

**The Atlantic Alliance's New Strategic Concept:
Implications for the European Union**

James Rogers

Documento de Trabajo 65/2012



Biographical note

James Rogers is Co-Director of the Group on Grand Strategy.¹ He holds an M.Phil in Contemporary European Studies from the University of Cambridge and a B.Sc. Econ. in International Politics and Strategic Studies with first class honours from Aberystwyth University. He is completing his Ph.D. in European Studies at the University of Cambridge. He has also worked on various research projects for the European Union Institute for Security Studies, the European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Security and Defence, RAND Europe and the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Ninguna parte ni la totalidad de este documento puede ser reproducida, grabada o transmitida en forma alguna ni por cualquier procedimiento, ya sea electrónico, mecánico, reprográfico, magnético o cualquier otro, sin autorización previa y por escrito de la Fundación Alternativas.

ISBN: 978-84-92957-85-9

© Fundación Alternativas

© James Rogers

¹ See: <http://www.grandstrategy.eu>.

Contents

- 1 Executive summary**
- 2 Introductory**
- 3 The New Strategic Concept**
 - 3.1 Comparisons with the European Security Strategy**
- 4 A spanner in the works? Towards a new geopolitics**
 - 4.1 Eurocentrism comes to an end**
 - 4.2 Will the pax Americana fade?**
- 5 Implications for the European Union**
- 6 Recommendations**
 - 6.1 Recommendations for the shorter-term**
 - 6.2 Recommendations for the longer-term**

1 Executive summary

- In November 2010, the Atlantic Alliance – one of the most powerful and successful alliances in world history – agreed a New Strategic Concept, which its members hope will take the alliance well into the twenty-first century.
- This new concept contains three components: ‘collective defence’, ‘crisis management’ and ‘co-operative security’. It is a synthesis of most of the prevailing strategic assumptions of the 1990s and early 2000s, a time when the constitutional democracies of the Euro-Atlantic area were in a position of supreme dominance.
- Today, however, the rise of large countries around the Indo-Pacific region – such as China and India, but also South Korea, Japan and Russia – and the corresponding shift in the United States’ geostrategic focus, away from Europe, and towards the Asian zone, compromises both the Atlantic Alliance, and, by implication, the European Union.
- As the Americans gradually transfer their focus towards the Indo-Pacific, Europeans will be left to provide for their own security, defend themselves from a number of threats, and project their interests over other regions of the world. Europeans should monitor the geopolitical changes very carefully, gradually building up their own resources and autonomy.
- However, this does not mean that Atlantic Alliance should be left to fade away or be disbanded. This alliance is the umbilical cord that links the two parts of Western democratic civilisation together. Instead, what is needed is a re-balancing of the alliance, with Europeans paying greater attention to the security of their own wider neighbourhood, leaving the United States to concentrate on the Indo-Pacific.
- This means (re-)electrifying the European Union’s Common Security and Defence Policy, and re-asserting the vital role of European military power in the twenty-first century.

2 Introductory

After a decade in which we fought two wars that cost us dearly...the United States is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region...Our new focus on this region reflects a fundamental truth – the United States has been, and always will be, a Pacific nation...The United States is a Pacific Power, and we are here to stay.

– Barack Obama, 17th November 2011²

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – the ‘Atlantic Alliance’ – has long had strategic implications for the European Union. In many ways, the alliance acts as a midwife to European integration. Halford Mackinder, the British geostrategist, foresaw the need of such an alliance during the middle of the Second World War. Writing in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations in the United States, he foresaw a peaceful European continent under the protection of London and Washington after the then coming defeat of the Third Reich. To achieve this, he recommended the formation of an alliance called the ‘Midland Ocean’, which would institutionalise a permanent British, French and American deterrent against either German or Russian geopolitical ambitions during the post-war era (or those of any other European country). Mackinder argued that the Midland Ocean would require three components, each critical to the other: ‘a bridgehead in France, a moated aerodrome in Britain, and a reserve of trained manpower, agriculture and industries in the eastern United States and Canada.’³ As Map 1 shows, since the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, the Mackinderian vision has animated the Atlantic Alliance: it fuses together the three strongest and most geopolitically significant Western democracies, France, the United Kingdom and the United States, alongside smaller allied powers, to deter aggression and maintain a liberal, constitutional and democratic order on the European continent.⁴ To this day, British, French and American nuclear weapons, maritime forces, aerospace assets, armies and logistical capacities continue to provide a permanent and durable guarantee of security for Western, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as to the wider North Atlantic region.

² Barack Obama, Speech to the Parliament of Australia, 17th November 2011.

³ Halford Mackinder, ‘The Round World and the Winning of the Peace’, in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1943, p. 604.

⁴ According to its first secretary general, Lord Ismay, the Atlantic Alliance’s role was: ‘To keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down.’ Cited in: Tony Judt, *Post-War: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Pimlico, 2007), p. 150.

Map 1 – The Euro-Atlantic area in 2011



European integration cannot therefore be understood without reference to the Atlantic Alliance. With its strategic and conventional forces, it has long provided a relatively benign regional environment where economic and political integration could take place, locking European countries into deeper and deeper structural and institutionalised arrangements. By negating the security dilemma, which has been a curse throughout European history, it reduced insecurity and the associated temptation to re-arm. While electrified by this primary objective, the alliance has nevertheless gone through a number of phases: foundation and consolidation during the Cold War; expansion during the post-Cold War era, which mandated

the pacification of Serbia during the Wars of the Yugoslav Succession; and meeting the challenge from cross-sector threats such as Islamist extremism and a resurgent Russia during the first decade of the twenty-first century. After a period marked by the 2001 Islamist terror attacks on Washington and New York City and the subsequent American- and British-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Atlantic Alliance agreed a New Strategic Concept on 19th November 2010.⁵ This new security strategy is supposed to set the tone and pace for the Atlantic Alliance's renewal; indeed, its members hope it will take the alliance well into the twenty-first century, delivering security, during a period of economic and financial austerity. In short, the New Strategic Concept reconfirms the role of the Atlantic Alliance as the bedrock of European and North American collective defence and general security; restates the willingness of the alliance's three atomic powers – France, the United Kingdom and the United States – to uphold their nuclear umbrella over all the other members of the alliance; commits the alliance to 'crisis management' overseas to prevent chaos from breaking out and harming allied interests; and urges 'co-operative security', including a closer and complementary partnership between the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union.⁶

The aim of this report is to look at the implications of the articles and prescriptions contained within the New Strategic Concept, in order to assess their implications for the European Union, particularly for the nascent Common Security and Defence Policy. It therefore begins by outlining and analysing the logics that govern the New Strategic Concept, looking at their development in a historical context, as well as new innovations and potential limitations. It will then compare and contrast the New Strategic Concept with the European Security Strategy, locating areas of convergence and contention; at one and the same time, it will also locate issues that have been overlooked or deliberately ignored in both documents. Next, it will make a series of geopolitical projections – based on current developments – which might confront certain members of the Atlantic Alliance in the years ahead, rendering it increasingly moribund and ineffective. In this sense, the geopolitical assumption underpinning this report is that the ongoing rise of large countries in the Indo-Pacific region will continue to draw the United States away from its primary focus on the wider European continent, leaving Europeans to assume more responsibilities for upholding security not only in their own backyard, but also their extended neighbourhood, perhaps including large swathes of the Indian Ocean.

This report therefore argues that the New Strategic Concept's implications for the European Union will be secondary to the wider geopolitical changes now underway in the rest of the world. As the rise of China and other Asian countries accelerates, the United States will be forced to re-focus the thrust of its geostrategy towards the Indo-Pacific zone, which means that the Atlantic Alliance will become both more and less important to Washington: less

⁵ The New Strategic Concept, Lisbon, 19th November 2010. The complete document can be downloaded from: <<http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf>> [accessed 11th November 2011].

⁶ The New Strategic Concept, Article 4 (a), (b) and (c).

important, because the European continent will cease to be the main region for American statecraft; more important, because Europeans will be expected to do more – much more – to maintain order and security in their own backyard. The New Strategic Concept is therefore something of a sideshow. For while the Atlantic Alliance will continue to be important for both Americans and Europeans, it seems logical to assume that the latter, including Spain, will be forced – progressively – to empower the European Union over the coming decade. This will enable Europeans to better uphold their security and assert their interests. Many European governments, including those even of France and the United Kingdom, need to think harder about the consequences of these changes, particularly when they seem so determined to keep cutting back on their military capabilities – capacities they may soon need to regenerate, and fast.

3 The New Strategic Concept

The New Strategic Concept is the product of over a year of deliberation and debate among the members of the Atlantic Alliance. A new concept was first called for at the Strasbourg Summit between the 3rd and 4th April 2009. Three months later, on 7th July, the alliance launched the project to develop a new concept, with a 'Group of Experts' being assigned to provide analysis and recommendations to the alliance's Secretary-General. From September 2009 to April 2010, the Group of Experts held a series of meetings, workshops and consultations across the Euro-Atlantic area to develop strategic thinking on the type of security strategy that would best fit the alliance's requirements in the second decade of the twenty-first century. On 17th May 2010, the Group of Experts submitted their final analysis and recommendations to the alliance's Secretary-General in a succinct document entitled NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement.⁷ During the next three months, these analyses and recommendations were turned into the New Strategic Concept, which was agreed at the Lisbon Summit on 17th November 2010.

As recommended by the Group of Experts' report, the New Strategic Concept is predicated on upholding 'three essential core tasks', which include: firstly, 'collective defence'; secondly, 'crisis management'; and thirdly, 'co-operative security'.⁸ The first of these tasks relates directly to preventing an attack on any member of the alliance within the North Atlantic region, in keeping with each member's 'firm and binding' obligation under Article Five of the North Atlantic Treaty.⁹ The second task relates to 'out-of-area' or 'expeditionary' operations, increasingly known under the humble metaphor of 'crisis management'. These can be interventionist, aiming to stop ongoing crises after they have broken out or preventative, with the aim of stopping crises before they break out. The third task relates to 'co-operative security', which accounts for the fact that 'the alliance is affected by, and can affect, political and security developments beyond its borders.'¹⁰ This promotes the understanding that, while

⁷ See: NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement, 17th May 2010. The complete document can be downloaded from: <<http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/expertsreport.pdf>> [accessed 12 October 2011].

⁸ The New Strategic Concept, Article 4(a).

⁹ Article Five of the North Atlantic Treaty requires that all members of the alliance 'agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.' See: The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, DC, 4th April 1949.

¹⁰ The New Strategic Concept, Article 4 (c).

the Atlantic Alliance is still primarily about the security of its members within the Euro-Atlantic area, it has a special responsibility to other regions of the world.

However, aside these general tasks, there are three particularly important novelties in the New Strategic Concept. These are: firstly, the proposal to develop a Missile Defence System to protect the alliance's members from the future machinations of rogue regimes armed with ballistic missiles, perhaps tipped with primitive atomic, chemical or biological warheads; secondly, the desire for a political rapprochement between the Atlantic Alliance and Russia, after several years of patchy relations, albeit provoked primarily by Moscow; and, thirdly, a re-emphasis on the significance of the connexion between the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance, especially 'the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence.'¹¹

3.1 Comparisons with the European Security Strategy

The New Strategic Concept shares many similarities with the European Security Strategy and its Implementation Report.¹² The former, drawn up by Javier Solana and Robert Cooper in 2003, is a remarkable document, in the sense that it attempted to draw a line under the sand over the divisions that emerged between the Member States over the American- and British-led invasion of Iraq. The strategy sought to reveal and codify areas of convergence in security and strategic thinking among Europeans, while simultaneously constituting a far more active and interventionist approach for Europeans to follow, which was explicitly threat based.¹³ The European Security Strategy, like the New Strategic Concept, declares that traditional threats like geopolitics and invasion are a thing of the past. Rather, it 'securitises' a range of cross-sector threats, such as forms of extremism and radicalisation, terrorism, the threat from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly by rogue regimes, organised crime and climate change, among similar issues. This is no surprise: all three documents draw off post-Cold War thinking about security and military policy, during a time of Western ascendancy. These threats can be drawn together under the concept of 'chaos', that is, a heaving concoction of threats and challenges that are thought to be able to undermine Western liberal or social democratic societies much like termites might undermine a wooden

¹¹ The New Strategic Concept, Article 32.

¹² See: 'A Secure Europe in a Better World', European Security Strategy, Brussels: European Council, 12th December 2003 and 'Providing Security in a Changing World', Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy, Brussels: European Council, 11th December 2008. Both documents can be downloaded from: <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>> [accessed 13th November 2011] and <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf> [accessed 13th November 2011].

¹³ For good summaries on the drafting of the European Security Strategy, see: Alyson J. K. Bailes, 'The European Security Strategy: An Evolutionary History', Policy Paper No. 10, Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2005 and Sven Biscop (ed.), 'Audit of European Strategy', Egmont Paper No. 3, Ghent: Academia Press, 2004.

house. This fear is amplified by the 'openness' of European societies, and the acceleration of globalisation, which draws the zones of chaos closer to Europeans than ever before. As Robert Cooper, who contributed greatly to the European Security Strategy, puts it:

The existence of such a zone of chaos is nothing new; but previously, such areas, precisely because of their chaos, were isolated from the rest of the world. Not so today when a country without much law and order can still have an international airport.¹⁴

Indeed, the biggest fear is that a number of these cross-sector threats might hijack the communication systems made available by globalisation and come together to constitute 'a very radical threat indeed'.¹⁵

Likewise, the New Strategic Concept also reflects the European Security Strategy in other ways too, not least the failure of the latter to deal the geopolitical implications of the changing balance of power in the wider world, let alone the rise of the Indo-Pacific zone, and the expansion of Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Russian and South Korean military power. However, given the gap between both strategies – a period of seven years – this is more understandable on the part of the European Security Strategy, because the new powers were still rather weak back in 2003 and the Western democracies were still in a position of dominance. Indeed, for the New Strategic Concept to not even discuss these changes is a shocking omission – particularly in 2010: for, as argued in the next sections of this report, the expansion of Chinese power, above all, is already drawing the United States' focus and concentration away from Europe and propelling it towards the Indo-Pacific zone. This will almost certainly be a dominating feature of world geopolitics over the next ten to twenty years. Consequentially, by failing to address these changes, the New Strategic Concept contributes to the trapping of Europeans even further into an increasingly outdated strategic framework – itself reflected by the European Security Strategy – as opposed to generating a future operational concept that will keep them secure.

Finally, there are similarities between the New Strategic Concept and the European Security Strategy and its Implementation Report in their recommendations for dealing with 'chaos': both counsel an approach predicated on 'preventive engagement' (described as 'crisis management' by the New Strategic Concept, which is also used frequently in European Union security discourse) and 'effective multilateralism' (which is described by the New Strategic Concept as 'co-operative security'). Likewise, both strategies allude to a 'comprehensive approach', in order to draw together all the tools and capabilities they can muster, in order to combat the threat from 'chaos'.

¹⁴ Robert Cooper, *The postmodern state and the world order* (London: Demos, 1996), p. 16.

¹⁵ European Security Strategy, p. 5.

4 A spanner in the works? Towards a new geopolitics

The twentieth century was an Atlantic century, while the twenty-first is going to be a Pacific one. It is a cliché, but like in every cliché, there is a truth in it. The tendencies go further than the well-known growth dynamics and demographics. Asia and the Pacific are quickly emerging scientific and research powerhouses, and the region's competitiveness is the global standard...Whereas Europe used to be the most dangerous continent in the past century – yes, the origin of two world wars – the focus of security analysts and hard power strategic planners has recently moved towards developments in Asia and the Pacific. They do not yet observe a full-blown arms race, but in terms of military spending and confrontational psychology, the premises of an arms race are there.

– Herman Van Rompuy, 9th November 2011¹⁶

Ever since Spanish and Portuguese sailors, missionaries and traders set out to explore, conquer and colonise distant lands across the ocean in the late fifteenth century, Europeans have been at the vanguard of global affairs. While European countries may have often competed with one another, they also worked together – if more by default than design – to establish European hegemony over the sea. This enabled Europeans to project their power over extensive distances; infiltrate littoral spaces; maintain 'go anywhere' maritime empires; and extend their trade routes, all of which contributed to making Western Europe the richest, most dynamic and most technologically powerful region of the world. As Sir Walter Raleigh once remarked: 'Whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself.'¹⁷

At the same time as European power was pulsating and spreading around the globe, the rest of the world's focus was decidedly on Europe, not least because of the numerous and frequent wars on the continent, which often dragged everyone else in. Even during the Cold War, when Europeans – bankrupt after fighting the most destructive conflict in their history – became trapped between two superpowers, the United States and Soviet Russia, Europe was still the focus of the world's attention. Europe was the prize; it held the balance. Everyone knew that with over a third of the world's industrial capacity and output, any power with the

¹⁶ Herman Van Rompuy, 'Europe's political and economic challenges in a changing world', Special Winston Churchill Lecture 2011, University of Zurich, 9th November 2011. For my analysis of the speech, see: James Rogers, 'Mr. Van Rompuy: Churchill provides the model', European Geostrategy, 11th November 2011 – available at: <<http://europeangeostrategy.ideasononeurope.eu/2011/11/11/herman-van-rompuy-churchill-provides-the-model/>> [accessed 11th November 2011].

¹⁷ Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Works of Sir Walter Raleigh: Volume VIII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1829), p. 325.

ability to either conquer directly or to acquire pervasive influence over the European continent, particularly the industrialised western and central sectors, would soon gain the upper-hand in any global geopolitical struggle. During the Cold War, Western Europe's sheer agricultural and industrial output; its technological capability; its trained workforce; and its advanced and highly organised societies would have greatly amplified the power of Soviet Russia. It was for this reason that the United States and United Kingdom – as superpowers – became so concerned with preventing Moscow from further territorial expansion after the Second World War.¹⁸ The British realised, followed by the Americans, that Western Europe was critical for the recovery and growth of global economy, so it had to be held – at any cost, even a third world war, or later, a nuclear exchange.

The Atlantic Alliance and the European Community therefore went hand-in-hand, the first 'comprehensive approach'. One was to provide 'hard' security by keeping potentially revanchist powers within Western Europe down and keeping external powers like the Russians out, while the other was to provide 'soft' security, by binding together the West European economies, making it increasingly difficult for any West European country to even contemplate the use of industrial resources for military purposes against another. And by making European economies more integrated and prosperous, more resources would become available for supporting collective defence through the Atlantic Alliance. Indeed, as the dull right-wing regimes of southern Europe fell one after the other during the 1970s – the Colonels in Greece, Franco in Spain, and Salazar in Portugal – this security system was enlarged to engulf all three, helping to cement liberal democracy and a social market economy.

After the end of the Soviet empire and the Cold War, the Atlantic Alliance expanded again. The Americans – in particular – moved to support the unification of West and East Germany, hoping that the institutional arrangements devised over the previous forty years would lock Germany down and keep it permanently within the Western alliance. And later, London and Washington sought to extend the democratic perimeter of the Atlantic Alliance as far east as possible, while Russia was – immediately after the end of Bolshevism – an economic basket case and a geopolitical husk. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the Atlantic Alliance was in a position of unabashed hegemony, expanding on all fronts, with the world's three greatest military powers – France, Britain and the United States – accounting for over seventy percent of world military expenditure.

¹⁸ Nicholas Spykman and William Fox coined the term 'superpower' during the latter stages of the Second World War to account for the overwhelming power of the United States, United Kingdom and Soviet Russia. See: Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1944) and William T. R. Fox, *The super-powers: the United States, Britain, and the Soviet union – their responsibility for peace* (New York City: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1944).

4.1 Eurocentrism comes to an end

Today, however, only ten years later, the Atlantic Alliance's position looks increasingly less rosy, after a decade of draining military operations in Afghanistan and a particularly deep Financial Crisis during 2008 and 2009, which sapped military budgets. Simultaneously, the world is experiencing a series of geopolitical convulsions, the like of which may not have been seen in centuries: Europe, long the crux of world affairs, is moving towards the periphery, as the countries of the Indo-Pacific zone – accounting for all those countries that border the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific – buoyed on by rapid economic growth and industrialisation, take centre stage.¹⁹ The largest two powers, China and India, with almost three fifths of the world's population between them, have been busily building up their terrestrial, aerial and maritime power over the past ten years, to engage and 'encircle' once another throughout their respective regions, which overlap, like never before.²⁰ The Chinese, in particular, grew very alarmed at how quickly the Western coalition blitzed Iraq in 1991; how easily the United States was able to defend Taiwan in 1996; how powerless China was after the Atlantic Alliance struck – albeit accidentally – its embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo War in 1999, and how rapidly various North American, European and Asian powers were able to offer maritime assistance to Southeast Asian countries after the Tsunami of 2004 – making China look very amateurish and unprepared.²¹

Indeed, in recent years, furnished with seemingly limitless resources and a military budget that has been growing at over ten percent per year, and rapidly expanding commercial interests reaching out as far as Africa and South America, Chinese strategists have been paying closer attention to Western geostrategic theory, especially Western seapower doctrine.²² They are thought to believe in the existence of two strategic 'island chains', which

¹⁹ See, for example: Bill Emmott, *Rivals: How the Power Struggle Between China, India and Japan will Shape Our Next Decade* (London: Allen Lane, 2008); Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York City: W. W. Norton and Company, 2011); Robert Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York City: Random House, 2010); James Rogers, 'From Suez to Shanghai: the European Union and Eurasian maritime security', Occasional Paper No. 77, March 2009, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies; and James Rogers, 'A new geography of European power?', Egmont Paper No. 42, January 2011, Brussels: Academia Press.

²⁰ See: David Scott, 'The Great Power "Great Game" between India and China: "The Logic of Geography"', in *Geopolitics*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2008, pp. 1-26; James Rogers, 'From Suez to Shanghai', March 2009, pp. 14-19; Iskander Rehman, 'Keeping the Dragon at Bay: India's Counter-Containment of China in Asia', *Asian Security*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2009, pp. 114-143; James Rogers, 'A new geography of European power?', January 2011, pp. 9-10; and Robert Kaplan, 'The Geography of Chinese Power: How Far Can Beijing Reach on Land and at Sea?', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 3, May-June 2010, pp. 22-41.

²¹ See: John Garofano, 'China-Southeast Asia Relations: Problems and Prospects', in Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes (eds.), *Asia Looks Seaward: Power and Maritime Strategy* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008). p. 182.

²² See: James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, 'A Chinese Turn to Mahan?', *China Brief*, Vol. 9, No. 13, 24th June 2009, pp. 8-11; see also: Xu, Q., 'Maritime Geostrategy and the Development of the Chinese Navy in the Early Twenty-first Century', in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4, Autumn 2006, pp. 47-67. For a good overview of

they deem essential for China's integrity and security.²³ The first, stretching from the Korean peninsula down through Taiwan, then further south into the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, terminating on northern shore of the Thai-Malay isthmus, is currently receiving the most Chinese attention.²⁴ Within this zone, Beijing is aiming to be able to undertake complete access and area denial – which the Chinese have described as a “counter-intervention” strategy’ – particularly against the United States.²⁵ To back up this approach, Beijing has been building larger and more advanced naval bases on the Chinese mainland and offshore islands, such as the new facilities at Sanya on Hainan Island, replete with hardened submarine pens. These are built into the side of the surrounding hills and cliffs, and are possibly engineered to be able to withstand an intense pounding from the next generation of high-precision burrowing bombs.²⁶

Simultaneously, Beijing has been pouring resources into the modernisation of the People's Liberation Army Navy, with numerous new classes of warship and submarine acquired over the past decade. What is significant about these acquisitions is that they seem to be experimental, with each class being built only in small numbers, only to be trialled and tested, then improved on, and finally turned into a newer, better, and more capable vessels.²⁷ The Chinese have also been boosting their cyber-warfare, aerospace warfare and – critically – their coastal artillery forces, not least with the development of anti-satellite weapons and advanced supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles.²⁸ Even more alarming – particularly from the United States, Japan, South Korea and Australia's perspective – China has been continuing to research a conventionally-armed high-velocity ballistic missile, known as the Dong-Feng 21D.²⁹ Beijing hopes such weapons will give it the ability to strike at American forwardly-

China's development as a geopolitical power, see: Robert S. Ross, 'China's Naval Nationalism: Prospects, and the US Response', in *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Autumn 2009, pp. 46-81.

²³ While the concept of the 'island chains' is widely discussed in maritime circles, it has never been officially confirmed or depicted by the Chinese navy, nor by any other part of the Chinese government. For further information, see: Bernard D. Cole, 'More Red than Expert: Chinese Sea Power during the Cold War', in Andrew S. Erickson, Lyle J. Goldstein and Carnes Lord, *China Goes to Sea: Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspective* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009), esp. pp. 318-319.

²⁴ Robert Kaplan, 'The South China Sea is the Future of Conflict', in *Foreign Policy*, September-October 2011.

²⁵ For a good overview of this doctrine, see: Cortez A. Cooper, 'Joint Anti-Access Operations: China's "System-of-systems" Approach', Testimony presented before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 27th January 2011, pp. 3-5.

²⁶ Jane's Defence and Security Intelligence Analysis, Secret Sanya: China's new nuclear naval base revealed, 21st April 2008 – available at: <<http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defence-securityreport.aspx?ID=1065927913>> [accessed 5th November 2011].

²⁷ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy in the Twenty-First Century* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010).

²⁸ Discussions with scholars at the United States Naval War College, September 2011.

²⁹ For an excellent overview of this weapon, see: Eric Hagt and Matthew Durnin, 'China's Anti-ship Ballistic Missile', in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4, Autumn 2009, pp. 87-115 and Andrew S. Erickson and David D. Yang, 'Using the Land to Control the Sea', in the *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4, Autumn 2009, pp. 53-86.

deployed assets in the Western Pacific, such as aircraft carriers and anti-air warfare cruisers and destroyers, as well as the United States' large military stations in South Korea, Japan and Guam, in the event of a future conflict.³⁰ It must be made clear that many of these capabilities are either still in the developmental stages and their ability to operate in demanding military environments remains very much unconfirmed. However, given the speed of Chinese research into these capabilities, and the large and growing industrial complex behind them, it seems likely that the United States will face a formidable adversary within the so-called 'first island chain' within ten years. Some American analysts even believe that China's capabilities are becoming so advanced that the Washington will soon have to reconsider the sending of its aircraft carriers close to China's shores in the event of conflict, for fear that they could be struck and sunk.³¹

Clearly, as China has grown more powerful and confident within its own 'near abroad', it has started to develop expeditionary forces akin to those operated by the United States, the United Kingdom and France, which may allow it to undertake deep oceanic power projection by 2020-2030. This is where the 'second island chain' becomes important. This chain is often conceptualised as stretching from Japan to Guam, and then down to the northern shore of Australia, containing most of the Western Pacific. Having wrestled control of the first island chain from the United States, by deterring American naval operations in the region, perhaps by 2025, and by either pacifying or integrating Taiwan into China proper, the Chinese will likely begin to expand their attention further afield.³² Here, Taiwan really is critical. As Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes argue:

Simply put, Beijing will remain tied down as long as the Taiwan impasse remains unresolved. But should the island return to the mainland, either peacefully or at gunpoint, a fundamentally new calculus in Chinese strategy will take hold. Not only would a satisfactory resolution free China of an all-consuming politico-military headache, it would also present Beijing a military redoubt overlooking the northern reaches of the South China Sea...For one thing, China could redeploy military assets arrayed against Taiwan to other forward positions supporting southern naval

³⁰ For a discussion of China's emerging missiles and the United States' nascent anti-ballistic missile capabilities, see: Marshall Hoyler, 'China's "anti-access" ballistic missiles and US active defence', in *Naval College War Review*, Vol. 63, No. 4, Autumn 2010, pp. 84-105.

³¹ Interviews undertaken with think tank personnel and academics in Boston, Newport and Washington, DC, during September 2011. See, also: Vitaliy O. Pradun, 'From Bottle Rockets to Lightning Bolts: China's Missile Revolution and PLA Strategy against US Military Intervention', in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 64, No. 2, Spring 2011, pp. 7-39 and Walter A. McDougall, 'History and Strategies: Grand, Maritime and American', *The Telegram*, Vol. 6, October 2011, esp. pp. 8-9.

³² See: Rogers, 'From Suez to Shanghai', March 2009, esp. pp. 14-16.

campaigns. For another, Beijing could use the island itself as a base, stationing missile batteries, fighter aircraft, and warships there to partly encircle the South China Sea.³³

It is therefore no surprise that China has already been accused of looking for potential overseas berthing rights and military facilities, including commercial ports, military stations and listening posts – particularly along its main maritime communication lines from the South China Sea to energy resources in the Middle East and East Africa.³⁴

Moreover, Beijing is also building or planning its own amphibious assault vessels and aircraft carriers, the latter of which are larger than anything the European powers currently operate.³⁵ Although these vessels are still either very much on trial or in the shipyard, under construction – or even, on the drawing board – they surely emphasise China's longer-term geostrategic intentions. While it may take up to a decade for these capabilities to be bought into action, they could already be having a strategic impact on the smaller powers within the first island chain. After all, the countries concerned – like Vietnam, like Taiwan and like the Philippines – are acutely aware of what is soon to come; Vietnam, in particular, has sought to bolster its submarine forces by purchasing six new 'Kilo' class submarines from Russia.³⁶ And even though China's 'offensive' vessels will be considerably smaller and less sophisticated than those operated by the United States, they will work in unison with China's 'counter-intervention' capabilities. That is to say, the latter will attempt to keep the Americans out, while the former may be used to cow or intimidate China's neighbours, particularly those countries surrounding the South China Sea – and perhaps, eventually, as far as the Indian Ocean.

In response, to China's rapid military build-up, India, South Korea and Japan have gradually been constructing larger and more complicated warships, including amphibious

³³ Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, 'Can China Defend a "Core Interest" in the South China Sea?', in *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Spring 2011, p. 56.

³⁴ Since the mid-2000s, there has been a considerable debate as to the scope and intent of China's overseas expansion. For varying degrees of concern, see: Donald L. Berlin, 'The "great base race" in the Indian Ocean littoral: conflict prevention or stimulation?', in *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2004, pp. 239-255; Christopher Pehrson, 'String of Pearls: Meeting the Challenge of China's Rising Power Across the Asian Littoral', *Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 2006; Christopher D. Yung and Ross Rustici, 'China's Out of Area Naval Operations: Case Studies, Trajectories, Obstacles, and Potential Solutions', *China Strategic Perspectives* No. 3, Washington, DC: Centre for Strategic Research, National Defence University, December 2010; and Daniel J. Kosticka, 'Places and Bases: The Chinese Navy's Emerging Network in the Indian Ocean', in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Winter 2011, pp. 59-78.

³⁵ For a discussion of China's aircraft carrier programme, see: Trefor Moss, 'Decoding China's Aircraft Carrier', in *The Diplomat*, 13th August 2011 and Monika Chansoria, 'The Dragon's Seaward Glare', in *Geopolitics*, Vol. 2, No. 5, October 2011, pp. 18-20.

³⁶ See: Wendell Minnick, 'Vietnam Confirms Kilo Sub Buy and Shangri-La', *Defence News*, 5th June 2011.

assault and other projection vessels.³⁷ India, in particular, has also been emerging as a major power over the past decade, with ambitions to dominate the Indian Ocean region.³⁸ In 2005, it opened a new naval station on its western seaboard, at Karwar in Karnataka. New Delhi plans for this facility to become the largest naval station in the Indian Ocean, which is likely to eventually have enough capacity for over fifty warships.³⁹ Another large base – to spread over 2,000 hectares – is planned for Rambili on India's eastern coast, just fifty kilometres south of Vishakapatnam, the location of the base for India's main naval flotilla in the Bay of Bengal.⁴⁰ New warships are also being acquired, including destroyers, frigates and aircraft carriers and amphibious vessels.⁴¹ Indeed, New Delhi plans to have three large carriers and four amphibious assault vessels by the early 2020s. Meanwhile, South Korea's Dokdo class of amphibious assault ship and Japan's Hyuga class of 'helicopter-carrying destroyer' (a vessel akin to a European helicopter carrier with a full length flight deck) have been recalibrating their armed forces, with each class being built over the past ten years.⁴² While the South Koreans are still constrained by their unpredictable northern neighbour, the Japanese have become increasingly 'normal' in recent years, as the memories of the Second World War recede and as they are called on by their American ally to assume greater regional burdens.⁴³ What is more, larger ships will soon follow, including an even bigger, 19,000 tonne Japanese vessel, which could carry as many as fourteen helicopters.

Smaller powers, like Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have also been seeking to gradually amplify their military capabilities, as have extra-regional powers with interests in the Asia-Pacific zone like Canada and Australia. Indeed, Australia's strategic military review,

³⁷ For an overview of these smaller Asian powers reaction to China's rise, see: Evan S. Medeiros, 'The New Security Drama in East Asia: The Responses of US Allies and Security Partners to China's Rise', in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 62, No. 4, Autumn 2009, pp. 37-52.

³⁸ For more on India's emergence as a major regional power, see: Donald L. Berlin, 'India in the Indian Ocean', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Spring 2006, pp. 58-89; David Scott, 'India's "Grand Strategy" for the Indian Ocean: Mahanian Visions', in *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2006, pp. 97-129; David Scott, 'Strategic Imperatives of India as an Emerging Player in Pacific Asia', in *International Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2007, pp. 123-140; David Scott, 'India's "Extended Neighbourhood" Concept: Power Projection for a Rising Power', in *India Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2009, pp. 107-143; Walter C. Ladwig, 'India and Military Power Projection: Will the Land of Ghandi Become a Conventional Great Power?', in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 50, No. 6, 2010, pp. 1162-1183; C. Raja Mohan, 'The Return of the Raj', in *The American Interest*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2010, pp. 4-11.

³⁹ 'Karwar naval base to be the largest in Asia', in *Defence News*, 22nd May 2011 – available at: <<http://www.defencenews.in/defence-news-internal.asp?get=new&id=480>> [accessed 10th November 2011].

⁴⁰ Vijay Sakhujia, *Asian Maritime Power in the Twenty-first Century – Strategic Transactions: China, India and Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011), p. 290.

⁴¹ For more on India's acquisition on larger platforms, see: Saurav Jha, 'Looking for Landing Platform Docks', in *Geopolitics*, Vol. 2, No. 5, October 2011, pp. 30-35.

⁴² For a discussion of these 'through deck carriers', see: Yoji Koda, 'A new carrier race?', in the *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 64, No. 3, Summer 2011, pp. 31-60.

⁴³ On Japan's re-emergence as an increasingly 'normal' country, see: Christopher W. Hughes, 'Japan's Remilitarisation', *Adelphi Paper No. 403*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008 and Alessio Patalano, 'Japan's Maritime Strategy: The Island Nation Model', in *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 2, April-May 2011, pp. 82-89.

undertaken in 2009, even came close to naming China as a potential threat and recommended the doubling of the Royal Australian Navy's submarine fleet, the construction of eight new frigates and the acquisition of a new strategic sea-lift ship, to complement the new Canberra class. This is modelled off Spain's Juan Carlos I, and will come into operation late this decade.⁴⁴ Finally, never too far away, even during times of austerity, is Russia: Moscow lacks the power it once had during Soviet times, but is still a relatively capable militarily, at least within its own backyard. Russia plans to modernise and greatly amplify its military forces over the next decade, including almost €500 billion of investment in new equipment.⁴⁵ Whether or not it will be able to meet those commitments will depend on the expansion of its economy, and – given its reliance on energy exports – the price of various fuels. However, Russia has recently purchased two 'Mistral' class helicopter carriers from France, which it plans to deploy in Vladivostok to give it an extended presence in the Pacific region, re-assert its sovereignty over the Kuril Islands, which are claimed by Japan, and re-establish itself vis-à-vis China and the United States.⁴⁶

4.2 Will the global pax Americana fade?

The role played over the past six decades by the United States in the North Atlantic region may be altered by these ongoing geopolitical changes. The re-emergence and rise of geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific region will both complicate and concentrate Washington's attention, much as the rise of Germany focused London's attention during the early years of the twentieth century. As James Holmes, Andrew Winner and Toshi Yoshihara put it:

[The] Royal Navy ruled the waves for much of the nineteenth century, only to see its margin of dominance dwindle with the rise of industrious, sea-power-minded challengers. Unable to sustain its vaunted "Two-Power Rule", which mandated keeping up a Royal Navy bigger than the combined fleets of the next two most powerful rivals, Britain struck diplomatic bargains with two of the new contenders, the United States and Japan. These arrangements allowed the Royal Navy to pull back from Asian and

⁴⁴ Department of Defence (Australia), 'Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030', Australian Defence White Paper, Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009, p. 70-71 and p. 73.

⁴⁵ See: Pavel Felgenhauer, 'Voters Will Pay for a Military Buildup After Electing Putin', Eurasian Daily Monitor, Vol. 8, No. 213, 17th November 2011.

⁴⁶ See: 'Japan, Russia and the Kuril Islands', Stratfor, 3rd February 2011 – available at: <<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20110203-japan-russia-and-kuril-islands>> [accessed 10th November 2011] and Pavel Felgenhauer, 'Russian Military Build-up in the Pacific May Not be Aimed at Japan', Eurasian Daily Monitor, Vol. 8, No. 34, 17th February 2011.

American waters, concentrating on the third contender, Imperial Germany, whose shipwrights were bolting together a High Seas Fleet across the North Sea.⁴⁷

Indeed, the British experience between 1890 and 1910 may be a good analogy for today. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Royal Navy reigned supreme on the seven seas; it defended Britain's colonies and dominions; enforced the 'Monroe Doctrine' for the United States; and kept the world's maritime communication lines open and telegraph cables safe.⁴⁸ However, the emergence of Germany's High Seas Fleet was perceived by the British to be a direct challenge to their maritime primacy – and in their own home waters. This resulted in Britain's global retreat: firstly, the Royal Navy withdrew its forwardly deployed naval assets from around the world to concentrate them in the North Sea at a new naval base in Scapa Flow; secondly, the British forged closer relations with countries they felt they could trust, including France in Europe; Japan in East Asia; and the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

Of course, the geopolitical context has changed since the early 1900s; and yet, with the rise of large countries over the last two decades, the United States is finding itself in a similar situation to Edwardian Britain. With numerous commitments in every continent and sea, American power is being pulled in many directions simultaneously. This was not so much of a problem during the 'unipolar moment' of the 1990s, when the United States' economy was growing rapidly and when no large competitor could challenge Washington's supremacy.⁴⁹ But it is becoming a concern for Americans today – not least after the re-emergence of large powers in Asia, a series of messy wars in the Middle East, the rise of a 'health-industrial' complex in the United States itself, and a global financial crisis during 2008.⁵⁰ What is more, as Asia becomes more industrially and politically important than Europe to the United States, Washington's geostrategic concentration will undoubtedly alter as a result, that is, it will move away from the North Atlantic, and towards the Indo-Pacific.⁵¹ This is compounded by the fact

⁴⁷ James Holmes, Andrew C. Winner and Toshi Yoshihara, *Indian Naval Strategy in the Twenty-first Century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 3.

⁴⁸ On the British enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine, see: Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), p. 229.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of United States' power after the Cold War, and from different perspectives, see: Charles Krauthammer, 'The Unipolar Moment', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1, 1990/1991, pp. 23-33 and G. John Ikenberry, 'American power and the empire of capitalist democracy', in the *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 5, 2001, pp. 191-212.

⁵⁰ On the decline of American power, see: Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2004); Christopher Lane, 'The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment', in *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Autumn 2006, pp. 7-41; Michael Cox, 'Is the United States in Decline Again? An Essay', in *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 4, July 2007, pp. 643-653; and James Rogers, 'The suicide of the West?', *European Geostrategy*, 10th August 2011 – available at: <<http://europeangeostrategy.ideasononeurope.eu/2011/08/10/the-suicide-of-the-west/>> [accessed 10th August 2011].

⁵¹ See: Barack Obama, Speech to the Parliament of Australia, 17th November 2011 and Hillary Clinton, 'America's Pacific Century', *Foreign Policy*, November 2011. See also: Daniel Deudney, James Goldgeier, Steffen Kern, Soo Yeon

that Europeans have allowed their armed forces to entropy, meaning that countries like Japan, South Korea and Australia are now starting to become more important to the Americans.⁵² And Europeans should be aware: depending on how quickly countries such as China, India and Russia continue to grow, Washington's shift in focus could accelerate even faster.

Kim, Hanns W. Maull and Iskander Rehman, *Global Shift: How the West Should Respond to the Rise of China*, Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, 2011.

⁵² On this matter, there is much speculation about the future of the relationship between the United States and Australia. Due to Australia's location, just outside the intersection of the Indian and Pacific oceans, it has been described as moving from 'down under' to 'top-centre' in American geostrategic thinking. See: Iskander Rehman, 'From "Down Under" to "Top Centre": Australia, the United States, and this century's special relationship', Paper Series, Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, 2011. Indeed, in November 2011, Canberra agreed to host United States' warships and aeroplanes, as well as 2,500 marines for six months in every year in its Northern Territories. See: Ben Packham, '2,500 US marines on Australian soil to increase defence ties', in *The Australian*, 17th November 2011.

5 Implications for the European Union

The European Union and the Atlantic Alliance have always been entwined with one another; as argued in the introductory section, in the 1940s, the Atlantic Alliance was conceived as a geopolitical framework to keep North American and British-French power bound together for the mutual benefit of all; to institutionalise British, French and American power on the European continent after the defeat of the Third Reich; to keep potentially revanchist powers pressed down; and to keep hostile enemies out.⁵³ The alliance also had another mission: to provide an security umbrella for the protection of smaller countries, who looked to the victorious allies for help in rebuilding their shattered societies, and integrating their economies with one another. Having achieved all of those aims, the Atlantic Alliance has proven its worth: from the early 1950s to well into the 2000s, not only was it by far the most powerful and important military organisation in the world, for it was also the midwife to European integration.⁵⁴ This latter point cannot be made too strongly: any alteration in the geopolitical balance underpinning the alliance, a consequence of changing priorities among the major members, will have implications for the European Union – and they may not all be necessarily negative.

By 2021 – just ten years from now – the world may look very different than it does today. So long as China continues to rise, it is almost certain that Beijing will seek greater leverage and autonomy in the Far East and the Indian Ocean, as well as Central Asia and the Middle East. Traditional geopolitics may strike back with a vengeance, making the threat from chaos look relatively mild in comparison; after all, during the Cold War, the members of the Atlantic Alliance were still confronted by cross-sector threats, it is just that they were seen as a relatively less important threat than that they are today. Back then, Soviet Russia was under the control of a dreary regime, which had the capacity – and the will – to erase entire European cities from the map with the flick of a few switches, and within less than an hour. The threat from the Irish Republican Army; Marxist-inspired revolutionaries like the Baader-Meinhof group; and other forms of chaos, paled in comparison. In the same vein, the threats

⁵³ It is interesting to note that the country most wedded to the Atlantic Alliance is of course the United Kingdom. For Britain, the Atlantic Alliance serves two vital functions: firstly, to keep the formidable industrial and military resources of North America locked in support of British interests in Europe; which are, secondly, to maintain a security system on the European mainland that is stable and orderly – for the minimum possible price. Once shorn of their empire, the British soon realised that they needed to find a way to ‘multiply’ their power in order to play their traditional role of ‘offshore balancer’ in Europe; bringing in American power allowed them to do that.

⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that the country most wedded to the Atlantic Alliance is of course the United Kingdom. For Britain, the Atlantic Alliance serves two vital functions: firstly, to keep the formidable industrial and military resources of North America locked in support of British interests in Europe; which are, secondly, to maintain a security system on the European mainland that is stable and orderly – for the minimum possible price. Shorn of their empire, the British know that they need to find a way to ‘multiply’ their power in order to play their traditional role of ‘offshore balancer’ in Europe; bringing in American power allows them to do that.

that exist today may pale in comparison to those in the future. In a worst-case scenario, by 2021, at least two and maybe three other countries – perhaps India, Russia, and Brazil – will be jostling alongside the United States, China and the European powers for raw materials, political influence and prestige. They will be joined by smaller but still highly capable countries like Japan, South Korea, Australia and Indonesia. What is more, this potential competition could be made all the more dangerous by the mounting pressure on dwindling resources or the growing impact of anthropogenic climate change. The international system may even come to resemble that of the early twentieth century – that is, a cut-throat multipolar system – or a multi-dimensional Cold War, where several great powers compete against the others, which begin to crystallise into large opposing alliances. In such a world, the New Strategic Concept, and potentially, the Atlantic Alliance itself, will seem like almost hopelessly outdated relics from the past.

Such an unpleasant scenario may seem unlikely from this time and vantage point. Save a serious miscalculation on the part of one of the rising powers, a large global struggle or conflagration remains improbable. For all China's success, it is still in no position to confront the military and industrial power of the United States and its Asian allies, even if it wanted to; indeed, Chinese strategists have been busily analysing the mistakes made by Wilhelminian Germany during the Edwardian era, when Berlin sought to challenge British maritime primacy, even though it lacked the means to do so. Likewise, while Moscow's monopoly over many European countries' energy supplies and infrastructure has gone unchallenged – and has even grown – Russia is still a much-reduced country, in no position to confront the Atlantic Alliance in military terms. Meanwhile, India has come to view the Western democracies – especially the United States – as potential allies in a looming struggle with China; this is a considerable reversal in New Delhi's perspective, it perceived them as potential opponents for much of the Cold War. Nevertheless, the geopolitical changes now underway – even if they are less severe – and the resulting multipolar system, will reduce the relative power of the United States, meaning that it is highly likely that the international environment will become more volatile and unpredictable. While it can sometimes feel overbearing, the United States' politico-military hegemony provides the world with many, many benefits – often known as international 'public goods' in the 'global commons'.⁵⁵ The United States nuclear arsenal; its 'power projection' apparatus and overseas military stations; and – critically – the institutionalisation of American power through alliances like the Atlantic Alliance, as well as bilateral agreements with other countries like Japan, South Korea and Australia; greatly reduces the likelihood of conflict, by deterring against foreign aggression and constituting an institutionalised system of global security.

⁵⁵ Barry Posen, 'Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of US Hegemony', in *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Summer 2003, pp. 5-46.

Europeans have – and continue to – benefit greatly from this umbrella, and have helped a great deal to hold it up. Some European countries continue to do so. Yet, since the end of the Cold War, others have decided to let go of the umbrella, cut their military budgets and pour the money into tax breaks and/or welfare programmes, leaving others hold it up for them. Consequentially, some members of the alliance have come to free-ride their partners (and especially the United States) who remain willing to support the system. That only four of the Atlantic Alliance’s European members (the United Kingdom, France, Greece and tiny Albania) currently spend the agreed benchmark of two percent of their national incomes on their armed forces is a damning indictment of the strategic irrelevance and de-militarisation of most European societies.⁵⁶ This is an undesirable state of affairs. For two main reasons, it is self-harming for Europeans to leave the United States to shoulder a disproportionate share of the burden of defending and securing the geopolitical interests of the North Atlantic area: firstly, as it is dispersed too widely and drawn away from areas where it could be used more effectively to help provide order and structure to international politics, which Europeans require for the pursuit of their commercial interests, American power gets sapped; secondly, an over-reliance on American power contributes to the decline of Europeans’ own military doctrines and capabilities.

A running theme throughout this report is that the geopolitical changes in the Indo-Pacific region are bound to draw the United States away from Europe and other regions of lesser significance to American political and economic interests. Although the United States has taken the lead in European conflicts in the past, such as the Wars of the Yugoslav Succession, these conflicts should now be seen more as discrepancies than the rule. During the 1990s, the United States was so powerful it could choose to intervene almost wherever and whenever it liked; and, with Cold War path dependencies still in play, many Americans still believed it was logical to remain involved in European affairs. Increasingly, however, this is no longer the case. This is because the United States, unlike France and United Kingdom, for example – the other two major military powers within the Atlantic Alliance – is a European power through design, not through default.⁵⁷ Due to the British Isles’ close proximity to the European mainland, and the fact that the British economy has become so heavily interwoven with the rest of the European Union’s, it can be taken for granted that Britain will remain at the heart of European security. For the United States, it cannot. Indeed, the rise of large foreign powers

⁵⁶ As the former American defence secretary stated in his valedictory speech: ‘The demilitarisation of Europe, where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it, has gone from a blessing in the twentieth century to an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the twenty-first. [...] Not only can real or perceived weakness be a temptation to miscalculation and aggression, but ... the resulting funding and capability shortfalls make it difficult to operate and fight together to confront shared threats.’ See: Robert Gates, Speech to the NATO Strategic Concept Seminar, Washington, DC: National Defence University, 23rd February 2010.

⁵⁷ Luis Simón and James Rogers, ‘The Return of European Geopolitics’, in *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 155, No. 3, June-July 2010, pp. 62-63.

and a thoroughly multipolar environment will almost certainly undermine American hegemony, forcing Washington to choose more selectively where it will and will not engage in pursuit of its interests.

Peaceful, prosperous Europe will not be at the top of the list. The recent intervention against the former regime of the late Colonel Gaddafi in Libya is a case in point: those Europeans (led by London and Paris) with the greatest strategic foresight quickly realised that they would look pitifully feeble if Tripoli was allowed to get away with mass-murdering civilians just a few hundred kilometres from the European coastline; equally, they knew that the resulting chaos would spill-over into their own backyard, much as it did during the Wars of the Yugoslav Succession; however, events in Libya would have little, if no, impact on the United States or Canada. It is no surprise then that the Americans did not become as involved in the British- and French-led intervention as they had in previous European conflicts. Indeed, London and Paris initially found Washington somewhat indifferent to their concerns, leaving them to drum up support for a military intervention at the United Nations by themselves. Although the United States eventually swung round into supporting Britain and France, it did not come to the front as it did twelve years earlier in Kosovo. The United States certainly provided some critical enabling apparatus like cruise missile-firing submarines and stealth bombers to silence Tripoli's air defences at the start of the allied offensive. It also provided satellite intelligence and tactical air support, which the British and French lack. However, as Ivo Daalder and James Stavridis show, the mainstay of the air-strikes were launched from British and French warplanes, with – between them – the Royal Air Force and the Armée de l'Air accounting for approximately sixty percent of all sorties flown by the alliance. During the Kosovo conflict, the United States Air Force conducted ninety percent of all air-strikes on Slobodan Milosevic's Serbian regime, which signifies a near role-reversal.⁵⁸

Does this really matter? One the one hand: no, for it is logical and right that Europeans should do more to tend their own garden, particularly when it is filled with weeds. One the other hand, though, it does matter, as it represents a divergence of interests on the part of the Atlantic Alliance's two halves – the product of the reassertion of differing logics of geography and changing interests. Unlike the United States, Europeans are surrounded by zones of chaos, where – for the moment – there is no large foreign power (other than perhaps Russia and Turkey) with the means to harm them. The United States, meanwhile, with two vast oceans on either side of it, is surrounded by very little chaos, and has an increasingly important role to play in the geopolitical structure and stability of East Asia, where it leads another alliance system that includes Australia, South Korea and Japan, among others. In this Indo-Pacific zone, at least two very large countries are rising fast, each keen to assert their own interests against the prevailing geopolitical order. And while the United States will continue to have interests in and around the European continent, these – by proximity – will always be far less

⁵⁸ See Ivo H. Daalder and James G. Stavridis, 'NATO's Success in Libya', in *The New York Times*, 31st October 2011.

important to Washington than they will be for Brussels, London, Paris, Madrid, Rome, and so on.

Thus, the Atlantic Alliance is at a radical turning point, uncertain of which way to turn. The latest New Strategic Concept is merely another incarnation of a string of similar concepts – in 1994 and 1999, respectively – which also tried to put the alliance on a new footing, also by focusing on cross-sector threats and expeditionary operations. And, like those before it, the New Strategic Concept will not live up to its expectations, because the existential threats that once presented themselves – and bound the alliance’s members together – no longer exist. Putting the Atlantic Alliance on a new footing will not be achieved through the articulation of any form of new security strategy. Some on both sides of the Atlantic will not mourn the alliance’s passing, arguing that it should just be left to rot or simply disbanded. Indeed, a growing number of Americans are beginning to ask why they should continue to foot the bill for an unworldly European pacifism, while some Europeans see the Atlantic Alliance as an obstacle to the generation of a common security and military policy at the European level.⁵⁹ Both groups are short-sighted and wrong: the alliance represents an enormous aggregation of strategic expertise and military capacity that has been accumulated over more than half a century. It is and should remain the umbilical cord that binds together the two main halves of democratic civilisation, a grand expression of Western power, cohesion, confidence and determination.

For it to survive the new geopolitics, the Atlantic Alliance needs to be both re-structured and re-founded. It therefore makes sense for Europeans – in particular – to begin re-thinking their role of the Atlantic Alliance in the twenty-first century. To some extent, some Europeans already have. It should be no surprise that France and the United Kingdom – as the two strongest European military powers – have already begun to seek closer political and military relations with one another, in the form of the renewal of the British-French alliance in November 2010. Given their proximity and similar interests, Britain and France will likely continue to work closely with one another to uphold each other’s position. They have already committed themselves to sharing aircraft carriers; forming a joint expeditionary force; researching new unmanned weaponry; and collaborating on nuclear matters, among several other areas of co-operation.⁶⁰ How far this will actually go is hard to see; however, there are very deep historical connexions between the two nations – proposals were once made on not one but two occasions for their integration into a single state – and fiscal imperatives will continue to assert themselves.⁶¹ However, with only 150 million people between them by

⁵⁹ See, for example: Andrew Bacevich, *Let Europe Be Europe*, in *Foreign Policy*, March-April 2010.

⁶⁰ See: Luis Simón and James Rogers, ‘The New Franco-British Entente and European Defence: Implications for Spain’, OPEX Memorandum No. 151/2010, Madrid: Alternatives Foundation, 10th November 2010.

⁶¹ Serious discussions were held about the permanent union of France and the United Kingdom between British and French ministers in 1940 and 1956, respectively. See: Avi Shlaim, ‘Prelude to Downfall: The British Offer of Union to France, June 1940’, in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No. 9, July 1974, pp. 27-63 and Mike Thomson,

2030, they will still not have sufficient mass to engage as an equal alongside the other great powers of tomorrow, some of which may have over six times their population and resource endowment.

With American power moving out of Europe, European power needs to move back in – or else, it might be replaced with Russian power, or beyond that, Chinese power – or even, a descent into a multipolar Europe, like before the Second World War.⁶² This is where the European Union comes in. Since the early 1950s, European integration has taken place under the Atlantic Alliance's wing; in many ways, the two organisations were two sides of the same coin – one could not function without the other. The Atlantic Alliance provided military defence from both internal and external threats, including a stable and secure environment for the European Community to breath, grow and flourish; the European Community then empowered its Member States, providing them with the economic and industrial might – as well as deep political connexions – to support the wider aims of the Atlantic Alliance, in a mutually reinforcing relationship. With the emergence of a new geopolitics, however, this symbiosis could break down. In such a world, medium-sized European countries like Spain have two options: they could try to hobble along as best they can, or they could seek to integrate themselves into the British-French effort, or even – maybe simultaneously – they could attempt to strengthen the European Union as a military power, safe in the knowledge that with over half a billion people and a large proportion of the planet's annual economic and industrial yield, it would almost certainly have the means to sit at the highest tables of world affairs.

In fact, like it or not, maintaining political leverage in the new multipolar world will depend in no small part on military power. As Nick Witney puts it:

[The] prevailing European disposition to downplay the importance of defence, while not irrational, is dangerously short-sighted. Europe may indeed be unprecedentedly free from any plausible threat of armed aggression...But the real challenge to the security and prosperity of Europe's peoples is to continue to count – to avoid being marginalised in a world where newer and more hard-nosed powers make the rules and assert their interests and values while Europe retreats into retirement. The end of the Western ascendancy requires Europeans to compete, as they have not had to do for many decades, in the new multiplayer global environment – and to compete with all the assets at their disposal. Seen in this light, European armed forces should be viewed less as counters to implausible "threats" than as instruments of statecraft...[A] major effort is now required to get Europeans to reassess their strategic environment; reconsider

'When Britain and France nearly married', BBC News, 15th January 2007 – available at: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6261885.stm>> [accessed 10th November 2011].

⁶² See: James Rogers and Luis Simón, 'The Return of European Geopolitics', June-July 2010 and Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, *The Specre of a Multipolar Europe*, London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2010.

the role that hard power should play in it; and re-energise their efforts to co-operate through their common defence and security policy.⁶³

Empowering the European Union, through a renewed Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy, which puts geopolitical matters at its core, will keep Europeans on the top tables of world politics. Europeans must focus on constructing strong central institutions and the political will necessary to underpin the regeneration of many of their lost military capabilities – even during times of austerity – in order to provide leadership and security in the wider European Neighbourhood and the surrounding maritime zones. This will contribute to a durable peace, a European political and economic order, which serves the interests of European citizens, constitutional democracy and the common good. Therefore, strengthening the European Union does not necessarily mean weakening the Atlantic Alliance. In fact, by boosting the European component of the alliance, both should continue to prosper. Meanwhile, the power of the United States would be freed for deployment in more volatile regions in other parts of the world, where rising nations might otherwise – if left unconstrained by a responsible power – seek to cause disruption, which, in a globalised world, would almost certainly have consequences for both European and North American security and prosperity alike. Expecting the United States to provide security for Europeans as it takes on more pressing and important interests, and when Europeans have the means to protect themselves, is both selfish and wrong. Without a stronger European component, the Atlantic Alliance will surely wilt.

⁶³ Nick Witney, How to stop the de-militarisation of Europe, London: European Council on Foreign Relations, November 2011, p. 7.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for the shorter-term

1. Within the European Neighbourhood, particularly the southern and south-eastern sectors, the prescriptions of the New Strategic Concept, like those of the European Security Strategy, remain especially valid. Cross-sector threats (i.e. chaos) will remain the biggest challenge for both Spain and the European Union for years to come, made all the more potent by the stale autocratic regimes that continue to plague the region.⁶⁴ Spain – sharing a border with the southern neighbourhood – and fielding one of the most powerful military forces in the Mediterranean, should be more active in monitoring events and potential threats. And, most importantly of all, a strategic ‘power vacuum’ must not be allowed to emerge in North Africa and the Levant. Unless Europeans can step in to the breach, a power vacuum will be the logical outcome of an American withdrawal. Madrid should therefore begin thinking about how to re-structure the neighbourhood, and about how the European Union could play a similar role to the United States: for example, how could European security guarantees be set up for friendly countries in the region? How would this fit in with the European Union’s traditional emphasis on the promotion of commercial activity and the provision of development aid?⁶⁵ What sort of crises are likely in the future and what sort of military capabilities will Spain and other Europeans need to address them? Accordingly, Madrid should continue to push for a strategic defence review at the European level in order to try and better ascertain these requirements. Ideally, this would be completed under the European Union’s Common Security and Defence Policy, with American consultation. However, should this not be possible at the European level, Spain should seek a similar study with Britain, France and Italy, the other three major European powers in the Mediterranean.

2. The so-called ‘Arab Spring’ took almost everyone by surprise. The Libya conflict showed that Europeans still need robust military forces to be able to apply pressure on obstinate regimes. Madrid should therefore think harder about the kind of military forces it wants to field. Spain is one of the largest members of both the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance, but it often seems to punch under its weight – and by a considerable margin. In part, this is because Spain

⁶⁴ These regimes cannot be disentangled from the rise of Islamist extremism over the past thirty years. Authoritarian regimes that suffocate political deliberation and stifle progressive change increase disenfranchisement and crush hope, thereby creating the conditions for predatory extremism to take root.

⁶⁵ For a geopolitical perspective on Europeans’ requirement to be better able to shape the southern and eastern Neighbourhoods, see: James Rogers, ‘A new geography of European power?’, January 2011.

does not currently come close to meeting the Atlantic Alliance's benchmark of contributing two percent of gross domestic product to its armed forces. Remedying this discrepancy should be given a higher priority, especially given recent developments in the southern neighbourhood. Indeed, if Spain wants to influence the future and make its voice heard, and operate within a powerful system of alliances, it will have to show that it is willing to remain a capable power and not free-ride off its allies. That means an increase in military spending and advocacy of a stronger European Union and Common Security and Defence Policy to offset military inefficiencies and undertake autonomous military operations within the wider European Neighbourhood when the Atlantic Alliance cannot or will not become involved. In particular, the British- and French-led operation in Libya showed that Europeans lack inexpensive tactical airpower with long endurance such as that provided by the Americans' A10 Warthog aeroplane (armed with a Gatling gun), which can hover over theatres of operation for lengthy periods and 'zap' enemy forces. Spain could take the lead in the development or acquisition of such aerial capabilities, which could then be used in support of future European operations. This would give Madrid potential influence over future missions, while creating a 'niche' capability on which other Europeans would depend. Likewise, the operation left Europeans heavily reliant on American long-range cruise missiles to silence Libya's air defence systems; among all European countries, only Britain has access to such technology. Spain should renew its interest in this vital weaponry for its Álvaro de Bazán class of frigates, which could then work alongside British submarines to put an over-reliance on the Americans to an end. Alternatively, or simultaneously, Madrid should suggest the development of an intercontinental and unmanned strike aircraft, perhaps with Britain and France, which would provide Europeans with further means to hit opponents within their wider neighbourhood region.

3. Given their strategic nuclear forces and expeditionary reach, the future of European military power hangs around ever-closer co-operation between France and the United Kingdom. Given their influence in military matters, Spain should find ways to plug itself in to a more tightly integrated British-French military capability as it takes shape in the second decade of the twenty-first century, not least because of the European demographic changes underway could – by 2050 – leave Britain and France with the largest European populations.⁶⁶ Spain should adopt a two-track approach in this regard: firstly, to work with France to maintain a strong European emphasis on the British-French agreements; second, to convince the British that European military integration actually empowers the Atlantic Alliance, rather than undermining it, by providing greater military capabilities; and third, to work with both countries to maintain an autonomous and capacious European military-industrial base. However, while Spain should court its northern allies, it should also engage with other European Union Member States like

⁶⁶ See: James Rogers, 'The geopolitics of European demography', *European Geostrategy*, 13th July 2011 – available at: <<http://europeangeostrategy.ideasoneurope.eu/2011/07/13/the-geopolitics-of-european-demography/>> [accessed 13th July 2011].

Sweden and Poland to encourage the British and French to renew their interest in 'permanent structured co-operation' at the European level, with the ultimate aim of rekindling the Common Security and Defence Policy – again, perhaps via a European strategic defence review. Spain's size and resources; its critical position at the Atlantic gateway to the Mediterranean and North Africa; and its role in South America, means that it matters a great deal to any future European military effort.⁶⁷ Madrid should draw attention to these attributes and use them to empower itself, its European partners and the European Union, in a mutually reinforcing relationship.

6.2 Recommendations for the longer-term

1. As it stands, the New Strategic Concept, like the European Security Strategy and its Implementation Report, is top-heavy in emphasising the threat from chaos (i.e. cross-sector threats). The 'Arab Spring' has possibly entrenched this thinking; unlike North Americans, Europeans are, and will probably remain, due to geography, surrounded by zones of seemingly endless chaos. However, in the longer term, cross-sector threats must not distract Europeans from more traditional strategic issues. With the rise of large new economic and military powers like China and India – and behind them, South Korea, Brazil and Indonesia – as well as the re-emergence of countries like Japan and Russia, classical geopolitics will almost certainly strike back over the next decade, particularly in a world of dwindling resources. Through the European Union, Spain should encourage its allies to convene a geopolitical working group to analyse and make a series of projections with regard to the changing international balance of power, which might then be used to focus policy. For example, what will the world look like if China and India continue to grow economically for the next ten to fifteen years? How might the United States be forced to refocus its military and strategic assets to meet the challenge of a far stronger and more assertive China, particularly in East Asia? How will this affect Europeans, as American forces and capabilities – and political attention – are drawn away from the European continent in order to support Washington's non-NATO allies elsewhere? Alternatively, how might the entrapment of American power in Europe lead to disorder in other regions, and ultimately compromise European security and prosperity via global disorder? And if the Atlantic Alliance decays, what will replace its function as midwife to European integration, viz. the European Union?

2. Madrid must be willing to 'think beyond' the Atlantic Alliance, at least in its current incarnation. This does not mean that the alliance should be disbanded; indeed, far from it.

⁶⁷ See: Luis Simón, *Geopolitical Change and its Impact upon Spain: Towards a Maritime Iberian Geostrategy*, Madrid: Alternatives Foundation, Forthcoming 2012.

Rather, Spain should encourage new thinking about how the alliance can be sustained well into the twenty-first century, as a structure to pursue and cement the critical triangular partnership between Europeans (through the European Union), the United States and Canada – the triad of Western civilisation. This could mean the simultaneous pursuit of five entwined initiatives:

- a. Spain should do everything it can to try and keep the European region ‘maritime’, which best reflects Spain’s own geopolitical predilection and the Atlantic Alliance’s original mission. This is only possible by maintaining the European centre of gravity on the western fringes of the continent. All attempts to circumvent either the Atlantic Alliance or the European Union as the dominant institutional frameworks within the wider European region should be vigorously resisted. Any new push by Russia (and, potentially, Germany and Italy) for some kind of new European ‘security architecture’ should be robustly rejected; moving Europe’s centre of gravity to the east would jeopardise Spain’s own position and interests, by moving it to the periphery.
- b. Madrid should support efforts to create a European Union Joint Military Headquarters to help generate a more effective and deeply-rooted European geopolitical and strategic culture, while creating the means for Europeans to undertake larger military operations by themselves, when the United States chooses not to be involved.
- c. Spain should encourage all European Union Member States that are not currently members of the Atlantic Alliance to join, putting an end to imagined ‘non-alignment’ and supposed ‘neutrality’ on the part of certain countries.
- d. Spain should draw attention to the fact that there is little European input into the development of the United States’ ballistic missile defence system. Europeans should not be passive bystanders in the development of this system, but should be actively involved – as equals.
- e. In the longer term, Madrid should promote the idea that the European Union should become a member of the alliance itself, either in full or as an observer. This could work in tandem with the generation of an autonomous European bloc within the alliance – via the European Union – with a fully-integrated foreign, security and military policy. This would provide Europeans with the aggregated power, means and capabilities to exert their preferences in both the southern and eastern sectors of the wider European Neighbourhood, including the Middle East and the western Indian Ocean. In turn, this would strengthen and renew the Atlantic Alliance, by facilitating a geopolitical division of labour, with the European Union providing geostrategic structure over the western sector of Eurasia, and the United States over the eastern sector – i.e. the Asia-Pacific region.