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Recasting the Euro-Atlantic Partnership

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The physical distance from the Fulda Gap in Germany, the main focal point of the old NATO, to the Latvian capital of Riga, where the new NATO held its most recent summit, is 700 miles. Measured politically and psychologically, however, the distance from the old to the new NATO covers light years. In traversing such a space for the NATO Summit meeting that was held in November 2006, the countries of the Alliance demonstrated they had met the first significant challenge of the post-Cold War world—achieving stability and security for a free and gradually whole Europe. This accomplishment has, in turn, extended the conditions necessary for Europe's complementary institutional development, as shown by the consequent widening and deepening of the European Union (EU).

In Riga, however, the main topic of discussion was not Europe but Afghanistan. On the map, the distance from Riga to Kabul is three times as great as from Fulda—but even greater in terms of the political, economic and security requirements for producing results comparable to those seen in Central and Eastern Europe. Peace and stability in Afghanistan's part of the world are far from assured. Moreover, the challenges of stabilization and reconstruction in Afghanistan are only one among several significant tasks facing the Alliance, many of which were only lightly touched upon, if at all, at the Riga summit.

Meeting the challenges of the 21st century will require new approaches and concerted efforts by the members of the Euro-Atlantic community. Unlike the concept of stability in Europe, which the Alliance, by history and proximity, was well-positioned to support, the challenges now faced by the nations of the Alliance—most pressingly those of failing states, radical militant Islam, energy security and structural economic competition—are often exceedingly complex and incompletely understood, offering few demonstrable short-term results and even fewer certain solutions.

Both the structures and capabilities of the Euro-Atlantic community will need revision if such challenges are to be met—and the development of new capacities will demand not only resources, but also commitment. This paper sets out a way forward, recommending a broadened strategic focus for the Euro-Atlantic community which explicitly encompasses the four issues listed above, in combination with a reform of Euro-Atlantic structures to make cooperation more effective.

The Main Problems

By many measures, the Euro-Atlantic community is succeeding brilliantly. In terms of per capita GDP, it includes 17 of the top 20 countries in the world, and as many as 18 of the top 20 in terms of quality of life. Yet, by other standards the Euro-Atlantic community also faces fundamental challenges that raise critical security, political, economic, and social concerns.

For the United States, traditional security concerns are increasingly bundled into circumstances that cannot be addressed by military power alone. Iraq and Afghanistan top the list of security issues that demand immediate attention. Yet, Iraq and Afghanistan overlap into larger questions of stabilization and reconstruction, rogue regimes, failing states, and radical militant Islam. These problems are further linked to the issues presented by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a subject currently dominated by the ambitions and defiance of Iran and North Korea. For most Americans, having suffered the shock of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent anthrax attacks, the potential significance of these states acquiring WMD is clear enough, despite the intelligence debacle of Iraq. Nevertheless, U.S. military preponderance can be only one element in a comprehensive approach needed to counter this mixture of interrelated threats.

Additionally, the United States faces longer-term issues that have the potential to become critical and urgent concerns in the years ahead. Approximately 40 percent of U.S. energy comes from oil, a commodity whose susceptibility to economic and geopolitical instability has been regularly demonstrated in the past several decades. Natural gas, too, is increasingly subject to worldwide instabilities affecting U.S. allies and partners, as Russian and Bolivian actions regarding supply to neighbors have shown. Under such conditions, and with fossil fuels in finite supply, energy security must feature more prominently on the U.S. agenda. Energy security, however, cannot be separated from environmental issues, as the generation of carbon dioxide and other hothouse gases from the consumption of fossil fuels portends an eventual climatic disaster. As a result, energy security achieved the wrong way may well lead to problems of an even greater magnitude.

Third, the United States faces concerns stemming from the changing structure of the world economy. The global market, especially the impact of the low cost, high quality producer exemplified by the paradigmatic "Chinese manufacturer" and "Indian service provider," may divide the interests of American capital from American labor in a way not easily subject to remedy by regulatory mediation. The path to adapting the U.S. economy to these new conditions without affecting current standards of living for future generations is not entirely clear.

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Europe, of course, faces these issues as well, arguably even more acutely than the United States. For most European countries, the impact of radical militant Islam is not only an external issue but also one of domestic concern. Unlike the United States, it is Europe that is within the range of Iranian missiles. When Russia puts its thumb on the gas pipeline, it is Europe whose energy is affected. And while the global markets have the potential to hurt the United States, Europe has already been enduring relatively high unemployment and lower growth rates for some time. In all these manifestations, Europeans face much the same issues as Americans do. Reflective of this fact, the European Security Strategy put forth by the Union and the U.S. National Security Strategy are remarkably, but not surprisingly, parallel.

In responding to the issues, however, the European and American processes are often different. This stems from an additional critical question faced by Europe—namely, the institutional finality of the EU. The Union (and the broader issues surrounding it) continues to raise serious questions of identity for Europeans, reflected in numerous levels of torn sovereignty, parallel structures, and political steps that have moved forward (the euro) and back (constitutional treaty). The EU, originally an economic project with political consequence, is now far more—a legislative and judicial sovereign entity (though not always with sovereign power), a diplomatic actor (though with parallel and often superior actors in member states), and a military power (though with quite modest assertion so far). Thus, the Union is both sovereign in itself and composed of sovereign member states, which have not given up their economic capacities, their diplomatic endeavors, or control over security and military policy.

Therefore, unlike the United States, which has a basic single sovereignty in the international arena, the different actors within Europe often espouse substantively different positions on many global issues. With a European Union presidency, an EU High Representative, and an EU bureaucracy with involvement in key international issues that national prime ministers, foreign ministers and parliaments are also involved in, European policy in international affairs can be very complex. In the end, Europe may now have a telephone number that the United States can call, but the answer is often that of a voice mail with references to the various national parties that populate the Union.

How then can Americans and Europeans work together to ensure that tomorrow's solutions are effective? What should be the substantive focus of the Euro-Atlantic partnership? What does the complexity of European sovereignties and the potential for further change mean for transatlantic interaction? History has given us today's starting point, but how shall we seek to shape the future?

The Road From Riga: The Question of Structure

While the fact of the NATO gathering in Riga was a success in itself, the summit did not generate many answers to the problems described above. One of the key reasons for this is that there are substantial disputes

within the Euro-Atlantic community over the proper roles for NATO, the EU, and individual states, respectively.

The question of how to structure Euro-Atlantic cooperation is critical to future effectiveness, as weak institutional structures will significantly inhibit the generation and implementation of substantive solutions. As a starting point, the debate over the proper role for NATO is characterized in what is reasonably described as a U.S.-French dispute (although, in truth, all countries of the Alliance face this wider question). The opposing viewpoints are succinctly captured in President Jacques Chirac's pre-Summit "Vision for NATO," which reaffirmed "the preeminent role" of the Atlantic alliance as "a military organization, guarantor of the collective security of the allies, and a forum where Europeans and Americans can combine their efforts to further peace."[1] The fundamental issue is whether to place the emphasis on "military organization"—as now favored by France—or, rather, on a "forum where Europeans and Americans can combine their efforts to further peace"—the view currently promoted by the United States.

In the latter vein, Chirac's call for a "more substantive political and strategic dialogue" between the United States and the EU, including "closer relations between NATO and the EU" appears helpful—but actual progress is limited. Admittedly, the Riga communiqué undertook to "strive for improvements in the NATO-EU strategic partnership as agreed by our two organizations," but it took no steps toward deepening a NATO-EU relationship that has been less than adequate, especially for two organizations that share as many as 21 members. Indeed, under the cover of the Turkey-Cyprus impasse, NATO and the EU have thus far been unable even to agree to a joint discussion of broader strategic issues.

Thus, coming out of Riga, the issue of where the Euro-Atlantic community assembles for "more substantive political and strategic dialogue" remains entirely unsettled. In terms of the main issues facing the community, there is no obvious forum to discuss, among other things, responses to radical militant Islam, energy security, or the impact of global markets. Even issues with obvious security consequences, such as Iran's nuclear program, are being handled in an ad hoc fashion, and the fact that President Chirac had to call for a contact group for Afghanistan nearly five years into the war again shows the limited fora available not just to discuss but, most importantly, to implement responses to key issues.

The three separate dialogues that now occur—within NATO, within the European Union, and between the United States and the Union—need to be substantively and procedurally intertwined in a more effective manner. The bureaucracies of the two organizations need greater high-level political direction instructing them to collaborate. The formal establishment of a council, including all EU and NATO members, as well as the EU itself, since it is an entity of sovereign consequence, would create the appropriate forum for the discussion of the critical challenges to the 21st century Euro-Atlantic community. The NATO Secretary General would also be offered a seat at the table to enhance communication and implementation. This council could be called the Euro-Atlantic Forum.

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Such a Forum would eliminate the need to define the respective competencies of the EU and NATO, as well as the role of individual states within each. There are no more trivial and debilitating types of questions than, for example, "whether NATO has the competence to engage in civilian tasks in support of its military missions"— especially as its member countries plainly have that competence—or "whether the EU has the capacity to undertake a military mission," when most of its members are also members of NATO, the most powerful military alliance in the world.

Rather than being beset by such trivial self-imposed limitations, the new forum could simply, with all parties present, decide upon the necessity of a military action, determine how best to implement it, and approve the appropriate implementing organization.[2] When, as surely will almost always be the case in the future, a combination of security, political, and economic

[1] Jacques Chirac, "France's Vision for NATO," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 28, 2006.

[2] Since this new Euro-Atlantic Forum would be a coordinating group, it could not bar any of the sovereigns—EU or nations (including the U.S.)—or NATO per decision of its members from going forward if they wished, but coordination would be the fundamental approach, not the afterthought.

measures are required, their implementation could be organized in a complementary, rather than disjointed, or even competitive, fashion. And when conflicting approaches are suggested, as, again, surely will be the case, a forum will be available to arrive at consensus and cooperation.

Creation of the new forum would not mean that either NATO or the EU would be abandoning their respective missions, their structures or even their futures. It would mean that they would be able to operate in a coordinated fashion allowing maximization of effort and resources, eliminating the self-imposed limitations created by focusing on procedure over substance. The new forum would act as a strategic coordinator of the efforts of the Euro-Atlantic community, pooling all available security, political and economic strengths.

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Creation of the appropriate new institutional structure is only the first step. As indicated above, the Euro-Atlantic community's combined focus must move past traditional security questions to face the more difficult and complex issues raised by failing states, radical militant Islam, energy security, and structural global competition. These issues are discussed below.

The New Comprehensive Agenda

The fundamental joint agenda of America and Europe demands an effective and comprehensive international approach that goes beyond traditional security questions. Maintaining rigid distinctions between security, political, and economic aspects of the global challenges we face often acts as a barrier to achieving successful outcomes. NATO often fails to be effective because it is too limited to the military side. The EU, too, often has little political punch because it has too limited a security dimension. The United States too often fails to create adequate partnerships with allies and partners—and, conversely, the latter with the United States. New initiatives will be necessary to generate the concepts, resources, and commitment necessary to success—and the proposed new forum needs to serve as a catalyst and driver in this process.

Failing States and the Problems of Stabilization and Reconstruction

The problem of failing states as a threat to peace is well recognized in the security strategies of both the United States and Europe. But solutions have been elusive, and responses remain fundamentally ad hoc.

Afghanistan is representative of the problem. After nearly five years, there is a general consensus that progress in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan is far from satisfactory. A recent report of the UN Security Council mission to Afghanistan concludes that "progress in 2006 . . . has not been as rapid as had been hoped ... [and has] tempered the legitimate hopes of Afghans with signs of despondency and disillusionment."[3]

Other interventions do not suggest that Afghanistan is an aberration. Based on the existing record, the Euro-Atlantic countries can hardly guarantee that their involvement in future interventions will necessarily resolve any given situation. Bosnia is still far from an effectively functioning state; East Timor has had significant problems; Haiti remains a miasma. Somalia and Iraq are worse. Kosovo is yet to be resolved. Each of these interventions has had significant international involvement, substantial resources, and long-term commitments. But none has had clear success.

To be sure, there are examples of positive results—the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo put an end to significant killings, and, despite the difficulties since then, those instances had great benefit for that reason alone. But Bosnia and Kosovo show the difficulty of moving from humanitarian efforts—"halt the killing"—to the broader requirements of creating a functioning polity; and other cases, such as Somalia and Iraq, show that interventions do not even always result in the end of killing (though, of course, non-intervention can result in a great deal more, as in Rwanda and now Darfur).

There is little doubt that stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) efforts inherent in dealing with failing states require more than a military approach. The U.S. Department of Defense has officially reaffirmed this

[3] Report of the Security Council Mission to Afghanistan, 11 to 16 November 2006 (S/2006/935), at summary page, available online at ReliefWeb.

point with Directive 3000.05, which states that stability operations, including political and economic requirements, are a DoD task on a par with warfighting. Yet, for such recognition of the multidisciplinary nature of the task of S&R, there is little to show, as the above list of interventions demonstrates, by way of actual results, in terms of building up functioning, stand-alone countries.

Needless to say, failing states differ from one another, and the demands of stabilization and reconstruction efforts will likewise be different in their particulars. In order to bring about more successful interventions, there needs to be a far greater appreciation of the political situation in each state in question, compared to that of past cases. Concomitant with this is a necessity to understand how to provide the internal parties with enough incentives to make peace and stability in their interest. This requires a carefully coordinated approach in which security, political, and economic efforts are properly prioritized and implemented.

A major Euro-Atlantic initiative that gives greater attention to what factors and approaches make a difference in the outcome of a range of intervention scenarios could provide important grounding relevant to succeeding in specific contexts. Simply continuing to do with greater vigor the ad hoc approach that has characterized past interventions suggests that future outcomes will only be more vigorous and, if not precisely failures, then "non-successes." The first great task of the Euro-Atlantic community is to generate a more effective approach to failing states and stabilization and reconstruction.

The Euro-Atlantic community must again face a dilemma of the Cold War: promoting democracy and human rights, on the one side, versus establishing stability, on the other.

Radical Militant Islam

The issue of radical militant Islam—the force that generated September 11 and the Madrid and London bombings in March 2004 and July 2005, respectively—presents the Euro-Atlantic community with the challenge of creating a long-term and multi-faceted response to an ideology that will use violence, but also political and economic activities, to advance its agenda.

The Euro-Atlantic community has a completely valid conceptual approach to respond to this movement—one that is reflected in the concepts of democracy and individual rights, including tolerance for the practice of religion. That approach is incorporated in many national constitutions, as well as in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and is largely accepted worldwide.[4] It also hardly needs stating that the Euro-Atlantic community also possesses great political, economic, security, and social strengths with which to counter the spread of radical militant Islam. The issue is how to bring all these capabilities to bear.

In doing so, the Euro-Atlantic community must again face a dilemma of the Cold War: promoting democracy and human rights, on the one side, versus establishing stability, on the other. Cold War strategy did not simply abandon democracy promotion in order to ensure stability—rather, it made use of intelligent diplomacy, combining the efforts of private with public institutions. President Gerald Ford's recent passing recalls the brilliance of the Helsinki Final Act, which framed the democratic aspirations of many then-Warsaw Pact nations while providing a platform for the West. It is true, of course, that during the Cold War not every possible action was taken in favor of democracy—but the fact is that democratic promotion and the generation of stability existed simultaneously as coordinated, common, and central values. It should again be a task of the Euro-Atlantic community to promote both goals in this new century.

In a globalized and interconnected world, withdrawal from the struggle with radical militant Islam is not an option. As noted above, radical militant Islam is an internal issue for many European countries: as September 11, Madrid and London demonstrate, and to paraphrase an earlier revolutionary, even if you are not interested in radical militant Islam, it is interested in you. The Euro-Atlantic community needs a shared commitment to meet radical militant Islam head-on—but head-on in an effective, resourced, and strategic fashion.

It will take a long time to resolve this problem, and it will require a comprehensive, adaptable approach. Politics must lead, but economic and development strategies will

[4] Though, in some places, more as a normative goal than actuality. (For example, the communist Chinese government has issued a white paper on democracy—although the actual Chinese practice is considerably less than democratic.)

be crucial, and security activities—external and internal—will also play an important role. The proposed new forum of the NATO and EU countries plus the European Union itself and with the NATO Secretary General would have the appropriate resources to direct such an integrated effort mobilizing the political, economic, and security assets of the Euro-Atlantic community.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

The Iran nuclear question dominates the concerns of the Euro-Atlantic community as a whole regarding the issue of weapons of mass destruction, but the prospects of Al Qaeda acquiring such weapons—as well as North Korea—are also of important consequence. Fears of the "worst weapons in the hands of the worst people" go beyond technical questions of non-proliferation, overlapping with the issues of how to deal with rogue states and radical militant Islam.

Again, there is no forum in which to bring the countries of the Euro-Atlantic community together to discuss such issues. Iran and North Korea, for example, have each been addressed by ad hoc groupings, and each case has escalated to the United Nations Security Council. In neither case does the prospect of successful negotiations, leading these countries to abandon their nuclear ambitions, appear likely (although negotiations have not necessarily run their course). Dealing with countries that fail to abide by international norms is of great consequence for the Euro-Atlantic community. The failure to do so in a coordinated fashion in the case of Iraq cut deeply into the cohesion of the community on many issues, and was an important contributor to some of the failures in the Iraq engagement. In the case of Iran and North Korea, the prospect of using force to eliminate nuclear programs also raises deep political and military issues—ones that deserve significant discussion.

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For example, there seems a significant prospect that a "containment" or "containment-plus" approach may be the least worst option. Senator John Warner, when chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, specifically called in a speech for consideration of deterrence with respect to Iran, and others are seeking to evaluate the options of continuing sanctions, engaging in various forms of containment, and employing military force. Whether containment is the proper approach or not, it is important for the community to work together to develop a common strategy if the problems are to be effectively dealt with. These issues again raise crosscutting political, military and economic questions and again could best be considered in a forum where the countries of NATO and the EU seek to generate a common approach.

Energy Cooperation

The developed world depends on the availability of reasonably priced and readily available energy, a requirement that has generated issues tied to rising costs, security of supply, and environmental impact.

As is the case for the above issues, there is once again no integrative forum in which the countries of NATO and the EU can cooperate to meet these challenges. NATO's Riga communiqué (paragraph 45) took the step of proposing "to consult on the most immediate risks in the field of energy security" and to "support a coordinated, international effort to assess risks to energy infrastructure." There is nothing wrong per se in this approach—other than the obvious point that it is a proposed study, not an action plan— but even if the study were completed and an action plan developed, it would hardly meet the problems of assuring energy supply.

Moreover, even in terms of security, as a recent report by senior U.S. chief executive officers and retired four-star officers noted, the problem of protecting energy supply goes far beyond those of securing critical infrastructure in developed nations. As the report states:

"In light of military threats to the global oil infrastructure, the U.S. should, where appropriate:

— Encourage burden sharing with U.S. allies and partners, including producing and consuming nations, in defense of global oil flows;

— Foster formal and informal security arrangements on multilateral, regional, and bilateral bases…;

— Provide diplomatic support as well as counter-terrorism training and military aid so that oil-producing nations can better assist in protecting petroleum supplies;
— Offer assistance to producing countries in their efforts to develop attractive investment climates backed by stable civil societies"[5]

While the report is directed to the American people and therefore is U.S.-centric, there is precedent for NATO to undertake some of the proposed activities. However, most of the recommended actions are not operations undertaken by NATO. For example, military, counterterrorism, and other security aid to countries are generally arranged on a bilateral basis. Many of the NATO countries have been patrolling in the Gulf, but either under UN auspices or on an ad hoc basis. While NATO does have the Partnership for Peace and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which include key security-minded countries that are not NATO members, neither the Partnership for Peace nor the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative has a mandate for dealing with energy security.

Even more importantly, there are numerous energy security issues that do not lend themselves to military action. The very tight supply-demand situation in the oil markets has led to an overall rise in prices in the past several years, with periodic spikes to levels of serious concern. How to allocate oil in crisis circumstances is a question on which the countries that have worked together to develop stockpiles under IEA auspices have had substantial discussions. But plans to deal with an immediate crisis that would necessitate opening stockpiles into the market do not deal with the much more important issue of how to ensure reasonable supply at reasonable prices over the longer term.

Similar to the issue raised by the inelasticity of the oil market is the issue of an enforced cutoff of supply, currently punctuated by concerns over Russian energy policies. Russia supplies about one quarter of Europe's gas requirements, and this number is expected to rise to about 40 percent by 2030. In the context of this substantial dominance, numerous voices have raised the question of whether the Euro-Atlantic community should pre-determine a collective response if, say, supplies to one country were cut off.[6] But, again, planning what to do in a crisis, while obviously quite important, does not resolve the substantive issues that generated the crisis in the first place. A longer-term strategic approach is required, and yet there is no appropriate forum for the Euro-Atlantic community to formulate such cooperation.

Environmental concerns similarly lack a Euro-Atlantic forum for discussion. The role of the Kyoto Accord, the U.S. decision not to join, and the question of whether the Kyoto protocols are in any way alleviating the nearly-universally acknowledged threat of global warming are well-known. A more effective approach is required, but again there is the issue of how to bring that discussion into full play in a way that is likely to generate a useful result.

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A first step is to put the issue on the agenda of the Euro-Atlantic community and to undertake its review in the context of discussions seeking consensus, rather than in the context of negotiations that generate countervailing pressures. The proposed new Euro-Atlantic Forum would be an appropriate coordinating body for such discussions.

Global Structural Competition

One of the fundamental challenges facing the Euro-Atlantic community is posed by economic competition from parts of the world whose technical competencies now match those of the West, but whose labor and, often, capital costs are much lower. As noted above, these challengers are generally characterized as the "Chinese manufacturer" and the "Indian service provider," but the reality is that increased educational levels, spreading technical competencies, and enhanced

[5] Securing America's Future Energy, "Recommendations to the Nation on Reducing U.S. Oil Dependence" (December 2006).

[6] The Polish Defense Minister raised the issue in the context of the proposed pipeline being built from Russia to Germany, which will bypass Poland. One of the co-authors proposed in a pre-Riga conference in September 2006 that a sufficient "limitation on one be treated as a limitation on all" which could trigger a support mechanism. Senator Richard Lugar proposed that the NATO treaty be considered the basis for a collective response in an important speech just before Riga.

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The situation is analogous to that faced in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s when much industry moved from the northern "Rust Belt" to the southern "Sun Belt." Over the long term, the U.S. economy as a whole has benefited from these changes, and the northern states developed new sources of jobs replacing those that moved. But, in the shorter term, the dislocations created significant local hardship, and some areas never recovered.

In the international arena, companies aiming to maximize profits will seek low cost production. Likewise, new companies that can be low cost producers will move into industry. The lower wages and capital costs to be found in developing countries almost guarantee that there will be continuing disruptions of ongoing enterprises in developed countries. The ultimate scale of such disruptions is not yet clear, and the exact timing and pace of these shifts is difficult to predict. Over the long term, the benefits to the world are clear enough—lower costs benefit consumers and, if the developing world generates a per capita GDP even remotely approaching that of the developed world, the developing world will find much to purchase from the developed world.

But the rub is what is meant by the "long term"? If it takes more than 50 years—and it almost certainly will—for the developing world to start to meet developed world income levels, what will be the impact on industry and jobs in the developed world? The results are likely to be problematic, given the fact that the developing world has a significant surplus of labor, mostly on rural land, whose movement into industry is likely to keep labor costs in those countries quite low. In addition, developing countries face issues of instituting the costly social welfare requirements of the developed world, such as labor standards, health care support, and retirement pensions.

There is also a national security aspect to these questions. Research and development tends to conjoin with manufacturing, and as and if industry settles away from the Euro-Atlantic community, research and development, which might be expected to breed innovation to keep developed countries competitive, may also display changing patterns. The West has had the benefit of all technological change over the past 800 years, but what will happen when technology develops elsewhere again is less than fully clear.

There are no short answers to these issues, but currently the Euro-Atlantic community lacks any substantial forum in which even to contemplate them in a useful fashion. The proposed new Euro-Atlantic council could fulfill that need.

The Euro-Atlantic community faces new and different challenges in the 21st Century. A new focus and new organizations will be necessary to meet those challenges. Making the problems of failing states, radical militant Islam, energy/environment, and global structural economic competition the focus of the community's effort and creating a new forum in which to discuss and act upon those issues will enable the community to achieve the same success in the 21st century as it did in meeting the challenges of the Cold War.

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