truce among the combatants and move on to another terrain to reengage under potentially more favorable conditions. Along the way the combatants may choose to realign or even raise a new flag during subsequent encounters (the merger between the "neo-realism" and the "neo-liberalism" of the early 1990s under the new heading of "rationalism" in the latter half of the 1990s is a case in point). Yet the underlying rules of the game for paradigmatic rivalry remain untouched.

The main purpose of this chapter is to give a brief overview as to how this mainstream disciplinary practice applies to recent disciplinary encounters with NATO's future. I will argue that these competitive encounters were essentially counterproductive when measured against the goal of better understanding where the alliance – doubtlessly a key institution with regard to war and peace well beyond the transatlantic area – might be heading. These disciplinary encounters can be considered useful only if one subscribes to the view that it is beneficial to IR as a theoretical discipline if scholars stage paradigmatic battles. Whereas the structural disciplinary incentives and imperatives clearly point in this direction¹⁵ there are at least three reasons why it is counterproductive after all. First and most generally, there is the empirically corroborated argument that paradigmatic war fighting usually leaves all sides concerned worse off. This shows in several ways (leaving aside the potential "human cost" which almost necessarily accompanies paradigmatic rivalry among peers): It damages the very reputation of academic scholarship if *exclusionary* claims are uttered in a field where theoretical as well as empirical ambivalence is omnipresent. But it also damages the paradigmaticists themselves since the "dual-fitting" exercise (i.e. fitting "stylized" facts to theory and/or readjusting deficient theory to

15 For a very illuminating analysis of IR as a theory-driven discipline see Waever 2003; see also Hellmann/Müller 2003: 378-379.

irritating "evidence") is hardly reconcilable with the epistemological foundations on which their "science" is usually based.

Secondly, there are also *a priori* reasons why paradigmatic rivalry is unlikely to really achieve what it almost always maintains to achieve (at least implicitly): to provide for superior guidance to the future based on superior explanation of the past. If we grant that "paradigms" have become what they are because they are offering something valuable to a sufficiently large segment of scholars, it is highly implausible that these paradigms may turn out to be utterly useless in a field where their knowledge contribution ought to be relevant. In this sense paradigms are better conceived of as "traditions" which preserve the valuable (and "tested") experience of prior generations of scholars. Yet "traditions" are not "falsifiable". Over time some of them may turn out to be less useful than others but this is hardly the result of failing a single "test". Yet if *many* paradigms (or traditions) have something to offer in accounting for significant real world events or phenomena it is counterproductive to advance exclusionary claims.

Third, paradigmatic rivalry is also counterproductive because inconclusive battles and subsequent retreats often leave the battle ground to analysts who couldn't care less for *any* type of "theory". This is obviously equally undesirable because "theory" (as a highly valuable generalized form of knowledge) is obviously crucial in both accounting for significant real world phenomena and for advancing scholarship. All this adds up to the argument that mainstream IR is conducting its paradigm wars only to its own detriment.

What is the alternative? After recounting how recent paradigmatic battles about NATO's future have indeed turned out to be inconclusive I will sketch a theoretical alternative. Given the usual constraints this alternative approach will be presented only in terms of an outline of some key elements (i.e. not in terms of its substance). However, the outline should provide an idea as to what needs to be taken into account in arriving at more productive scholarly offerings.

The chapter will proceed as follows. In the next section I will briefly recount the three mainstream paradigmatic offerings for NATO's future during the past decade. This debate is very much premised on the dynamics of the modern inter-state system with its key features of coalition building and balancing among sovereign units on the one hand,

and nation-state transcending processes of community building on the other. Then I will turn to a more unorthodox alternative, which is less prominent though increasingly visible and relevant. This strand of theorizing locates the prime dynamics of any international system in the overarching aims of states and the "inevitable tension between the desire for order and the desire for independence".¹⁶ Here alliances or security institutions figure as just one means among many to deal with the observed tension. The more important point, however, is that a "gravitational pull towards hegemony, and the ubiquity of some hegemonial authority in societies of independent or quasi-independent states"¹⁷ can be observed throughout history, including the post-war international system. Thus, rather than asking whether a particular alliance will persist, adapt or vanish (as in the case of classical IR theory debates) this approach digs more deeply by asking how the major actors in any international system approach the more basic question of how to provide for order for the system to function sufficiently smoothly. Whereas this perspective adds a significant perspective (while remaining relatively aloof of any fixation on "...isms") it also stays within a particular theoretical frame. In the final chapter I briefly sketch an argument why it may be useful instead to aim for trans-paradigmatic integration.

Recent "-isms" and the Future of NATO: A Brief Look Back

Three schools of thought have clearly dominated the debate about the future of NATO during the last decade: Realism, institutionalism and constructivism.¹⁸ Since this debate is well documented, I will only briefly

16 Watson 1992: 14.

17 Watson 1992: 314. For Watson this "ubiquity of some hegemonial authority (...)" stands out so clearly from the evidence that the question arises why studies of states systems and political theory underestimate or even ignore it. One main reason, I think, is that we are not used to thinking of systems of communities as ranging from independences to empires. Our vision is constricted by the assumption that the independent sovereign state is the basic or even sole unit of a states system."

18 It should be obvious by now that I treat concepts such as "paradigm", "school of thought" or "tradition" less rigorously as some other IR-scholars. For me what is usually called a "paradigm" or "school of thought" is a loosely connected set of theoretical assumptions and propositions which remains rather fluid over time despite the fact that it is usually made up of some core beliefs which remain relatively stable. Even a quick look at some of the standard accounts of the history

recapitulate the predictions as well as the underlying theoretical arguments.¹⁹ Each section is also accompanied by a short assessment where the strength of each approach lies and why it nevertheless falls short with its (more or less explicit) exclusionary claims.

Realism:

The most clear cut predictions have always been presented by realism. Even before the upheaval of 1989 Stephen Walt argued that alliance cohesion was bound to decline given the vanishing perception of threat.²⁰ Moreover, "without a clear and present threat", he added in June 1990, "neither European politicians nor U.S. taxpayers are likely to support a large U.S. military presence in Europe. Although NATO's elaborate institutional structure will slow the pace of devolution, only a resurgence of the Soviet threat is likely to *preserve NATO in anything like its present form*".²¹ Other realists concurred with Kenneth Waltz stating outright in the fall of 1990 that "NATO is a disappearing thing. It is a question of how long it is going to remain as a *significant institution* even though its name may linger on."²²

Obviously much of the weight of these predictions could be put on those qualifications that were not operationalized in detail by the authors themselves: Is NATO at present still a "significant institution"? And has its "form" been changed to the extent that it may be said to differ radically from its previous "form"? One of the two authors has offered adjustments himself after NATO stayed involved as a key to European security throughout the 1990s. In a 1997 article, for instance, Stephen Walt granted that alliances may persist even if the conditions under which they were originally formed had changed substantially. Referring mainly to NATO he listed four factors in particular: a large asymmetry of power within the alliance, shared values, a highly institutionalized relationship and a strong sense of common identity – factors which

of IR as a discipline (especially as far as its "great debates" are concerned) shows how "paradigms" come and go.

19 For a recent discussion of diverse theoretical approaches to the underlying problems of security cooperation see Müller 2002.

20 Walt 1989: 8-9.

21 Walt 1990: vii, emphasis added.

22 Waltz 1990: 210 (emphasis added); see also Mearsheimer 1990: 75-76; Snyder 1990: 121 and Krasner 1993: 23, 37.

usually do not figure very prominently in realist analyses.²³ Yet in this light, Walt granted, NATO "has proven to be more resilient than many pessimists predicted."²⁴ Still, on balance, he continued to question whether past and present would provide strong enough evidence to believe that NATO would persist. Rather, given the absence of a major threat strains among its members were bound to increase, "eventually" leading to its demise.²⁵

While pointing to somewhat different mechanisms, other realists basically came to the same conclusion. From his "offensive realist" perspective John Mearsheimer saw NATO's future largely in terms of its utility to the US's role as an effective offshore balancer. Whereas he stopped short of predicting outright that NATO is doomed he clearly also foresaw an increasing distancing of America's European allies as well as a dwindling interest on the American side to maintain a significant US troop presence. Against this background "the most likely scenario in Europe is an American exit coupled with the emergence of Germany as the dominant state."²⁶ Obviously, so the implicit argument, it would be hard to imagine NATO to persist under these circumstances.

The mechanisms driving these dire realist predictions and the evidence to look for are therefore clear: first and most importantly, since alliances are responses to an external threat, significant shifts in the level of threat (via changes in the balance of power, revised beliefs about other states' intentions or new means to provide for security) will change the underlying calculus which initially led to the alliance's formation.²⁷ As far as NATO is concerned the break-up of the Warsaw Pact as well as the Soviet Union usually count as the most compelling evidence for such a major shift. Second, increasing doubts among alliance members that existing arrangements are sufficient to provide for their security may also lead to an alliance's demise.²⁸ Realists here point to the early 1990s where such doubts did appear among European states with regard to the

23 Walt 1997: 164-170.

24 Walt 1997: 171.

25 Walt 1997: 173; in a subsequent article Walt makes an even stronger case for this expectation, see Walt 1998/1999

26 Mearsheimer 2001: 400; for a discussion of the differences between neorealist and traditional realist predictions see Schweller/Priess 1997: 21.

27 Hellmann/Wolf 1993: 10-11; Walt 1997: 158-159

28 Walt 1997: 160.

US' commitment to contribute to a resolution of the conflicts in the Balkans. Similar tendencies were even more visible in the approach of the Bush administration to deal with what it perceived as the new "threats" after 9/11. Here NATO seemed to be at least as much of a burden as it was seen to be beneficial in conducting the new "war on terror". Finally (and less prominently), some realists point to a set of domestic factors (such as demographic and societal trends or regime change) that may lead to the collapse of an alliance. Among others, generational changes in Europe as well as America are already seen to point to loosening ties.²⁹ Thus, whereas theoretical adjustments had now taken in bureaucratic and institutional inertia as additional factors which may delay NATO's demise somewhat, realists do not believe that these will prevent the alliance's "eventual" demise since the crucial cause for its foundation as well as its persistence so far, a unifying threat to the security of its members, has disappeared.

Still, realists have granted that NATO's "outliving its purpose" may indeed look like a "strange case" – at least initially.³⁰ Yet this hardly leads them to accept the proposition that NATO can still be characterized as a "significant institution". As Waltz put it around the change of the millennium:

"I expected NATO to dwindle at the Cold War's end and ultimately to disappear. *In a basic sense*, the expectation has been borne out. NATO is no longer even a treaty of guarantee because one cannot answer the question, guarantee against whom?"³¹

What looked "strange" initially is not so surprising after all if one looks at the alliance as a means at the disposal of its most important member, the US: it remains "a means of maintaining and lengthening America's grip on the foreign and military policies of European states" and thus:

"the ability of the United States to extend the life of a moribund institution nicely illustrates how international institutions are created and maintained by stronger states to serve their perceived or misperceived interests."³²

Yet despite these assessments it remains a tough sell for realists to argue that realism has turned out to be the superior paradigm in

29 Walt 1997: 161; Walt 1998/1999: 8.

30 Waltz 2000: 18.

31 Waltz 2000: 19.

32 Waltz 2000: 20.

accounting for the future of NATO. To be sure, it is difficult to argue that NATO cohesion is as strong as it was in the final years of the Soviet Union. Yet the reverse is equally difficult to defend. Since NATO forces are currently heavily involved both in the Balkans and in Afghanistan (with an additional, although more symbolic involvement being prepared in support of US troops in Iraq) it does not sound very plausible to characterize NATO as merely "lingering on". Moreover, even though realists such as Walt see an "*imbalance* of power (in America's favor)" which is "driving us apart" he at the same time grants that "the United States and Europe still (can) be effective allies" if both sides keep engaged. Given that he does not place a high probability on the proposition that "a powerful common enemy" will produce the "unifying pressure" usually needed to provide for the necessary glue of an alliance, it is hard to understand why it is still possible for the US and Europe to cooperate as "effective allies".³³ Thus, in judging realism's performance and predictive power the record turns out to be mixed at best.

Institutionalism:

Prior to the upheavals at the turn to the 1990s institutionalist approaches had not paid much attention to alliances even though its proponents granted that a prominent strand of institutional theory building during the 1980s, regime theory, directly applied to the analysis of alliances as well.³⁴ After 1990, however, security institutions in general and NATO in particular became an important topic of research since it did provide for one of the most obvious subjects to put competing hypotheses of realist and liberal origin to the test.³⁵ Whereas realists predicted the alliance's demise outright, institutionalists were more circumspect. In the beginning they were merely cautioning that "NATO should *not be counted out*".³⁶ Robert Keohane in particular stated that he was unwilling to predict that NATO would still be around in the year 2000, "because it is not clear that both the US and Europe will regard NATO as continuing

33 Walt 2004: 34-35 (emphasis in original).

34 This applies mainly to the work of Robert Keohane; for details see Hellmann/Wolf 1993: 13.

35 Keohane, et al. 1993; McCalla 1996; Haftendorn 1997; Theiler 1997; Wallander/Keohane 1996 and Wallander/Keohane 1999; Wallander 2000; for a critique from the perspective of rationalist institutionalism see Keck 1997aa.

36 Keohane, et al. 1993: 403 (emphasis added).

to be in their interest".³⁷ Given, however, that institutions such as NATO "all benefit not merely from inertia and the fact that costs of organization have already been paid, but also from fear of uncertainty that would ensue in the event of their collapse"³⁸ he expected NATO "to use its organizational resources to persist, by changing its tasks."³⁹

In subsequent analyses, these cautiously optimistic assessments have become more pronounced as realist predictions about NATO's collapse were interpreted as having "turned out to be wrong".⁴⁰ Institutional changes within the alliance during the 1990s seemed to prove that NATO was not just an alliance in a narrow sense but rather a more flexible and more easily adjustable "security management institution".⁴¹ This distinction turned out to be crucial since it did allow that:

"realists could be correct that NATO's traditional alliance functions are diminishing in importance, but incorrect in the inference that NATO will itself disappear because NATO as an institution is adapting itself to a new set of purposes."⁴²

Two types of argument in particular were said to account for this successful adaptation. First, while there was agreement among realists as well as institutionalists, that the unifying threat which originally formed the core of NATO as a security coalition, the understanding of NATO as a "hybrid" security management institution addressing both threats as well as risks⁴³ allowed institutionalists to point to a broader array of security problems (including instability, uncertainty and relations among alliance members) which may provide the necessary glue for the alliance to persist in altered form. For institutionalists this has obviously been the case after 1990. Not only did the break up of former Yugoslavia pose a new type of challenge for the alliance, but uncertainty with regard to

37 Keohane 1992: 31, note 16.

38 Keohane/Nye 1993: 19.

39 Keohane 1992: 25.

40 Wallander/Keohane 1996: 2, Wallander/Keohane 1999: 21.

41 Wallander/Keohane 1999: Wallander/Keohane 1996: 7-9, 34-37. Alliances were defined here as "exclusively focused and institutionalized security coalitions" which are "directed against specific threats" whereas security management institutions were defined as being inclusive rather than exclusive.

42 Wallander/Keohane 1996: 9, Keck 1997b: 258.

43 Wallander/Keohane 1999: 34, Haftendorn 1997: 27; for an illustration of NATO's function to manage intra-alliance conflicts as well as shifts in the balance of power see Haftendorn 1994 and Tuschhoff 1999.

Eastern Europe more broadly as well as collective security considerations (such as remaining doubts about German power) did also provide incentives to keep NATO in place.⁴⁴ Secondly, whereas NATO's institutional decision-making procedures as well as practices were developed in order to meet a Soviet threat they were sufficiently flexible (or "portable"⁴⁵) to deal with a new set of problems. Politically as well as militarily, NATO had established an elaborate set of rules and procedures over the preceding decades (such as the consensus rule or the "silence rule" in the field of decision-making as well as the integrated military command structure for force planning as well as implementing military missions) which proved easily adaptable under the new circumstances.⁴⁶ Not only did the alliance succeed in inventing new institutional mechanisms to tackle a changing strategic landscape (such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) or Partnership for Peace (PfP) in the political sphere as well as the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) in the military field), it also succeeded in adjusting established institutional structures (such as the command structures and the practice of multinationality of its forces) to the new environment.⁴⁷ Thus, what appeared to be puzzling from a realist perspective – NATO's persistence in spite of a vanishing threat – was not puzzling at all in the light of institutionalist theory: since NATO had always been a multifunctional security institutions with a high degree of institutionalization as well as a sufficiently flexible mechanism for political as well as military decision-making and implementation and since security risks in Europe as well as beyond to which its rules and procedures remain relevant had not disappeared altogether it turned out to be not surprising at all for

44 Haftendorn 1997: 30, Wallander 2000: 717-731.

45 Wallander/Keohane 1999: 34.

46 For a discussion of the relationship between organizational theory (emphasizing bureaucratic inertia) and institutional theory more broadly see McCalla 1996: 456-469 and Haftendorn 1997: 27-28; for a more skeptical analysis as to NATO's adaptability especially with regard to NATO's capacity for peace operations drawing on collective action theory see Leggold 1998; see also Chernoff 1995 who draws on institutionalist as well as cybernetic theory arguing that NATO's outlook is not as pessimistic as realists suppose but more pessimistic than institutionalists allow.

47 For discussion and illustration for the early 1990s see Hellmann/Wolf 1993: 25-26, for subsequent phases in NATO's adaption see also McCalla 1996: 464-469; Haftendorn 1997: 28-29, Theiler 1997: 121-133, Wallander/Keohane 1999: 43-45, and Wallander 2000: 724-725.

institutionalists that NATO lived on. Moreover, the expectation was that it may continue to do so "to a ripe old age".⁴⁸

In comparison to realism, institutionalist theory, at first sight, seems to fare better. In some fields NATO has indeed implemented major changes to its institutional rules. Nevertheless for institutionalists it must be highly irritating to observe that a successful "security management institution" such as NATO is virtually sidelined in the most serious crisis experienced by its most important member. Moreover, the very instrumental recourse to the alliance by the Bush administration in Afghanistan and in Iraq sounds more easily compatible with John Mearsheimer's realist interpretation that institutions are merely tools in the hands of their most powerful members without any independent constraining effect.⁴⁹ This is precisely what Robert Keohane still expected in the run up to the Iraq war. Writing in November 2002, he thought that "up to this point" the behavior of the Bush Administration could still be interpreted as "reflecting a strategy of *multilateral preventive diplomacy*, or *multilateral compellence*, rather than as a strategy of unilateral preventive war."⁵⁰ Around the same time, however, he himself offered a cautious note that the constraining impact of security management institutions may not be powerful enough to counter more deeply seated domestic causes of foreign policy such as competing conceptions of sovereignty. In this respect the European Union (EU) on the one hand and the US on the other were seen to differ markedly. Moreover, "divergences of interests, values and social structures" which clearly amounted to a "widening Euro-American breach" were now said to be so significant that Europe and America might even "favor a parting of ways".⁵¹ Thus even though institutionalist theorizing seemed to offer a more plausible account of NATO's development towards the end of the 1990s than realism its focus on institutional dynamics at the expense of other variables nevertheless fell short in the interpretation of its adherents.⁵²

48 Wallander/Keohane 1996: 37.

49 Mearsheimer 1994/1995, 2001.

50 Keohane 2002ba, emphasis in original.

51 Keohane 2002ab: 760 and 761.

52 For another assessment see Keohane 2003.

Constructivism:

In a narrow sense, the debate about NATO's future has been the domain of realism and institutionalism for much of the early 1990s. It was only when the constructivist challenge of so-called "rationalist" approaches broadened in the mid-1990s that this school of theorizing also entered the debate about NATO's future.⁵³ To some extent this is odd since one of the keys to post-war liberal IR thinking, Karl Deutsch's writings about NATO as a pluralistic security community, had been around longer than any of the ("rational") institutionalist challengers of realism. Proponents of constructivism grant that this approach is per se rather weak in terms of coming up with clear-cut predictions.⁵⁴ In the debate about NATO's future, the emphasis on identity-building processes has therefore often been combined with theoretical arguments developed by other schools of thought, mainly liberal and institutional thinking. Thus, in combining "social constructivism" and "republican liberalism" constructivists such as Thomas Risse or Frank Schimmelfennig describe NATO as "an institutionalized pluralistic security community of liberal democracies", an alliance representing the "military branch" of a broader "Euro-Atlantic or 'Western' community".⁵⁵ From this perspective the end of the Cold War:

"not only does not terminate the Western community of values, it extends that community into Eastern Europe and, potentially, into even the successor states of the Soviet Union, creating a 'pacific federation' of liberal democracies from Vladivostok to Berlin, San Francisco, and Tokyo."

The important point here is, however, that the institutional form of NATO was considered less critical than the underlying community of values: "liberal theory does not necessarily expect NATO to last into the next century. It only assumes that *the security partnership among liberal democracies will persist in one institutional form or another.*"⁵⁶

Thus, whereas liberal constructivists are as optimistic about the future of the transatlantic community as institutionalists are, they emphasize quite a different causal nexus. First, NATO is not primarily an institutional solution to deal with a multifaceted set of threats and risks.

53 For an effort to locate constructivist accounts of NATO in the broader debate between realists and neoliberal institutionalists see Ruggie 1998: 877.

54 Müller 2002: 382.

55 Risse 1996: 397, Schimmelfennig 1998: 213-214.

56 Risse 1996: 396, emphasis added.

Rather it is an expression of an underlying community of shared values among liberal democracies built on "mutual sympathy, trust, and consideration" and expressed in institutions which externalize the internal norms of democracies.⁵⁷ NATO's charter is more than merely an instrumental system of rules. The norms contained in it "tell states not only what they are supposed to do, but what they are supposed to wish."⁵⁸ Taken together these norms and values "constitute the collective identity of a security community among democracies."⁵⁹ They define who belongs to "us" and who belongs to "them". In this reading a Western perception of a Soviet threat certainly helped to foster a sense of common purpose within NATO, but "it did not create the community in the first place." Rather, "the *collective identity led to the threat perception, not the other way around.*"⁶⁰ In other words, democracies form alliances with each other not because of a unifying external threat but because they perceive each other as peaceful.⁶¹ Therefore, the waning of the Soviet threat was considered irrelevant to the existence of NATO as long as the underlying community of shared liberal values would remain intact among its members. At least up until the American intervention in Iraq in 2003 none of the conflicts within NATO were seen to have negatively affected the underlying foundation of shared values.⁶²

Second, in contrast to an institutionalist accounts the question of the adaptability of NATO's institutional mechanisms is less important than its underlying "norms of democratic decision-making among equals emphasizing persuasion, compromise, and the non-use of force or coercive power."⁶³ As long as these norms are not violated, there is little reason to believe that NATO is endangered. Here there is some "bad news" with regard to more recent events: As Risse argued recently, "unilateral and even imperial tendencies" in the U.S.' approach to Iraq "violate constitutive norms on which the transatlantic community has been built over the years, namely multilateralism and close consultation

57 Risse 1996: 368.

58 Müller 2002: 381.

59 Risse 1996: 370.

60 Risse-Kappen 1995: 32, emphasis added.

61 Risse 1996: 371.

62 See Risse 2003.

63 Risse 1996: 369, see also Risse-Kappen 1995: 33.

with allies."⁶⁴ If these tendencies were to persist or even worsen, the foundation of the alliance could indeed be endangered. These developments should not, however, be dramatized since other events clearly speak to the vitality of the alliance.

This relates to the third argument differentiating liberal constructivist from other approaches: the attractiveness of this security community displayed in its successful enlargement. The values of the liberal democracies of the transatlantic security community do not only prescribe norms for internal decision-making they also imply that these values are defended against competing values and spread out. NATO, therefore, was not only expected to be seen as an attractive institution which other democracies wanted to join, it was also expected to be actively involved in disseminating its values by granting membership to such states.⁶⁵ With two rounds of NATO enlargement being almost completed and with NATO reaching out well beyond the more narrow circle of prospective members via institutional innovations such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and its successor, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Partnership for Peace (PfP), and the NATO-Russia Charter and its successor "NATO at 20", the alliance was seen to be well on its way to extend the Euro-Atlantic community eastward towards the end of the 1990s.⁶⁶ While recent initiatives of the US in the aftermaths of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were seen as potentially undermining some of the core principles of NATO decision-making, overall the alliance was still perceived to be resting on a rather solid foundation.⁶⁷

64 Risse 2003: 2; on the importance of multilateralism as "a general organizing principle" of NATO see Weber 1992.

65 Schimmelfennig 1998: 211-212, 216; Risse 1996: 395-396; on the importance of NATO "teaching" its values to surrounding states see also Adler; for a detailed analysis of the discourse on enlarging NATO as a community of democratic states see Bürger 2002.

66 See Schimmelfennig 1998: 216-228 and Adler 1998: 143-146. In 1990, however, Adler did not yet believe that NATO would become such a model candidate for security community building. Writing in a Postscript shortly after the revolutions of 1989, he thought that both the Warsaw Pact and NATO seemed to be "almost obsolete", placing his highest hopes on the CSCE instead (Adler 1991: 163).

67 This overall assessment is sometimes complemented by another strand of liberal thinking pointing to the dense and symmetrical economic interdependence between Western Europe in the one hand and the US on the other; for data see Krell 2003, especially ch. 2.2.

Much of the writing referred to above predates the escalation of European (or Franco-German) and American conflict in the immediate run up to the Iraq war. Moreover, even adherents of a liberal constructivist view now grant that the transatlantic foundation of a community of values has been suffering major blows.⁶⁸ Yet if it is indeed "collective identity" which leads to a common perception of threat (rather than the other way around) the dramatically widening gap in threat perceptions between EU-Europe (as a whole) and the US must indeed be a very irritating observation to constructivists. One may easily construe terrorism as "objectively" forming only a marginally different threat to the US and EU-Europe. Yet opinion polls among both elites and the public on both sides of the Atlantic clearly identify a widening gap among a "security community" which should reveal a collective Atlanticist identity. Thus, as in the case of institutionalist as well as realist theorizing, this most recent paradigmatic offering is encountering some trouble as well in convincingly accounting what we are observing.

NATO and America as Hegemon or Imperial Power

The foregoing discussion summarized the key propositions and predictions about NATO's future of three mainstream schools of thought. In spite of crucial differences these three schools have one thing in common: they take NATO as an alliance, as a security institution or as an expression of an underlying security community as their main point of reference. As the discussion has shown none of these three perspectives can easily be relegated to the dustbin of disciplinary theory building. At the same time none offers as convincing an account of the dynamics driving NATO's developments as implicitly suggested by exclusionary claims to superior explanatory power. A fourth approach, which I will briefly discuss, now has not received much attention since it does not easily fit in the discipline's paradigmatic matrix. However, given the prominence given during the last few years to the question whether the US is becoming an "imperial" power this approach may provide additional insights not covered by the approaches above. Rather than asking whether NATO will persist, adapt or vanish, it argues that the dynamics of international politics is driven primarily by the key player(s)

68 Risse 2003/2004.

in the international system and how they approach the fundamental problem of order.

The work of Adam Watson is most prominently associated with this approach. Throughout history, Watson argues, we can observe that in dealing with the "inevitable tension between the desire for order and the desire for independence" the international system has displayed a strong propensity (or "gravitational pull") away from what he describes as the extreme poles of a "pendulum" ("multiple independences" and "empire") towards hegemony. Hegemony is defined as a state of affairs, where:

"some power or authority in a system is able to 'lay down the law' about the operation of the system, that is to determine to some extent the external relations between member states, while leaving them domestically independent."⁶⁹

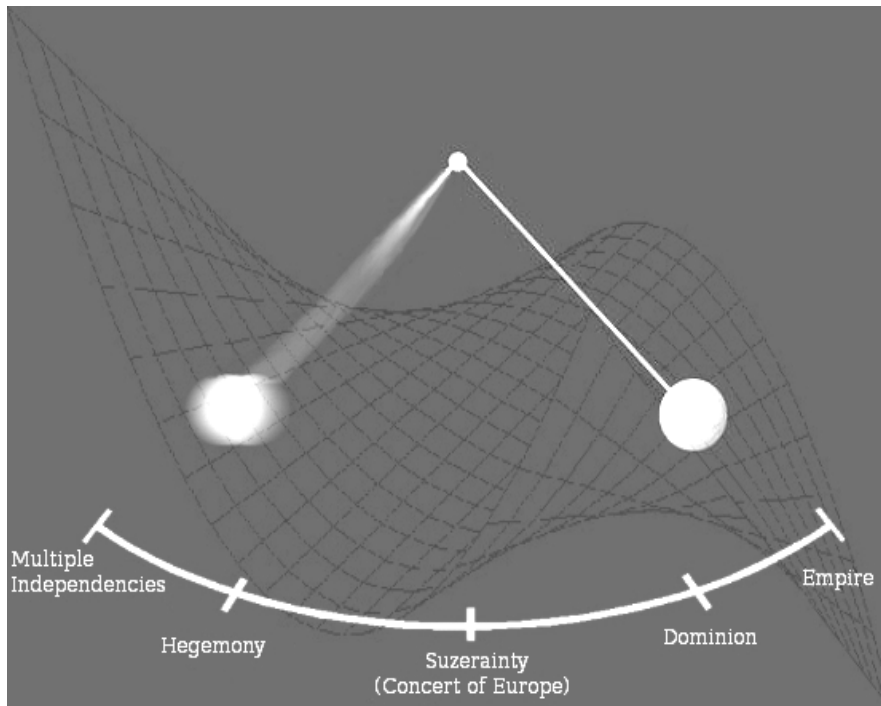
However, while preponderant military and economic power (by a single state or by a coalition of states) were obviously a prerequisite for hegemony to be established throughout history they were far from being sufficient. Legitimacy, "the acceptance of authority, the right of a ruler or a ruler to be obeyed, as distinguished from the power to coerce",⁷⁰ was as crucial. In comparing different international systems starting in ancient times Watson finds that the most stable and generally accepted point along the spectrum was always the result of an optimum mix of three factors:

"the balance of material advantage, for both the rulers and the ruled; the point of greatest legitimacy; and the gravitational pull of the pendulum away from empire and anarchical independences towards the middle of the spectrum."⁷¹

69 Watson 1992: 14, 15; see also 313-314. In Watson's "pendulum" multiple independences stands for an international system where many sovereign political entities "retain the ultimate ability to take external decisions as well as domestic ones". At the other end of the pendulum empire stands for the "direct administration of different communities from an imperial center" (Watson 1992: 14,16). Thus, the defining distinction between empire and hegemony is whether a preponderant power or authority exercises control over both external and domestic politics (empire) or over foreign policy only (hegemony); see also Doyle 1986: 40.

70 Watson 1992: 17.

71 Watson 1992: 324.



If we approach the question of the future of NATO from this perspective, three questions appear crucial: (1) How is power distributed among the major players? (2) What are the dominant visions of order as well as the practices to realize these visions and to what extent are these visions and ambitions perceived to be legitimate? (3) How do the answers to these questions affect other forms of international organization, such as alliances? Events during the 1990s seemed to point to a fairly clear picture as far as questions (1) and (2) are concerned. As to the distribution of power, there was little disagreement among scholars that US power was preponderant indeed. As a matter of fact, it was not even an issue that seemed worth debating.⁷² What is more, as the decade

72 Few scholars even bothered to show and explain, in what sense the US could be called being preponderant; for two early exceptions see Nau 1990 and Nye 1990; for subsequent competing assessments as to the sources (though not about the fact) of American preponderance see Wohlforth 1999: 9-22 and Ikenberry 2001. Instead of defining preponderance much of the debate centered around questions such as whether primacy "mattered" (Jervis 1993, Huntington 1993); where its advantages and disadvantages lay (Walt 2002); whether unquestioned American primacy was significant enough to justify describing the post-Cold War international system as being "unipolar" (Krauthammer 1991; Layne 1993; Huntington 1999; Wohlforth

of the 1990s passed into the early 21st century the primacy of US power seemed to stand out ever more clearly. As to question of dominant visions of order, most assessments seemed to converge around a description of a fairly benign hegemonial order dominated by a coalition of powerful democracies with the US obviously ranking at the top. To be sure, realists generally tended to downgrade the argument that "ideology" (democratic rule) had any impact on the impetus towards balancing against the most powerful actor in the system. Moreover, some of these designs were openly imperial, calling for a "benevolent global hegemony" based on a "neo-Reaganite foreign policy of military supremacy and moral confidence".⁷³ Yet most liberal observers argued that it would be misconstruing the central features of both the post-war order as well as the situation after 1990 if one were to reduce it to a *Realpolitik*-game centered on the distribution of military power and the balancing behavior of the key players.

John Ikenberry, for instance, argued that the post-war order was actually made up of two kinds of settlements: the "containment order" based on countering the Soviet threat via NATO and a more diffuse though equally profound "liberal democratic order" made up of "a wide range of new institutions and relations among the Western industrial democracies, built around economic openness, political reciprocity, and multilateral management of an America-led liberal political system."⁷⁴ What is more, this order did not come about as the unintended result of a random mix of policies and events, but was, in fact, deliberately brought about by a "distinctively American liberal grand strategy".⁷⁵ In this view the end of the Cold War did not mark a significant break but rather an accentuation of a major trend: at the least it amounted to a "mild hegemonial authority" in the form of a loose informal concert of the strongest powers with the US standing at the top;⁷⁶ in a more far-reaching

1999), whether such a unipolar world could be stable and/or whether it would last (Layne 1993; Huntington 1999; Wohlforth 1999; Mearsheimer 2001).

73 Kristol/Kagan 1996: 20, 23; for a critique see Maynes 1998; for a more differentiating discussion of the US acting as a benevolent hegemon, especially in the context of US-German relations, see Haftendorn 1999.

74 Ikenberry 1996: 81.

75 Ikenberry 2000: 104.

76 Watson 1997: 132, 126; in Watson's description (Watson 1997: 127) this hegemonial authority pursued three aims in particular: the promotion of peace, economic prosperity and Western standards of civilization.

interpretation it was even characterized as a benign imperial system, a "world democratic-capitalist empire" which could actually be called "the American system" due to the preponderance of the US.⁷⁷ This system was thought to be "expansive and highly durable" because of American military as well as economic power, the benefits of geography rendering the US into an "offshore" power, the "liberal character of American hegemony" with its inbuilt "mechanisms to make itself less threatening to the rest of world", and America's "deep alignment with global developmental processes – (...) the 'project of modernity'".⁷⁸ To be sure, not everyone was willing to identify the liberal core of an expanding international society with American hegemony. Yet one of the key arguments in liberal thinking, the expansion of principles of international legitimacy (such as principles of multilateralism, a "collectivization of security" and adherence to liberal rights values), was indeed thought to be emanating from the "imperial core" of an international society increasingly transcending the state system.⁷⁹

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have shifted the debate on the nature of American power and the visions and ambitions of the current administration in Washington significantly. Whereas some liberals still think that the underlying foundation of the transatlantic community remains intact in spite of the irritating evidence of American unilateralism and violation of constitutive norms of the alliance,⁸⁰ other liberals such as John Ikenberry saw "a new grand strategy" taking shape which threatened to undermine the liberal order. In a major reversal of earlier assessments that a benevolent, liberal American empire was "robust and durable"⁸¹, Ikenberry now perceived a new U.S. strategy which essentially aimed at aggressively preserving a unipolar world in which the US had no peer competitor.⁸² This new strategy was characterized mainly by an unprecedented emphasis on offence and preemption over deterrence in meeting new threats; by redefining state

77 Ikenberry 2001: 192; for more nuanced descriptions of America as an empire see Maier 2002.

78 Ikenberry 2001: 193-194.

79 Clark 2001: 238; for a critique of Ikenberry's position see also Clark 2001: 250-253.

80 Risse 2003.

81 Ikenberry 2001: 193.

82 For tracing the origins of this view back until the early 1990s see Gordon 2003 and Tyler 1992

sovereignty in a manner which allows for intervention "anywhere, anytime" in fighting threats emanating from terrorism and so-called "rogue states"; by a general depreciation of international rules; and by an explicit reliance on the unconstrained use of force.⁸³

Thus despite their disagreements on other fundamental issues liberals such as Risse or Ikenberry, and realists such as Christopher Layne, Jack Snyder or Stephen Walt⁸⁴ perceive an increasingly precarious development in US foreign policy fraught with "imperial dangers" and "myths".⁸⁵ Suddenly the fate of the alliance appears to be a function of the predisposition and preferences of its most important member – rather than being primarily a function of systemic processes. To be sure, most of the prominent paradigmatic approaches discussed above seldom relied exclusively on systemic variables. However, the attention which is now (once again) paid to issues of international legitimacy and domestic sources of foreign policy (in addition to the distribution of power) is very recent phenomenon.

NATO's Future and the "Evidence": The Alternative of Trans-Paradigmatic Pragmatism

What should we make of all this? In the following I will sketch an alternative to paradigmatic, which I call trans-paradigmatic pragmatism. Whereas this is not the place to discuss in detail what this means, I will

83 Ikenberry 2002: 49-55; see also National Security Strategy of The White House 2002 and Gaddis 2002.

84 Layne 2002, Snyder 2002 and Walt 2002 see also the advertisement "War With Iraq Is Not In America's National Interest" in the New York Times, 26 September 2002, signed by 33 scholars of international relations, among others by Robert Art, Alexander George, Robert Jervis, Jack Levy, John Mearsheimer, Richard Rosecrance, Thomas Schelling, Jack Snyder, Glenn Snyder, Stephen van Evera, Stephen Walt, Kenneth Waltz, available at <http://www.bear-left.com/archive/2002/0926oped.html>.

85 While not disagreeing with the description of America as an imperial power, other observers openly applaud what they saw. "On September 11", Charles Krauthammer, for instance, wrote, "American foreign policy acquired seriousness" by acquiring a "new organizing principle: We have an enemy, radical Islam (...) and its defeat is our supreme national objective, as overriding a necessity as were the defeats of fascism and Soviet communism." In defining "friend and foe – according to who was with us or against us in the war on terrorism" this "Bush doctrine" restored the necessary "intellectual and conceptual simplicity" that had been lacking for so long. In Krauthammer's view the world is better off as a result. Krauthammer 2001.

briefly summarize its main tenets.⁸⁶ My version of pragmatism is based on a *theory* of thought *and* action – i.e. a "tool" *to think about* thought *and* action⁸⁷ – which emphasizes the genuine creativity of individual as well as collective actors. This implies that (individual and collective) actors are neither hostage to some "systemic" or "structural" constraints nor free from what John Dewey called "experience". Rather they act intelligently and creatively given a particular situation at hand. Two dimensions are important. First, the focus on human intelligence and creativity puts (individual and collective) actors at the center of investigation without ignoring the constraining *and* enabling effects which structures have on their action. Given pragmatism's key proposition that beliefs are rules for action we will be able to better understand action if we come to grips with those (sets of) beliefs – i.e. if we better understand what "expectations", "ideas", "causal beliefs", "world views" or "norms" (to list just a few of those ideational concepts which are usually applied in current IR theorizing) guide action.⁸⁸ Second, the centrality of human intelligence and creativity in pragmatist thought also implies that one must not attach too much significance to the kind of "theory" which is usually constructed in mainstream IR scholarship, i.e. generalizing *ceteris paribus* statements which leave a lot

86 For a more detailed discussion of my views on "synthesis" (rather than paradigmatic "analysis") as well as my version of pragmatism see Hellmann, et al. 2000, 2002, and Hellmann 2003; see also the Millennium Special Issue 2002 on 'Pragmatism in International Relations Theory'.

87 For a discussion of this conception of "theory" as a "tool" see Rorty 1996: 74.

88 Note that this concept of belief differs crucially from both standard positivist understandings in IR (eg. Goldstein/Keohane 1993) as well as constructivism. Wendt 1999 (1999: 116, fn. 66), for instance, argues that the "terms 'desire' and 'belief' are conventional in the philosophical literature, but no particular importance attaches to them. The former I take to be equivalent to the social scientist's 'interest', 'taste', or 'preference', while the latter is equivalent to 'expectations', 'information', or 'knowledge'". This judgment that the philosophical literature attaches no particular importance to beliefs is highly dubious, however. For Donald Davidson (whom Wendt cites only with regard to his earliest works from the 1960s and who arguably is one of the leading contemporary philosophers), "belief" has always been a core category – and (as with classical pragmatists such as Peirce and James) it has always been intimately related to action; cf. among others, Davidson 2002; for the centrality of the concept of belief in classical pragmatist thinking see also Peirce 1997 (1877) and James 1948 (1886). For Wendt (and much of the current constructivist literature) the concept of "ideas" serves the basic function which "belief" has in pragmatism.

of "other" things "equal". Rather, given that action necessarily takes place against the background of a mixture of routine and non-routine situations an adequate understanding of action necessarily has to systematically grant for novelty.

Such a pragmatist perspective is particularly useful when we are faced with a highly complex phenomenon where the standard repertoire of routinized theory-building is unlikely to yield satisfactory results. It is my contention here that NATO today is such a phenomenon: It is situated in an international environment which does not allow an easy recourse to a set of standardized paradigmatic variables. This is especially so with regard to the paradigmatic practice of advancing claims of exclusive and superior explanatory power relative to rival paradigms. The previous discussion has shown that whereas each of the paradigms discussed had something to offer in shedding light on NATO's evolution none really advanced a sufficiently convincing account to eclipse all the others. This is another way of saying that it is useful to get rid of the paradigmatic mindset when studying NATO. Instead one ought to assume that *each* has to offer *something*. This is what I mean when I use the term *trans-paradigmatic* pragmatism. The *pragmatism* part of this approach stresses that it is useful to treat NATO in a manner equivalent to how many scholars working on the EU treat their subject matter: as an institution *sui generis*, i.e. as a phenomenon which has by now revealed so many traits of novelty that it must no longer be subsumed under some fixed label with stark connotations of past paradigmatic battles such as "alliance" (for realism) or "security community" (for constructivism).

How does one study *sui generis* phenomena? Is it not a recipe for the kind of "a-theoretical" work which our community so despises to declare a key phenomenon of international relations such as NATO basically off-limits for paradigmatic treatment? I do not believe so. First of all it is highly unlikely that the discipline will stop doing what most of its disciples are taught to do in the first place. Paradigmatic treatments will continue to be available even if trans-paradigmatic pragmatism were to flourish. Second, even if many IR disciples were to follow the pragmatist call this would not imply that we would stop doing theory. As a matter of fact a pragmatist approach would be highly appreciative of the theoretical knowledge transported by disciplinary traditions such as realism or some offspring of its classical counterpart, idealism. This is so because *all*

these traditions basically serve as stores of the discipline's wisdom. The changes brought along by a pragmatist approach would be stark nevertheless since it would stop with the widespread disciplinary practice of staging paradigmatic battles. However, the benefits should more than make up for the losses. If trans-paradigmatic pragmatism indeed delivers what it promises it would not only be healthy for the discipline (in terms of getting rid of "stylized" paradigmatic fights) but also useful for policy.

So, once again, what would a trans-paradigmatic pragmatist approach to NATO look like? I can only provide an outline at this point in time which stays at a rather abstract level.⁸⁹ Two aspects, in particular, stand out. First and most basically, a pragmatist alternative would rely on what Ludwig Wittgenstein (in discussing the task of philosophy) called the need for "perspicuous representation" ("übersichtliche Darstellung") instead of exclusively aiming for "explanation".⁹⁰ "A philosophical problem", Wittgenstein says, "has the form: 'I don't know my way about'"⁹¹. Getting to know one's way requires "perspicuity" ("Übersichtlichkeit"). Translated into our context this means that it is the task of the IR expert to show how things hang together, i.e. that in solving a particular problem an expert has to put us into the position of helping us to "see the connections" between different aspects by "finding and inventing *intermediate links*" due to her or his perspicuity.⁹² Perspicuity or "surview"⁹³ is thus the opposite of getting drowned in analytical detail or in being carried away by some presupposition for scientific exactness (whatever that may be). To be sure, in order to provide for surview it is necessary to know as many facets of a given problem as possible. But for pragmatists the prime criterion for being an expert in a particular field is not that one delves in details or that one

89 This is certainly not an optimal conclusion since for pragmatists the pudding is always in the eating. However, in another context I have attempted to be more specific as to how a pragmatist approach is translated into more specific statements; see my analysis of the presence and future of German foreign policy in Hellmann 2002.

90 Wittgenstein 1953: §§122, 109. For a detailed discussion of the importance of this concept see, among others, Genova 1995: 25-38.

91 Wittgenstein 1953: §123.

92 Wittgenstein 1953: §122, emphasis in original.

93 This is rather old-fashioned term is preferred by Baker and Hacker, two pre-eminent Wittgenstein scholars. The translation of the German term "Übersicht" into English has been a matter of extended debate. For a discussion see Baker/Hacker 1986.

knows to speak a specialized language. Rather it is that one is familiar with the status of debate within one's discipline and how this may translate into descriptions of a particular problem at hand which may provide for better understanding and, in addition, help to (re-)orient practice. With regard to NATO, for instance, this implies that an expert ought to demonstrate a sufficient familiarity with a very diverse set of variables suggested by competing paradigms: the measurement and analysis of power as well as its distribution across a set of relevant actors; an understanding as to what "threats" are made of and how they are made⁹⁴; an appreciation for a diverse set of factors ("values", "interests") which lead countries to either downgrade or upgrade the need for borders etc.

Second, since a pragmatist analysis always has to pay a good deal of attention to the actors involved it is necessary to get a clear sense of who the relevant actors are when one deals with NATO and what beliefs guide their action. To start with "states" (as "black boxes") may not be a bad point for departure but analysis certainly must not stop there – especially since it is difficult to attach *beliefs* to this type of collective actor. Institutionalist analysis as well as recent work on "imperial" tendencies in the US has shown that "bureaucratic" as well as "domestic" factors may play a significant role in shaping the beliefs of decision-making elites (such as the "neo-conservative" coalition) and driving policy at the level of the state or at the level of the institution itself.⁹⁵ Therefore, the dynamics which drive "domestic" actors (such as electorates which are subject to intense opinion polling), "bureaucratic" actors (such as the NATO-related bureaucracies in Brussels as well as member countries) as well as "governmental" actors at the state level are important to include in such an analysis. This is more than merely a reflex against "black boxing" tendencies among realist approaches. It is an expression of pragmatism's fundamentally different conception of the

94 See the discussion of processes of "securitization" in the writings of Ole Waever, most recently Buzan/Waever 2003, Part I; in our context Parts IV and V are also very instructive because the authors here discuss what they call "regional security complexes" with regard to Europe and the Americas. Among others Buzan and Waever show that European and US preoccupations about prime security concerns are increasingly diverging, if only because the regional context regains pre-eminence after the "overlay" of superpower rivalry has come to an end.

95 On the importance of bureaucratic institutional expertise as well as bureaucracies as actors see Barnett/Finnemore 2004.

genuine creativity of any type of (individual or collective) actor. Understanding their beliefs as to how the alliance might (or ought to) evolve is as crucial as understanding institutional or power "structures". This is so because for pragmatists the beliefs held by individual as well as collective actors with some influence on the fate of such institutions are a very good guide as to how these institutions will evolve.

If we pay attention to these facets as emphasized by pragmatists the potential payoff in comparison to traditional paradigmatic treatments is that it will yield richer insights into the dynamics, which drive the evolution of NATO. By identifying how the major driving forces of the "alliance" hang together a pragmatist analysis will succeed to the extent that it provides theoretically and empirically informed guesses about *all possible* and *many plausible* futures.⁹⁶ In addition it should also provide plausible accounts as to why past futures may have turned out to be wrong.

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96 A highly instructive and systematic treatment of possibility and plausibility of different futures is provided by Hawthorn 1991.

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