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Title: NATO's persistence after the cold war. (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

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Neorealist theories help explain alliance formation and longevity but have trouble explaining why the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) continues to exist after the cold war. Organizational theories further our understanding by noting that organizations have strong survival instincts, yet NATO survives only as long as its members wish it to. To understand NATO's persistence after the cold war, we must turn to international institutionalist theories to explain why, contrary to neorealist expectations, NATO remains the key international security institution for its members. International institutionalist theories add the conception of NATO as part of a broad multilevel and multi-issue relationship among member states, and this broader context is necessary to explain NATO's persistence.

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Alliance literature traditionally has focused on two key questions: Why do alliances form? and What keeps alliances together?(1) A broader question, related to the second, is inadequately addressed: How do alliances respond to changing strategic circumstances? This essay examines how the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has responded to the end of the cold war and the demise of its main threat, the Soviet Union. This is a timely and critical issue, as NATO could take many different paths in response to these changes. It might lose cohesion and direction, the fate of the coalition of Austria, England, Prussia, and Russia that defeated Napoleon in 1815.(2) It might continue in name only, with little effect on international affairs, as the Inter-American Treaty (Rio Treaty) has. It might focus on strictly military functions as part of a narrow security guarantee, like the Korean - U.S. mutual defense treaty. Or, as NATO's former Secretary-General Willy Claes suggested, it could build on its past, moving to establish closer ties with Central and East European states; deepen its political, economic, and social ties with the United States; build a better relationship with Russia and certain Mediterranean and North African states; and work with regional and international organizations to ensure the stability of Europe and its neighbors.(3) One of these paths already is emerging: NATO remains an active, vibrant organization that is expanding - not contracting - its scope and membership.(4) This article explains why this is so.

Although NATO's former Secretary-General, the late Manfred Worner, once said

that "The Treaty of Washington of 1949 [which created NATO] nowhere mentions the Soviet Union" and that NATO will survive by continuing to serve its members' needs, skepticism nevertheless remains about NATO's future.<sup>(5)</sup> NATO's confused and belated response to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia raises questions about its post-cold war value. Many argue that other European organizations such as the Western European Union (WEU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) should take over NATO's functions.<sup>(6)</sup> Indeed, several analysts argue that NATO has achieved its purpose, outlived its usefulness, and can - even should - be expected to die a peaceful death.

The traditional literature on alliances has been narrow in scope, frequently bypassing the issue of alliance persistence after an initial catalyzing threat has faded. As Glenn Snyder notes, "One of the most underdeveloped areas in the theory of international relations is alliance theory."<sup>(7)</sup> Existing literature, heavily realist or neorealist in orientation, has dealt mostly with alliance origins, membership, relationship to wars, and success in protecting member interests.<sup>(8)</sup> Scholars have paid far less attention to what alliances do when the threat facing them changes or disappears. Those who have studied alliances under these conditions generally conclude that without threats, alliances will not last.<sup>(9)</sup> Contrary to these expectations, NATO has added to the list of functions it is prepared to carry out, broadened its ties to other countries and organizations, and is working to expand its membership.

To understand in a generalizable way NATO's persistence after the cold war, we must therefore turn to nonrealist arguments. Neorealist theory about alliances is limited by its inattention to variations in the density and depth of alliance structures and processes and its lack of attention to the internal dynamics of states comprising alliances.<sup>(10)</sup> Since policymakers must simultaneously satisfy internal organizational and factional interests as well as external ones, we cannot ignore these unit-level processes. To understand NATO, we must understand the dynamics of its behavior as an organization, the interplay of member interests within the security regime that surrounds NATO, and the opportunities and constraints of the domestic political considerations of NATO's members.

NATO provides a useful setting in which to examine several nonrealist arguments that can supplement the explanatory power of neorealist insights while at the same time moving past their limits. As I will discuss below, one of the clearest neorealist predictions about alliances is that they will falter absent a threat. Because NATO has not faltered, and because neorealism does not preclude using NATO as a test case, it must be a deviant case, in Arend Lijphart's language. As Lijphart argues, deviant case studies "can have great theoretical value. They weaken the original proposition, but suggest a modified proposition that will be stronger." The method here will follow Lijphart's "deviant-case" analyses of "single cases that are known to deviate from established generalizations . . . to uncover relevant additional variables . . . or to refine [existing ones]."<sup>(11)</sup> NATO is moving, I will argue, in a direction clearly opposite to that predicted by neorealism.<sup>(12)</sup> To explain NATO's persistence after the cold war, I will use theoretical perspectives that make room for its multifaceted nature as an alliance, international organization, and role in a broader security regime among allies.<sup>(13)</sup> These perspectives draw on literatures in the fields of organizational behavior and international institutions and serve two purposes here. First, they direct our attention to the strengths and weaknesses of neorealist alliance theory and in so doing help address the latter. Second,

they aid in interpreting a complex and important case. I use each theoretical perspective to develop an argument about alliance maintenance and then see what part of the NATO story this illuminates. This serves as an adjunct to neorealist theory, which helps explain NATO's birth and cold war lifespan but cannot easily account for subsequent developments. Using these additional approaches is meant to develop complementary, not competing, hypotheses that progressively add to our understanding of alliance behavior by starting with the parsimonious, but limited, structure of neorealism. In so doing, I take seriously the possibility that insights from organizational and institutional theories can both be applied usefully to international security organizations in general and can help us understand this specific key case.

One could wonder if enough time has elapsed since the end of the cold war to address these questions. Neorealism, our starting point, makes no specific prediction about how much time should elapse before the behavior it predicts (loss of alliance cohesion) should be seen. (Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf, in their discussion of neorealism, note that it does predict the demise of NATO without being precise about a timetable.)(14) Instead, it focuses simply on the types of events that should trigger certain behaviors. Since neorealist predictions about the origins and demise of alliances make no special temporal claims, we should not hold them to claims they do not make. Still, one can make some reasonable inferences from neorealist discussions to make some plausible, testable predictions. We can say that if there are no signs of the predicted behavior, or that behavior contrary to the predictions is observed, the evidence tends to disconfirm the hypothesis. Put differently, NATO's persistence per se cannot be considered as proof that the neorealist predictions are wrong, but behavior directly contrary to neorealist arguments can be. As Harry Eckstein writes, "A [single] case can impugn established theories if theories ought to fit but do not."(15)

NATO, the cold war, and after

Because NATO's origins and cold war history both are well known, this summary is limited to what is relevant to the arguments below.(16) What catalyzed NATO was a strong desire to link Europe and North America in response to the Soviet threat. NATO mollified European concerns about a potential German threat; contributed to a greater sense of West European unity and security; and provided a mechanism for the United States to participate in European economic and military recovery. Throughout the next forty years as NATO's membership, organizational structure, and list of responsibilities grew, two essential facts remained constant: NATO focused on the Soviet threat, and it performed both military and nonmilitary functions for its members. Though the degree of threat varied over that time, the threat always was present.(17)

The end of the cold war came about quickly, posing a major challenge. On 9 November 1989 the Berlin Wall was opened. Eleven months later Germany reunified. On 1 April 1991 the Warsaw Pact disbanded followed on 25 December 1991 by the Soviet Union. In just two short years, the core factors that had contributed to NATO's creation (a divided Germany and the Soviet threat) were gone. For NATO there was relief - and confusion.

NATO has since moved to reorient its approach to issues of military doctrine, sufficiency, and readiness. In October 1989, as Secretary-General Worner and U.S. President George Bush called for cuts in NATO and Warsaw Pact force levels, NATO planners began work that would eventually result in significant reductions in funding and force levels for NATO's conventional and nuclear

forces.(18) Joint weapons programs, annual military exercises, readiness, nuclear alert status, and training all have been sharply reduced. In May 1990 NATO's Military Committee announced that it no longer considered the Warsaw Pact a threat to the alliance.(19) A military reorganization followed: the July 1990 London summit moved to restructure NATO's military forces into true multinational units, moving away from the geographically based area-defenses of the past. NATO's new Strategic Concept announced at Rome in November 1991 marked another key turning point, as did the adoption of its first new military policy document in almost twenty years, its MC (Military Committee) 400 document. It created "rapid reaction forces"; implemented for the first time a true multinational force structure; and announced hitherto unimaginable proposals for reaching out to the countries of Eastern Europe, including their possible participation in NATO's most radical plan, the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF), put forth at the January 1994 Brussels summit. CJTF allows for the first time the possibility (1) for NATO to engage in military action with other international entities and (2) for the nonparticipation of NATO members in alliance-approved military activities. Most important, NATO has ceased planning for operations against a clearly defined adversary and has taken as its primary purposes crisis management and promoting international stability, as seen in its shift from threat assessment to risk assessment.(20)

The members have accomplished this broad reorientation in several ways. The alliance has adopted new approaches to joint security issues, the former Warsaw Pact nations, and other European security organizations. NATO is improving its ties with former Warsaw Pact countries through the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), announced at the November 1991 Rome summit to serve as a forum for East-West discussion, and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) framework announced at the January 1994 Brussels summit. NATO also is engaged in a study of how to enlarge the alliance, with the possibility of including some of its former adversaries. NATO has developed closer ties with the United Nations, the WEU, and the OSCE, hoping to be in a stronger position to participate when its interests are at stake in areas outside of its geographic domain.(21) In the Balkans it has recently been using coercive force on behalf of the international community in a way that would have been unimaginable a decade ago. In short, NATO has shown both continuity and innovation with respect to its overall strategic direction. Even in the absence of a compelling threat, member states still find it valuable in numerous ways. Let us now consider how the existing alliance literature might explain this.

#### Alliance theory

Alliance theory traditionally has not dealt with the death of alliances, focusing instead on their origins, functions, and impact on interstate relations. Classic works, like George Liska's *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*, rarely addressed the fate of successful alliances, possibly because "almost all alliances [have] dissolved once the original threat faded," as Hellmann and Wolf describe it.(22) Scholars have paid substantial attention to burden sharing in alliances as well to optimal alliance size, but we know little about what happens in obsolete alliances. Who, if anyone, assumes their functions? In addition, we know little about the nonmilitary dimensions of alliance dynamics or the domestic - international dimensions of alliances.(23)

While alliances historically have been a central topic in world politics, few have attempted to create general alliance theory, in part because of the

historically limited nature of alliances.(24) In addition to their roots in ongoing conflicts, security alliances have been quite limited in their range of functions, generally confining their actions to military coordination and defensive preparations.(25) Rarer are those alliances that develop functions and goals beyond their primary security purposes. Ole Holsti, Terrence Hopmann, and John Sullivan found that "alliances are generally formed in response to external threat, [and] that their cohesion is largely dependent on the intensity and duration of that threat, and . . . one major cause of their disintegration may be the reduction or disappearance of the external threat against which they were initially formed."(26) All such propositions are consistent with neorealism, the powerful parsimony of which makes it attractive. Neorealism, then, is the best place to start when considering alliances and alliance behavior.

### Neorealism and alliances

Classical realism and Waltzian, or structural, neorealism argue that states balance opposing powers. A variant argues that states balance against potential harms represented by tangible power only when intentions are seen as threatening as well. Either view of the origins of alliances is relevant here. Changes in the power or threat the alliance was created to counter puts pressure on the alliance to change.(27) Nearly all realists, however, agree that while threats may not be sufficient to produce alliances, they are necessary.

An alliance's cohesion can be nearly as important as its existence because alliances are costly in terms of lost freedom of action (agreeing to let external events commit states to action and some degree of policy alignment) and actual resources (troops and material) committed to alliance needs. Without a sense that alliance participation is valuable, members will be unlikely to subordinate individual interests to group interests, reducing alliance cohesion and longevity. Put simply, the greater the threat or power to be balanced, the greater the cohesion of the alliance.(28) What, then, happens when threats go away, either through a shift in the balance of power or a change in the allies' perception of threat? The neorealist answer is unambiguous: a clear diminution in the danger to an alliance should weaken or break up the alliance. It does so by weakening the forces holding the alliance together and therefore members' resolve to make necessary sacrifices. As Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan concluded from their review of the literature, "Probably the most widely stated proposition about alliances is that cohesion depends upon external danger and declines as the threat is reduced."(29) In short, an alliance that sees its primary threat shrink or disappear will be less cohesive, leading to eventual irrelevance or breakup.

Through a neorealist lens, when the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact disappeared, the threat perceived by NATO allies was reduced. Mikhail Gorbachev's and Boris Yeltsin's actions eased fears about Soviet and Russian intentions by withdrawing from Afghanistan, agreeing to significant cuts in nuclear and conventional arsenals, loosening the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe, and even allowing for the breakup of the Soviet Union itself. In Stephen Walt's balance-of-threat theory, this constitutes a serious change, as the threat seen by the West has shrunk rapidly and substantially. As a result, we should expect NATO's cohesion to loosen, the U.S. position in NATO to weaken, and the degree of policy coordination among alliance members to shrink as members seek out their own policy directions.

A balance-of-power approach, like that of Waltz, is somewhat less direct in its predictions. Despite a less menacing appearance after 1986, the Soviet Union was still the second most militarily powerful nation in the world. While many noted the changes in Soviet behavior, allied concerns about Soviet power remained. A December 1990 North Atlantic Council ministerial communique expressed them as follows: "The risks the allies now face in Europe arise less from a likelihood of deliberate aggression against Allied territory by former adversaries, than from the unforeseeable strategic consequences of instabilities that might emerge in a period of rapid and widespread political and economic transformation. Even in a non-adversarial relationship, prudence requires NATO to counterbalance the Soviet Union's substantial residual military capabilities."(30)

These cautious public statements, however, did not match NATO's internal threat assessments, which as early as 1988 had begun to question the ability of the Soviet Union to move its troops quickly through Eastern Europe and make effective use of still-numerous Warsaw Pact troops. By the time the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, both political and military analysts had concluded that the effective military threat from the Warsaw Pact had declined sufficiently for NATO to reduce substantially its military readiness. Following the Soviet breakup at the end of 1991, Russian power continued to shrink. By 1994, Russian troops were fully withdrawn from Europe, major cuts in nuclear weapons were under way, and the participation of former Warsaw Pact members in PfP activities and the inspection framework instituted under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) had increased political and military transparency in Europe to an extent previously unseen. Thus, while a balance-of-power approach (focusing on capabilities) would expect cautious behavior despite changed Soviet/Russian intentions, we should nevertheless start to see signs of loosening in NATO (greater policy disagreement) as the power equation shifted decisively in favor of the West. Both balance-of-threat and balance-of-power theories on alliances predict the loss of cohesion in an alliance as, first, the threat posed by and, then, the capability of its adversaries diminish.(31)

A final consideration leads both neorealist perspectives to predict alliance collapse absent threats, and in a shorter, rather than longer, time period. Because alliances entail major costs, neorealist theory tells us that they will form only when members believe benefits outweigh costs. The loss of policy freedom, the political and economic opportunity costs, and the material costs of an alliance commitment will all be weighed against its benefits (security and nonsecurity).(32) Any decrease in benefits relative to costs should be accompanied by resistance to paying those costs. How would this logic apply to NATO? As alliances go, NATO is about as costly in policy and resource terms as one could imagine, short of political union. The Article 5 commitment to aid other partners is clear, direct, and unequivocal. The degree of policy coordination and the resultant narrowing of political maneuvering room have been significant. Lost economic opportunity costs from defense policy coordination and coordinated export controls have been high, as have the direct costs of contributing to the overall military structure - especially for European members who have endured more than four decades of troop exercises, low-flying aircraft, and foreign troops in their lands. A neorealist calculation would expect members to begin to move away from NATO as the threat that had previously justified those costs shrinks. We should also expect policy convergence to decline on key alliance issues, with those that involve the greatest cost (troops, forgoing economic gains) most likely to be the first areas of disagreement. Finally, we should see NATO move toward less

costly areas of policy convergence. Simple policy consultation, which by itself implies no action, is the least costly activity, and we can thus expect that it will be the last to go. Let us turn to the issue of timing and see how this relates to costs.

Neorealist arguments clearly say that alliances should form in response to power imbalances and threats. They do not, however, say how long it should be before an alliance forms or, conversely, how long it should be before this process reverses. As noted, general theories cannot be expected to predict specific events or dates. Yet, clearly, if we wish to test a theory's predictions, we must make some effort to put temporal boundaries on theoretical predictions and look for emerging evidence of causal mechanisms. To do so in the case at hand, consider how quickly NATO was formed in the face of the Soviet threat and contrast that with how much time has passed since the demise of that threat.

Just two and a half years elapsed from the Nazi surrender to the beginning of serious high-level talks among, first, the Europeans and, second, the Americans about the creation of an alliance to protect against the Soviet threat.<sup>(33)</sup> By mid-1948, it was evident to all concerned that an alliance would be necessary, and by 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty had been signed. In contrast, NATO declared the cold war over with its Declaration from Turnberry in June 1990, just seven months after the break in the Berlin Wall. As a result, looking for signs of loosening in alliance cohesion in less than double the amount of time (1989-95) that it took to create it does not seem unreasonable. Let us look at this first from the balance-of-threat framework, where one can reasonably "start the clock" on NATO's demise in 1988, when unilateral Soviet arms cuts were announced. This cut followed a sudden reversal a year earlier when the Soviet Union dropped its opposition to signing the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and caused many in the West to take seriously the proposition that the threat really was declining. The confusion within NATO about the implication of this and other changes was such that it failed to come to agreement on its annual intelligence assessment that year: many thought that too much attention was paid to capabilities and not enough to changed intentions. The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and its nonintervention in the startling changes in Eastern Europe only hastened the change in Western attitudes.<sup>(34)</sup> If, instead, one uses a balance-of-power lens, the "clock" on NATO's demise could start running as early as 1991, when the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union disappeared, further reducing the capability of the remaining forces facing NATO. The CFE treaty signed in November 1990 provided what Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) had earlier concluded would be an unambiguous advantage in conventional forces, and certainly by late 1992 - following significant cuts in the Russian military and reductions in nuclear forces as well as a major pullout of Russian forces from East European countries - the balance of power had shifted massively toward the West in general and toward NATO in particular. In this framework, 1992 marks a point where one should start seeing significant signs of decline in NATO. NATO was created quickly in response to a rapid increase in the perception of power and threat; surely signs of its decline should be evident with a rapid reduction in that threat.

Thus, neorealist theories applied to NATO predict the following:

(1) NATO members will cut military expenditures substantially to bring their cost-benefit ratios back into balance following the loss of the threat that

previously had justified high levels of spending.

(2) Members will engage in more disputes over common alliance policy as they take more independent directions in their foreign and defense policies ("renationalization" of policy).

(3) Members will move away from NATO to other less costly forms of international cooperation.

NATO provides an important test for neorealist alliance theory, as its predictions should apply in this instance. Failures of these predictions would not be fatal to it, but they certainly would be cause to look for flaws in, or limits to, the theory. What do we find?

At first glance, it would seem that neorealist predictions have been borne out. As the preface to the 1990 paperback edition of Stephen Walt's *The Origins of Alliances* (which is otherwise unchanged from the 1987 version) notes, events from 1987 to 1990 vindicate Walt's balance-of-threat theory; events since then (breakup of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union, democratic elections and market reforms in Russia and elsewhere, the participation of former enemies in the PfP) only reinforce a balance-of-threat-theory's prediction about NATO's breakup. Many of the predicted behaviors have been seen. NATO members have cut their defense spending and force strength; policy disputes among members about security issues have increased; U.S. leadership in NATO is receding; and members are giving more attention to other security organizations.<sup>(35)</sup> Realism would appear to be vindicated. A closer look, however, shows that beneath its disputes, NATO remains robust and healthy. Member states have cut military spending and troop commitments but, with what have turned out to be a few minor exceptions, only in the context of overall alliance agreements and negotiations. Despite initial concerns, the "renationalization" of member states' foreign and military policies (making policy decisions on a strictly national basis) has not progressed very far and the integrated command structure, under American command, remains without serious challenge. Even France has toned down its historical opposition to American command, going so far as to be willing to participate in NATO military operations enforcing UN sanctions in the former Yugoslavia and rejoining NATO's Military Committee. NATO members continue to attach great public importance to the alliance and make clear their willingness to continue to provide necessary resources. While some members clearly disagree about alliance policy in various areas (NATO expansion, Bosnia), they agree broadly that the alliance remains useful.

Members have also worked to expand NATO's functions and purposes - something that neorealist theory would not expect of an alliance in the face of a declining threat. The creation of the NACC and the PfP are further signs that NATO members value its functions and want to extend its lifespan. As of early 1996, the pessimistic neorealist expectation about NATO has not been realized - in fact, NATO has been quite busy with an active new Secretary-General and a lively debate about where it should move in the future. NATO thus far has survived the end of the cold war with its general mission of providing security for its members intact.

A final issue arises because neorealist approaches say little about how decision makers will view residual threats or uncertainties following the breakup of a larger threat. Neither the power-based nor the threat-based approach to alliance formation and cohesion tells us this. Is the power of



many small states additive? Do many small threats require the same response as one larger one? We would need a theory of threat perception (which neorealism does not provide) to answer the question of when powerful states are also seen as threats. Power-based approaches cannot tell us, for example, why Canada does not fear the United States. Threat-based approaches tell us that states perceived as having "aggressive intentions" will be seen as a threat and responded to; they do not tell us, however, what causes some to see certain states as being aggressive while others do not.(36) We would also need a better theory about security choices that states make about alliance formation and power buildups.(37) Reductions in security preparations also comprise uncharted territory. It is certainly reasonable that states might continue previously successful practices, but theory cannot tell us which ones. As former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher puts it, "You don't cancel your home insurance policy just because there have been fewer burglaries on your street in the last 12 months!"(38) One certainly might expect a community to make changes in its police force by cutting the number of officers or the frequency of patrols, but one would still expect the community to be wary of a resurgence in crime. In any case, neorealism provides no answers.

We clearly cannot reject neorealism based on this case alone, but this evidence is inconsistent with neorealist predictions. To explain why, we must pull back from a focus on NATO as simply an alliance embodying a security commitment among its member states. Our first step is to recall that NATO has been more than an ad hoc mutual defense coalition. NATO is distinguished by its organizational structure (with separate political and military headquarters) and its explicit commingling of security and nonsecurity functions, features not found in other Western cold war alliances. NATO's organizational structure adds elements to NATO's behavior that a strict neorealist analysis, with its system-level focus, cannot explain. To understand why, let us turn to the organization itself for clues about its post-cold war behavior.

### Organizational theory and NATO

The literature on organizations and bureaucracies provides a framework that generates insights and predictions about NATO unavailable from neorealist theories. Beginning with the alliance itself, this framework considers the possibility that NATO as an organization will have at times interests that are different than those of its members, much like corporate officials can sometimes have different interests from shareholders. If true, this might account for NATO's persistence after the cold war, as its organizational interests - not its members' interests - drive its behavior. Gayl Ness and Steven Brechin have pointed out that research shows that "organizations are comprised of individuals and groups who attempt to fulfill their own goals. Consequently, organizations have no uniform goals of their own. . . . [M]ost organizations willingly modify or abandon stated goals if doing so enhances their ability to survive and prosper."(39) Ness and Brechin contrast this view with earlier functionalist views of international organizations, which saw them as tools of their creators, not "live collectivities interacting with their environments, . . . contain[ing] members who seek to use the organization for their own ends, often struggling with others over the content and allocation of the product. These dynamics produce a distinctive organizational character over time."(40) Treating NATO as an organizational entity with key role holders, who pursue their own goals, sheds additional light on its behavior since 1988.

NATO is a substantial organization with hundreds of offices and facilities spread across member countries. NATO headquarters in Brussels alone employs over 3,750 full-time workers, less than half of which are associated with national delegations (uniformed and civilian).(41) Like other large organizations, its employees belong to various social clubs, identify themselves as part of a community (international in nature) centered around NATO, and form subgroups based on professional and personal interests. These employees identify with NATO and will have an incentive to see NATO continue to function, as their personal and professional self-interests are at stake. Additionally, they are likely to feel that NATO performs a valuable function and be willing to support it. Many people, civilian and military, are assigned to NATO for three- or four-year terms and they, as well as those who follow, are also likely to work to ensure that NATO continues to function. This furnishes a large reserve of NATO supporters who can be expected to resist challenges to the alliance and promote its interests.

Given an organization's interest in survival, what might we expect of NATO? The organizational literature makes clear that organizations and their members engage in three general types of behavior to ensure survival: resistance to change, affirmation of organizational necessity, and adaptation to change.

The first organizational response, and the first likely to be tried, is resistance to change. Organizational self-interest can be served by denying that there has been any major change in the organization's environment. Such denial allows the organization to claim that its services continue to be essential and that no change is needed. Additionally, organizations develop their preferred view of their roles and procedures to carry out those roles, what James Wilson referred to as "critical tasks."(42) Organizations work to protect these tasks from outside interference, even resisting new roles and missions if they undermine existing ones. Denial also helps bureaucrats protect, and even expand, organizational resources (personnel and budgets). William Niskanen implies that bureaucratic leaders will be relatively indifferent to the direction the organization takes as long as they can gather greater resources; Matthew Holden's argument is similar, noting that bureaucracies share expansive tendencies and are protective of the status quo as it relates to resources and roles.(43)

Given an organization's dependence on outside resources, affirmation is another option. The aim here is to argue that the organization's activities are essential despite environmental changes. Legitimacy is essential to political and material support; leaders can be expected to make every effort to deny that the alliance is unneeded or irrelevant. Given this, it should not be surprising to see clashes between NATO officials and member state officials over the continued need for the alliance: more is at stake for NATO officials. Divergence between alliance officials and member governments would be evidence of conflict between NATO's organizational interests and those of its members; congruity between such statements undermines the hypothesis.

A final possible behavior is adaptation. Organizations prefer to continue past practices because change introduces uncertainty and cost. Yet at times organizations must change or lose the resources and legitimacy on which they depend - a concept known as "resource dependency."(44) Given that NATO could not function without resources from member states, we would expect it to be attentive to the wishes of its most influential members (Germany, Great Britain, and the United States), soliciting their views and providing explanations of the alliance's preferred policies and objectives. We also

would expect to see new initiatives from within NATO itself as officials work to maintain its viability and external support. Adherence to core values or normative activities is not the priority - survival is. When an organization's central task is accomplished or not needed, new tasks will be sought and eventually valued - the process of goal succession.<sup>(45)</sup> The organization's existing tasks will be defended, but not to the point where the organization itself is endangered. Eventually the organization will incorporate new tasks and goals as its core mission, with resulting changes in policies and practices.

Finally, we can also expect efforts to strengthen existing ties with resource providers and to expand the base of support for the alliance. As mentioned above, taking on new missions valued by alliance members is one path to strengthen support, but one would not be surprised if the organization were to consider expanding the membership of the alliance as a means of widening its circle of supporters. Such outreach efforts, though, would not be expected to involve any sharing of functions with, or ceding of policy domains to, others as that increases the risk of losing control of the organization's policy domain and authority. Similarly, we would not expect NATO to agree with its critics that its mission was complete - organizational suicide is not widely seen.

In sum, organizational theory applied to NATO leads us to expect, in roughly this order, NATO officials to:

- (1) Deny the need to change, thus protecting the status quo roles and missions and resisting new ones, and resist efforts to downsize the organization
- (2) Affirm the value of the alliance to member states in hopes of assuring continued access to resources by engaging in outreach activities to garner the support of political and domestic audiences within member states
- (3) Modify roles and missions or generate new ones - if they believed the organization's future was at stake - to retain support from members, possibly seeking new members to strengthen support

Have these expectations been borne out? During 1988 and 1989, NATO officials repeatedly denied that the Soviet threat had changed significantly, arguing instead that the alliance should continue past practices. Changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were noted, but military capabilities and the possibility for retrenchment were cited as reasons not to change - a combination of balance-of-threat and balance-of-power reasoning. Once the Warsaw Pact broke up and the Soviet Union dissolved, emphasis shifted toward balance-of-power concerns with more attention paid to the military potential that remained in the former Soviet Union. The threat had been transformed from being direct and deliberate to one that was indirect and perhaps unintended, but a threat nonetheless.

Affirmative behavior was quite common throughout this period, as well. From NATO's Secretary-General to the political heads of member states to member states' foreign and defense ministers, all have claimed that NATO was, and is, still useful. There were some signs of the expected divergence of opinion among alliance officials and members as various members made cuts in their armed forces. As early as the fall of 1989 (before the Berlin Wall came down), NATO officials expressed concern about members making unilateral defense cuts outside of the CFE Treaty.<sup>(46)</sup> This continued after the Warsaw Pact was

disbanded and the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Worner criticized members for making cuts in advance of final agreement on CFE levels, as well for making larger than necessary cuts in force levels.(47) Even NATO's annual defense review in 1992 noted with concern that some members' defense spending plans did not comply with agreed-upon NATO force levels.(48) Nonetheless, there appears to have been no lasting effect of these tensions - changes continue to be made without fanfare or upset.

NATO officials and member governments also found themselves at odds on other issues. Worner, realizing that NATO needed to keep up with international change, took the lead in pushing for new roles. Prior to the Rome summit in November 1991, Worner expressed "personal" views - a move recognized by insiders as criticism by the Secretary-General of the alliance of which he was the head - about the need for NATO to move "out of area" and take greater responsibility for ensuring stability in Eastern Europe, a view not widely shared by member governments.(49) NATO officials began working in early 1992 to devise and implement plans for NATO's expansion into Central Europe, reportedly as a way of undermining WEU and OSCE efforts in this area.(50) In the summer of 1992, Worner argued that NATO should become a peacemaker rather than just a peacekeeper - but these were again personal views.(51) By autumn 1993 Worner had become very critical of allied unwillingness to take action in Bosnia, a direction its members were not ready then to support.(52)

NATO has also embarked on a number of different adaptive paths since 1989. Political consultation among its members has expanded, and it has moved to allow local governments and private organizations to use NATO facilities, generating additional income and support.(53) Many of these new directions came from NATO leaders and working groups within alliance headquarters. The initiative to reconfigure NATO's military structure, which included the dismantling of one of its three major commands, came from within SHAPE as one effort to adjust to the times. NATO also has worked to redefine its military missions and approaches to alliance security; examples include the New Strategic Concept, CJTF, and modified command structures to accommodate peacekeeping activities and collaboration with non-NATO organizations.(54) Cautious support for expansion of alliance ties through NACC, PfP, and possibly new members has come from within the organization; various officials interviewed noted that the addition of states who are eager to join might provide new vitality for the organization. Finally, various parts of NATO have taken on a new focus or direction. Nuclear weapons and the various elements of NATO associated with them have become much less important, and many of the personnel and resources previously associated with this function have been shifted elsewhere within the alliance.

As can be seen, an organizational perspective moves us beyond neorealism's limits by taking the analysis beneath the interstate level and looking at some of the specific internal features that characterize this alliance. It is also clear, however, that there are limits as to how far NATO's organizational interests can play themselves out, since certain actions cannot easily be explained from an organizational perspective. NATO's military reorganization and downsizing; the broadening of ties with other international entities like the OSCE, WEU, and United Nations (UN), including a stated willingness to consider their requests to utilize NATO forces; and the willingness to see key organizational elements, like its nuclear weapons plans and operations capabilities, decline illustrate some of these limits. Despite the appearance of organizational strength, the particular structure of NATO and the nature of its day-to-day interactions actually make for a weak bureaucracy. NATO's

international staffs (the International Staff and the International Military Staff) work almost exclusively at the direction of the Secretary-General and NATO's Military Committee, respectively. The new post-cold war activities have been added to the responsibilities of these staffs without a corresponding increase in personnel or resources, so that, in the words of one senior NATO official, "they [the international staffs] have barely enough time to do what we ask them to do, let alone what they might want to do."<sup>(55)</sup> From the standpoint of organizational theory, NATO's willingness to share or even hand over activities to other organizations was unexpected, as was NATO's expressed willingness to work with and occasionally at the direction of the OSCE and the UN. NATO has clearly deferred to the OSCE and its conflict resolution skills, making clear that it would not try to expand in that direction even though there would be advantages in doing so.<sup>(56)</sup> Finally, the willing downsizing of NATO's nuclear infrastructure remains a puzzle. In the words of a key official in NATO's nuclear directorate, nuclear weapons and the personnel once associated with them are almost a "nonissue, and that is just fine."<sup>(57)</sup> A key capability that developed into a substantial presence within the organization has been pushed to the background with hardly a fight - not what one would expect of an organization intent on protecting the status quo.

To better understand these aspects of NATO's post-cold war behavior, we need to look more broadly at its relationship to its members, since ultimately this organization will not survive without their support. While the organizational interests of NATO as an organization may include survival, that survival depends on how much NATO members benefit from the alliance and the security relationship that surrounds it.

#### International institutionalist theory and NATO

To go beyond the limits of an organizational approach, we turn to an approach based on the growing literature on international institutions.<sup>(58)</sup> This approach draws back from focusing on NATO as a formal organization to look at it as part of a broad multilevel and multi-issue relationship among NATO's member states, based on implicit and explicit norms and rules. As sociologists advanced their understanding of organizations by moving away from seeing them as "closed systems" with little interaction with their environment to seeing them as "open systems" interacting with and affecting their "institutional environment," so have international relations theorists made advances in seeing international organizations as part of a broad set of relations among state and nonstate actors.<sup>(59)</sup> This argument builds on both the regimes and neoliberal institutionalist literatures.<sup>(60)</sup> Taking Robert Keohane's definition of institutions as a "related complex of rules and norms, identifiable in space and time" and of regimes as "specific institutions involving states and/or transnational actors, which apply to particular issues in international relations," we can apply these approaches to NATO, even though, as Hellmann and Wolf note, the formation of institutions has received far more attention than their demise.<sup>(61)</sup> This is an advance, for as Keohane notes, with a paucity of realist and neorealist theory dealing with alliances as institutions or regimes, theorists must take "advantage of the fact that alliances are institutions, and that both their durability and strength (the degree to which states are committed to alliances, even when costs are entailed) may depend in part on their institutional characteristics."<sup>(62)</sup> Although Keohane later blurs the distinction between organizations and institutions (and their possibly different self-interests), by noting "Institutionalists would expect NATO to use its organizational resources to persist, by changing its tasks," my approach here distinguishes between

organizations and institutions.(63) Because of the similarities in definitions and applications of international regimes and neoliberal institutionalist theories, I will use "international institutionalist" from here on to cover these.

Traditional alliances, unlike NATO, do not share NATO's development of norms and procedures beyond mutual defense. We have here one key feature, then, that might explain why NATO is a deviant case for neorealism. One of the variable features of a regime is its institutionalization (the degree to which its norms and practices are formalized within a particular structure and process).(64) This feature sets NATO apart from other alliances. NATO is at the heart of what has been called a "Euro-Atlantic security regime" built around an American extended deterrence commitment, forward defense in Europe, political coexistence with first the Soviet Union and then Russia, and large U.S. troop commitments, all guided by a closely coordinated policymaking framework.(65) NATO's complex ties to its members, the networks of elites in member countries involved in NATO affairs, and its organizational and issue "density" (many functions, subparts, and processes) make it an appropriate vehicle for the application of these theories.

A core proposition of the institutionalist literature is that regimes bring benefits to their members that can outlast their original purpose. Whether created by a dominant power (as hegemonic stability theories suggest) or states making their own calculations about the benefits of coordinated efforts (an economic rationality approach), a regime reduces both long-term and short-term transaction costs of members by providing guidelines to their own behavior and to the behavior of others in the regime. One result is that members will usually find that maintaining a regime is less costly than creating a new one.(66) In this way, NATO helps its members' common defense efforts through the emergence of shared expectations and the creation of mechanisms for acting on them, thus reducing the need to constantly adjust security ties in response to continual external changes.(67) Thus, the situations that give rise to the formation of a regime can change, but the regime can continue because the benefits it provides - both public and private - will continue to be appreciated.(68) For example, both the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have changed their functions over the years, responding to the desires of their members that they continue to be the main international bodies for dealing with countries experiencing economic difficulties.(69) Likewise, NATO is the organizational core of a set of overlapping interests that increase the likelihood that it will continue to be a valued tool for its member states.

Regime participants can expand the regime beyond its original purposes, refine the range of cooperative arrangements, take on new tasks, or drop old goals. They can do so by either defining new purposes or adding new elements. This process of adaptation is a key feature of regimes and is encouraged because regimes (and the international organizations within them) are easier to modify than to create. An important limit to institutionalist theory is that it cannot tell us which mechanisms will ultimately be utilized - only that members will turn to existing institutions as a first step.(70)

The fundamental idea here is that once a regime exists, there are internal and external incentives to perpetuate it rather than start anew when problems arise. As a means of solving collective action problems, a regime increases the likelihood of a state's compliance with regime norms and expectations, even though such behavior might not be what the state would engage in absent

the regime.(71) Regimes also create internal incentives for norm compliance as domestic actors develop a stake in the regime and regime norms become part of individual belief systems on the part of officials and even the public.(72) Finally, an institution's success creates a momentum for the institution that is particularly useful at a time of external change or stress.(73)

Where does this approach take us that an organizational approach cannot? Institutionalism explains the functional use of institutional cooperation for the benefits of state and substate actors. By contrast, the organizational perspective focused attention on how NATO's organizational interests alone will adapt to the end of the cold war. The international institutionalist perspective looks at the interaction of NATO's organizational interests and its members' interests. Linkages that emerge between elite factions within and between member states are also important elements.(74) In addition, a regime does not necessarily have a single "center of gravity," in the way that an organization frequently does, around which interests and activities can coalesce. NATO's organizational core is centered in its headquarters in Brussels and its military headquarters (SHAPE) at Mons. Individuals work for and at NATO and SHAPE and thus identify with a particular empirical entity. An institution does not share the same features. While many may feel themselves part of, or identify with, a North Atlantic security regime, they need not work "there" - they may work in foreign or defense ministries, national governments, legislatures, and in a variety of other settings. What brings them together are the norms and values they share. Interests and values may coalesce but in a much more diffuse manner than they do within an organization's bureaucracy, leaving the regime with greater flexibility and fewer entrenched interests than the bureaucracy alone would have. As a result, those who support the regime are more likely to do so because they value the regime, not because their jobs are at stake. Change will be easier because less is at stake.

What does this suggest for NATO? Institutional theory would lead us to expect that rather than folding NATO's tent, declaring victory, and moving to create new institutions, NATO members will take the alliance in new directions, making use of existing procedures and mechanisms to build on past successes to deal with new problems. They spent forty-five years learning how to work as a long-term coalition through a sophisticated political and military structure. NATO members can thus be expected to turn first to existing mechanisms and procedures when confronted with new problems rather than creating new non-NATO institutions. The presumption is that actors will be disinclined to abandon sunk costs (political and economic) of existing institutional arrangements, turning instead to a mechanism (NATO) that already works. Developing new institutions or consultative frameworks entails start-up costs; NATO's appeal is that these costs already have been paid. A common refrain from NATO officials was that it is easier to change NATO's direction than to obtain unanimous agreement on a new treaty-based organization. Thus, we would expect members to refine and modify NATO as a first step toward dealing with new situations and needs rather than turn to other mechanisms or create new ones.

To summarize, an international institutionalist approach suggests that NATO members will:

- (1) Utilize existing norms and procedures within NATO to deal with new problems rather than create new ones

(2) Modify NATO as necessary, possibly including cuts and downsizing, to deal with problems that existing structures cannot

(3) Use the regime as the basis for ties to other actors, state and nonstate, in pursuit of regime goals

The evidence since 1989 illustrates the value an international institutionalist approach adds to the organizational argument presented above. The role envisioned for NATO in Articles 2 and 4 of its charter (namely, to function as a mechanism to further member interaction on a wide range of issues) has become highly developed. A North Atlantic Council communique in December 1990 noted that NATO would now build on those provisions for political consultation, both among NATO members and in relation to other countries and organizations, as part of a move to integrate itself more closely into European affairs.(75) For Wornor, NATO was not just a military alliance but also "a political instrument with which the West can influence a historic process [changes in Eastern Europe]. . . . Clearly the political side of this alliance comes more and more to the forefront," allowing the alliance to serve as a "platform" for "coordinating, harmonizing political views, handling, [and] managing the process of East-West relations" at this time of change.(76) A constant theme of NATO officials at that time was that NATO needed to deepen its ties to the OSCE, UN, and WEU to ensure that NATO remain relevant to the broader security needs of its members.(77) This stemmed from a desire to show that NATO indeed was relevant and had a specific role among the broader set of multilateral security international governmental organizations. There were, of course, limits as to how far members were willing to go in turning over important issues to organizations like the UN and OSCE, with their poor or unproven records in dealing with security issues, but they were willing to move in that direction. Most important here is that these efforts made use of NATO as the base from which to adjust to change.

For example, at its July 1990 London and June 1991 Copenhagen summits, NATO called for greater efforts to work through the OSCE framework as a means of furthering East-West relations.(78) This is in sharp contrast to expectations of the organizational framework, namely, that NATO would not share its functions and purposes with others, since in doing so it would feel its autonomy and policy domain were threatened. Since 1992, NATO has become very involved in planning for peacekeeping activities - which of necessity will involve a closer involvement with other international organizations and institutions than currently exists.(79) NATO has also participated in carrying out UN mandates with respect to air and sea embargoes against the former Yugoslavia as well as military actions against Serb forces. This willingness to participate in peacekeeping activities signified a new departure for the alliance but is entirely consistent with our theoretical expectations, since it allows member states to be involved indirectly in something they have an interest in but do not want to lead. The web of ties between NATO and nongovernmental organizations that support NATO goals and values has served to perpetuate common interests, values, perceptions, and goals and maintain a shared interest in protecting NATO after the cold war. NATO provided a framework for coordinating efforts in the Persian Gulf shipping crisis and the subsequent war, and in the words of the U.S. ambassador to NATO, it "proved to be an invaluable forum for consultation and agreement for its members states" throughout the war, deploying its Allied Command Europe (ACE) Mobile Force to Turkey in addition to providing logistical support to coalition forces on their way to the Persian Gulf.(80)



NATO members also have used NATO as a way of dealing with European security issues as they relate to the European Union, OSCE, and former Warsaw Pact states. Member states have continued their individual ties to these groups and states, but NATO has allowed them to present and protect their interests in ways that they might not achieve unilaterally. These behaviors go substantially beyond organizational expectations, which imply a hostility to - or at least suspicion of - sharing activities with other organizations (since such sharing might create greater interdependence and thus limit organizational autonomy). The expanded ties to other organizations, as well as the creation of multiple ways to strengthen ties to nonmembers (NACC and PfP), and the possible inclusion of new members are all consistent with the international institutionalist argument.

Finally, in clear contrast to an organizational perspective, it would not be outside of the realm of institutionalist theory for NATO member states to conclude that NATO, or various parts and functions, had served its function and was no longer needed. We need not predict that NATO will die - the international institutionalist perspective is silent in this regard; what we do predict is that when member states no longer value what the alliance does, little will prevent those wishes from resulting in the alliance's death. The demise of NATO's nuclear infrastructure illustrates this scenario: a powerful organizational actor has been weakened because it served the broader needs of NATO members to do so. The organization and the alliance per se are not the critical issue here - the benefits that come from each are. While analysts have many reasons to believe that members will continue to see benefits, they may not.

An international institutionalist explanation is, of course, not a complete explanation. NATO has made greater progress in modifying its external relations (e.g., the use of NACC and PfP to build ties to nonmembers and the development of closer ties to the OSCE and the UN) than it has its internal arrangements (e.g., restructuring and cutting organizational infrastructure and resources and reconfiguring command arrangements). As mentioned above, NATO has created new mechanisms through which it and its members interact with other states (NACC and PfP) in the post-cold war era; it has made little progress in its efforts to restructure internally to meet the demands of the post-cold war world. A key reason for this is the impact of domestic politics on alliance members. Two issues are worth mentioning to illustrate some of the limits of the international institutionalist approach.

The first is NATO efforts to create new command arrangements to more effectively carry out the new missions that NATO has said it is willing to perform - for example, peacekeeping for the OSCE or UN and crisis prevention. Some of the most difficult fights within various working groups in NATO have been over the command arrangements needed to put in place the CJTF concept endorsed at the January 1994 Brussels Summit. American reluctance, in response to strong Congressional pressure, to have U.S. troops under "foreign command" has been a major stumbling block, as has the French insistence, reflecting long-standing domestic anxieties about American dominance in NATO's military structure, that the greater political content of any mission arising under the CJTF framework means that Supreme Allied Command Europe (SACEUR) must of necessity play a lesser role in these types of missions, with the North Atlantic Council (NATO's highest decision-making body and one in which France does have a seat) playing a greater role.

The second issue is that of reconfiguring NATO's military infrastructure in

light of the shrinking external threat environment. Although NATO has had apparent success in removing one of the three major NATO commands (the Allied Command Channel), in reality the majority of Allied Command Channel offices and command billets have been moved to other parts of the alliance. As one senior civilian official at SHAPE put it, "closing bases in the U.S. is easy compared to cutting bases and commands here. The combination of national pride and domestic military patronage make it almost impossible in NATO."(81) Despite the obvious need and desire for such changes within the alliance, domestic politics provide some key limits on where the alliance can go. Domestic politics, then, becomes the link that ties together the three perspectives discussed here.

The role of domestic political factors in alliance behavior has historically been neglected and only recently has generated significant attention.(82) As noted, alliances are costly commitments. Neorealist theories do a good job of outlining when and why states pay those costs; institutionalist theories explain why states continue to pay them. What neither adequately addresses, however, is that these costs must have domestic support. Neorealism, with its state-level assumptions and predictions, assumes leaders will act to meet threats. It does not address the internal prerequisites for such action.(83) Likewise, institutionalist theories do not consider the impact of domestic coalitions and factions on the freedom of state leaders to pursue international policies. Unless one assumes autonomous leaders, this is an unwarranted premise. The French withdrawal from NATO's military structure as well as the conditions Spain attached to its entry into NATO grew out of domestic political concerns. Even when the Soviet threat loomed large during 1947 and 1948, Western officials found it difficult to generate significant support to counter that threat: considerable political effort was needed to make sure that the threat was interpreted in a way that generated needed support. Domestic support that was critical during the cold war is more critical now, especially in the United States, as European allies increasingly are seen as economic competitors.(84)

The impact of domestic pressures on international behavior is not limited to democratic regimes, although its force is more often felt in them. Alliance commitments can generate positive benefits for actors in and out of government, but they also generate costs. All government policies, in democratic and nondemocratic states, depend on a careful balancing of the benefits and costs seen by internal factions or constituents. National leaders interested in maintaining a strong defense position can use alliance commitments to justify higher defense spending, from which other domestic actors (defense contractors, armed services, legislators) benefit.(85) Support from these domestic factions insures against defense cuts or changes, as does the historic reluctance of states to be seen as failing in their alliance commitments.(86) As a result, there will always be a core of alliance supporters - how large and how consistent that core is will depend greatly on the specific commitment.

Domestic factors, however, also create limits on alliance participation. While alliances have costs which, when paid, benefit certain groups, one must consider that those who pay the costs might also like to see costs shifted in other directions. Certainly when the threat to which an alliance is responding goes away or is substantially reduced, the power of alternative arguments increases. In the context of NATO, it is not difficult to predict that aggregate support would diminish with the end of the cold war. NATO has endured threats in the form of wavering public support but always within the

cold war context where the Soviet threat could be used to regenerate support.(87) Public willingness to support an expensive commitment against no obvious enemy will likely decrease as time goes on, especially in countries like Canada and the United States where NATO is viewed as a "foreign" commitment.(88) A Soviet attack on Western Europe during the cold war, with its attendant risks of nuclear war, was plausible to posit as something that NATO citizens should be willing to spend money to prevent; Serbian genocide, no matter how awful, has been a more difficult problem.

The interaction of domestic support and opposition will create the boundaries within which national leaders must operate in both democratic and nondemocratic states. These boundaries in turn constrain the fluidity of international institutions. Worries about domestic repercussions limited Jordanian participation in the war against Iraq; domestic opposition to Iraqi participation in the Baghdad Pact led to Iraqi withdrawal and eventually to a revolution in 1955.(89) NATO will always have room for creative political leadership and diplomacy by those members seeking to justify continued participation in the alliance and its attendant costs. The cross-cutting nature of factional interests and the difficulty of predicting policy outcomes, however, make determinations about domestic repercussions difficult.(90)

Thus, in the context of the three frameworks considered here, domestic factors play a final crucial role in explaining the opportunities for participation in an alliance that has lost its original purpose. They create vital, albeit somewhat nebulous, boundaries on both the upper and lower limits of alliance support. Adding these considerations to a discussion that began with the weaknesses of neorealist theory, which were then supplemented by the insights of organizational theory and bounded by the interests found within institutional theories, leaves us with a fuller understanding of NATO at the end of the cold war. Its application to alliance theory and the future of NATO is explored below.

## Conclusion

This article began with a striking anomaly: six years after events that most observers agree heralded the end of the cold war, the key Western security institution was still functioning and even expanding - even though most theories about alliances would predict that it should be on its deathbed. While no theory, especially a structural one, can explain every event or policy decision, a good theory should explain the overall direction of outcomes and should identify causal mechanisms that must be present if the theory is to work. By this criterion, neorealism falls short. Nonetheless, I aim here to supplement neorealist arguments about alliances, not dismiss them. What emerges is a better understanding of the boundaries of traditional realist theory, some potential modifications to realist theory, and an appreciation of the utility of theoretical frameworks not usually applied to alliance behavior. In particular, this effort takes international institutionalist approaches to security seriously and finds them to be worthwhile.(91)

Shortly after the Berlin Wall fell, John Mearsheimer predicted that absent the Soviet threat, NATO would cease to be an effective alliance.(92) Kenneth Waltz, in testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee in November 1990 argued 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."(93) Half a decade later such predictions show little sign of coming true. While some recent analyses conclude that neither neorealist nor neoliberal hypotheses with respect to NATO have been borne out, it is by now clear that NATO has survived the end of the cold war, living up more closely to institutionalist arguments than to neorealist ones.(94) NATO remains, as one analyst put it, "the leading security organization in Europe."(95) NATO still is preparing to deal with threats in true realist fashion, even though their identities are increasingly in dispute or uncertain.(96) NATO exists nonetheless at a level of institutionalization today that cannot be explained by threats alone. While neorealism would lead us to expect a revised definition of the external threat that NATO members faced after 1991, neorealism cannot easily account for what NATO has done in response. It has expanded its relationship to other international organizations as part of an effort to embed itself further into the framework of European, and to a lesser extent trans-Atlantic, relations. In so doing, NATO has demonstrated the flexibility expected of both organizations and international institutions.

If one's aim is to modify, and in so doing strengthen, neorealist theory (in the spirit of Lijphart's deviant-case method), this review suggests two modifications that could be validated by future research. First, where the organizational development of an alliance is high, we would expect the impact of the loss of a threat on an alliance to be mitigated and hence slowed. Organizational interests will work to prolong the life of the alliance because in doing so they benefit themselves. This is not to suggest that an alliance without a threat will never die, only that death will take substantially longer in an alliance with a well-developed organizational entity attached to it. Second, an alliance that is at the center of a regime will respond more slowly to changes in threats than one that has not developed attendant norms, procedures, and functions. The wider the range of functions that an alliance fulfills beyond its core defense function, the less responsive it will be to changes in the threats it faces and the more likely it is to be transformed in purpose as its external environment changes. This tendency will be even more pronounced the longer the alliance has been in existence, as there will have been more time for interests and benefits to coalesce around the core organization and institution. Recall the reference above to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; the original purposes of each were either met or overtaken by events. Each, following the desires of their members (which of course overlap greatly), changed its approaches and methods to deal with the emergent concerns, ensuring that they would continue to serve the interests of their members.

Of these two modifications, the first (where a high level of organizational development would mitigate the impact of the loss of a threat on an alliance) is more difficult to falsify than the second (where an alliance at the center of a regime would respond more slowly to changes than one that was not), but there is one inference of the first that could be tested in further work. Domestic pressures in member states (strong in all but strongest in Canada and the United States) to cut commitments and contributions to the alliance will continue to grow. The organizational argument implies further efforts within NATO to save itself as these pressures intensify, most likely by continuing to redefine the threats or cutting ancillary functions to make integrated defense less costly. Any other behavior would seriously impugn the argument.

No evidence has been presented that challenges the core neorealist understanding of ad hoc alliances that lose their threats. In such

circumstances, the basic neorealist expectation about alliance erosion remains intact. The de facto U.S. alliance with the People's Republic of China against the Soviets that emerged in the late 1970s evaporated as Chinese perceptions of the threat posed by the Soviets eased in the early 1980s.<sup>(97)</sup> Neorealist (and ultimately realist) insights about the effect of increased threat perceptions on alliance cohesion and durability also remain intact. Clearly, in the context of a high or growing threat environment, realist expectations will prevail. The argument presented here suggests that only in the context of an institutionalized alliance and a declining threat environment will these expectations not apply. The best explanation of this process comes from the international institutionalist approach advanced here. The organizational perspective, while providing insight into the behavior of the organization itself, does not provide enough intellectual leverage to understand why the regime of which it is part will continue and perhaps even thrive. For that, one needs to step back and look at the broader relationship that exists among NATO members and understand the many ways that NATO helps its members deal with change. As long as this continues to be the case, NATO can be expected to survive the end of the cold war. Clearly, NATO is not through with its post-cold war adjustments. These arguments will thus need to be revisited in the future, but for now the international institutionalist approach has provided the best insight into NATO's behavior.

Those who predict an end to NATO have adopted too narrow a perspective on NATO's function and history, focusing too much on NATO's military functions and geographic limitations. As Douglas Stuart notes, NATO has had room for more than strictly military functions built into it from the beginning, including mechanisms for solving disputes, coordinating foreign and military policies, and consulting on political matters, and these have allowed it to serve important nonmilitary functions.<sup>(98)</sup> NATO's original purposes were broad and have continued to grow. While NATO's high degree of organizational and institutional development sets it off from other alliances, increasing political and economic integration suggest that future security efforts by states will be more multilateral in nature and show greater institutional development than in the past. To the degree that the security needs of increasingly interdependent states are seen in a broad, multilevel perspective that encompasses political, economic, social, and domestic dimensions, alliances like NATO are likely to endure, especially as publics are increasingly unwilling to support unilateral security measures where the costs cannot be spread. Those that are simply ad hoc cooperative security arrangements are likely to exhibit the sensitivity to shifts in threat perceptions and power balances that realist theories expect. Further work will be needed to assess the continuing usefulness of institutionalist theories, especially within the security realm, but the discussion here has provided a significant step in that direction.

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1. See Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan 1973, 88; and Ward 1982, 15-32.
2. Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan 1973, 52.
3. "NATO: The Next Generation," Independent (U.K.), 8 February 1995, 18.
4. Duffield 1994/95, 765.
5. The quotation is from Worner 1991, 5. For views sympathetic to NATO, see Christopher 1993, 3-6; 1995, 18-20; and Glaser 1993, 5-50. For a cogent skeptical view, see Clarke 1993/94, 22-40. A useful collection of relevant essays is found in Carpenter 1994.
6. Brown 1995, illustrates this line of argument.
7. See Snyder 1991b, 83; and 1991a, 121.
8. Excellent reviews of alliance literature can be found in Christensen and Snyder 1990; Walt 1987; and Snyder 1991b.
9. A very useful recent effort is Hellmann and Wolf 1993.
10. Barnett and Levy 1991.
11. Lijphart 1971, 692.
12. For an example of a study using NATO as a "heuristic case study," see Kupchan 1988. For one using ad hoc coalitions as "most likely cases," see Bennett, Leggold, and Unger 1994. A useful comparison of deviant case studies and heuristic case studies is found in George 1979, 51-53, and especially 66 n. 26.
13. The term "security regime" is here used differently than in Jervis 1982, where it related primarily to modes of cooperation between adversaries.
14. Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 19.
15. Eckstein 1975, 99.
16. For two excellent bibliographies see Gordon 1978; and U.S. Congress 1989.
17. DePorte 1990, 198. For an argument that relates NATO's survival specifically to the Soviet threat, see Stuart and Tow 1990, 313.
18. See Washington Times, 12 October 1989, 4; and Los Angeles Times, 26 October 1989, 7.
19. See Financial Times (London), 23 May 1990.
20. See NATO 1991; and U.S. GAO 1992, 12.
21. Worner 1992.
22. For one classic work, see Liska 1962. The quotation is from Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 16.

23. See Oneal and Elrod 1989; Boyer 1993; Riker 1962; Bennett, Leggold, and Unger 1994; Ward 1982, 59-60; and Barnett and Levy 1991, 369.
24. Snyder 1991b, 83-84.
25. See Morgenthau 1959, 191 n. 14; and Osgood 1968, 25-26.
26. Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan 1973, 88.
27. See Liska 1962; Waltz 1979; and Walt 1987.
28. Snyder 1991a, 124-25. See also Liska 1962, 61-115; Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan 1973, 16-20 and 254-56; Ward 1982, 15-17 and 31-32; and Walt 1987, 17-26.
29. Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan 1973, 17.
30. NATO 1990, 22, emphasis added.
31. For a similar but not identical opinion, see Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 17-19.
32. Snyder 1991b, 90-92.
33. Cook 1989 is excellent on this period.
34. For a work that covers this period in great detail, including the transformation in U.S. and Western views about the Soviet Union and Russia, see Beschloss and Talbot 1993.
35. For an excellent early discussion of these issues, see Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 21-25.
36. Walt 1987, 26-27.
37. For three examples of trying to make such assessments from various theoretical perspectives, see Barnett and Levy 1991; Walt 1988; and Morrow 1993.
38. U.S. News and World Report, 9 July 1991, 31.
39. Ness and Brechin 1988, 264.
40. Ibid., 246-47.
41. NATO 1995, 137.
42. Wilson 1989, 25.
43. See Niskanen 1975; and Holden 1966, 951. For a useful review of the former and the debate it engendered, see Blais and Dion 1991, especially 3-12.
44. For useful summaries of this approach, see Hall 1991, 277-92; and Scott 1987, 111, 181-82, and 200-203. For further work focusing on business organizations, see Pfeffer and Salancik 1978.

45. Blau and Meyer 1987, 106-9.
46. Washington Times, 10 October 1989, 7.
47. On criticisms of Canadian changes in particular, see New York Times, 27 February 1992, 9; and Financial Times (London), 25 March 1992, 2. For the reaction to Belgian cuts, see Financial Times (London), 6 July 1992, 2.
48. For a discussion of this problem, see U.S. GAO 1992.
49. Washington Post, 4 October 1991, p. 19; and former member of Worner's speech-writing staff, personal interview, 14 July 1995.
50. Washington Times, 5 April 1992, 15.
51. Jane's Defense Weekly, 11 July 1992, 32.
52. See Philadelphia Inquirer, 11 September 1993, 3; and Defense News, 25 October 1993, 4.
53. van Foreest 1993, 23-25.
54. For details of the new Strategic Concept, which reduces reliance on nuclear weapons and places greater reliance on true multinational forces, see Legge 1991; Eide 1992; and New York Times, 11 March 1993, 1.
55. Personal interview, Brussels, 26 June 1995.
56. Worner 1991, 7.
57. Personal interview, Brussels, 7 July 1995.
58. For an example of the debate this has sparked between realists and institutionalists, see Mearsheimer 1994/95, and the replies it prompted: Keohane and Martin 1995; Kupchan and Kupchan 1995; Ruggie 1995; Wendt 1995; and Mearsheimer 1995. For a useful discussion of recent empirical work on institutions, see Keohane and Martin 1995, 46-50.
59. Ness and Brechin 1988, 249-50.
60. Early approaches include Krasner 1983; and Keohane 1984. For an interesting application of regime theories to NATO, see Duffield 1992.
61. The definitions are from Keohane 1989, 383 and 383 n. 2, respectively. On applying these approaches, see Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 14.
62. Keohane 1989, 15, emphasis original.
63. Keohane 1993, 287, emphasis added.
64. See Stein 1983, 133; and Keohane 1988, 174.
65. Leggold 1995, 161-63.
66. Keohane 1989, 101-2. See also Keohane 1982; and Stein 1983.



67. Bland 1991, 12-13.
68. Boyer 1993, 115-16.
69. For details, see Cohen 1982.
70. For a similar argument, specifically with regard to NATO, see Weber 1992, 675-77.
71. See Duffield 1992, 834-38; and Cowhey 1993.
72. Duffield 1992, 836.
73. Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 20.
74. Knopf 1993.
75. NATO 1990, 22-24.
76. Worner is quoted in Baltimore Sun, 14 November 1989, 4.
77. Worner 1992, 3-9.
78. North Atlantic Council, "Partnership with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Statement Issued by the North Atlantic Council Meeting in Ministerial Session in Copenhagen on 6 and 7 June 1991," NATO Review 39(3): 28-29 (June 1991).
79. Kriendler 1993.
80. Taft 1991, 8.
81. Personal interview, Mons, Belgium, 5 July 1995.
82. See Kupchan 1988, 326 n. 28; Bennett, Lepgold, and Unger 1994, 45-48; Barnett and Levy 1991, 369-71.
83. Morrow 1993, is an exception.
84. For two recent treatments of the domestic connection of U.S. policy toward Europe, including NATO, see Lepgold 1994; and 1995.
85. Boyer 1993, 115-16.
86. Kegley and Raymond 1990, 62-73 and 246-75.
87. Domke, Eichenberg, and Kelleher 1987. For the historical dimension of public support, see Flynn and Rattinger 1985; and Eichenberg 1989. For a current discussion, see Bruce 1992. For the American context, see Lepgold 1994, 185-91; and Reilly 1995, 88-89.
88. Lepgold 1994, 185-91.
89. For details, see Podeh 1995. My thanks to Michael Barnett for the example.
90. Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 38 n. 107.

91. For two arguments that realism must be supplemented with institutional theories when discussing alliances, see Duffield 1995; and Wallander and Keohane 1995.
92. Mearsheimer 1990, 52.
93. Waltz's testimony is quoted in Hellmann and Wolf 1993, 17. For a more recent quotation, see Keohane 1993, 286.
94. On neorealism's and neoliberalism's failings with regard to NATO, see Hellmann and Wolf 1993.
95. Duffield 1994/95, 763.
96. *Ibid.*, 767-72.
97. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for the example, who also suggested that the fragility of the Sino-Soviet alliance might have been due to the fact that it never developed an institutional basis.
98. Stuart 1993.

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