

by Sally McNamara

Ivo Daalder, a former presidential campaign adviser to Barack Obama, was sworn in today as United States Ambassador to NATO, replacing career diplomat Kurt Volker. Mr. Daalder will be responsible for handling America's most important multilateral alliance at a time when it is facing serious challenges including:

- * A resurgent Russia;
- * Inequitable burden sharing of the mission in Afghanistan;

- * Negotiating a new Strategic Concept; and
- * The formulation of a new NATO-EU relationship.

Reforming and revitalizing NATO will be a massive undertaking requiring American leadership and an Administration committed to a NATO-first agenda. NATO must confront existing challenges in Afghanistan as well as future threats such as cyberterrorism and ballistic missile proliferation. It must also re-energize NATO's Open Door Policy and continue its successful enlargement program. Above all, the United States must uphold the primacy of NATO in Europe's security architecture.

In order to achieve these aims, Ambassador Daalder should adopt the following principles:

Recommendation #1: Uphold the Primacy of NATO in the Transatlantic Security Architecture

Traditionally, NATO has been the primary alliance architecture in which to discuss transatlantic security. However, the development of the EU's Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and the Obama Administration's endorsement of a separate and independent Europe-only military identity now threaten this primacy.

Since the creation of a separate European defense identity in 1998, overall European defense spending, military capabilities, and deployable manpower have decreased, creating fierce competition for limited resources. The ESDP has provided NATO with little or no valuable complementarity, and serious questions remain about the EU's motivation in pursuing a military identity. The United States should reassess the structural and organizational relationship between the EU and NATO, including the purpose and value of pursuing further integration.

Ambassador Daalder should establish the following principles with regards to NATO-EU relations:

- * NATO's primacy in the transatlantic security alliance is supreme;
- * The EU should be a civilian complement to NATO rather than a separate military identity;
- * There should be no duplication of NATO assets, including any separate EU operational planning and command capabilities;
- * NATO must maintain at least one Supreme Command in the United States;
- * NATO must reserve all resources exclusively for NATO missions; and
- * The assets and resources for exclusively ESDP missions must be provided in addition to--not instead of--the members' contributions to NATO.

Recommendation #2: Pursue a NATO-First Agenda

Ambassador Daalder should establish a NATO-first agenda. Previously, Daalder has advocated an extreme pro-EU integration position and even called for anti-terrorism cooperation to be moved from the bilateral to the supranational EU level. In a major policy paper in 2001, he called for the U.S. Administration to adopt a "Europe-First Policy," supporting EU integration over-and-above the prioritization of the NATO alliance.

As America's highest-profile diplomat within the alliance, it is important that NATO can be confident of Daalder's support and his prioritization of the alliance over all others, including the EU. He should also be wary of the law of unintended consequences when endorsing separate EU defense and security arrangements.

For example, next weekend, the EU will hold a summit with Russia focusing on "hard security" issues. This summit will take place in the wake of Moscow's recently unveiled National Security Strategy, which identified the United States and NATO as major threats to global security and Russian military interests. Considering this context alone, the EU should not be negotiating with Russia on any upgrading of security relations. However, the political blessing imparted to the ESDP and the Administration's support of an EU-first policy severely lessens its ability to influence these matters.

Ambassador Daalder must take action to demonstrate to Europe that NATO remains at the heart of the transatlantic alliance and that the United States will not tolerate being sidelined by Moscow or Brussels.

Recommendation #3: Support NATO Enlargement

Specifically (1) the Accession of Macedonia in Time for the 2010/11 Lisbon Summit, and (2) the immediate accession of Georgia and Ukraine to NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP).

At the April 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl summit, NATO welcomed Albania and Croatia as the 27th and 28th members of the alliance. Ambassador Daalder has described NATO enlargement as

"a highly successful policy over the decades," which has contributed to a "peaceful, united and democratic continent." NATO expansion has been a major success story for the alliance and has played a crucial role in stabilizing and reforming large parts of Europe that were under Soviet domination. Withdrawing the prospect of NATO accession from aspiring countries will jeopardize the West's post-Cold War gains and betray the founding principles of NATO.

NATO enlargement has traditionally enjoyed strong bipartisan support in the United States, and the Obama Administration should rally congressional support for NATO's Open Door Policy, specifically supporting:

- * Macedonia's full accession to NATO; and
- * The extension of MAP to Georgia and Ukraine at the earliest opportunity.

Macedonia. Like Croatia and Albania, Macedonia completed all the cycles of its MAP, but it was refused a full invitation to the alliance after Greece objected due to a bilateral name dispute. Bilateral disputes have traditionally been resolved outside of the alliance (such as Slovenia's border dispute with Croatia) so that one member alone does not block the consensus of the others. However, Athens has been uncompromising, which is all the more galling considering that Macedonia currently has more troops serving under NATO in Afghanistan than does Greece. Ambassador Daalder should use the U.S.'s diplomatic channels, in concert with his colleagues in Athens, to complete Macedonia's accession to NATO in time for the alliance's 61st summit.

Georgia and Ukraine. At the 2008 Bucharest summit, NATO accepted the principle that Georgia and Ukraine would one day accede to NATO but failed to offer them MAPs for fear of a Russian backlash. Ambassador Daalder should make it a priority to accelerate Georgia and Ukraine into MAP.

The accession of Georgia and Ukraine into MAP provides a key test case for the Obama Administration's policy of resetting Russian relations, as it will gauge whether Moscow is genuinely interested in recalibrating its relationship with the United States or if it is merely interested in accumulating policy gains from Washington. Further, by inviting Tbilisi and Kiev into MAP, NATO will send Moscow the message that it will not tolerate Russia's "zone of privileged interest" policy, which Moscow believes entitles it to interfere, militarily and politically, in the affairs of its border states.[

Recommendation #4: Support NATO's Bucharest Declaration and the Communiqué of December 2008

The NATO foreign ministers' communiqué of December 2008 recognizes "the substantial contribution to the protection of allies from long-range ballistic missiles to be provided by the planned deployment of European-based United States missile defence assets."

At the Bucharest summit in April 2008, NATO leaders endorsed U.S. plans for elements of its missile defense system to be based in Poland and the Czech Republic and agreed to explore

ways to link the U.S. system "with current NATO missile defence efforts ... to ensure that it would be an integral part of any future NATO-wide missile defence architecture." This "third site" missile defense deployment of 10 interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic was again supported by the alliance at the Foreign Ministers Summit in December 2008.

However, prevarication on the issue of missile defense by the Obama Administration has resulted in no progress being made by NATO on an alliance-wide system, with the third site deployment also looking to be in jeopardy. In fact, speaking in Prague following the Strasbourg-Kehl summit, President Obama gave a keynote speech focusing on complete nuclear disarmament whereby missile defenses would be unnecessary.

In the absence of U.S. leadership on missile defense and mixed messages regarding its necessity, NATO has produced an agenda for inaction. The Strasbourg-Kehl declaration stated that "additional work is still required" before NATO can advance its position on missile defense and that this issue will not be considered until the next summit in 2010-11. It is clear that the alliance is waiting on direction from the United States and that American abandonment of the third site installations will eradicate the alliance's willingness to commit to a layered missile defense program. Therefore, Ambassador Daalder must support both the third site deployment and immediate exploration of an alliance-wide missile defense system.

Recommendation #5: Ask All Members to Contribute More Combat Troops to the Mission in Afghanistan

Ambassador Daalder has repeatedly criticized NATO members for failing to provide enough troops for the mission in Afghanistan as well as cumbersome operational caveats that hamper the execution of allied missions. For example, in 2006 Daalder said: "[in many cases the very allies who bitterly complained about the U.S. president's unilateralism only a short time ago have been reluctant to do their part in helping multilateralism succeed."

The U.S. Administration's new "surge" strategy in Afghanistan did not receive the much-needed additional commitment of combat troops from NATO's Continental allies at the Strasbourg-Kehl summit. Only Britain pledged more combat troops in a sustained deployment: Up to 1,000 British soldiers will join the 8,300 others already serving, largely in the south of Afghanistan, along side the 21,000 additional U.S. troops and trainers that President Obama has already begun deploying. In total, European nations committed just 5,000 troops and trainers, 3,000 of whom will deploy solely for the August election in Afghanistan.

The majority of Continental European allies will therefore continue to hobble their military commitments to Afghanistan with the highly restrictive national caveats that keep their deployments out of harm's way. These powers also cannot claim to have undertaken successful civilian reconstruction efforts as an alternative to providing combat troops: Embedded Training Teams, Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams, and Police Mentoring Teams are all understaffed.

Ambassador Daalder should decry the effective creation of a two-tiered alliance within NATO--naming names where necessary--and advocate more equitable burden-sharing

arrangements for NATO's military and civilian campaigns in Afghanistan. He should also harness President Obama's personal popularity and credibility among the European allies to leverage additional combat commitments to the mission, as well as greater long-term resources for the new "surge" strategy.

Putting NATO First

Ivo Daalder described NATO as "the most successful multilateral organization the world has ever known." However, he has also called for the promotion of an EU defense identity at NATO's expense. As U.S. ambassador to NATO, Daalder cannot afford to be so equivocal in the future: In terms of transatlantic security and America's national interest, he must put NATO first.

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