

The

**NATO RESPONSE  
FORCE**

United States' final attempt to keep  
the Alliance alive?

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## List with abbreviations

<b>ACT</b>	Allied Command Control
<b>AIV</b>	Advisory Council on International Affairs
<b>CFSP</b>	Common Foreign and Security Policy
<b>CJTF</b>	Combined Joint Task Force
<b>C4ISR</b>	Command Control Communications Computing Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance system
<b>DCI</b>	Defence Capabilities Initiative
<b>ECAP</b>	European Capabilities Action Plan
<b>ERRF</b>	European Rapid Reaction Force
<b>ESDI</b>	European Security and Defence Identity
<b>ESDP</b>	European Security and Defence Policy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ISAF</b>	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
<b>NAC</b>	North Atlantic Council
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>NCW</b>	Network Centric Warfare
<b>NRF</b>	NATO Response Force
<b>PCC</b>	Prague Capabilities Commitment
<b>RMA</b>	Revolution in Military Affairs
<b>SHAPE</b>	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
<b>SRF</b>	Spearhead Reaction Force
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNMIL</b>	United Nations Mission in Liberia
<b>US</b>	United States of America
<b>WMD</b>	Weapons of Mass Destruction

# Chapter 1 – Research design

The NATO Prague Summit of November 2002 was supposed to go down into the Alliance's history as the day that seven new member states were invited to begin accession talks to join the organisation. For many, the summit will also be remembered for something entirely different: the official creation of a new military force called the NATO Response Force (NRF). At the insistence of the United States, the leaders of NATO's 19 member states unanimously agreed to the formation of this robust, high-readiness force. Just two months earlier, the United States Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, had taken his colleagues completely by surprise when, several days before an informal defence ministerial meeting on 24-25 September 2002 in Warsaw, he outlined his plans for a new, rapidly deployable military force. At that meeting, Rumsfeld stressed that the United States wanted NATO to remain an actor of importance in the future. He warned his NATO colleagues by saying that "NATO would not have much to offer the world in the 21st century", unless it had a strong military capability, "ready to deploy in days or weeks instead of months or years" (Monaco and Baines, 2002:1). According to Rumsfeld, the new force would allow NATO to react in a quick and adequate manner to new types of security threats, in particular terrorism, thereby maintaining its relevance to the United States.

## § 1.1 NATO Response Force – an introduction<sup>1</sup>

NATO's new Response Force is a small, rapid reaction force that will eventually comprise of approximately 20,000 military personnel. It is a Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF), which means that sea, land and air forces are all united in the concept, whereby creating a fully interoperable and integrated capability. The force will consist of a brigade size land element including special operations forces, a joint naval task force and an air force capable of 200 sorties a day. The NRF will operate on a rotational basis, which means that military units from a multitude of countries will be 'on-call' for a six months period, after which they will be replaced by others. Troops assigned to the force will have to be fully certified before they can operate under a NRF flag. They will have to undergo intensive training for a period of approximately two months, in order to ensure a certain level of interoperability.

The NRF has been specifically created to deal with conflict situations at the higher end of the spectrum, which means the force will, in principle, serve as a so-called 'initial entry force'; an insertion force with real fighting capabilities. The force will serve as 'the first boots on the ground', "including in an environment where they might be faced with nuclear, biological and chemical threats" (Prague Summit Declaration, November 21, 2002). Its main tasks will consist of trying to restore stability and preparing the arrival of follow-up forces. The NRF can, however, also easily be deployed in low intensity conflicts, like non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian crises, crisis response operations (including peacekeeping), counter-terrorism operations and embargo operations. In any case the force will have to be ready for deployment within five days, and will have to be able to sustain itself for at least thirty days.

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<sup>1</sup> For this review extensive use has been made of the official NATO website, <http://www.nato.int>

On 16 July 2003, NATO member states met at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) in Casteau, Belgium, for an initial force generation conference. At this conference countries were asked to make a contribution to the NRF, specifying the type and amount of units they were prepared to make available to the force. At the moment, 17 member states have troops assigned to the NRF; the only countries not contributing are Iceland and Luxembourg. In principle the United States will also contribute to the force by assigning a certain amount of forces, but their contribution will only serve to complete European contributions. A strong dependence on US-capabilities is not acceptable to the United States. In their view a proper functioning of the NRF requires all countries to contribute equally. Later that year, on 15 October 2003, the NRF was officially declared operational during a short ceremony at one of the Alliance's headquarters in Brunssum, the Netherlands. For the moment, the NRF is a small prototype force that will be adjusted as NATO leaders go along understanding its missions and capabilities. NATO expects the force to be fully operational by the year 2006, but does at the same time "not rule out the possibility that the force will be deployed as soon as 2005" (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004).

At first sight, both the formation and implementation of the NRF seemed to have gone very smoothly. At a very short notice, the leaders of NATO's 19 member states managed to reach an agreement on the necessity of this military force, and at the NATO summit in Prague they unanimously voted in favour of the American proposal. This all happened so quickly that, even today, national governments and parliaments are still struggling to come to terms with what the creation of this force actually implies, and what it eventually will mean for them. The same goes for policy-makers working at defence departments, who still discover new implications every day. Besides that, many observers and analysts in the field are still surprised by the speed with which the creation of the NRF became a fact. If one takes this into account, it becomes all the more interesting to find out more about this force. In this thesis the NRF will be discussed in more detail. Reasons behind its creation, the objectives it has been set out to achieve and the obstacles it might possibly encounter, will all be dealt with. In the remainder of this chapter the methodological and theoretical approach to this thesis will be outlined.

## **§ 1.2 Research objectives, research questions and hypotheses**

A lot of things can stand in the way of a project or a policy becoming the success it intended to have. This is also true for the NRF. The aim of this thesis will be to discuss the creation of the NRF in more detail, whereby to find out whether the force will achieve its objectives, as formulated by NATO. But, what are its objectives? Are there factors that might stand in way of the force reaching its goals? And, what can be done to make the NRF becoming as successful as possible?

First, one has to know what are the objectives of the NRF. As was already mentioned above, the United States see in the NRF a means to keep NATO relevant to them. This is being thought of as the main objective behind the Prague Summit and the creation of the force. However, other objectives might be derived from this main goal. Initial research has in fact shown that other objectives are set out to serve the achievement of the main objective. These objectives have to be identified and discussed in more detail. Second, factors that might complicate the realisation of these objectives will have to be discussed in more detail and third, an answer has to be given to the question how to enhance the NRF's success.



The following research definition can be derived from this:

What objectives is NATO trying to achieve with the NATO Response Force? How do factors influence the achievement of these objectives? And, is it possible to adapt the NATO Response Force's form and content in such a way, as to enhance its chances for success in the future?

To get a better idea of what the NRF is, and in order to answer the research definition in a satisfying manner, one first has to answer the underlying questions. The questions are grouped per main question. This means that there are three groups that consist of questions related to one of the three main questions.

- **What objectives is NATO trying to achieve with the NATO Response Force?**
  - Where did the idea for the NRF originate?
  - What reasons lie behind the creation of the NRF?
  - What objectives did NATO set out for the NRF to achieve?
  
- **How do factors influence the achievement of these objectives?**
  - What factors might stand in the way of the NRF having the success NATO is hoping for? For this research five factors that might be of influence to the NRF have been defined and are mentioned in table 1.1 on the next page.
  
- **Is it possible to adapt the NATO Response Force's form and contents in such a way, as to enhance its chances for success in the future?**
  - Are there factors that might contribute to the NRF becoming a success (like the use of opt-outs, partial participation, integrating European plans in the concept, adapting or changing certain procedures)?
  - Does the future of NATO and the co-operation between the United States and Europe depend in any way on the success of the NRF?

As part of this thesis, the following hypotheses have been defined as well. They will be discussed and answered throughout the following chapters. In the conclusion paragraph a review will be given of the outcomes.

*Hypothesis 1:* The terrorist attacks that took place on '9/11' have been a decisive point in US foreign policy, which led to the creation of the NRF.

*Hypothesis 2:* Under the Bush Administration there has been a change in American foreign policy. This change entails a view towards international security that can also be found in the concept of the NRF. The Bush Administration can therefore be regarded as the decisive factor in the creation of the NRF.

*Hypothesis 3:* From a realist regime theoretical approach, the creation of the NRF can be explained as an attempt of the Bush Administration to allow NATO to continue to exist instrumentally inside the Pax Americana.

*Hypothesis 4:* Or, from a liberal regime theoretical approach, the creation of the NRF can be explained as an autonomous action from NATO to allow itself to continue to exist.

*Hypothesis 5:* A change of government will change the American attitude towards NATO and the NRF.

*Hypothesis 6:* The NRF has been created to block European defence plans.

Based on the relevant literature and the interviews conducted, five factors have been identified that could either influence the implementation of the NRF, or its successful deployment in the future. Some observers and people interviewed regard these factors to be problematic as far as the proper functioning of the force is concerned, others on the other hand argue that this will definitely not be the case. In this thesis these five factors will be discussed in more detail and a conclusion will be drawn as to whether these factors do, in fact, influence the implementation and deployment of the NRF. Note here that this list of possible factors of influence is certainly not exhaustive, however, for reasons of space and availability of information, only the five factors mentioned here will be discussed in more detail.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Related questions</b>	<b>Type of factor</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
1. The nature of the conflict in which the NRF will have to operate.	How does one decide in which conflict the NRF will be deployed? Do countries decide this together? What happens if one does not agree? How do you prevent the NRF from not being deployed at all?	Political	3
2. The American elections in November 2004.	How do national policies and coalitions effect the deployment of the NRF in the future?	Political	3
3. Decision making procedures related to the NRF within national parliaments and NATO.	How do these decision-making procedures work and effect the deployment of the NRF?	Political and Judicial	3
4. Necessary capabilities for the NRF.	Can all partners make enough means available? Can costs be paid for? Can the gap be closed technically speaking?	Political and technical	4
5. The existence of European defence plans.	Do these European defence plans not run in the way of the NRF. Can the NRF and the ERRF co-exist? Where does the loyalty lie of the European partners? Is it possible to build a European component in NATO and the NRF? What will happen to the thought of one European Defence?	Political and technical	5

Table 1.1

### § 1.3 International regime theory

In the vast literature on international relations attention is also paid to the concept of international regimes. Definitions explaining the concept are multiple, but their formulation is often similar. Krasner, one of the most influential neo-realist writers on the subject, defines international regimes as “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1993:2). Keohane and Nye use a somewhat similar formulation. They define regimes as “as sets of governing arrangements” comprising of “networks of rules, norms and procedures that regularise behaviour and control its effects” (Keohane and Nye, 1977:19). Young, to conclude, defines regimes as “social institutions”, that “govern the actions of those interested in specifiable activities”. According to Young regimes, like all other social institutions, are “recognised patterns of behaviour”. “Regimes may be more or less formally articulated, and they may or may not be accompanied by explicit organizational arrangement” (Young, 1993:93).

An international regime is clearly more than an international organisation. It also involves the use of international law and informal rules (Woerdman, 1999). NATO, for example, has to be regarded as an institutional arrangement (international institution), which is part of an international security regime that came into place shortly after the Second World War and was dominated by the Communist threat. In other words, those principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures that define the international security regime can be found, amongst other places, inside NATO.



Figure 1.1

For this thesis, the definition provided by Krasner will be used to serve as a guideline. According to Krasner a regime is more than a temporary agreement. Its purpose is to facilitate agreements through the institutionalisation of principles and norms, rules and decision-making procedures. Regimes do not serve short run interests, but are based on the idea of long-term reciprocity. Krasner makes a clear distinction between principles and norms on the one hand, and rules and decision-making procedures on the other. The first two elements form the basis of a regime. Rules and decision-making procedures are agreed upon on the basis of norms and principles agreed upon by state actors. Krasner defines changes in rules and decision-making procedures as changes within the regime, and changes in principles and norms as changes of the regime itself (Krasner, 1993). According to Krasner the weakening of a regime will take place when “the principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures become less coherent, or if actual practice is increasingly inconsistent with principles, norms, rules and procedures” (Krasner, 1993:5).

Several theoretical views with regard to international regimes can be expounded. The most influential theoretical approach contends that regimes should be viewed in terms of a power-oriented realist approach. The neo-realist tradition explains the rise and decline of international regimes, as well as changes to the regime by the hegemonic model. This traditional approach has been challenged by a neo-liberal approach to the role of international regimes. Especially the role of international organisations as independent actors in the field of international relations is an important element of this approach.

### **§ 1.3.1 A neo-realist approach to international regimes**

In the traditional neo-realist view, international politics is defined by a struggle for power between sovereign states. The most important power resources are military. Military security is the dominant goal. The struggle for power is dominated by organised violence. States are confronted with a security dilemma. In order to guarantee one's safety one has to arm itself against a possible military attack from other states. If all states react in the same manner security will be threatened. The only way to solve this problem is by a balance of powers. According to the neo-realists, a hegemonic system (one superpower) could best solve this problem. Keohane and Nye also offer a good description of realism based on three main assumptions. First, states as coherent units are the dominant actors in world politics. Second, force is a usable and effective instrument of policy. And third, a hierarchy of issues exists: 'high politics' of military security dominates the 'low politics' of economic and social affairs (Keohane and Nye, 1977:24). Neo-realists recognise the existence of international organisations, but they regard them as instruments of state policy. They "bear the imprint of the main hegemonic power. If they would try to break away from it, they would find themselves side-tracked by that power" (Archer, 1995:86). In short, the nation-states are the dominant actors in politics. Threats to security are permanent and military power dominates. States with the most power dominate the world and the international organisations.

#### **The hegemonic model**

The power politics assumption of the neo-realists can also be found in their assumptions on international regime theory. According to the neo-realists, regimes will only arise under specific circumstances. In the neo-realist tradition, the distribution of power between states has been regarded as a central factor in explaining the creation and stability of a regime. The theory that can be derived from this is called the 'theory of hegemonic stability'. The idea behind this view is that the concentration of power in one dominant state facilitates the development of strong regimes, and that fragmentation of power is associated with regime collapse. In this traditional view, powerful states make the rules. According to the overall power structure explanation, the most powerful state controls the regime.

The concept of this theory has been developed by neo-realists like Krasner and Gilpin, but was first expounded in the work of the economist Charles Kindleberger, who argued that the Great Depression of the 1930 could have been avoided by strong leadership. Kindleberger argued that during the last century international economic systems with one leader have been more stable than other systems, and they have been associated with greater prosperity (Krasner, 1993).

Hegemonic power would account for strong international regimes. The theory, as developed by Kindleberger, is mainly used to describe and explain the international political economy, but can also be translated as to describe and explain international security regimes. In the neo-realistic view, hegemons will only decide to the creation of a regime when it serves their own interests. In order to be a true hegemon, a state must have three attributes: "the capability to enforce the rules of the system, the will to do so and a commitment to a system, which is perceived as mutually beneficial to the major states" (Notes on Hegemonic Stability Theory, 2004). "The capability to enforce rules on states depends on a large, growing economy, dominance in a leading technological or economic sector, political power backed up by projective military power" (Notes on Hegemonic Stability Theory, 2004).

Leadership is an important element in the theory of hegemonic stability. Krasner argues that "without leadership, principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures cannot easily be upheld" (Krasner, 1993:15). On the other hand, if the dominant state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations, and willing to do so a regime may prosper. A strong leader can, besides maintaining a regime and its existing rules, "prevent the adoption of rules that it opposes, or play the dominant role in constructing new rules" (Keohane and Nye, 1977:44). When the hegemonial power does not seek to conquer other states, but merely to protect its favoured position, other states may benefit as well (Keohane and Nye, 1977:45). However, a regime is a collective good, which means that there is a risk of free riders. States may not be willing to contribute accordingly to maintain the regime. This means that the hegemon must sometimes force other states to support the regime. Again, power is an important factor in reaching this goal.

Young speaks in terms of imposed order when, either the hegemon "openly and explicitly articulates institutional arrangements and compels subordinate actors to conform", or when "the dominant actor (hegemon) is able to promote institutional arrangements favorable to itself through various forms of leadership and the manipulation of incentives" (Young, 1993:100-101). According to him this will, however, have some consequences as well in terms of burden responsibility, as in terms of moral/ethical leadership. On top of this type of regimes will surely disappear when the hegemonic power declines (Young, 1993).

### **§ 1.3.2 A neo-liberal approach to international regimes**

The 1950s and early 1960s marked a move away from the state centric view of international regimes and organisations. In that period, Ernst Haas developed a neo-functional approach to international relations, which largely draws on the idea of regional integration in Western Europe through intensified cooperation between countries. The idea behind the theory is that "the dominant organisational unit of the international system, the nation-state, is becoming increasingly inadequate for satisfying the needs of mankind because it is confined to circumscribed territory, whereas the needs of man cut across its boundaries" (Frankel, 1973:49). By means of so-called 'spillover', integration in one area would automatically lead to integration in other areas. However, setbacks in Western European cooperation in the mid-1960s led Haas to conclude that regional integration had to be studied in a different context (Jackson and Sørensen, 2003). This line of thought led to the development of a general theory of interdependence. In the 1970s, Keohane and Nye introduced their 'complex theory of interdependence'.

According to them, we live in an era of interdependence, an era of mutual dependence, in which transitional actors are becoming more important and states no longer are the dominant players in international relations. Also the use of military force is considered less effective in maintaining relations, because the 'high politics' of military security has become less important (Keohane and Nye, 1977). This interdependence theory can also be used to better understand the concept of international regimes, and can serve as a means to counter the hegemonic stability theory described above.

### **The organisational model**

It has been argued that (neo)realists are not good at explaining why and how hegemonic power declines (Archer, ). Neo-liberals (or neo-functionalists) also recognise the existence of international regimes. However, according to Keohane and Nye, international regimes are not solely based on dominant state power. The interdependence theory can be seen as an attempt to complete the realist regime theory. In their book, entitled "Power and Interdependence", Keohane and Nye develop a new international organisational model to offer a better explanation for international regime change, that is, the change in the sets of governing arrangements affecting relationships of interdependence. In their 'model of eroding hegemony' Keohane and Nye argue that hegemonial systems and their regimes collapse either because of "war or major shifts in the overall balance" or by "economic processes" (Keohane and Nye, 1977:45). In their view, "more status for the secondary states means less for the dominant power" (Keohane and Nye, 1977:46). So, a state trying to uphold its preferred position and interests might assume the burden of maintaining a regime. However, as soon as its hegemonial power erodes that particular state will wish to change or abandon the regime that no longer serves his interests accordingly.

In the organisational model special attention is paid to the role of organisations themselves in the maintaining or changing of the existing regime. According to Keohane and Nye, international organisations are hard to eradicate once they have been established. According to Keohane, Young and Rittenberger "They are of interdependent importance, and they can promote cooperation between states" (Jackson and Sorensen, 2003:117). Because international organisations are considered to have 'a mind of their own', they might stand in the way of states trying to change regimes. On the other hand, they also might contribute to changes within the regime without the interference of state actors.

### § 1.3.3 The meaning of strategy

An equally important concept in relation to the subject of international security regimes, is the role of strategy in international security politics. In his article on the future of NATO, Volten gives a good overview of what strategy is. He describes strategy as the sphere between the political and the military domain, and sees it as an element that “connects political goals to available security means” (Volten, 2003:21). According to him, strategy in fact shapes the relationship between the goals one tries to achieve and the means that are used in order to reach these goals. According to Volten strategy is a complex notion. There is a continuous interaction between politics and the military, which makes strategy a difficult concept with which to deal. This was not so much a problem during the Cold War, explains Volten. At that time a clear threat existed and those countries united in NATO agreed on that threat both politically and militarily. Volten uses both a *Realist* and *Constructivist* point of view to describe not only the meaning of strategy but also its importance in the field of international relations.

From a *Realists* perspective the Cold War represented a clear and objective threat. A military-strategic answer was the only thing necessary to maintain an international political and military balance. According to *Constructivists* on the other hand, actors in fact “infer external behaviour from the values and norms governing the domestic political processes that shape the identities of their partners in the international system” (Volten, 2003:21). This means that the norms and values in the Soviet Union gave the Allies a framework of what the threat was and how to perceive it. *Constructivists* therefore believe that NATO did not dissolve after the Cold War ended because these views (norms and values) were institutionalized in the means and attitudes of the NATO member states. According to the *Constructivists*, because of this, NATO represents a ‘socially constructed reality’ of norms and values. The ‘materially constructed reality’ had disappeared but this ‘socially constructed reality’ has kept the Allies together. According to Volten it is important to take both ‘realities’ into account when talking about strategy.



Figure 1.2

According to many observers, amongst which is Volten, the current American Administration holds a ‘materially constructed reality’ (Volten: 2003:21) The United States has a strong military-strategic view but neglects the political processes that are also of importance in order to keep a tight balance. In short, the country puts a lot of emphasis on advanced military technologies and sees war as a means to bring peace and stability to the world.

According to Volten, it is important to rank military means to new political-strategic goals. At the moment the United States follows a material-orientated strategy. Europeans hold on to a strategy, which is often called post-modern. In their view military means are far less important. Instead, political, societal and economic means play a more significant role. In short, at the moment the West has no common security strategy. Throughout the rest of this thesis, the theory expounded here will serve as a framework to explain the current state of the transatlantic relations, the US attitude towards NATO and the backgrounds to the creation of the NRF.

## **§ 1.4 Methods of research**

For this thesis extensive use has been made of relevant literature, which consists of scientific articles, official and unofficial reports, newspaper articles, articles from relevant magazines, official NATO material and relevant websites. Because literature on the subject of the NRF still is rather limited, due to the fact that the force has only created a few years ago, interviews were conducted in order to gather additional information on the force and to find out what peoples thought are regarding the force's form and contents, as well as its possible deployment in the future. The one hour interview method as an additional research method was preferred to a questionnaire, because, in this way, more in-dept information could be gathered. The use of a simple questionnaire would not have done justice to the complexity of the subject. The questions asked would have had to be simplified and the answers given would never have been as detailed as they sometimes were. Both so-called "open" and "closed" questions were formulated. The use of "open" questions would give the interviewees the possibility to elaborate on the subject.

In January 2004, five interviews were held with six people: two officials at the Dutch Ministry of Defence, two officials at the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands at NATO headquarters in Brussels, one official at the Advisory Council of International Affairs and one researcher at the Clingendael Institute. Interviewing more people from different organisations, with different working backgrounds, helped to look at the subject from different perspectives: a military-technical perspective, a political perspective and a policy perspective, as well as both a national and an international perspective. The results of these interviews have been used throughout this thesis. The names of the people interviewed have not been mentioned in order to safeguard anonymity, with exception of Cees Homan; a researcher at the Clingendael Institute.

Throughout the interviews quite a few of the same questions were put forward in order to compare the answers given. However, most questions asked during these interviews were not the same for all interviewees, because of their different working backgrounds. For example, interviews held with the officials at the Ministry of Defence and the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands at NATO headquarters in Brussels focused more on some of the military-technical details regarding the introduction and implementation of the NRF. On the other hand, the interview held with an official at the Advisory Council of International Affairs focused entirely on the Dutch decision-making procedures regarding the deployment of troops abroad. The questions formulated in order to conduct the interviews can be found in appendix 1, on page 75.



## § 1.5 Concluding remarks

The questions that have been raised here will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. In **chapter two** the objectives the NRF is trying to achieve will be explained and the first part of the research question will be answered (What are the objectives NATO is trying to achieve with the NATO Response Force?). Besides that, an explanation will be given as to how the five factors mentioned above are attached to the three objectives. In **chapters three to five** the three objectives will be discussed in more detail and the second part of the research question will be dealt with (How do factors influence the achievement of these objectives?). Here, the five factors will be discussed in more detail. **Chapter six** will present the reader with a conclusion. Here the third part of the research question will be answered (Is it possible to adapt the NATO Response Force's form and content in such a way as to enhance its chances for success in the future?). Throughout the following chapters attempts will be made to falsify the hypotheses mentioned in the previous paragraph. To conclude, one can find an overview of the structure of the thesis below.

Introduction subject	Theory	Research design	Chapter one	
Transatlantic relations	Introduction objectives		Chapter two	
Objective 1.	Factor 1.	Factor 2.	Factor 3.	Chapter three
Objective 2.	Factor 4.		Chapter four	
Objective 3.	Factor 5.		Chapter five	

Table 1.2

## Chapter 2 – Towards a NATO Response Force

The formation and implementation of the NRF seems to go smoothly. On a very short notice, NATO member states managed to reach an agreement on the necessity of this new military force and at the NATO summit in Prague they unanimously voted in favour of the American proposal. The speed with which NATO leaders agreed to the creation of the force does, however, raise some questions. For example, what exactly happened at the summits held in Warsaw and Prague? Is it possible that Rumsfeld left his NATO partners with no other choice but to accept his proposal? In other words, what influence did actors like Bush, Blair, Chirac and Schröder really have during the months preceding creation of the NRF? What were their views regarding the NRF concept? Why did they agree to the establishment as quickly as they did? Questions also arise as to where the idea for the NRF originated, why it was created at this particular time and place and what NATO exactly has in mind for this new force. In this chapter, these questions will be dealt with in more detail. First, the reactions of the actors involved will be discussed, followed by an overview of possible reasons that may have led to the creation of the force. The role of the current transatlantic relations will also be referred to, as to explain today's US foreign policy and its possible relation to the creation of the NRF. This chapter will conclude with a short presentation of the objectives NATO has set out for the NRF to achieve.

### § 2.1 Unanimous agreement – truth or fiction?

In an interview, held shortly after the informal NATO defence ministers meeting in Warsaw, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld “characterised the response to his proposal as ‘uniformly excellent’ and ‘overwhelmingly positive’” (Rumsfeld, 2002:1). Newspaper reports tend to endorse his views. According to the Washington Post, for example, “assistant secretary of Defence J.D.Crouch got a warm reaction when he briefed on the plan in Brussels”, earlier that month (Diehl, September 16, 2002). According to the newspaper, this was mainly due to the fact that the plan would only cost the Europeans 2 to 3 percent of their annual European defence spending.

CBS News, on the other hand, reported a “cautious response” to the NRF concept. According to the news station, the Italian Defence minister Antonio Martino told Reuters that he thought it to be a very good idea, but the Luxembourg Defence minister responded less enthusiastically, stating that “EU plans had to be taken into account” (CBS, 2002). Ronja Kempin on her turn stated that:

Whereas the Financial Times neutrally wrote that a dozen defence ministers had supported Rumsfeld's proposal, the French *Le Monde* reported that Great-Britain, Poland, Turkey and Spain had declared to support the proposal. The Financial Times Deutschland only mentioned Italy and Spain as being entirely in favour of the project. One day later the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* declared that Spain, together with France, Germany and the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Solana, had voiced concern about the US proposal. The NATO Response Force should not be in conflict with EU's Rapid Reaction Force. The British *The Independent* stressed that the American plan presents an acute dilemma for several NATO countries, with Germany and France uneasy at Washington's apparent desire to see Alliance forces take pre-emptive action against ill-defined terrorists threats. (Kempin, 2002, p. )

So even though most people in the press picked up Rumsfeld's words and stated that everyone welcomed this concept, some dissenting words were heard as well (Kempin, 2002). For the larger part, this has a lot to do with the way in which the NRF concept has been formulated by Rumsfeld. France, for example, did not react enthusiastically to Rumsfeld's proposal at all. According to the French Minister of Defence, Michèle Aillot-Marie, the NRF should only be allowed to operate inside the geographical borders of the organisation. On top of this, the force should not be allowed to use pre-emptive force or operate without direct orders from the United Nations (Kempin, 2002).

The question as to how NATO member states managed to agree on the establishment of the force at such a short notice, is difficult to answer. The same goes for the question as to whether any consultation had taken place between the Allies beforehand. It is also not clear whether or not, the Americans exerted any kind of pressure in order to persuade its partners to accept the proposal. NATO officials, for example, deny that the Americans put any pressure on the other Allies. They state that "the proposal was well received by all members of the Alliance. No pressure in any form was exerted on anyone. But, this does not mean that, as a person, Donald Rumsfeld did not put pressure on individual member states to accept the proposal" (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004). In short, Rumsfeld himself might have felt he needed to pressure his colleagues, but it was not official US policy to do so and therefore officially everyone agreed voluntarily to the concept. Newspapers, on the other hand, report that, after the introduction of the proposal, countries hesitated and were not quite sure what to think of the idea. Therefore, it is likely that, even if no pressure was openly put on the member states, they did feel some form of pressure that made them decide to accept the proposal. Some observers in fact consider Rumsfeld's remark (NATO will not have much to offer the world in the 21st century, unless it has a strong military capability, ready to deploy in days or weeks instead of months or years) made at the informal summit in Warsaw, just a few months before the Prague summit as a clear form of concealed pressure (Interview Homan, January 2004).

The question as to whether any consultation had taken place between the Allies beforehand is not easy to answer, but the fact that even today parliament, as well as policy-makers at the Ministry of Defence, are still struggling to come to terms with the proposal's implications, makes it look like hardly any real discussion preceded the acceptance of Rumsfeld's proposition. This is striking, especially when one realises the implications of the proposal, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapters. It seems that, at the time of the force's creation, there was no time to even think about what it would mean. One NATO official even called it 'an intellectual equivalent of a raid' (Mariano and Wilson, 2004:34). This once more brings us back to the idea that the European NATO member states might not really have had a choice but to accept the proposal. It seems likely that the NRF was indeed perceived by the Europeans as NATO's last opportunity to prove its military relevance to the United States. The Europeans were caught by surprise by Donald Rumsfeld and there was every reason to take on his words as being real.

## **§ 2.2 NATO under pressure – Or how the transatlantic quarrel affected NATO's decision to create the NRF**

Mariano and Wilson present a good view of what might have been the reason behind the introduction of the NRF concept in their article entitled: "NATO Response Force – Political deftness, economic efficiency, military power". They state that many observers:

believe that this US proposal, timed as it was just a few months before the Prague summit, was offered to downplay the summit's enlargement policies (thereby not offending the Russians) and to give NATO allies one last chance of developing a credible war-fighting capability. A kinder view holds that the NRF is a bit of an olive branch designed to allay fears of increasing US isolationism, particularly based on American exclusion of NATO during major portions of Operation Enduring Freedom, and presents a tangible link between the United States, NATO and even the European Union. (Mariano and Wilson, 2004:34)

One can add to this list of possible reasons the conviction of some observers that the United States introduced the NRF in an attempt to obstruct the development of European defence plans. Homan, for example, believes that the establishment of the NRF was meant to block the European Defence and Security Policy (EDSP). According to him, the creation of the NRF has to be seen as a sort of "Blitzkrieg type of pre-emptive action by Donald Rumsfeld meant to block any advance made at the level of the EDSP" (Interview Homan, January 2004). Still, others mention the events of '9/11' as an important turning point for NATO and transatlantic relations, which led to the creation of the NRF. De Wijk even mentions the determination of the US President, George W. Bush, which could lead to the "WEU-isation of NATO" unless the organisation tried very hard to remain relevant to the United States (De Wijk, 2002:539).

However, reasons for creating the NRF are also undeniably linked to a more fundamental discussion about the current state of transatlantic relations. According to many observers, the United States and Europe no longer share a common worldview; a common conception of security. Because the Allies lack this common conception of strategy in both foreign and defence policy, crucial differences of opinion exist on the question how to deal with the changes to the world's security environment. This has ultimately had its effects on NATO, and the NRF. In this paragraph the differences between the United States and its European NATO allies regarding international security will be discussed in more detail. Special attention will be paid to the differences in strategic military conceptions between the Allies.

### **§ 2.2.1 Transatlantic relations after the Cold War**

The transatlantic relations have changed considerably over the last twelve years, which consequently has had its effects on the NATO. Especially over the last two years, the relationship between the NATO member states has been troubled. Factors leading to the weakening of the Alliance will be dealt with here in more detail. The idea behind discussing these factors is that if one understands the underlying issues related to the weakening of the transatlantic bond, one will also better understand the role of the NRF in trying to revitalise it. Changes to the transatlantic partnership are twofold. Both the security situation and the power situation have changed considerably over the last decade.

The end of the Cold War has to be regarded as a turning point in the recent history of the transatlantic relations, and in that of NATO in particular. First, with the disappearance of the communist threat, the international security situation changed drastically. The current security environment is marked by the growing threat of international terrorism. The situation is aggravated by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons) that could easily fall in the hands of terrorist organisations or so-called 'failed' or 'rogues' states. Besides that, the existence of smaller wars between states or regional conflicts further complicate today's security environment. These new security risks required the use of different military capabilities, which meant that NATO had to restructure its organisation. Something which has proved to be extremely difficult.

Second, with the end of the Cold War the United States became the world's only remaining super power, or what the Frenchman Hubert Védrine calls "a hyper puissance" (Kagan, 2002:6). At this moment there is no other country, or group of countries, able to act as a real counterbalance to the United States. In this hegemonic state of affairs, the United States is the world's only policeman. Theoretically speaking, the country has got both the financial means and the military capabilities to fight wars anywhere in the world. They can do this without risking considerable losses, thanks to the enormous amounts of money the country has invested, and continues to invest, in the development of new, more advanced military technology. This so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) unleashed by the Americans at the beginning of the 1990's, has been important to the country's development as a superpower and has affected its relationship with NATO. According to Van Ham, for example:

The American RMA has major implications for NATO, making it more difficult, and, therefore, less likely for the United States and Europe to work together effectively in joint military operations. Since the United States has access to more intelligence in real time, has more advanced military technology at its disposal, and has a different perspective on the use of force NATO has *de facto* been dethroned as the privileged military instrument for Atlantic cooperation and action. (Van Ham, 2002, p. 23)

The fact that the United States is a military superpower, has led them to believe they can do without the help of other countries; in other words, do without the help of NATO. Their military power combined with their political conviction that they have an obligation to restore and maintain peace and stability all over the world, has resulted in them actually going at it alone. In other words, the United States has become more of a unilateral player in the field of foreign policy. In general it is often believed that this transatlantic 'drifting apart' started when George W. Bush became President in 2001. According to some observers, amongst which is Kagan, this is not true. In his well known article on the current transatlantic relations, entitled 'Power and Weakness, he states that:

Although transatlantic tensions are now widely assumed to have begun with the inauguration of George W. Bush in January 2001, they were already evident during the Clinton administration and may even be traced back to the administration of George H.W. Bush. (Kagan, 2002:5)

The unilateralist trend has been visible on more than one occasion. Take for example the transatlantic argument over the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the American refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol and the dispute over the International Criminal Court (Van Ham, 2002). On top of this, the United States did not evoke article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty after the '9/11' terrorist attacks.

This had a lot to do with the political divisions in Europe on how to deal with the issue, but also with the American realisation that Europe would not be able to contribute effectively. It simply did not have the military means necessary to co-operate with the Americans. In the eyes of the Americans, Europe was continuously becoming more of a liability instead of a reliable and effective partner.

These two trends, a different security environment and a shift in the United States' attitude in foreign policy, have had its effects on NATO. First, with regard to the changing security environment, NATO had to redefine its mission and restructure its organisation, in order to ensure a role of importance in fighting these new threats. According to some observers (Volten, 2003) this did not happen quickly enough. Especially the search for a new strategy took a very long time. Second, the Americans started to feel that NATO was becoming irrelevant to them. According to them, European NATO Allies were just not spending enough on defence. They were, and still are, not making the necessary investments. Because of this, a military-technical gap became more and more visible between the Americans and the Europeans.

This gap has continued to grow over the last ten years, which makes effective military co-operation between the Americans and the Europeans almost impossible. Add to this the fact that the United States has become more unilateralist, they no longer feel that NATO, as an organisation, represents what they believe to be the right attitude towards the new security environment. They cannot make use of NATO in the way they would like to and therefore have openly started doubting its relevance. In the eyes of many American observers, the NRF has to be seen as a last attempt for NATO to ensure its relevance in the future. The question is whether the NRF will ever be able to act as a bridgehead, considering the fact that the European NATO countries and the Americans no longer share a common military and political strategic conception as well.

## **§ 2.2.2 No common security concept**

The unilateralist attitude of the United States can also be found in the way Americans approach the issue of security. There seems to be a consensus amongst observers and analysts on the fact that there is no common conception of security and military strategy. Europeans and Americans no longer share a common "strategic culture" or "doctrine" (Kagan, 2002:1; Osinga, 2003:14; but also see Volten, 2003; Biscop, 2003 and Van Ham, 2002). The American vision on how to deal with the new security environment is completely different from the way Europeans deal with it. In their political and military strategy a lot of emphasis is put on the use of military means and they do not shy away from using these means in a preventive or pre-emptive way. Besides this, the United States has a completely different vision on the meaning of coalitions, alliances and international institutions. A vision that can best be called "instrumental" (De Wijk, 2002:541). According to this instrumental vision, the United States will not be interested to enter into a coalition with other states, unless they contribute positively to US objectives.

With regard to NATO, this means that the Alliance will only be of interest to the Americans if it actually serves their interests. In the case of Afghanistan, for example, the United States declined help from NATO, mainly because they felt that they would be limited in their freedom to operate in the way they wanted to. This also goes for the United Nations Organisation (UNO), which was put aside at the eve of the war on Iraq. In short, what the Americans are displaying is a neo-realist approach to foreign policy, where international institutions are secondary to the power of the nation-state.

This strategic conception of security conflicts with a European notion of strategy. Europeans, for example, hold a different view when it comes down to institutions. They think of them in terms of order. Europeans believe institutions are important and they want to make them stronger (De Wijk, 2002). This means Europeans attach great importance to organisations like NATO and the UN and they believe strongly in the use of international law and international agreements. Besides that, Europeans aim at conflict prevention, crisis management and risk management through dialogue and partnership. This is also called proximity policy; partnership will lead to more and better integration on an economic, political and cultural level and this will ultimately lead to the prevention of conflicts (Biscop, 2003:276). In writings on the current state of the transatlantic relations one often uses the distinction between 'soft power' and 'hard power' to describe these differences. Soft power means that most emphasis is being put on diplomacy, economic sanctions (embargoes) and peacekeeping. Hard power puts more emphasis on the recourse to military means, in the form of interventions that have to lead to the creation of balances of power (De Wijk, 2002).

Remarkably, an all-American conception of security can be found in the NRF concept, as accepted by the European Allies. The United States want a so-called 'global NATO' which can operate outside its own territory and which has the means to deal with new security issues, predominately terrorism. The NRF, which is especially designed to fight threats like terrorism, would be a means to live up to American expectations of NATO, whereby making the organisation more relevant to them. On top of this, the concept mentions the possibility of preventive and pre-emptive action and states that the force will not necessarily rely on a UN mandate. This strategic vision can also be found in the National Security Strategy of the United States, which states that the country 'will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed' (Biscop, 2003:276).

According to Biscop, the strategic contrast between the United States and Europe could have a negative effect on the NRF. In his view, the role for the NRF will on the one hand be finished before it can ever be deployed because it will be extremely difficult to reach consensus between the Allies on the use of the reaction force. On the other hand, the United States have experienced in the past that they cannot always be certain of support of its NATO partners. Therefore, according to Biscop the deployment of the NRF cannot be part of an American strategic and military plan. In his view, the role of NATO is therefore under discussion again. He thinks the dispute between the Allies over the war in Iraq has damaged the role the NRF could have played in the future. Osinga (2003) also believes that the different conceptions on strategy can seriously affect the NRF's future. He feels that, in the eyes of the United States, the NRF is both a means and a doctrine and he wonders if the Europeans will ever accept this new doctrine.

### § 2.3 '9/11' – a defining moment in US foreign policy?

From the previous two paragraphs it becomes clear that, since the end of the Cold War, the United States have become more and more unilateralist. They are the only remaining hegemonic super power. On top of this, they have developed a strategy towards foreign policy, which is completely different from that of the Europeans. The question that needs to be dealt with here is how do the events of '9/11' fit in? Can the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington account for the dramatic shift in US foreign policy. Can they also account for the US decision to propose to the creation of the NRF.

Tensions arising from this unilateralist attitude slowly started to put more pressure on the transatlantic partnership. The events of '9/11' finally brought the differences between the partners to full light, and they reached the highlight during the US intervention in Iraq. Van Ham, for example, argues that although the unilateralist tensions were there before the terrorist attacks took place on '9/11', those events can to some extent explain the shift in US foreign policy.

The terrorist attacks are as much a useful excuse as a cause for America's new assertive unilateralism. Even before 9/11, Washington had started to cut the legal and political ties that would limit its room to maneuver. This is testified by the refusal to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the decision to do away with the AMB Treaty, and the opposition and obstruction of the Kyoto Protocol and the ICC. Europe, Russia, and the rest of the world are confronted with an America unwilling to take into account the concerns of others, now that it sees its own survival as a free and prosperous country at stake. The American Gulliver has used 9/11 to cut the many multilateral ropes that restrain its power. (Van Ham, 2002 :11)

Daalder even goes beyond that, stating that US foreign policy under the Bush administration has taken a 'revolutionary' turn after the events of '9/11'. According to him, the following preconceptions define Bush's attitude towards foreign policy. First, we live in a dangerous world; second, states are the dominant actors in world politics, Third, military power matters; fourth allies, friends and international institutions do not matter; and, fifth American is a just power. According to Daalder, the current US administration believes that the world is a dangerous place and that the United States have a moral obligation to do something about it. Daalder describes a clear neo-realist, power-oriented approach to foreign policy.

Daalder argues that before the events of '9/11', Bush was already displaying a unilateralist attitude towards the international community (see the examples mentioned above). But after the terrorist attacks on the country, he had a clear opportunity to break away from the international community, because holding on to a foreign policy based on international partnership and international institutions would limit his ability to defend his country. Friends, allies and international institutions simply did not matter anymore after '9/11' (Daalder, 2003).

On the other hand, both two officials at NATO headquarters and an official at the Dutch Ministry of Defence deny that the terrorist attacks have been of a significant influence to the Pentagon's decision to propose the creation of the NRF. Before the idea of a new, rapidly deployable, response force like the NRF became apparent to the Bush administration the idea of a force like it had already been widely discussed at the National Defense University in Washington.



In their article on the transformation of European forces Hans Binnendijk and Richard Kugler (2002) introduced a new concept for NATO. In their view, NATO was supposed to reconsider its Defence Capabilities Initiative and to introduce a small Spearhead Response Force. This force was to be a small European military capability (so without the Americans contributing) that would be a part of NATO. According to the authors this small reaction force would hardly cost the member states anything. They did however see in it the opportunity to revitalise the Alliance. According to the officials at NATO headquarters, the Bush administration just used this idea because they were still looking for something to introduce at the Prague summit. Otherwise, "the Prague summit would not amount to much" (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004). This line of thought seems highly unlikely, because the Prague summit had some important issues on its agenda, and therefore it seems odd to think that the NRF concept was introduced just to make the summit more interesting.

An official at the Dutch Ministry of Defence does mention the events of '9/11' as "a point in time when the United States, and especially Rumsfeld, openly asked themselves the question: is NATO still relevant to us" (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004). According to the official, after in-dept conversations with several think tanks, the idea from Binnendijk and Kugler seemed interesting enough to be used at the Prague summit. He, however, also denies that the terrorist attacks have been the main reason for the NRF to be created. "Although the creation of the NRF is often mentioned in relation to the '9/11' terrorist attacks, it is a mistake to believe that the creation of the NRF has solely to be seen as a reaction to these attacks and the following search for new capabilities to fight this 21st century international security threats. NATO was already in search for new ways to deal with these issues and similar forces like the NRF already existed at a smaller base". (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004). This view fits the neo-liberal approach to international regimes. According to this approach, international organisations can change themselves from the inside out. However, based on what has already been said with regard to the shift in US foreign policy combined with the fact that the NRF fits this policy neatly, and the fact that the United States made the proposal some doubts can be cast on this line of thought. If NATO had this idea in mind, why not put it forward before?

Finally, some observers argue that the atmosphere after '9/11' led NATO member states to agree to the creation of the NRF, without asking too many questions. In this view, the events of '9/11' had a symbolic and rhetorical function. Biscop states it nicely in his article, when he says that "in the aftermath of '9/11' dissenting voices did not sound very loud" (Biscop, 2003:276). Another employee at the Dutch Ministry of Defence says a similar thing. "After '9/11' people felt that something needed to be done, this was very apparent at the Prague summit" (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004).

Based on the information in the previous paragraphs some conclusions can be drawn as to the contents of the first two hypotheses. It has been argued that under the Bush administration there has been a shift in American foreign policy. The United States have started to act more like a unilateralist, like a true hegemon. In US foreign policy, there has been shift towards a new post '9/11' strategy, which can be found in the National Security Strategy of the United States. It has also been argued that the NRF concept neatly fits an all-American strategic perspective.

One can conclude that, at least to some observers, this approach to foreign affairs has been affected and shaped by the events of '9/11' (*hypothesis 1: The terrorist attacks that took place on '9/11' have been a decisive point in US foreign policy, which led to the creation of the NRF*). At the same time, one can also conclude that the Bush administration has to be regarded as the decisive factor in the creation of the NRF, because this administration has been responsible for a dramatic shift in foreign policy which has had its repercussions on the NRF concept (*hypothesis 2: Under the Bush Administration there has been a change in American foreign policy. This change entails a view towards international security that can also be found in the concept of the NRF. The Bush Administration can therefore be regarded as the decisive factor in the creation of the NRF*).

## **§ 2.4 Renewed hegemony – the NRF as a means for unilateralist power projection?**

Based on a theoretical approach to international regimes, it seems that the creation of the NRF can best be explained as a hegemonic attempt of the Bush administration to allow NATO to continue to exist as an instrument for US foreign policy (*hypothesis 3: From a realist regime theoretical approach, the creation of the NRF can be explained as an attempt by the Bush Administration to allow NATO to continue to exist instrumentally inside the Pax Americana*). In the paragraph on international regime theory, in chapter one, an international regime was defined as a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (Krasner, 1993:2). A weakening of a regime will only take place when "the principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures become less coherent, or if actual practice is increasingly inconsistent with principles, norms, rules and procedures" (Krasner, 1993:5). According to Krasner, changes of the rules and decision-making procedures of a regime are to be considered changes *within* the regime. Changes of principles and norms of a regime are to be considered changes *of* the regime (Krasner, 1993). The question is, whether the current US attitude towards NATO, including its proposal to create the NRF, imply a change *within*, or *of* NATO's security regime.

Based on the previous two paragraphs, one can conclude that, over the last decade, the United States have taken a more unilateralist (or hegemonic) approach to foreign policy. This will, ultimately, also have its effect on NATO's international security regime. The creation of the NRF, which has been described by the Americans, as a final attempt to keep the transatlantic Alliance relevant, neatly fits, what by Volten has been explained as, a 'military constructed reality'. This type of strategy, which is based, amongst other things, on pre-emptive warfare as a means to fight international terrorism, does not imply a change of NATO's decision-making procedures or rules, but has to be regarded as a clear move away from basic NATO principles. From a neo-realist approach, the NRF concept can be considered to be an attempt to control NATO's regime, as to make it serve their own interests. In the terms of Young, the United States has been trying to "impose order", by "openly and explicitly" articulating "institutional arrangements" that suit them best and by trying to make other NATO member states conform to these arrangements (Young, 1993:101), not because it is in the interest of NATO, but because a NRF (American style) would be in the interest of the United States in their War against Terrorism.

According to many observers, it is therefore, doubtful whether the Allies still share the 'socially construct reality', as was mentioned by the *Constructivists* (Volten, 2003:21). New threats are perceived, and acted upon, differently by the United States and its European Allies. For example, in the eyes of the Americans, terrorism is an act of war and therefore has to be dealt with by the use of military means. Many European countries, on the other hand, regard terrorism as a crime, which has to be dealt with by arresting the perpetrators and bringing them to justice in a court of law. If the Europeans do not accept the implications of the NRF concept, it is likely that the United States will continue to act unilaterally, or by means of so-called 'coalitions of the willing', like they did in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. If this is the case one can doubt whether both the United States and European NATO member states still share that socially 'constructed reality' the *Constructivists* talk about. According to the theory of hegemonic stability this would, eventually, lead to the collapse of the regime because the United States will pull away from NATO, which will lead to a fragmentation of power. If on top of this, the remaining NATO member states are incapable of reaching agreement themselves, the Realists might end up being right and NATO will cease to exist in the long run.

Neo-liberals (or, neo-functionalists) will argue that the NRF has to be regarded as an attempt from NATO itself to make sure the organisation will continue to play a role of importance in the future of international security affairs. (*hypothesis 4: From a liberal regime theoretical approach, the creation of the NRF can be explained as an autonomous action from NATO to allow itself to continue to exist*). The organisational model, explained in the first chapter, pays special attention to the role of international organisations in maintaining or changing an international regime. International regimes might contribute to changes within the regime without the help, or despite the opposition, of state actors. This line of thought is supported an official at the Dutch Ministry of Defence, who argues that NATO was already in search for new ways to deal with the current security issues and states that similar forces like the NRF already existed at a smaller base. However, if one takes into account the shift in US foreign policy and the fact that the NRF neatly fits this policy, this seems unlikely. On top of this, the fact that the United States made the proposal and not NATO also cast some doubts on this line of thought. If NATO had this idea in mind, why were they not the ones to propose the creation of this type of force?

## § 2.5 NRF objectives and factors

Reasons behind the creation of the NRF are closely related to the force's objectives. Based on the reasons formulated in the previous paragraphs, a list of possible objectives the NRF has to achieve can be defined. Some of these objectives have in fact been put down in the Alliance's final declaration made at Prague. Others are not stated officially but tend to loom somewhere in the background. For the remainder of this thesis only the objectives, officially stated at the Prague summit will be discussed in detail.

### § 2.5.1 Objectives

First, it is often argued that if NATO wants to play a role of importance in the future, the Alliance will need a new, rapidly, deployable force which can deal with the ever changing security environment in a satisfying manner. The NRF is supposed to be this force. This line of thought has also been incorporated in the final declaration and can therefore be considered as an official objective. NATO wanted to create a new force consisting of "technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed" in order to "deter, disrupt, defend and protect against any attacks on its member states including terrorist attacks"(Prague Summit Declaration, November 21, 2002). In **chapter three** this objective will be discussed in more detail.

Second, another important reason for setting up the NRF, according to most analysts, has been to create a means to close the existing transatlantic military capabilities gap between the United States and its European allies. Throughout the last couple of years it has become apparent that the Americans find it more and more difficult to work together with their European NATO partners because of the growing differences between their war fighting capabilities. The NRF has to be seen as a means to force the participating countries to streamline investments and to convince them of the need to reform their national defence, thereby slowly closing this capabilities gap between the Allies. This reason has been translated into one of the official objectives the NRF has to achieve. In the Prague Summit's final declaration it has been stated that the NRF will have to act as "catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities" (Prague Summit Declaration, November 21, 2002). In **chapter four** this objective will be discussed in more detail and an answer will be given to the question whether it will be likely that the NRF will in fact achieve this aim.

Third, several analysts believe that the NRF has been introduced to downplay European efforts to develop their own defence policy. In the eyes of these observers the NRF has especially to be seen as a counterpart of a European force, called the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF), which was created two years earlier at an EU Summit in Helsinki. At the Prague summit the relation between the NRF and the ERRF has been discussed in detail and all member states agreed to the fact that both should be "mutually reinforcing while respecting the autonomy of both organisations" (Prague Summit Declaration, November 21, 2002). With regard to this third reason a diversity of opinions exists. Not everyone agrees to the fact that the NRF is meant to block EU plans. In **chapter five** the relation between the two forces will be discussed and an answer will be given to the question whether it is right to think that the Americans see the NRF as a means to counter this similar, European force.

## § 2.5.2 Factors

In chapter three, factors one, two and three will be dealt with. Factor one (the nature of the conflict in which the NRF will have to operate) is closely related to way in which the NATO partners have defined the role the NRF will have to play in future conflict situations. The NRF will be a high-readiness force capable of fight high intensity threats. However, some questions can be raised as to whether every one agrees to the definition provided in objective one concerning the role of the NRF.

Factor two (the American elections in November 2004) will also be discussed in chapter three. The question that will be dealt with is how national (American) policies and coalitions effect the deployment of the NRF in the future. In principle this factor can also be discussed as part of objective two. The way in which the transatlantic military capabilities gap is being dealt with can also be influenced by a change of a US government. In chapter three, however, more emphasis is put on how a change of government could influence the way in which the US Administration regards the role of the NRF in fighting these new threats, predominately terrorism. From this point of view, the second factor is more related to the first, and therefore the second factor will be discussed in this part of the thesis. But, this does not take away the fact that this factor can also be discussed as part of objective two. In that case one could look at how a change of administration could influence US defence expenditure and the way the Americans look at sharing technology with the Europeans as to bridge the capabilities gap.

Factor three (decision-making procedures related to the NRF within national parliaments and NATO) cannot easily be placed under any of the three objectives. However, because part of the discussion related to the national decision-making procedures, namely the Dutch case, is related to how countries decide to assign troops abroad, especially in conflict situations that are up the higher end of the spectre, this factor is also being dealt with as part of objective one.

Factor four (necessary capabilities for the NRF) will be discussed in chapter four. Objective two heavily focuses on what capabilities are necessary for the NRF and how the NRF can contribute to streamlining capabilities. Factor four can therefore best be discussed in this chapter.

Finally, factor five (the existence of European defence plans) will be discussed in chapter five as part of objective three. This objectives deals with the relation between the NRF and its European counterpart the ERRF, as well as with the role of current European defence plans in the discussion of the NRF. Therefore, factor five can best be discussed as part of this objective.

## § 2.6 Conclusions

The question as to how NATO member states managed to agree on the establishment of the force at such a short notice, is difficult to answer. The same goes for the question as to whether any consultation had taken place between the Allies beforehand. It is also not clear whether or not the Americans exerted any kind of pressure in order to persuade its partners to accept the proposal.

Reasons for the establishment of the NRF are multiple, but are, at the same time, also unquestionably related to a more fundamental discussion about the current state of transatlantic relations. Today's transatlantic partnership is defined by two different trends that have set in after the end of the Cold War, namely a change in the international security environment and a change in the US attitude towards foreign policy. Both, these two trends have had its effects on NATO. The Alliance had to redefine its mission and restructure its organisation, in order to ensure a role of importance in fighting new threats. Besides that, NATO was confronted with a superpower that has become more and more unilateralist over the last decade and has required the means, both politically and technologically, to fight wars and bring peace, without depending on its transatlantic partners for support. According to the United States, NATO has not been able to transform fast enough to deal with the new security situation, which has led them to openly start doubting its relevance.

Although the change in US foreign policy can be traced back to the end of the Cold War, the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, have brought the differences related to international security co-operation to full light and therefore '9/11' as to be regarded as a decisive point in US foreign policy, which led to the creation of the NRF (*hypothesis 1*). The current administration has been an important element in formulating the post-'9/11' strategy that has led to the creation of the NRF (*hypothesis 2*). The NRF concept, that in the eyes of many observers has to be regarded as a final US attempt to keep NATO relevant to the United States, is influenced by both the shift in US foreign policy and the '9/11' terrorist attacks.

The current attitude towards international politics displayed by the Americans, fits the neo-realist theory of international regimes. The United States are clearly trying to control NATO by proposing a force that serves their own interests best. The country has been acting as a true hegemon, when convincing other NATO member states to accept the NRF concept. Besides that, the formulation of the concept fits neo-realist military constructed reality. It can therefore be argued that the creation of the NRF can be explained as an attempt of the Bush administration to allow NATO to continue to exist instrumentally inside the Pax Americana (*hypothesis 3*), instead of an autonomous action form NATO itself (*hypothesis 4*).

The chapter concludes with a short presentation of the three objectives NATO has set out for the NRF to achieve. According to NATO, the force has in the first place been created as a means to fight 21<sup>st</sup> century threats. Second, the force will act as a catalyst for focussing and promoting improvements in NATO's military capabilities and as an instrument to close the transatlantic capabilities gap. Third, the force will not serve as a means to downplay European defence plans. These three objectives will be discussed in the remaining chapters of the thesis.

## **Chapter 3 – The NRF as a real answer to 21<sup>st</sup> century threats**

In the first place, the establishment of the NRF is an answer to changes taking place in the international security environment, which is marked by a globalisation of threats, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the increase of international terrorism. These new threats require a force that can be deployed quickly to wherever it might be needed, regardless of the intensity and geographical position of the conflict at hand. For this purpose, NATO has decided to the creation of a “technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force” which should be able to carry out “operations over distance and time, including in a environment where they might be faced with nuclear, biological and chemical threats” (Prague Summit Declaration, November 21, 2002).

### **§ 3.1 Different concepts of strategy - Will the NRF ever be deployed?**

In the previous chapter, notions underlying the current state of the transatlantic relations have been explained. Differences between the United States and its European NATO Allies regarding the subject of international security are real, and can ultimately be found at the level of the NRF as well. The NRF has been especially designed to act as an ‘initial entry capability’, well equipped to fight conflicts at the higher end of the spectrum, outside the Alliance’s own geographical borders. It has been intended for pre-emptive warfare and will in principle not depend on authorisation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In short, the way the concept has been formulated neatly fits the American views on how to deal with the 21<sup>st</sup> century security environment. However, although all leaders approved of the proposal, there is still no real consensus on the nature of threats the NRF will have to counter. So, did the Europeans really agree to the use of the NRF as part of a pre-emptive action? Is it likely that the NRF will ever be used without the presence of a UN mandate? Will the NRF be deployed in high intensity conflict situations? The aim of this paragraph will be to find out whether the NRF will ever be able to achieve its objectives, when taking into account the nature and formulation of the concept as agreed upon in Prague.

#### **§ 3.1.1 Fighting at the high end of the spectrum**

The NRF will have to carry out the full range of the Alliance’s missions, both at the higher end, as well as the lower end of the conflict spectrum. Observers, however, rightly doubt whether the force will ever be deployed in situations of high-intensity battles, especially as an initial entry force. Interestingly enough however, a lot of emphasis has been, and still is being put on exactly this role. At the moment the NRF already has the military capacity to operate at the higher end of the spectrum (Interview NATO Headquarters and Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004). So it seems that the question whether the NRF will be able to act in these kind of conflict situations does not so much depend on its technical capabilities, but more on the willingness of the member states to deploy their troops to these dangerous areas. In practice, quite a few countries find it difficult to agree to the deployment of its troops to high intensity conflict situation. Especially countries like Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands might refuse to participate in these types of mission.

According to Homan, for example, the Netherlands find it extremely hard to make these kind of decisions. In his view this has a lot to do with the Dutch concept of war fighting, and their lack of experience in fighting them. He states that: "even though the Netherlands fully support the NATO Response Force and pay great lip service to it, they have a history of displaying so-called 'risk avoiding behaviour' when it comes down to the deployment of its troops" (Interview Homan, January 2004). Homan uses the example of UNMIL, the United Nations mission in Liberia to enforce his argument. He states: "take for example the Dutch decision to send a hospital ship to Liberia, as part of UNMIL. Some parties in parliament already made a fuss about that. While this decision was probably as low in the spectrum that one could possibly get" (Interview Homan, January 2004).

An official at the Dutch Ministry of Defence also endorses this line of thought. He states: "Although the NATO Response Force will eventually be deployed, it remains to be seen if NATO will use it to intervene in this particular way" (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004). Another official, working for the same ministry, is also of the opinion that too much emphasis is put on the NRF as an initial entry capability. "Although it is one of the possibilities, it should not be regarded as the main one. More emphasis should be put on the NRF as means for deterrence" (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004). The official believes that, although the NRF has war fighting capabilities, it will not actually serve as a war fighting- or initial capability. But, deployment in case of war does belong to the options and can therefore, according the official, not be discarded.

Officials at NATO headquarters also do not rule out the possibility of the NRF being deployed as an initial capability in a high intensity conflict. But, they also believe it is more likely that the force will be used as a strategic back-up capability in, for example, Bosnia or Afghanistan. They expect the NRF to be deployed in the near future, possibly in 2004 or at the beginning of 2005. Its first mission will not be in the higher end of the spectrum. On the contrary, it will probably be a small, low intensity situation (maybe not even what one would call a conflict). It will be an operation in order to test the workings of the force and to show the world it is ready to be deployed (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004).

### **§ 3.1.2 With or without a UN-mandate?**

NRF deployment shall in principle not depend on authorisation of the UNSC. For many European NATO member states this could be problematic. Just like most European countries have a problem with pre-emptive action, many of them also have a real problem with passing over the UNSC. Most European NATO member states will prefer a UN-mandate when engaging in military activities abroad. A clear example is the continuous disagreement over how to deal with the current situation in Iraq.

France's response to Rumsfeld's proposal, for example, was quite clear on exactly this matter. According to the French minister of defence Michèle Aillot-Marie, the NRF should not be allowed to operate without direct orders from the United Nations (Kempin, 2002). Other countries, like for example Germany and Belgium, also endorse this line of thought (Interview Homan, January 2004). However, this does not mean that countries will at all times hold on to the presence of a UN mandate.



It also does not mean that an intervention using the NRF will never take place without the presence of UN-authorisation. In fact, if the deployment of the NRF would be on the agenda of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) tomorrow, anything could be decided. The following scenarios related to the issue of UN authorisation could unfold themselves.

### ***Scenarios related to the issue of a UN-mandate***

If the UNSC backs up a possible NATO intervention by a UN mandate, the NRF can be deployed. Regardless of whether all member states agreed to the necessity of the mandate. No further discussion is necessary. If the UNSC, on the other hand, does not approve of a forthcoming NATO intervention, the NRF can in principle still be deployed, because, according to the concept, a UN mandate is not required. The question is whether this will be likely to happen. In this case the following could happen:

- First, all member states can unanimously decide that a UN-mandate is required. If the UNSC then does not approve of the intervention, the NRF will not be deployed. Consensus would be reached not to take any NATO action using the NRF.
- Second, all member states can agree to the fact that a UN mandate is not required. In this case the NRF can be deployed because, as was mentioned above, in principle a UN mandate is not necessary. Consensus will be reached and the intervention will take place using the NRF.

A similar thing, in fact, happened during the war on Kosovo. What one does have to bare in mind is that the NATO operation in Kosovo had a humanitarian character, which could have made it easier for the member states to set aside any objections from the UN Security Council. If the intervention had had a different character, being higher up in the spectrum, which is something the NATO Response Force is aiming for, it would have been more difficult to maintain the necessary legitimacy when passing over the UNSC. On top of this, the war over Kosovo was an air war. This means no ground troops were involved. This also made it easier for countries to set aside objections of the Council (Interview AIV, January 2004).

- Third, a few member states can decide that UN mandate should be required. In that case, consensus will not be reached at the level of the NAC, which means that the NRF will not be deployed. A similar thing happened quite recently in the case of Iraq, when some countries, particularly France and Germany, held on to UN authorisation.

At a speech before the National Defence University, entitled "Why America and Europe need each other" Aillot-Marie stated that in the case of Iraq there could be no question about the role of the UNSC. She stated that:

The UN Security Council remains the only tool we have in order to provide legitimacy and to create binding legal obligations for all countries". It has proved to be flexible and responsive to the requirements of difficult situations. Its unity is its main strength because when its members act together they reflect the determination of the international community. (Alliot-Marie, 2002:6)

In order to solve this problem, NATO member states, which also hold a seat in UNSC, might try to put forward a text to the Council hoping that other members will eventually agree upon it. If this does not work out, countries may decide not to make use of NATO, and its Response Force. In this case, countries could set up a 'coalition of the able and the willing', which happened in the case of Afghanistan, and later in the case of Iraq. Consensus will not be reached at a NATO level, meaning that an intervention can take place but the NRF will not be used. However, one has to wonder what this would mean for NATO as a collective defence organisation.

In short, it seems just to assume that the majority of NATO member states will prefer a decision which is directly linked to a mandate provided by the UNSC. This, to ensure coverage by international law. With regard to the NRF this means a UN mandate would have to lie at the basis of its deployment. A lack of consensus, however, is real, or as a Defence employee put it: "If the objective of NATO is deployment of the NATO Response Force, the lack of a UN-mandate is an obstacle" (Interview Ministry of Defence, January 2004).

### **§ 3.1.3 Pre-emptive warfare**

The NRF has also been specifically designed for pre-emptive strikes against any 'failed' or 'rogue' states, and possibly even against terrorist organisations. Note here that a preemptive attack is not the same as a preventive attack. In the case of a preemptive attack an enemy attack is to be believed imminent. In the case of a preventive attack an enemy attack is not imminent, but nonetheless thought of to be inevitable. The notion of pre-emptive warfare has been introduced by the United States in reaction to the '9/11' terrorist attacks and the concept of pre-emptive action was already clearly established in the country's National Security Strategy before Rumsfeld introduced his proposal to create the NRF. In this document the relation between NATO and this new type of warfare had been made clear by the Americans:

NATO's core mission – collective defence of the transatlantic Alliance of democracies – remains, but NATO must build new structures and capabilities to carry that mission under new circumstances. NATO must build a capability to field, at short notice, highly mobile, specially trained forces whenever they are needed to respond to a threat against any member of the Alliance. The Alliance must be able to act wherever our interests are threatened, creating coalitions under NATO's own mandate, as well as contributing to mission-based coalition. (National Security Strategy, September 17, 2 2002)

It is evident that pre-emptive action is something the United States have no problem with, and the US Administration is especially hoping that the force will be used in their fight against international terrorism. However, most European states don't believe in this type of warfare. Countries like France, Germany and Belgium argue that the NRF should under no condition be used as a pre-emptive force. Germany even goes one step further and does not approve of the use of any form of 'hard power' and prefers the NRF to be assigned 'softer' tasks, like peacekeeping or peace enforcement. Therefore, it becomes very unlikely for the NRF to ever be deployed as part of any pre-emptive strike.

### **§ 3.1.4 'Out of area' operations**

For NATO, dealing with these new security threats, also means operating outside its own geographical borders. According to Bücherl, the decision also to deploy troops outside NATO's geographical borders is, again, something that neatly fits the American strategic concept of security. In his view, the plans agreed to at the Prague summit have to be seen as another step in the Americans defining a new strategy for NATO, which is dominated by their perspectives. Operating outside of its geographical borders is one of them. In his eyes, particularly the NRF can contribute to this type of global power projection and he states that: "Damit haben die Amerikaner ihr schön seit Anfang der neunziger Jahre verfolgtes Ziel erreicht, den Wirkungsbereich der NATO gemäß ihren Interessen auszuweiten" (Bücherl, 2003:58). However, reality shows us that this remains to be seen. With regard to the NRF, France has made it clear that the force should not be allowed to be deployed in out-of-area operations (Kempin, 2002). This attitude towards out-of-area operations does not compare well to the concept of the NRF and could form an obstacle in the future.

### **§ 3.2 Change of government - change of policy?**

A change of government often also implies a change of policy. The issue that will be dealt with in this paragraph is whether a change of US government will soften the American attitude towards NATO and the NRF. Will a change of government lead to a new military strategy that is more acceptable to the Europeans? Especially in Europe, the idea prevails that a new US presidential administration will considerably change the US foreign policy, whereby settling the transatlantic dispute. However, most observers in the field of foreign policy, like Selden, Mead, and Heisbourg, seem to think that the US policy towards national and international security issues, including its attitude towards NATO, will not change considerably when the Bush administration is not re-elected in November 2004. They stress the importance of an historical approach to explain US foreign policy. According to these observers, the current trend is one of a more strategic nature and the US attitude towards foreign policy is not likely to change during the years to come.

At the core of this historical approach lie two conflicting principles that have dominated US foreign policy for centuries: a Wilsonian or Messianist notion and a Federalist notion. According to the first notion, which dates back to the 19th century, "individual liberty is a moral absolute", and that "American liberal values and institutions constitute a generalizable model that promotes human rights and prosperity" (Selden, 2004:2-4). The United States should promote these values all over the world, which accounts for their (military) interventions abroad. According to the second notion, which dates back even further, the federal government should be limited. Its only task should be "to protect its citizens from foreign enemies" (Selden, 2004:4). These two principles are at all times present in US foreign policy. According to Selden "it takes a significant event to move American public opinion away from supporting a constrained foreign policy, but shifts in public opinion can be massive and rapid once the nation is threatened" (Selden, 2004:6). This threat became but all too real on September 11, 2001. This fits with what already has been said with regard to the events of '9/11' in chapter two.

Based, on the historical approach it will be unlikely that a change of government will lead to a change of policy. Or in the words of Selden:

If Europe is waiting for a new administration or a new set of policy professionals to rise to positions of influence, the continent may be in for a very long wait. The style in which affairs are conducted may change, and the blunt take-it-or-leave-it pronouncements of the current administration might be softened, but the substance of American foreign policy –reshaping the Middle East, preemptive confrontations with potentially threatening adversaries, and an ambivalent attitude towards international organizations that constrain the use of American power to achieve those ends – is unlikely to change with any new administration that could conceivably come to the White House in the near future. (Selden, 2004:3)

This also has consequences for NATO and the NRF. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the nature of the concept fits the American approach to foreign policy. If this policy is unlikely to change in the near future, it is probable that the US will also hold on to the current formulation of the NRF concept. If the Europeans do not accept this, changes for the force's success are small.

According to Heisbourg (2003), it is an illusion to think that changes of government in the United States as well as in Europe will lead NATO back to the old days. The transatlantic relations have changed too much and besides, new threats require a new attitude. On top of this, the change is one of a strategic nature, thus likely to last for a long time to come. Heisbourg believes an important task for NATO lies in enhancing interoperability, which for one thing means concentrating on the Allied Command Transformation and on the NRF. According to him, the changes in the international foreign politics require a strong commitment of NATO member states to make NATO work in the 21st century. In other words, the Europeans have no other choice but to put in a tremendous effort to make the NRF a success, regardless of its pro-American contents.

In conclusion, on the basis of an historical approach, it seems safe to assume that, even though a Democratic government might attach more value to maintaining good relations with its transatlantic partners, the recent change of US foreign policy is likely to last for a long time to come. This takes us back to hypothesis three, formulated in chapter one. In this hypothesis, it was argued that a change of government would change the American attitude towards NATO and the NRF. Based on the previous, this is unlikely. This line of thought is also supported by hypothesis two. According to hypothesis two, the terrorist attacks that took place on '9/11' have been decisive point in US foreign policy, which led to the creation of the NRF. The impact of these attacks on US foreign policy has been enormous, which, again, makes a change of that policy under a new government unlikely.

### **§ 3.3 Decision-making procedures and international commitment**

NATO is an organisation of independent, sovereign states. This means that decisions made by the NAC have to be approved of by all member states, at a national level. For a detailed overview of the exact procedures regarding the deployment of NATO forces, I would like to refer to appendix 2 on page 79. What is important here, is that in case of the NRF the current decision-making procedures are too lengthy. The force needs to be deployed within five days and especially the 'force generation process' will simply take too long. That is why the NRF is a 'standing force' with units being assigned to it beforehand. This is an important factor in the light of national decision-making procedures that will be discussed in more detail in the next paragraph. Many analysts fear that current decision-making procedures at the NAC will be complicated even more by the enlargement of NATO from 19 to 26 member states. They feel that a discussion about the 'decision-making by consensus rule' is inevitable. Besides this, because NATO is an intergovernmental organisation, member states remain sovereign at all times, and have the right to draw back their forces from the NRF, should they decide that deployment is not desirable. Because NATO decides by means of consensus, one risks that the NAC will not manage to reach an agreement. In that case the NRF will not be deployed at all.

This risk is real, and therefore NATO commander General James Jones argues that, in the future, nations would have to consider whether the opposition of one or two nations could continually stymie the will of the majority (Smith, 2002). In this light, it has been argued that it might be a good idea for NATO to introduce so-called opt-out clauses. Critics however argue that by introducing these 'opt-outs', NATO will undermine the effectiveness of the concept and will openly question the nature of its own organisation, which is an organisation for collective action. This option is therefore thought of as being undesirable. Introducing redundancies, whereby countries assign more troops than necessary, will probably solve the problem. This solution will be very expensive because you have an overlap of capabilities for political reasons, and it is doubtful if such a reserve capacity is in fact available (Interview AIV, January 2004).

#### **§ 3.3.1 National procedures**

Much has been said about possible conflicting national decision-making procedures in the run up to the creation and installation of the NRF. It has been argued that countries would need considerably more time to bring their decision-making process in line with NRF requirements than the five days agreed upon. However, research has shown that the fear of a possible incongruence between national decision-making procedures and rapid NRF deployment seem to be somewhat exaggerated. A crisis management seminar held in October 2003 in Colorado Springs, highlighted some problems regarding national decision-making procedures used in some countries, but in general most countries are capable of reaching an agreement within five days. Most of them do not require formal parliamentary approval for military deployment abroad, either within article 5 and non-article 5 collective NATO actions. In a few countries, such as Turkey, Hungary, Norway and the Czech Republic some form of parliamentary consent is required, but officials still believe their procedures to be fast enough (Monaco, 2003). For an extensive overview of the national procedures I would like to refer to appendix 3, on page 81.

Only Germany had a problem with its decision-making procedures, because the deployment of its troops depends on parliamentary consent. According to German constitutional law, the Bundestag (German Parliament) is the only institution that can decide on the deployment of German armed forces. In a decision of the German constitutional court of 12 July 1994 it was decided that all 603 representatives had to agree on the deployment of German troops outside NATO's geographical borders. The idea behind it was that troops abroad should have big support from parliament (read: the voters) (Mützenich, 2003).

Only in case of imminent danger the German government can legitimately set parliament aside. After the crisis management study seminar, German defence minister Peter Struck pointed out that his country would have a serious problem if the NRF would be deployed tomorrow. Back in Germany, he presented plans according to which parliament as a whole would no longer have a decisive voice in the deployment of German troops. Struck was much criticised for his plans. Many critics in Germany argued that parliament had always been able to reach an agreement on time and that a change of procedure was therefore unnecessary. They expressed the fear that government might be trying to draw responsibilities away from parliament. In a following plan Struck proposed to set up a small commission consisting of members of parliament that could be regarded as specialists in the field of foreign affairs and defence (Hasselberger and Middel, 2003). At the moment, the country is still in the process of adapting its constitution as to speed up its decision-making process

Dutch officials also foresee problems for their country. In the Netherlands, decision-making procedures could be problematic because of the delay they might cause. In the Netherlands, the government has the authority to deploy troops in any situation. In case of NATO-commitments, parliament will assess government decisions only after they have been taken. In the case of non-NATO missions, the government will first inform parliament that it is considering deployment before making a decision. This decision can then be debated in parliament. Only after this debate has taken place the government will make an official offer to either an organisation or a country. In order to structure the parliamentary debate, a framework for verification of the relevant points of interest, the Toetsingskader, has been developed. This Toetsingskader seeks to facilitate a critical exchange between parliament and government. Only after this procedure has been completed a military operation can be authorised and participation can be offered (AIV, 2004). The Toetsingskader will be discussed in more detail in the next paragraph.

### § 3.3.2 The NATO Response Force and Dutch parliament<sup>2</sup>

Because Dutch government wants to be sure they can comply with the requirement of rapid deployability, they asked advice from the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV). In a letter to parliament dated October 2, 2003, government put forward the question whether an adjustment of the Toetsingskader would be necessary to avoid procedures becoming too lengthy, whereby acting in conflict with NRF requirements (Letter to Parliament, October 2, 2003). The advice of the Council was made public in March 2004. In the following paragraph the Dutch situation will be explained in more detail and the advice of the Council will be discussed.

In order to discuss the relation between the NRF and the role of Dutch parliament in more detail, one first has to know how the national decision-making procedure regarding the deployment of military forces works. Especially sections 97 and 100 of the Dutch Constitution are of importance in the discussion on the role of parliament regarding the deployment of (NRF) troops.

Section 97 deals with involuntary deployment of Dutch troops. For example when the country comes under attack, or in case the Netherlands are being asked to deploy troops because of commitments derived from international treaties. The section 5 assistance clause of the NATO Treaty is a good example of the latter.<sup>3</sup> In this case, there is no parliamentary involvement. Section 100, on the other hand, deals with voluntary participation in crisis management operations and the role parliament has.<sup>4</sup> This article was added to the constitution in the year 2000. According to section 100, parliament does not have the right of formal approval in the case of voluntary deployment of Dutch troops, but according to subsection 1 of section 100 the government is in duty bound to inform parliament about its intention to deploy troops as part of an international crisis management operation. After a debate with the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has taken place in parliament the government can proceed with the deployment of Dutch forces. Only in exceptional cases the government can decide not to inform parliament beforehand, like for example in the case of so-called 'special operations' (subsection 2 of section 100 of the Constitution).<sup>5</sup> In that case a small group of ministers will decide whether the cabinet needs to be informed or not, and when/how parliament should be notified. In cases like this parliament will often only be informed after the fact.

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<sup>2</sup> For this paragraph, extensive use has been made of an advice entitled "Nederland en crisibehersing. Drie actuele aspecten." of the Advisory Council on International Affairs and an interview held at the beginning of January with an employee from this Council.

<sup>3</sup> Grondwet: Art. 96. Lid 1: 'Het Koninkrijk wordt niet in oorlog verklaard dan na voorafgaande toestemming van de Staten-Generaal'. Grondwet: Art 97. Lid 2: 'Ten behoeve van de verdediging en ter bescherming van de belangen van het Koninkrijk, alsmede ten behoeve van de handhaving en de bevordering van de internationale rechtsorde'.

<sup>4</sup> Grondwet: Art 100. Lid 1: ' De regering verstrekt de Staten-Generaal vooraf inlichtingen over de inzet of het ter beschikking stellen van de krijgsmacht ter handhaving of bevordering van de internationale rechtsorde. Daaronder is begrepen het vooraf verstrekken van inlichtingen over de inzet of het ter beschikking stellen van de krijgsmacht voor humanitaire hulpverlening in geval van gewapend conflict'.

<sup>5</sup> Grondwet: Art 100. Lid 2: 'indien dwingende redenen het vooraf verstrekken van inlichtingen verhinderen.

In order to structure the decision-making process under section 100 the 'Toetsingskader' has been formulated. The 'Toetsingskader' is a checklist the government can use when discussing the possible deployment of Dutch forces. The list consists of the following points:

- grounds for participation
- political aspects
- mandate of the operation
- participating countries
- level of influence of decision-making
- feasibility of the operation
- risks
- suitability and availability
- length of participation and the changing of the troops
- financial aspects

Research has shown that the Toetsingskader is highly valued as a democratic instrument. None of the people interviewed as part of this thesis believe any real changes should be made to this procedure. Two Dutch officials working at NATO headquarters believe that the procedure works quick enough. In their eyes no changes need to be made to the Toetsingskader (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004). Homan also doubts the necessity of adapting the Toetsingskader in order to speed up the decision-making procedure. According to him all of the points have to be taken into account anyway: "The Toetsingskader contains no points that can be put aside" (Interview Homan, January 2004). Besides this, he does not believe that it would in fact take that much time to run through the procedure. An official at the Dutch Ministry of Defence also shares this opinion. He mentions that operations like ISAF in Afghanistan and UNMIL in Liberia have shown that the procedure can be run through at a very quick pace. Besides, one also has to realise that one of the advantages of the NRF is that some questions regarding the Toetsingskader can be answered immediately because they are known beforehand. In short, it seems that the speed of the procedure itself is not so much the problem. The interviewees do, however, mention that it might be wise to develop some additional procedural agreements just to make sure, for example, that parliament actually answers quickly. In their advice, the AIV reaches a similar conclusion.

In its advice to the government, the AIV states that participating in the NRF can be at odds with already existing national decision-making procedures. However, not because the procedures might be too lengthy, but because NATO must be able to rely on troops already assigned to the NRF in the past. According to the AIV, the real problem related to the NRF has to be found somewhere else. In their view, tension exists between three different phases: the phase in which government decides to the creation of the NRF (1), the phase in which the government decides to assign troops to the NRF (2), and the phase in which the government has to make a decision regarding the deployment troops to the NRF (3).



The national decision making procedure as described in section 100 of the Constitution concentrates on the third phase, without taking the full implications of the first and the second phase into consideration. The decision to create the NRF and to make troops available to it did not fall under section 100. This decision could be made without evoking the Totesingskader. Only when deployment of the assigned troops under non-article 5 is under discussion, parliament will be informed and the Toetsingskader will be evoked. However, at that point in time there is not much room left for parliament to decide not to deploy Dutch troops.

The dilemma is that making troops available implies handing over a part of the decision-making authority considering the deployment of these troops at a later stage. In itself this is nothing new. According to the AIV, one can also find this dilemma in other already existing multinational relationships like the British-Dutch Amphibious Force or the German-Dutch Army Corps. The effectiveness of these partnerships depends heavily on the actually preparedness of the countries to deploy these troops, if necessary. If one of the countries insists on its own sovereign authority this means the partnership will have no real meaning. An example is the refusal of the Netherlands to participate in a planned joint exercise of the British-Dutch Amphibious force in the Mediterranean on the eve of the Iraq war. On the other hand, the joint-led ISAF in Kabul shows that sometimes things work out right. In the case of the Netherlands the nature of the contribution is fixed but at the same time not attached to the decision about future deployment (Interview AIV, January 2004).

Deciding whether to agree to the deployment of the NRF in a situation of immediate crisis is difficult and could prove to be extremely problematic. In an earlier advice to the government on exactly this topic, the AIV put forward the dilemma between holding on to one's sovereignty when making decisions about operational co-operation. Especially in the Dutch parliament one regards this to be very important. In their advice the Council stated that: "Holding on to this basic assumption could severely undermine the effectiveness of the co-operation" (AIV, 2003:31). The Dutch government is well aware of this dilemma and has mentioned the difficulty of retread in its letter to parliament. In it, the government stated that pulling military units out of the NRF when its deployment is on the agenda is almost inconceivable and will only be possible under highly exceptional circumstances. What exactly is meant by these 'highly exceptional circumstances' is not entirely clear. It seems obvious that pulling back forces when the situation gets tense still is possible but is regarded as unacceptable. In which situation a retread would be acceptable is not quite clear. According to the AIV, the existence of this dilemma, means that changing the Toetsingskader will not offer a real solution to the problem. In itself allocation of military units to an international co-operative group is not a problem. Making troops available to the NRF does not conflict with the Toetsingskader, because we are still not talking about the deployment of troops.

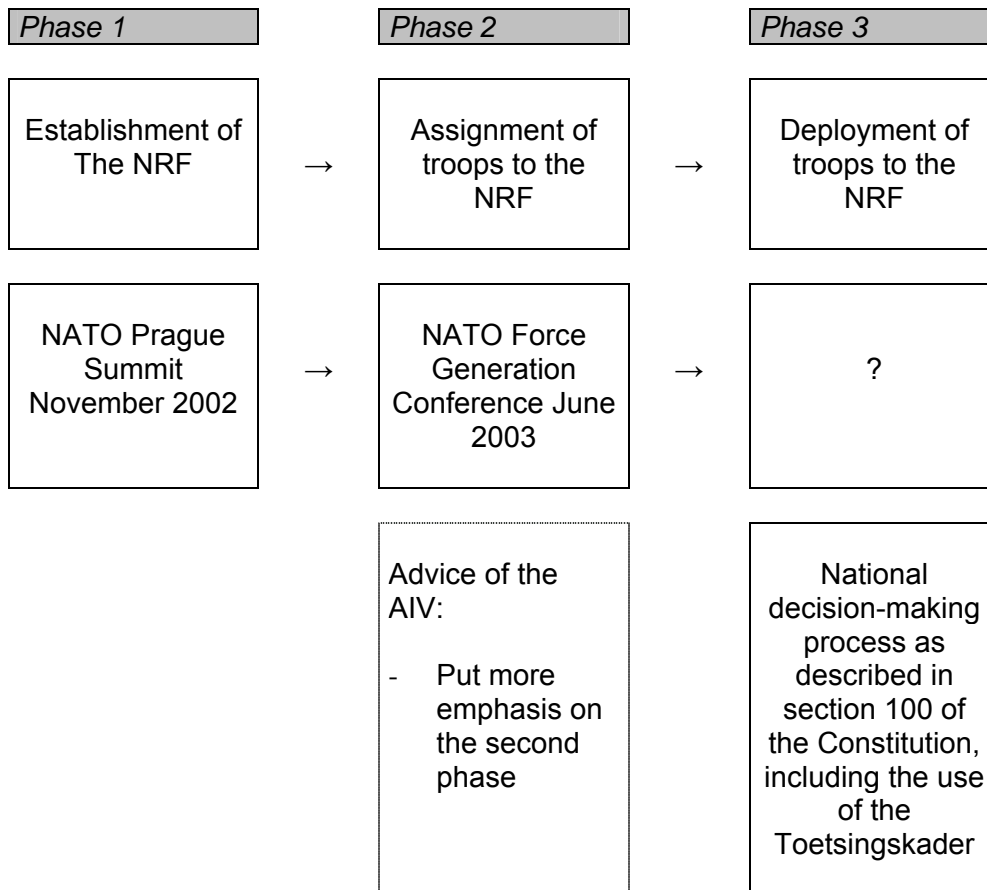


Figure 3.1

It is amazing to see how unprepared parliament was at that time and still is today. They are only now starting to realise the implications of the NRF on their position. For them the problem lies in the fact that they have already agreed to participation in the NATO Response Force. Only Groenlinks (the Greens) did not agree with the concept (Interview AIV, January 2004). This means that in fact it can be seen as a *fait accompli*. And it can therefore be expected that parliament will in majority vote in favour. The question that has to be answered here is: What can be done to prevent this problem from recurring in the future?

According to the AIV more emphasis should be put on the second phase. In their view it is vital that one informs parliament about the implications a decision to assign troops will have. This is not an easy thing to do because one can only make assumptions on how and when these troops could be deployed in the future. Still, it must be possible to come up with a set of possible situations that indicate the consequences assigning troops to, for example, the NRF will have on both government and parliament. From a parliament's point of view it would provide them with a better overview of what a positive decision in the second phase could mean in the third phase.

On the other hand it is understandable that policymakers will try to avoid a problematic second phase by trying to block a positive decision to be taken in the second phase. They could end up listing a series of possible doom-scenarios, which might influence parliament in deciding negatively on co-operation. Especially in the Netherlands, where there is a sense of risk-avoiding behaviour, this could easily happen.

However, providing parliament with more extensive information beforehand will raise the credibility of any military partnership, either bilateral or multilateral, in the future. At the moment the Dutch government informs parliament on a regular basis about any new developments related to the NATO Response Force. In a letter to the Lower Chamber, government once more explained that the existing procedure consist of notifying parliament in accordance with section 100 of the constitution (Letter to Parliament, October 2, 2003). On top of this the Dutch contribution to the NRF has been put down in the budget. It might be wise to do this every year so parliament knows exactly when Dutch troops are 'on call'.

Eventually, any attempts to make acceptance easier should focus on changing the underlying attitude. Putting more emphasis on the first and the second phase will only solve part of the problem. It will only serve as a means to make parliament more aware. Real emphasis should be put on a behavioural change in Dutch politics as well as in the public opinion. Being part of this world and wishing to participate in international organisations, means accepting the consequences. The real issue, which goes beyond searching some mutual agreement in the first two phases, whereby making a decision in the final phase easier, is the Dutch attitude towards military co-operation. The attitude of the Dutch will probably need to change in that respect. Wanting to be part of a multinational partnership like NATO, means accepting possible losses. It seems the Dutch are in need of some real self-reflection

### **§ 3.4 Conclusions**

The NRF has been especially designed to act as an 'initial entry force', well equipped to fight conflicts at the higher end of the spectrum, outside the Alliance's own geographical borders. It has been intended for pre-emptive warfare and will in principle not depend on a UN-mandate. Although all leaders approved of the proposal, there is still no real consensus on the nature of threats the NRF will have to counter. Did the Europeans really agree to the use of the NRF as part of a pre-emptive action? Is it likely that the NRF will ever be used without the presence of a UN-mandate? Will the NRF fight in high intensity conflict situations? In this chapter it becomes clear that in many respects the European NATO member states hold quite different views as to how to deal with conflict situations. In the light of the NRF, this means that the European views on security issues differ a lot from the concept, which has been developed by the United States.

The American strategic view has been incorporated into the NRF, and it remains to be seen if the Europeans will be willing to accept this view. Overall, it seems that the debate on the nature of threats has been postponed in order to make sure all countries would accept the proposal, as to avoid possible failure at the Prague Summit. Over the last two years nothing has changed with regard to these views. Eventually, the concept's character might stand in the way of its deployment, especially, when one considers the fact that a change of US foreign policy is unlikely to change in the coming years (*hypothesis 5*). Current decision-making procedures at the NAC will further complicate the deployment of troops under an NRF flag. The fact is that a rapid response force also requires rapid decision-making procedures. With the enlargement of NATO from 19 to 26 member states, a discussion about the decision-making by consensus rule is inevitable. Lengthy procedures will damage the image of the NRF as a quick and responsive force. Though striving for consensus is always a good thing because it enhances solidarity and legitimacy, a lack of it will ultimately stand in the way of NRF deployment.

## **Chapter 4 - Closing the transatlantic capabilities gap**

Joint NATO operations in the 1990's revealed major differences in military technology between the United States and Europe. At a time when the Americans were spending large sums of money on new, more advanced military capabilities, European defence expenditure stagnated. The asymmetrical development in capabilities that followed led to what one now calls 'the transatlantic capabilities gap'. As was put down in the final declaration of the Prague summit, the creation of the NRF has to be seen as a "catalyst for focussing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities (Prague Summit Declaration, November 21, 2002). The NRF must be seen as a new instrument to persuade European NATO partners to transform their military capabilities, whereby ensuring effective co-operation with the United States in the future. In this chapter the origins of this transatlantic capabilities gap will be discussed, and an answer will be given to the question whether the NRF can play a role of importance in closing it.

### **§ 4.1 From Rome to Prague – NATO after the Cold War**

Most observers discuss the creation of the NRF in the light of the terrible events that took place on 11 September 2001. In many ways they are right to do so. The determination NATO leaders showed at the Prague summit and their strong commitment to the results of that meeting are unquestionably linked to a post-'9/11' feeling of loyalty towards the United States. Besides, NATO's decision to create a force capable of fighting new, 21<sup>st</sup> century battles, including terrorism, is most certainly influenced by the American fight against international terrorism. However, the events of '9/11' are definitely not related to NATO's renewed attempts to close the growing capabilities gap between the United States and Europe. For years now military analysts on both sides of the Atlantic have warned about the possible consequences of this growing capabilities gap. Especially the Americans have on more than one occasion asked their European NATO-partners to update their defence system (Cahla, 2003). In the following paragraph's NATO's attempts to stop the widening of the gap will be outlined.

### **NATO and the Cold War**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was established in 1949 as a military alliance. Its main aim was "to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area" (Preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty). However, the direct purpose of this Western Alliance was to protect its members from "a potential threat resulting from the policies and growing military capacity of the former Soviet Union" (NATO handbook, 2001:31). The organisation's main task was to provide its member states with a collective military defence system, that was intended to defend the geographical borders of the Alliance. Its military structure and capabilities were designed to beat off any Soviet attack with conventional and possibly even nuclear weapons. NATO forces were what one would call "heavy", meaning that they used "tanks, fighter aircraft and substantial ground forces" in order to counter any attack against the Alliance (Ullman, 2003). With the end of the Cold War, NATO lost its principal enemy and had to either re-invent itself or die an otherwise inevitable death.

## **Rome 1991 – Reforming NATO**

At a NATO summit held in the city of Rome in November 1991, NATO leaders adopted a new, post-Cold War Strategic Concept which included far-reaching measures to NATO's military forces. Reductions had to be made both in size and readiness and improvements related to mobility, flexibility and adaptability were introduced. On top of this more use had to be made of multinational formations. All of these measures resulted from the rapidly, changing security environment which required new capabilities, especially in the area of crisis management and peacekeeping (NATO Handbook, 2001). Throughout the years following the Rome summit, many NATO headquarters were closed down and the amount of European armed forces were reduced considerably. At the same time NATO were confronted with new threats to stability, like for example the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the developments in the Balkans, which meant it had to start putting crisis management and peacekeeping into practice.

## **Washington 1999 – Facing up to new security threats**

At a summit meeting held in Washington in April 1999 NATO, Heads of State and Government updated the Strategic Concept by putting more emphasis on the role of the Alliance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As part of this update the 19 leaders launched the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI), a plan of action designed to ensure the Alliance would be able to meet any new security threat, mostly outside its own territory. The initiative comprised of five elements:

- the ability to deploy forces quickly to where they are needed, including areas outside the Alliance's territory (mobility and deployability );
- the ability to maintain and supply forces far from home (sustainability);
- the ability to engage any adversary in both high and low intensity conflicts (effective engagement);
- the ability to protect forces and infrastructure against any threats (survivability);
- and to ensure that command, control and information systems are compatible, so forces can different countries can work together effectively (interoperable communications). (NATO Handbook, 2001:52)

The call for this new type of forces was dictated by experiences during the Kosovo war and was related to the situation at US-European airbases. As the air war on Kosovo was underway, NATO leaders realised that, despite Europe's relatively large fleet of tactical aircraft, only a few allies had the capability of participating in US-led air operations (Mariano and Wilson, 2004). In order to guarantee complete interoperability in the future, countries were asked once more to reform their national defence structure. For Europe this meant it had to get rid of its Cold War material once and for all and start investing in new capabilities. However, by the year 2002 only 50% of 58 points of improvement had been achieved. In the eyes of many observers, the DCI has therefore failed hopelessly (De Wijk, 2002; Teunissen, 2003). Especially in Europe, reform was limited and a lot of useful capability was rejected because of budgetary restraints.

## **Prague 2001 – A final change for NATO?**

At the Prague summit NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson stated that NATO had to change radically in order to remain effective in the future; it had to be “modernised or marginalized” (Shape, 2003). With respect to existing capabilities, Supreme Allied Commander for Europe (SACEUR) general James Jones stated, quite rightly, that “We (NATO) have too much capability for the past and not enough capacity for the future (Shape, 2003). Therefore, besides deciding to the creation of the NRF, the Alliance also launched the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), a programme similar to the DCI meant to strengthen the organisation’s military capabilities and narrow the transatlantic capabilities gap. On top of this, NATO-leaders also agreed to the restructuring of NATO’s command structure. The formation of the NRF must be understood within the context of the Prague Capabilities Commitment and the command structure reform. All three are interrelated (Mariano and Wilson, 2004).

The PCC cannot succeed unless countries start spending their money wisely and have a strong political commitment to build new capabilities. Subsequently, the NRF and the command structure changes will not succeed unless the PCC is fulfilled. Only when all NATO member states implement the PCC, complete interoperability at the level of the NRF can be guaranteed. So, even though the NRF has to, according to the NATO leaders, be seen as a ‘catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the alliance’s military capabilities’, it is at the same time heavily dependent on the success of this renewed capabilities initiative. This means that the NRF can only contribute to closing the capabilities gap if countries participate fully in the PCC and reform their defence apparatus accordingly. In the following paragraph, NATO’s aim to use the Response Force as a vehicle for removing the disparity between the United States and Europe will be discussed in more detail. Can the NRF be expected to play any role of importance? And what factors might stand in the way of achieving this objective?

### **§ 4.2 Will the NRF contribute to closing the capabilities gap?**

The formation of the NRF has to be seen as a real attempt to solve two of NATO’s biggest problems, which are the inability of its member states to fight together as effectively as possible because of a lack of capable forces, and the unwillingness to spend more money to acquire them. With the acceptance of the US-proposal for the creation of the NRF, European NATO member states have committed themselves to the transformation and reform of their defence apparatus. The question is whether these commitments have been translated into concrete actions. In other words, have European member states up to now been willing and able to contribute accordingly to the NRF, or do obstacles related to these capabilities make it difficult for the NRF to contribute to closing the capabilities gap.

#### **§ 4.2.1 Acquiring the necessary means – budgetary implications**

According to Binnendijk and Kugler (2002), the formation of a reaction force would cost the Europeans only two to three percent of European defence spending. Therefore no real increases in European defence budgets would be necessary. The idea was to combine those parts of the military apparatus that were already modernised, and put them under a joint command. In other words, the material was present and it would only have to be integrated in a new force. It has been argued that for a small reaction force, like the NRF one should need to invest about 40 milliard Euros. According to Osinga (2003), it would certainly not be impossible for the European Union to raise that amount of money, but they would have to reform their defence apparatus considerably.

The United States have always spent more money on defence than its European Allies and is expected to raise the budget even more over the next decade. This increase in defence expenditure was already apparent before the terrorist attacks took place on 11 September 2001 but has intensified since then. Between 2000 and 2001, defence spending increased over 6%, and in 2003 over 11% (Cahla, 2003). On the contrary, European defence spending has levelled off after the constant decline of the 1990s. A lot of this money spent by the Americans is being spent on research and development. Again one sees an enormous difference between the United States and Europe. European NATO member states spend far less money on research and, on top of this, research done in Europe is fragmented. At the same time, European member states will also have to make investments on the level of the European defence plans. This means that two initiatives might end up fighting over the same amount of money. The Netherlands, for example, made 180 million euros available to the NRF, but seemed to have forgotten that this money had also been promised to the European Rapid Reaction Force (Teunissen, 2003).

Many observers have questioned the feasibility of the initiatives, because of the budgetary implications they have and the lack of a strong political commitment on the side of the member states to invest more in new concepts and R&D. De Wijk, for example, doubts whether the NRF will ever work. Although he is of the opinion that the smart thing about the NRF is the fact that it streamlines investments (member states will have to modernise according to the units they will assign to the force), he is sceptical about its possible success. "In the past similar initiatives have failed; from the Long Term Defence Program (1978), to the Defence Capabilities Initiative (1999). It always went wrong because of problems related to money" (De Wijk, 2002:540). Osinga (2003) also mentions the budgetary problems many of the NATO member states are facing as one of the complicating factors and therefore doubts the force's eventual success. Hoekema (2003) also questions whether the European member states will be willing to make the necessary means available. The concerns raised by these three analysts are also felt at NATO-level.

The NATO sub-committee on transatlantic defence and security co-operation shares the view that in this case money is once more the keyword. However, they feel that one has to accept that defence budgets will not rise enough in the coming years. Current economic trends related to the proportional increase of the ageing population, EMU constraints and the overall worsening of the economic climate with uncertain economic growth make it obvious that less money will be spend on defence (Cahla, 2003). The Committee therefore feels that one should not ask oneself how much Europe will spend in the near future but how the existing budget can be used more wisely and effectively. In their view, emphasis should be put on asset sharing and joint procurement.

At the moment the European NATO members are spending about 50% of what the United States spends on defence but get only about 10-15% of the capability. This has a lot to do with a lack of economies of scale. If one starts to share assets and buy capabilities in a more co-ordinated manner this problem could be solved. On top of this it would not cost them that much extra either (Cahla, 2003). Teunissen (2003) also believes that closer military co-operation through tasks division and pooling of means, joint buying and common funding of projects could end up in savings. But, he nuances his pronouncement by adding that in the short run it will only cost a lot of money because of the high initial costs. The committee feels that if Europe is not able or willing to do this the interoperability and capability gap between the United States and Europe will continue to widen. According to the committee these “are the most important questions to explore in the coming years” (Cahla, 2003:3). From this, one can reduce that it will probably take a long time before the NRF will have the capabilities it is meant to have, let alone that the force can function as a spearhead for further changes to the European capabilities.

NATO officials also recognise the problems mentioned above, but see at the same time a more imminent obstacle related to money looming in the background. An equally important discussion that still has to take place at the Council, is who will bare the costs related to the actual deployment of the NRF? If the force goes into battle this will result in high addition costs. There are two options available in dealing with this issue. The first is “the cost lie where they fall principle” and the other is “the principle of burden sharing” (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004). According to the first principle only the countries that are deployed as part of the NRF will pay for the costs that result from engaging in action. Some countries strongly oppose to this option. Besides having to fight the battle and bare the possible losses of lives, they would also have to pay for the mission. It conflicts with the NATO principle of collective action. Quite a few countries have been up to now also strongly opposed to the second principle, that of collective burden sharing, either because they cannot afford it (for example Belgium), or because they did not joint the NRF in the first place (Luxembourg and Iceland). Sharing the burden collectively might lead to countries overspending because they do not have to pay for it anyway. This money-discussion is yet to take place and will not be easily resolved (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004).

#### **§ 4.2.2 Investments at a national level**

Some European countries, amongst which are the United Kingdom, France, Portugal and Norway, have taken the American pleas for reform to heart, and have started to augment their defence budgets. Some of them are now even buying more of the necessary equipment and are developing initiatives based on asset sharing and joint procurement (Cahla, 2003). Especially the United Kingdom spends a lot of money on defence, and like the United States, the country risks the loss of interoperability with other European states in the near future (De Wijk, 2002).

At the same time, other European member states have decided to cut deep in their defence expenditure, like for example the Netherlands. The decision of the Dutch government to cut on their defence spendings, just a few weeks after the Prague summit, was therefore not at all well received. At the moment, regarding the Netherlands, new investments are being made. The Netherlands could contribute a lot. Technically there is no problem at all. The air and maritime forces will have the least trouble to adapt to this transformation process because they are for the larger part able to work together with the Americans.



Air forces have co-operated well during the Kosovo war. The maritime forces will have no real problems. The focus must lie on the land forces. The real problem is that investments went down, especially at the level of the land forces. They had an investment quote of around 5 percent, which clearly is not enough. The Dutch Minister of Defence, Henk Kamp, announced a few months ago that through severe cutbacks money will become available to raise the current investment quote of the land forces to up to 20 percent. Both the air forces and the maritime forces have an investment quote between 25 and 30 percent so they have been able to invest in the necessary equipment. Countries like Germany are also transforming their forces. There are also countries like Belgium who will have more problems (Interview Homan, January 2004).

### **§ 4.2.3 Interoperability**

The NRF is a versatile force, which has to be able to operate in a fast and flexible manner without even once compromising on the level of effectiveness. That is why the armed forces participating in the NRF need to sustain a high level of interoperability at all times. In order to reach this level of interoperability countries, which have committed themselves to the NRF, will have to make their units suitable for the force. By making the necessary investments and by putting their troops through extensive training, they make their forces suitable for the NRF, whereby, at the same time, making their units more suitable for NATO.

The largest obstacle is a lack of national political willingness to make the decisions necessary to contribute fully. If the Europeans are not able or willing to spend more money on defence capabilities this will have consequences. Most analysts are sceptical and believe it will take many years to come before Europe has reached a similar level (Osinga, 2003). It is likely that the gap will continue to grow larger and larger. This would mean that interoperability would become more and more difficult in the future. It is therefore not evident that the NRF will be able to solve this problem. It will at best enhance the interoperability between European member states. And even this remains to be seen, because many of the new NATO member states will have to take longer to reach the European level. Most western European countries will not have that much difficulty. The British are building a capacity for advanced expeditionary warfare. This means that they will be able to operate unilaterally or with the United States (De Wijk, 2002). Countries like France, Portugal, Norway and the Netherlands have also taken the necessary steps to establish real expeditionary power. For the new member states it will be more difficult. They still have to start reforms. This will probably take many years to come and depends on the countries political situation as well as budgetary restrictions (Interview Homan, January 2004).

According to Homan (Interview January 2004), for example, it is therefore more likely that the United States will downplay their capabilities to ensure a more or less equal playing field, keeping advanced technologies for themselves. If this should end up to be the case, the NRF can not be seen as a means to close the transatlantic capabilities gap but more as a means to streamline European capabilities. Something which will also remain difficult because especially the new NATO member states are in a similar position to the western European countries as the latter are to the United States. As far as the NRF is concerned, the United States will probably assign military units that are well advanced but can at the same time work with the European NATO member states, in order to make sure that interoperability is safeguarded. At the same they will keep certain units to themselves, like for example the Striker Brigades.

#### **§ 4.2.4 Representativeness and flexibility**

Another issue, which is closely related to the idea of military co-operation through task division and the use of a pooling system, is how to guarantee both multilateral representativeness and flexibility at the same time. According to an official at the Dutch Ministry of Defence ensuring multilateral representativeness can seriously affect the effectiveness of the NRF and the other way around. Even though the forces assigned to the NRF have to be well trained and certified before they can be assigned to the force, they will not always be fully interoperable at all levels. So, especially when communication is essential, one has no other choice but to assign just a few countries to a certain unit (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004).

In case of the air force there will be no real problems because all countries use the same codes and the language used is English. A somewhat similar conclusion can be drawn as far as multilateral cooperation in the navy is concerned. However, with regard to ground force it is more than likely that communication problems, as well as cultural differences, will make it impossible for more than three to four countries having to work together without compromising on the level of effectiveness. That is why, for example, the Dutch-German forces together generate some 40% of the ground forces together in NRF4. The Dutch-Germany army corps is used to working together and will have no intercultural and communication problems. This ensures effective co-operation and reduces possible risks. The fact that two countries contribute so much, however, poses another problem. If the NRF4 is deployed, the Dutch and Germans will have a disproportionate number of soldiers on the ground, which means that, if something goes wrong, they also risk bringing home a disproportionate amount of body bags (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004).

According to some critics, it will be impossible to find a clear balance between the two and that in the end the same three or four countries will contribute disproportionately to the NRF. Having more countries working together could seriously endanger the force's flexibility and its effectiveness in the field. But, at the same time this would undermine the NATO Response Force's representativeness and would, on top of it, lead to disproportionate financial and military contributions. In other words, letting two to three countries share the burden instead of five or six enhances the safety of troops but at the same time equal, multilateral representativeness is important if one does not want few countries to bare the costs and possible losses. Hopefully more investments and more training will eventually solve this problem and complete interoperability will become a fact. However, for now it seems that at the level of the NRF we are struggling with what we are trying to solve, namely a gap between capabilities and a lack of interoperability.

### **§ 4.3 Closing the gap part of a new American doctrine?**

In the previous chapters it has been argued that the NRF concept is dictated by an American perception of how to deal with security threats and that the underlying reason for developing the NRF has been to build a force which fits this perception. Consequently, this perception requires a certain type of capabilities the Europeans do not have. Therefore, according to some analysts, the NRF must not just be looked upon as a means to close the capabilities gap but, moreover, as a way to ensure that an US-type of warfare is secured at NATO level. As was already mentioned in chapter one, according to the neo-realist approach, hegemony will only be decided to create and maintain a regime when it serves their own interests. In this paragraph, it has been argued by some observers that, by means of the NRF, the United States have been trying to build a force, which fits the American perception on foreign policy. Based on the theory of hegemonic stability, one can argue that the United States have, since the end of the Cold War, been trying to keep NATO relevant to themselves as an instrument of US foreign policy. The NRF must, therefore, not just be looked up on as a means to close the capabilities gap, but as a way to ensure that an US-type of warfare is secured at NATO level. The United States have been well aware that trying to maintain the regime for their own benefits, results in other states benefiting from that regime as well. As was mentioned in chapter one, a regime is a collective good, which means that there is a real risk of free riders. From the previous paragraph's, it has become evident that European NATO member states have not been willing to contribute accordingly to NATO, as to maintain the regime the Americans would like to uphold. This means that the United States had no other choice, but to force its partners to support the NRF concept. This line of thought is more likely than that of the neo-liberals, who will argue that the NRF has been created from the inside out.

In this respect, Osinga (2003) talks about the "the forgotten element", namely the growing gap in military-political-strategic doctrines between the United States and Europe. He argues that there is no such thing as a European doctrine, something he calls a 'mindset', a way of thinking about how to use the military instrument. One has to agree on this mindset before one can co-operate effectively. In his view, the currently existing capabilities gap makes it impossible to fight battles according to the American doctrine, so that is why the Americans were so keen on presenting the NRF concept and were eager to once more convince the Europeans to bring their capabilities in line with those of the United States. According to Osinga the NATO Response Force includes both a means and a doctrine. He wonders if the Europeans really accepted the American doctrine at the Prague summit.

One cannot give a real answer to this, but it is likely that even if the Europeans wanted to accept this doctrine the above has shown that from a military, technical point of view it will be very difficult to reach that level, even if they wanted to. If one also reviews the political implications of that doctrine related to the NRF, namely its pre-emptive character, and a lack of a UN mandate and if one takes into account the countries' views mentioned in the previous chapter it seems unlikely that they will in the long term be eager to accept this line of warfare.

Binnendijk and Kugler (2002) also use a value related vision on strategy to explain the current capabilities gap. According to them Europe has a fundamentally different view on how to deal with security threats, which is translated in their military-political and strategic attitude. They argue that for many countries war seems to be a thing from the past and that one therefore spends less on defence capabilities. They explain this by referring to what they call the “convenient trap”.

They state that:

While Britain and France think in terms of power projection, many other Europeans believe their proper role to be that of stabilising their continent while the United States defends common interests elsewhere. Along with this ‘continental mentality’ comes an aversion to entanglement in messy regional affairs and controversial US policies outside Europe. As a consequence, many European countries have purposefully shied away from preparing their military forces for power-projection. The effect has been to leave Europeans in a self-created, convenient trap: unable to project power because they lack the assets, and unwilling to acquire the assets because they are not eager to perform the mission. (Binnendijk and Kugler, 2002:121)

According to Van Ham the problem also has to be found in the differences in strategic culture and he doubts whether closing the military gap will solve the problem. He argues that:

The problem is not only – or even mainly- the differences in military capabilities between the United States and Europe, but the simple fact that these capabilities are a reflection of the way the United States and Europe each see the world and the world’s problems. (Van Ham, 2002:24)

He goes on to state that:

The American RMA is a reflection of a “can do” strategic culture. It is an option which remains open for Europe as well, but one which is not chosen for a variety of practical and cultural reasons. Surely, if EU members states would join efforts and pool financial and other resources, a European RMA would be possible. Europe does not lack the money or political maturity to take such a step. But, since most European countries do not think it strategically opportune, it has not happened. In both elite and public opinion, the necessity to spend much more on defence – in comparison to health care, development assistance, etc. – is not recognized. The widening transatlantic military gap, therefore, mirrors a concomitantly widening political and strategic gap. (Van Ham, 2002: .24-25)

Again, one sees that a more fundamental issue underlies the capabilities gap. In fact the transatlantic gap can be found on three different levels. In the literature on the NATO Response Force most emphasis is put on the so-called transatlantic military capabilities gap. The United States have become technically so well advanced that it has become more and more difficult for its NATO partners to work together with the Americans. Enormous increases in US defence spending eventually resulted in a Revolution of Military Affairs (RMA) which means that the United States has been able to develop all sorts of new military techniques, whereby outweighing Europe. This military gap is the result of a political gap. It is a political decision not to spend as much money on defence as the Americans as it is also a political decision to go to war and use the capabilities.

Besides this, it is also a political decision not to invest in the restructuring of means according to a changing security environment. Underlying this political gap is the strategic value gap discussed in chapter one, a cultural difference between the Americans and the Europeans on how to deal with security threats, how to deal with situations of conflict and war and what place to give defence.

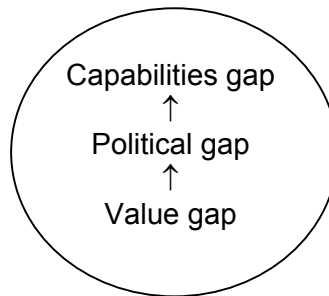


Figure 4.1

#### § 4.4 Conclusions

The gap in capabilities between the United States and its Allies has been apparent for a long time and the fear that in the near future NATO's allies will no longer be able to work together is real. The chances that this problem can be solved in the near future and that the NRF can play any role of importance are small. If one takes into account the current economic situation as well as the political unwillingness of some countries to spend more money on defence, it seems unlikely that the necessary investments to close this gap can, and will in fact be made. The United States have always spend more money on defence than its European Allies, and is expected to raise the budget even more over the next decade.

In Europe, on the other hand some European member states have decided to cut deep into their defence expenditure. It seems unlikely that those European countries, which did took the American pleas for reform to heart, will be able to make the difference. Only a collective European response, promoting closer military co-operation through tasks division and pooling of means and joint buying could end up in savings. But, in the short run, it will only cost participants a lot of money because of the extremely high initial costs. Besides that, European NATO member states spend far less money on research and development, and the research that is being done is fragmented. Again, a collective response is necessary. Unfortunately even if European member states would start to spend the equivalent of what the Americans are spending on their defence apparatus, especially on new military techniques, it would take them years to catch up with them.

With regard to the NRF, this means that, instead of being able to contribute to closing this capabilities gap, it will probably find itself struggling with it in terms of ensuring interoperability between forces and means, especially on the level of the ground forces. Consequently problems will arise including:

- ensuring multilateral representativeness inside the NRF. (more than three to four countries working together could enhance a lack of interoperability);
- ensuring equal contributions to the NRF; (the same countries will have to assign their capabilities more often to the NRF because others do not have the capabilities themselves);
- ensuring flexibility and effectiveness of the NRF. (a lack of interoperability enhances inflexibility and ineffectiveness)

If countries invest a lot in their contributions to the NRF, the gap might be closed at that level. This would mean that European countries have to spend an enormous amount of money on defence, something that they are still not doing enough. Besides this, the so-called strategic value gap will not stimulate countries enough to spend more on defence if they do not see the purpose of doing so. It will take years before Europe can measure up to the United States and one has to wonder were that leaves the NRF tomorrow, or in 2006.

## Chapter 5 – The NRF and European Security and Defence Politics

Officially, the NRF has been created to achieve the following objectives. In the first place, the military force presents the Alliance with a new and agile fighting capability which can respond quickly and effectively to new security threats, especially international terrorism (see chapter 3). Secondly, the NRF is an instrument to streamline European military investments and a means to convince the European NATO member states to reform their defence apparatus, as to ensure complete interoperability between the Allies on the battlefield (see chapter 4). On top of this, by encouraging the European partners to restructure and update their military assets, NATO hopes that the Response Force can act as a spearhead in closing the transatlantic capabilities gap (see chapter 4). Some observers argue that the establishment of the NRF is also part of an American attempt to block European defence efforts. According to the Prague summit final declaration, this is definitely not the case. Officially, the NRF will at no time stand in the way of any European efforts to build a credible defence policy of their own. “The NRF and the related work of the EU Headline Goal should be mutually reinforcing while respecting the autonomy of both organisations” (Prague Summit Declaration, November 21, 2002). The main question is: Will this be possible?

### § 5.1 NRF and ERRF

Two years prior to the creation of the NRF, the European Union had already created another, similar force. At the 1999 EU summit in Helsinki, the EU member states agreed to the formation of a new European reaction force, called the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF). The idea for this force originated in 1998 when the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, met with President Jacques Chirac of France in St. Malo to discuss the creation of a European ‘defence identity’. This initiative eventually led to the setting up of the ERRF, a year later. An outline of the plans for this new force are formulated in the so-called 2003 Headline Goal. According to the Headline Goal, EU leaders committed themselves to the creation of a 60,000 strong military capability by the year 2004. The force should be able to be deployed within 60 days and should have the necessary capabilities to remain in an area for a maximum of one whole year. In principle it would only carry out softer military tasks, the so-called Petersberg tasks (peacekeeping tasks, humanitarian tasks, rescue tasks, combat force tasks in crisis management, including peacemaking (Riggio, 2003). The ERRF has to be seen as a first step towards operationalising the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) (NATO Handbook, 2001:97).

In their article “Transforming European Forces”, Binnendijk and Kugler (2002) stated that their Spearhead Response Force (SRF) would not become a rival of the ERRF, because the two would have completely different missions. This notion can also be found in the NRF-concept, as it was presented by the United States Minister of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, and could later be found in the final Prague Summit Communiqué. At the Prague summit, Secretary General George Robertson once more stated that the two forces would have to complement each other. He repeated the major differences between the two forces and went on to saying that the proposed NRF would have to be looked upon as just another sharp tool in the toolbox. Nothing more, nothing less.

Robertson (2002) stated that:

This is designed to complement the European rapid reaction Force and not to replace it. It's something very different even though it uses a lot of the same forces. I think that clarification was welcome, because we are in the early stages of the NATO reaction force, but we will not produce something that is designed to duplicate or to compete with the European Rapid Reaction Force. (Robertson, 2002)

Other NATO member states also endorse this line of thought. According to the French Minister of Defence, Michèle Aillot-Marie, for example, complete complementarity between the NRF and any EU defence plans has to be the keyword. In a speech delivered at the National Defence University in Washington two weeks after the Prague summit she repeated her views stating that: "On both sides of the Atlantic, talents and capabilities may not be identical but they certainly are complementary and can be made to converge"(Kempin, 2002). Almost one year after the adoption of the NRF, on 16 October 2003, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, the French Prime Minister expressed a similar view, when he once more affirmed the French position to NATO and the NRF. In a speech held before the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies (IHEDN) he stated: "By strengthening European capabilities we are of course contributing to NATO and we are endeavouring to ensure that the two organisations' approaches complement each other with due regard for the autonomy of each" (Raffarin, 2003).

After the Prague summit, President Jacques Chirac declared that his country would be prepared to contribute to the NRF, but under the condition that it would not stand in the way of a European defence community: He stated that: "Nous y sommes donc, sur le principe, favorables", mais "elle devra être développée selon des modalités compatibles avec les engagements que certain d'être nous ont pris dans le cadre de l'Union Européenne". He went on arguing that the French forces assigned to the NRF should also remain available to the European Union 'sans droit de premier emploi' (Paris prêt à participer à la Force de réaction de l'OTAN, mais sous condition, November 22, 2002). Earlier this year, in a speech in reply to the French Armed Forces' new years greetings, Chirac once more confirmed that France will continue to pursue an European Security and Defence Policy. He said:

Situations will arise when NATO will not want or be able to act. The European Union must prepare for them. This is why we are tirelessly pursuing the building of the European Security and Defence Policy, maintaining total transparency with NATO, but doing so firmly and resolutely. (Chirac, October 8, 2004:4)

He went on saying that:

At the Istanbul summit, I shall repeat France's commitment to the Atlantic Alliance. I shall also reiterate that France deems her commitments in the European Union and in the Alliance perfectly compatible. There is no, there can be no incompatibility between NATO and the European Union. (Chirac, October 8, 2004:4)

The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, also stated that the NRF concept should be compatible to European plans for a common defence policy (Bundesregierung, November 22, 2002). At the Prague summit, the German government argued that the NRF should remain compatible to the ERRF. The doubling of structures had to be avoided at all costs. In their view, the ERRF should be able to take over any situation, which NATO did not want to (Stichwort: Die Einsatztruppen von Nato und EU, November 21, 2002).



Days before the summit in Prague, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, stated that a division of labour between the two forces in case of crisis management would not be acceptable (Koch et. all, 2002).

The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, also reacted positively to the creation of the NRF. He stated that:

We need the NATO Response Force able to deploy troops quickly to fight and win. I am grateful to the US Administration for putting forward this excellent proposal. Again we as Europeans have the responsibility to put in the resources and the commitment to make it a reality', he said in his opening speech at the summit. (Tony Blair on "The future of NATO", November 21, 2002)

With regard to possible competition with the European force he later said that:

It is extremely important that we can push forward European Defence. There are going to be circumstances where Europe is able to act but for example, because of American unwillingness to act, NATO is not willing to act. In those circumstances it makes perfect sense for European defence to take this over. (Blair says EU military will not conflict with NATO, November 25, 2002)

From the previous, one can conclude that, officially, the ERRF will in no way compete with the NRF. The two forces, in fact, differ from each other to a large extent, both in structure and in the type of missions they have to perform (for an overview of the two forces, see appendix 4, page 85). However, it remains to be seen if the aim of strict complementarity between the two forces can be accomplished in practice.

## **§ 5.2. Strict complementarity or future competition – political obstacles**

In the eyes of some analysts, complete complementarity between the two forces can be achieved if the ERRF serves as a follow-up force to the NRF. This means the NRF would be used at the beginning of a conflict and the ERRF would act as a follow-up force; a stabilisation force which performs peacekeeping tasks. In theory this could be possible, but one does have to ask oneself the fundamental question if it would be right for the EU to play second hand: the Americans fight the war and the Europeans clean up afterwards. Some observers, like for example Homan, feel that this division of labour is not desirable, neither for the EU, nor for NATO. "Europe should not want this, because it would mean that others would clean up their mess for them", stated Homan (Interview Homan, January 2004). He, however, also acknowledges that, if at the same time, the NRF operates at the high end of the spectrum and the EU at the lower end this would not necessarily conflict with each other. An official at the Dutch Ministry of Defence also doubts whether it would be desirable for EU forces to simply act as a follow-up to the NRF, but he does feel one has to be realistic and accept that the EU is not yet ready to participate in the higher end of the spectrum. In short, they will have no choice but to serve as a follow-up force to the NRF. They do not have the means to act differently. (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004).

## **The ERRF and the NRF in the higher spectrum?**

On top of this, the relation between the NRF and its European counterpart, the ERRF, is not yet clear. Although it is official policy that the two will not overlap or interfere with one another as to avoid duplication, it is likely that complete complementarity will turn out to be an illusion in the long run. In this light, one also has to wonder if the Europeans will be willing to stick to the Petersberg Tasks and remain dependent on the United States and NATO for the completion of their missions. Maybe the EU will want to strive to become more independent from American assistance, by wanting to be able to act at the higher end of the spectrum as well? In fact, especially France is a strong advocate of a European defence capability that can perform in high intensity conflicts without the assistance of NATO (read: the United States). If this should be the case, the NRF and the ERRF will indeed end up competing with each other for the same means. "However, eventually this will all depend on the level of ambition displayed by the Europeans" (Interview Homan, January 2004).

At this moment, this is probably not something to worry about too much. The Europeans still do not have the means and capabilities to perform any of these high intensity missions by themselves, so they will probably remain dependent on NATO, and particularly the United States, for a long time to come. Besides that, there is still no real agreement between EU-member states on what tasks the ERRF has to perform (Riggio). The ERRF will therefore have to remain complementary to NATO and the NRF. It is more likely that the real problem has to be sought the other way around. What if the NRF cannot live up to its expectations and remains at the lower spectrum? As already mentioned, Germany would only like softer tasks to be assigned to the NRF, which would mean that the NRF would work on the same field as the ERRF. This latter view could prove to be more problematic in the near future.

## **Strategic incomplementarity**

Another possible political obstacle has been nicely explained by Ronja Kempin in her article on the relation between the NRF and EU defence plans. In it, she states that both forces are in fact incomplementarian from a strategic point of view. She points out that NATO and the EU have different ways of approaching a conflict. She finds it morally unacceptable to choose the one concept when dealing with the NRF and the other when dealing with the ERRF.

Kempin states that:

Parallel maintenance of a security conception based on military fighting on the one hand and of a security conception based on civil-military actions conceptualized for peacekeeping and peace enforcement on the other hand is not possible in the long run – neither from an analytical view nor under the aspect of Europe's political credibility. How is it possible in the optic of political credibility that European soldiers – with the 'helmets' of NATO Response Force – fight wars or do pre-emptive strikes against a state, then change the NATO Response Force 'helmets' in order to do – on the same ground – peacekeeping and peace enforcement with European Rapid Reaction Force's hats? (Kempin, 2002:10)

In her view, it would therefore be better to set up a "peacekeeping track" inside NATO, which would make it possible for "the ESDP's member states to act in their civil-military conception" (Kempin, 2002:10).

It is true that the NRF and the ERRF represent two different strategic perceptions; an American one and an European one. That much has been made clear in the previous chapters. Parallel maintenance of these completely different conceptions could lead to a certain amount of political ambivalence. Her solution, integrating these different views on defence and security issues inside NATO, without making them somewhat converge, is questionable. According to Kempin, it is not possible for EU forces to both fight the war American style and bring the peace European style. This means that the European Union will once more remain dependent on the Americans (and on those European countries prepared to help the US fight the wars). The only way to solve this problem is either for the Europeans to change their strategic conception to look more like the American one, or the other way around. With the acceptance of the NRF concept, Europe seems to have chosen the latter. However, it remains to be seen if they are able and/or willing to keep their end of the bargain. If they do not, the NRF concept will fail to reach part of its objectives and not much will have changed. The EU will continue only to perform peacekeeping tasks. Whether they do this inside NATO, or as part of their own ESDP does not make a real difference. Fighting wars and bringing the peace are connected and should not be seen separate. Who knows, maybe in the long run, both world views can be made to converge. An European branch in NATO is in itself not a problem, if it leads to the Europeans becoming more dependent on the United States, in the eyes of many observers it is.

Kempin is quite sceptical on the future relationship between the NRF and the ERRF According to her:

What is at stake with the establishment of a NATO Response Force is the political future of the European Security and Defence Policy. In other words: [whilest trying to build] up a NATO Response Force on the one hand, the EU states that at the same time are NATO members might on the other hand give the death-blow to ESDP. (Kempin, 2002:10)

The only way to solve this problem is for the ESDP to be further developed to perform the type of missions similar to the NRF, or for the NRF to change in favour of the European. Funnily enough, the creation of the NRF proved to be a stimulant for the European Union to revitalise its policy. The Praline Summit held in Tervuren and the creation of European battle groups are all examples of a new boost in European defence politics. It is unlikely that the NRF will mean the end of the ESDP and the ERRF. It is more likely that the NRF will lose out because the Europeans will are not willing to accept the American strategy displayed in the concept.

### § 5.3 Strict complementarity or future competition – practical obstacles

On a more practical level, strict complementarity between the two forces will be very problematic and to some extent impossible. If one takes into account the recent budget cuts in some European countries and the low priority they give to defence in general, it will turn out to be extremely difficult to serve two masters at the same time. In the future, this might lead to one of the forces losing out financially. Teunissen (2003), for example, believes that the creation of the NRF will make it harder for the EU to intensify their plans for a European intervention force, unless the ESDP becomes a part of a core-Europe with a strong commitment to increasing European defence expenditure. He doubts this will ever happen because of the internal division among the EU-member states.

Eitelhuber says a similar thing with regard to the financial means available to both forces. According to him full complementarity is a fact when one follows the US-line of argumentation that the NRF operates in the higher spectrum and the ERRF operates in the lower spectrum. One does, however, assume that Europeans are willing to stick to these Petersberg tasks. According to him, Europe does not have the financial means to operate at the higher end of the spectrum. He believes that the argument sometimes raised by observers that every Euro spent on the NRF will have a positive effect on the ERRF as well, is false. At first, he admits, it looks like money spent on forces and capabilities assigned to the NRF will find its way back to the ERRF because they make use of the same troops and capabilities.

However, even if this would be the case the Europeans would not have all the necessary capabilities to operate autonomously in conflicts at the higher end of the spectrum. This has to do with the fact that, the American contribution to the NRF cannot be used for the European force. He states that:

Einiger europäischer Nationen wird diese Entwicklung nicht ungelegen kómen, sind sie doch seit langem gegen eine zu starke militárische Rolle Europas. Die anderen Nationen werden sich der Einsicht beugen müssen, daß nur mit einer deutlich stärkeren finanziellen Unterfütterung ihrer Verteidigungsbemühungen, oder langfristig bei Vergemeinschaftung der Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, moderne Streitkráfte mit den in Breite und Tiefe erforderlichen Fähigkeiten in Europa unterhalten werden können. (Eitelhuber, 2002:3)

At the same time, there will only be so many troops and assets available to the NRF and the ERRF. Capabilities used for an ERRF-operation will not be available for a NRF-operation and the other way around. Officials at NATO-headquarters recognise this complicating 'pooling' factor but they do not regard it to be an imminent problem yet. However, "if the European Union decides to expand its forces in the future there will be a risk of overlap and conflict. If that happens a clear schedule would have to be made" (Interview NATO Headquarters, January 2004). Another NATO official, however, fears that this 'double hatting' will lead to a 'competition for resources'. At the defence ministerial meeting, NATO emphasised the need for a coherent and mutually reinforcing development of the NRF and the ERRF. However, "one NATO official complained that in this regard nothing concrete has been done so far" (Monaco, 2003a).

A defence employee at the Dutch Ministry of Defence also acknowledges the problem, but believes that “with a little co-ordination the issue can be solved” (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004). This, however, does not alter the fact that troops earmarked for the NRF cannot be used for the ERRF. This could be a problem for those, mainly Eastern European, countries who do not have a large pool of military capabilities available.

Another issue that needs to be solved is that of EU-access to NATO’s military planning capabilities and assets. In the past, the Alliance has, on more than one occasion, acknowledged the wish of the EU to have a capacity for autonomous action. In their view, it should be possible for the EU to approve of military action where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged. The EU, however, has not enough operational planning capabilities of its own and no force planning mechanisms. Under the so-called ‘Berlin+’ agreement the EU can therefore make use of both operational planning and force planning mechanisms. The question that still remains to be answered is what will happen if the EU puts in a request for NATO capabilities that at the same time will have to be used for the NRF.

#### **§ 5.4 Blocking EU defence plans?**

It has been argued by some observers that the creation of the NRF is an answer to developments taking place at EU-level. Homan, for example, argues that the creation of the NRF has to be seen as a sort of “Blitzkrieg type of pre-emptive action by Donald Rumsfeld, meant to block any developments taking place at the level of the European Security and Defence Policy” (Interview Homan, January, 2004). Some newspapers have also reported that the NRF has to be seen as a serious attempt made by the United States to block a further deepening of the ESDP. Headlines like “Wary of Europe’s defence plan, the US prepares global cops”, or “New force will end spectre of French-dominated Euro army” account for these thoughts (Roxburgh, 2002; Smith, 2002).

Of course one cannot deny that in the past the pursuing of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), has not been all too well received by the United States. The American reaction towards European efforts to establish a common security and defence policy, with an independent military force (ERRF), has been “ambivalent”, to say the least. In their Strategic Concept adopted in 1999 in Washington NATO recognised the positive effects of the ESDP, but in reality “U.S. policymakers have been increasingly concerned for several years now that the European Union’s goal of acquiring the capability to pursue an autonomous policy in the area of security and defence will undermined NATO’s role as the primary guarantor of European security”. This view has probably been intensified by the creation of the ERRF, which aims at operating independently from NATO. The question is whether the United States in fact aimed at cutting off any further attempts made by the European Union to create a real policy when they proposed the creation of the NRF? This question cannot be answered easily. From the information gathered as part of this research project it is impossible to conclude that the Americans intended to block the ESDP (*hypothesis 4: The NRF has been created to block European defence plans*). However, this does not mean that in the eyes of some observers this is exactly what the United States were aiming for.

Bailes, for example, does not believe that the NRF has been created to block European defence plans and criticises those people who disapprove of the NRF for exactly this reason. According to Bailes, the initial critic on Rumsfeld's proposal had not so much to do with the contents of the proposal but more to do with transatlantic tensions. These tensions were partly raised by the fact that 2002 had been a bad year for the European Security and Defence politic. The EU lacked a common vision. Bailes states that:

Eine Bilanz der Errungenschaften von NATO und EU auf diesem Gebiet ließ es objectiv unwahrscheinlich erscheinen, dass das Bündnis die Mühe auf sich nehmen würde, neue Initiativen zu erdenken, nur um die ESVP noch weiter zu schwächen. Doch in ihrer nationalen Politik hegten die Europäer sehr wohl den Verdacht, dass die Regierung von George W. Bush die nächsten Gelegenheit beim Schopfe packen würde, um der gemeinsamen Europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik und auch dem gemeinsamen europäischen Willen, von dem sie ja abhängig ist, ein für allemal den Garaus zu machen. (Bailes, 2003, p. 53)

She continues to state that:

Solange die Union nicht bereit ist, eine vollständige Verteidigungsgemeinschaft zu werden, bieten die Formeln von St. Malo und Helsinki den besten, wahrscheinlich den einzigen Weg, den Europa in Richtung dieser Ziel verfolgen kann. Die wirklichen Gefahren auf diesem Weg haben weder etwas mit der NATO zu tun noch mit den griechischen-türkischen Meinungsverschiedenheiten, die die Sache bisher durcheinander gebracht haben. (Bailes, 2003:53)

Bücherl also believes it is wrong to think that the NRF will serve as a means to undermine European defence initiatives. According to him, the United States were not only thinking about themselves when they created the NRF. Bücherl says:

Die Ergebnisse der vor diesem Hintergrund lancierten Initiativen tragen zwar eine amerikanische Handschrift, lassen aber auch Raum für europäische Interessen. Die Liste der Entwicklungs- und Beschaffungsziele der 'Prager Verpflichtung für Potenziale' (PCC) genügt nicht nur amerikanischen Prioritäten, sie deckt sich auch weitgehend mit der Wunschliste der Europäer für ihre Europäische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik.. (Bücherl, 2003: 56)

Eitelhuber (2002) also argues that: "Es sind somit nicht die USA, die mit ihrem Vorschlag zur Schaffung der NRF die Aufgabe der ESVP beschneiden, sondern die Europäer selbst, durch ihr Versäumnis, in der Vergangenheit mehr in die Mittel zur Führung eines modernen Krieges investiert zu haben" (Eitelhuber, 2002:3). So, the argument that the United States would be to blame for a failure of European defence plans is false.

At the same time, one has to conclude that not much has happened over the last couple of years with regard to creation of the ERRF. The force should have been operational by now but is not. On top of this, the European Capabilities Action Plan (the European alternative to the DCI and the PCC) has not had the wanted results. According to a Dutch defence official, however, "the funny thing happened that after the creation of the NRF more emphasis is once again being put on European defence" (Interview Dutch Ministry of Defence, January 2004). So, in his view, if the United States made an attempt to block European defence plans they would obtain the opposite results.

## § 5.5 Conclusions

The relation between EU plans to develop an ESDP, with at its centre the ERRF on the one hand and revitalisation of NATO through the NRF on the other, is a complicated one. Although, based on the previous, one cannot conclude that the NRF concept was in principle aimed at blocking the ERRF, it is still not impossible that some people in the current US Administration had this at the back of their minds when they forwarded the proposal. However, according to official policy, the two forces are designed to complement each other (*hypothesis 6*). Complete complementarity between the two forces can be achieved if the ERRF serves as a follow-up force to the NRF. The question is whether this is either desirable and realistic. Several observers, for example Homan, believe that this type of tasks division is unacceptable.

In this light, one also has to wonder if the Europeans will be willing to stick to the Petersberg Tasks and remain dependent on the United States and NATO for the completion of their missions. What if Europe decides that it wants to act at the higher end of the spectrum as well? If this is case, the NRF and the ERRF will end up competing for the same means. However, at the moment it is far more likely that the real problem has to be sought the other way around. What if the NRF cannot live up to its expectations and remains at the lower spectrum? This would mean that they would work on the same field as the ERRF.

On a more practical level, only a certain amount of money and troops will be available to both forces. As far as the amount of troops is involved this is not so much a problem at this moment and could easily be overcome by making a clear schedule. This however does not mean that countries which do not have a large pool of troops available will not have problems living up to the expectations of NATO and the EU at the same time. The fact that there is only so much money one can spend can become a real problem in the near future, especially considering the current economic situation. Another issue that will have to be dealt with, is what will happen to the ERRF if NATO operational planning capabilities have to be used for NATO purposes and can not be used for EU purposes as was agreed upon under the Berlin+ agreement. All these issues will have to be dealt with in the future and it remains to be seen if they can be solved satisfactorily.

Complete complementarity therefore seems to be an illusion. The creation of the NRF might in fact overshadow the efforts made in building the ERRF. For now, based on the previous, this risk of competition is not so apparent but things might change in the future. Earlier this year, January 2004, the French President, Jacques Chirac, once more affirmed that France will continue with 'determination' to the construction of a European defence community (Chirac: pas d'opposition entre l'Otan et la défense européenne, January 8, 2004). It seems that Europe will continue to develop their ESDP, which will enhance the ambiguity between the EU (ERRF) and NATO (NRF). Their relationship will become more difficult each time the Europeans decide to move a bit further into the direction of an autonomous European defence.

## Chapter 6 – Conclusions

Over the past two years the Alliance has taken some important steps in realising its agenda for the twenty-first century. Especially developments taking place at the level of the NRF have been called remarkable by many. Within less than a year of its creation, the Force officially reached initial operating capability in October 2004. Full operational capability is expected as soon as 2006, and some insiders do not rule out the possibility that the Force will be deployed for the first time by the second half of 2005. But although substantial progress seems to have been made with regard to this Force, it remains to be seen whether the objectives that NATO has set out for the NRF will be realised in the near future. In the previous chapters of this thesis, both the form and the contents of the NRF concept have been discussed in detail. In this final chapter, conclusions will be presented regarding the research questions expound in chapter one. Besides that, the hypotheses, also explained in the first chapter, will be summarised here.

The first question that needed to be answered in this thesis was what objectives NATO had set out for the NRF to achieve? Research has shown that many observers hold many different views regarding both the underlying reasons that led to the creation of the NRF and the objectives the force will have to achieve. But, although reasons for the establishment of the NRF are multiple, they are all unquestionably related to a more fundamental discussion about the current state of the transatlantic relations. Throughout the last decade the United States have started to display a more unilateralist attitude towards foreign policy, which has also had its effects on NATO. According to the United States, NATO has not been able to transform fast enough to deal with the 21<sup>st</sup> century security environment and therefore the United States has openly started doubting its relevance. Although the changes to US foreign policy can be traced back to the end of the Cold War, the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, have brought the differences related to international security co-operation to full light. The events of '9/11' marked an important step in US foreign policy and is linked to the creation of NRF (*hypothesis 1*). The force, that in the eyes of many observers has to be regarded as a final US attempt to keep NATO relevant to the United States, is heavily influenced by the post-'9/11' strategy as formulated by the current US government (*hypothesis 2*). The current attitude towards international politics displayed by the Americans, can be explained by the neo-realist theory of international regimes expound in chapter one. The United States are clearly trying to control NATO by proposing a force that serves their own interests best. The country has been acting as a true hegemon, when convincing other NATO member states to accept the NRF concept. Besides that, the formulation of the concept can also be explained by a neo-realist military constructed reality. It can therefore be argued that the creation of the NRF can be explained as an attempt of the Bush administration to allow NATO to continue to exist instrumentally inside the Pax Americana (*hypothesis 3*), instead of an autonomous action form NATO itself (*hypothesis 4*).

Based on the available research material, only those objectives that can be regarded as official NATO policy has been defined to be discussed in detail throughout this thesis. In the first place, the military force presents the Alliance with a new and agile fighting capability which can respond quickly and effectively to new security threats, especially international terrorism.



Secondly, the NRF is a instrument to streamline European military investments and a means to convince the European NATO member states to reform their defence apparatus, as to ensure complete interoperability between the Allies on the battlefield. On top of this, by encouraging the European partners to restructure and update their military assets, NATO hopes that the Response Force can act as a spearhead in closing the transatlantic capabilities gap. And thirdly, the NRF will at no time stand in the way of any European efforts to build a credible defence policy of their own.

In order to achieve the first objective, the NRF has been especially designed to act as an initial entry force, well-equipped to fight high-intensity conflicts outside its own geographical borders. It was intended for pre-emptive warfare and will in principle not depend on a UN-mandate. Based on the information presented in chapter three, one can conclude that the nature of the concept as was agreed upon at the Prague Summit is unlikely to sustain in the future (*factor 1: nature of the concept*). The main reason for this has to be found in what has been described as the differences in strategic culture between the United States and its European NATO partners. The formulation of the NRF concept is dominated by an American perception of how to fight new 21<sup>st</sup> century threats and it remains to be seen if the Europeans will be willing to accept this view. Holding on to the NRF concept in this particular way could ultimately stand in the way of the NRF becoming the success NATO is hoping for, especially considering the fact that a change of US foreign policy is unlikely to occur in the coming years (*hypothesis 5*). Problems related to decision-making procedures at NATO level will further complicate this (*factor 2: decision-making procedures*). NATO works on a consensual basis, which means that the NRF will only be deployed if all parties agree. On top of this decision-making procedures are continuously getting more complicated. NATO is aware of this and is investigating how to adapt its organisation to the enlargement that recently took place. It is important to note here that this does not mean that the NRF will therefore never be deployed, but is likely that the Europeans will ultimately not accept the American dominated formulation of the concept.

Similar conclusions can be drawn as to the question as to whether the NRF will serve as a catalyst for supporting improvements in NATO's military capabilities. Many observers doubt the attempts being made to close this gap. It would require huge investments from the side of the Europeans and, when one takes into account the current economic situation as well as the unwillingness of some countries to spend more money on defence, it seems unlikely that those investments can and will in fact be made (*factor 3: necessary capabilities*). The fact that similar initiatives taken in the past have failed because of problems related to money is definitely not encouraging. Those countries that did make the decision to augment their defence budgets and are developing initiatives based on asset sharing and joint procurement will probably not be able to make the difference. With regard to the NRF, this means that instead of being able to contribute to closing this capabilities gap it will probably find itself struggling with it in terms of ensuring interoperability (especially on the level of the ground forces), multilateral representativeness, equality and flexibility. Reaching the same military and technological level of capabilities will be impossible in the near future. Even if European member states would start to spend the equivalent of what the Americans are spending on their defence apparatus, especially on new military techniques, it would take them years to catch up with them. In this regard the NRF will not be able to play the role the United States have been hoping for.

One can argue that closing this military gap is again part of an American perception of how to deal with security threats. This US-perception requires a certain type of capabilities the Europeans do not have. So, convincing the Europeans to make a better effort to close the gap has more to do with ensuring a NATO which is capable of US-type warfare in the future instead of bringing Allies closer together. Again, the neo-realist approach can explain the US attitude. One has to wonder if it might not be better for the United States to accept some of the differences on the level of these capabilities instead of trying to push countries in their direction, without even being very effective up to now.

Finally, one has to conclude that complete complementarity between the NRF and the ERRF in the future seems to be an illusion (*factor 4: European defence plans*). There are European countries who clearly insist on further development of a more autonomous European defence. Especially France believes that in the long run Europe should be able to fight high-intensity conflicts without having to depend on NATO's assistance in any way. As was mentioned in the previous chapter this would have practical consequences in terms of availability of forces and other capabilities as well as financial means. At the moment this is probably not something to worry about too much because critics believe it will take Europe a very long time before it reaches that level. A much more eminent problem lies in the fact that if the NRF cannot live up to its expectations to fight at the higher end of the spectrum this could mean that they end up working on the same field as ERRF. Whether the Americans deliberately created the NRF to downplay any attempts on the side of the Europeans to develop a stronger European defence policy is not quite clear (*hypothesis 6*). Some observers still look at the creation of the NRF as a US attempt to block European defence plans, others state that European plans were at a very low level at the time and are now in fact benefiting from the NRF. Although it is not very likely that the NRF concept was in principle aimed at blocking the ERRF, officially it was not. Even though one cannot deny that some people in the current US Administration are quite sceptical about the European defence plans, it is not possible to find any conclusive evidence that they tried to actively block its further development.

To conclude, one can ask oneself whether it is possible to adapt the NRF's form and contents in such a way, as to enhance its chances for success in the future. Throughout the previous chapters, solutions have been presented for the more practical problems that might arise in the future. Problems related to the national decision-making procedures can probably be solved. To a certain extent this also goes for a possible overlap between the NRF and the ERRF. However, at the basis of our discussion lies the fact that the United States have convinced the European Allies to accept a proposal dominated by a US attitude towards international security issues, an attitude which can best be explained by a neo-realist approach to international organisations. The force's future success heavily dependent upon the European willingness to accept the NRF in this form. According to many observers it remains to be seen if the Europeans will legitimise this American way of strategic leadership in the long run. From what has been said in the previous chapters, one can conclude that it is unlikely that the European Allies are able and willing to conform to the NRF concept as formulated at the Prague Summit. The fundamental differences between the United States and Europe on how to approach the issue of international security, which results in diverging conceptions on strategy, are real and will undermine any future deployment of the NRF unless one is willing to accept those differences. Introducing a concept that does not take those differences into account will not contribute to solving the problem of NATO's relevance.

Therefore, ultimately, the problem of how to keep NATO relevant to the United States will not be solved by an all-American NRF. If, however, the United States are able and willing to use the NRF for NATO purposes, instead of national purposes, the force might be able to achieve its objectives to a large extent and might even be able to serve as a bridge that brings the Allies closer together, both politically and militarily.

# Appendix

# Appendix 1

## *Interview NATO Response Force.*

### **NRF**

1. According to many, like for example the American Minister of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, the creation of the NRF has to be seen as a final attempt to keep the transatlantic partnership alive. Do you share the opinion that the future of NATO and the co-operation between the United States and her European partners depends on the success of the NRF? Why / why not?
2. Where do you think that the idea for the creation of the NRF originated from?  
  
Which factors have, according to you, been of overriding importance to the creation of the NRF?
3. It seems that not much discussion preceded the adoption of the NRF proposal. Is this assumption correct? If no, why not?  
  
How do you explain the quickness with which the other NATO member states proved themselves willing to accept the American proposal?
4. According to its creators, the NRF will cost the Europeans no more than 2 to 3 percent of the annual European defence budget. Do you share this view? Why / why not.

### **Procedures**

5. Quite a few factors might stand in the way of the NRF achieving its main aims, like for example the existence of different decision-making procedures related to the deployment of military troop abroad? How do you think (your organisation, the Netherlands) to solve these problems?
6. NRF commander Deverell stated that, according to him, it would be wiser for those countries not yet ready to adapt their decision-making procedures not to participate in the NRF? Do you share this opinion? Why / why not?  
  
Do you think participation in phases or the use of so-called opt-outs is desirable? Why / why not?  
  
Do you think that the NRF will lose strength if one decides to the introduction of these measures? Or do you think that these measures will make NRF deployment easier, whereby more successful ?  
  
Is there a tendency towards introducing these type of measures?

7. A more fundamental problem is the difference between Europe and the United States regarding which security strategy should be used. In the NRF concept there has been talk about the use of so-called pre-emptive strikes. This is clearly something that fits an American view towards how to fight and prevent conflicts. Many European countries have a problem with this line of thought. Do you think this could stand in the way of the NRF become a success? Why / why not?

How do you think this problem could best be solved?

8. Some analysts argue that the NRF can only be operational if the partnership contains no more than two or three countries at the same time? A multitude of countries would make the NRF less flexible? Do you share this opinion? Why / why not?
9. Critics even fear that the same 3 to 4 somewhat larger countries will end up participating together in NRF missions, especially because this is regarded to be more effective. How do you think a clear balance between multilateral representativeness and effectiveness can be obtained?
10. Do you think a multilateral coalition of countries is in fact possible? Or do you think that there will be groups of countries that will function as leaders? How big is the chance that the NRF will end up as a *coalition of the willing*.
11. Is the fear of some countries that the United States will play a dominant role inside the NRF justified? Why / why not?
12. Many countries value the use of a UN mandate? The NRF has to be operational within days. This could be problematic. How do you think this could best be solved?
13. Does the United Nations take these issues into account in their reform discussion?
14. How do you think countries could be convinced to change their procedures in order to participate in the NRF?
15. Do you expect the NRF to be fully operational by the year 2006? Why / why not?

#### **Relationship between the NRF and the ERRF**

16. To what extent do you think that the creation of the NRF might stand in the way of its European counterpart the ERRF? Is complementarity between the two forces to be expected?
17. Many observers share the opinion that the ERRF and the NRF should complement each other. The NRF should be deployed in the first (more dangerous) phase of a conflict, the ERRF troops should act as a follow-up force, performing peacekeeping tasks. Do you believe this task division to be desirable to Europe? Does it not make Europe more dependent on the United States? Why / why not?

18. On a European level there is no clear consensus on the tasks the ERRF should fulfil. In the NRF concept there has been talk about many different tasks. Is there a consensus amongst NATO member states on the tasks the NRF should fulfil?

**NRF and Dutch policy**

19. How does Parliament think about changing the Toetsingskader? Have proposals to adapt its contents been made? What do these proposals look like?
20. Has the NRF proposal been talked about in detail (in your organisation) before the Netherlands accepted the American proposal?
21. Do the Netherlands have enough defence capacity to make a contribution to both the NRF and the ERRF at the same time?
22. Will the Netherlands have to reform their defence structure in order to participate in the NRF? How does one read the recent cutbacks in defence expenditure?

## Appendix 2

- The NAC starts off the planning phase by asking the Strategic Commander (SC) to develop a plan of operations. This plan then has to be approved of by the Council before it can be exercised. If the Council approves of the plan it issues a Force activation directive'. This mean that the SC can start the 'force generation process', meant to generate the forces necessary for the operation. In general, this process takes a very long time. The SC issues an 'activation warning' to all regional commanders and all NATO member states, informing them about the need for military forces. Member states can then make informal contributions to the operation. Only when the strategic commander has got a good overview of these contributions and the feasibility of the operations, he issues a 'activation request'. Through this request countries can formalise their contributions. Only after the NAC has issued the 'activation order' the operation can take place (AIV, 2004).
- A decision is based on a draft proposal, presented to all Allies by either the Secretary General, or by a the head of one of the working groups or committees that prepared the proposal. Draft proposals may be initiated by the Secretary General himself, by the International Staff, or by individual Allies. Sometimes the presentation of a draft proposal is preceded by a consultation period. If no Ally breaks silence, which means notifying the IS the proposal is approved. In case that one or more Allies do break silence the proposal will be adapted as to reach consensus. Consensus is reached by means of informal consultation and influence (Michel, 2003).
- In his article, entitled "NATO decisionmaking: au revoir to the consensus rule?", Leo Michel presents four possible options to streamline the decision-making procedure at the NAC, without compromising on the important role of consensus. All four options will be discussed here shortly to give an idea of how quick NRF-deployment could be assured (Michel, 2003). Any decision involving the deployment of the NATO Response Force will take place in the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

- *'Threatened Ally Rule'*

Normally, NATO Military Authorities (NMAs)'s only prepare those contingency operational plans initiated by the NAC, as was already mentioned above. The 'decision-making by consensus rule' can seriously slow down this initiation process if one, or more, Allies have doubts regarding the operation. According to the 'Threatened Ally Rule", any NATO member state could make a request to the NMAs asking them to prepare a contingency operation plan if they feel threatened in any way. This option would be entirely consisted with Article four of the Treaty. According to Michel the burden of proof would shift from the threatened to the non-threatened Allies. The latter would require a consensus to determine that such planning was unneeded or unwise. In case of a quickly emerging threat the military options would already be available. At the same time consensus would be safeguarded.



- *'SACEUR's Discretion'*

Under this option the SACEUR would get permission to prepare and update contingency operational plans for a broad range of NATO missions. The SACEUR would keep the Secretary General informed of such plans. Obviously, the NAC would retain its power to decide whether any of the planning options are executed, but the plans are always up to date which means that a decision could be made a lot faster. In the light of the NRF this is a good thing.

- *'Empowering coalitions within NATO'*

According to this option, consensus on the level of the Council would still be required, but it could mandate a NATO-committee of contributors to carry out the operations. Only those Allies willing to contribute to a mission would be included in the planning and execution of the operational plans. The Secretary General would, who would chair the committee, would regularly inform the other Allies that declined their contributions. They would not be involved in the planning and execution of the mission. It would allow does countries who agree on a certain threat to take appropriate measures, by drawing on NATO capabilities. According to Michel it would avoid the image of a 'coalition of the willing and able'.

- *'Consensus Minus One Rule'*

Following this approach, a consensus on the level of the Council would still be desired, but under a Qualified Majority Vote (QMV) it would make it more difficult for one Ally, or a small group of Allies, to block the decision-making process. The QMV process would be similar to that used by of the European Union. Again, an option like this would enhance a possible deployment of the NRF.

## Appendix 3<sup>6</sup>

- Question 1: Does your country require parliamentary approval for military deployment abroad?
- Question 2: Does your country require parliamentary approval for military deployment abroad within non-Article V collective NATO actions, such as in the Balkans?
- Question 3: What are the procedures, including parliamentary approval if necessary, within Article V collective NATO actions?

COUNTRY	RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>No to all.</b> The government can independently deploy military assets abroad, but has to report to parliament immediately. The government announcement to support Article V on 12 September was given approval by parliament.
<b>Canada</b>	<b>No to all.</b> Very similar to the UK system (see below). The government will normally consult parliament.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<p><b>Yes to Question 1.</b> With the accession to NATO in 1999, adjustments to the constitution were made in order to allow the deployment of foreign troops on Czech territory and the sending of Czech troops abroad. Article 43 of the constitution requires parliamentary approval, which consists of more than a half of all Deputies and Senators. [<i>Exceptions:</i> The government has full authority to deploy troops up to 60 days if 'they fulfil obligations from international joint defence against aggression'; or if it is a participation in 'peace operations in accordance with the decision of the international organisation, of which the Czech Republic is a member, and subject to the consent of the receiving state', (e.g. NATO Operation Essential Harvest in Macedonia), or if 'or if they provide assistance in natural disasters, industrial or ecological accidents'.]</p> <p><b>Yes to Question 2.</b> Parliamentary approval is required for military deployments abroad for non-Article V collective NATO actions exceeding 60 days as well as for those not covered by the exceptions above. (Czech participation in SFOR and KFOR were approved by parliament, but prior to the change of the constitution).</p> <p><b>No to Question 3.</b> Within Article V, the government is authorised to approve deployment for up to 60 days; for longer periods parliamentary approval is required. The are also authorised to approve the stay of foreign troops in the Czech Republic for up to 60 days.</p>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>No to all.</b> Parliamentary approval is not required, but in practice, the government will consult with parliament and seek their approval (e.g. Balkans, Kosovo).

<sup>6</sup> Monaco, Annalisa (2003b)

<b>France</b>	<b>No to all.</b> If French military means were involved, parliament would be consulted and regularly informed, e.g. Kosovo. No approval in form of a vote is required.
<b>Germany</b>	<b>Yes to all.</b> Following a decision by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994, the constitution requires that the government must seek parliamentary approval prior to any deployment. This is based on cases involving German participation in international peacekeeping missions conducted by the UN, but is also applicable to NATO operations –Article V or non-Article V. ‘In exceptional circumstances such as specific time constraints,’ ... approval may be sought after deployment, in which case the parliament would be entitled to terminate the ongoing operation. (Since 1994, there has only been one operation with no prior approval: the evacuation of German and other EU nationals in Albania in 1997). [ <i>Exception:</i> In case of deployment of armed forces abroad for humanitarian relief or for conduct of support operations no approval is required, as long as there is no involvement in armed operations.]
<b>Greece</b>	<b>No to Questions 1 and 2.</b> [ <i>No comment was provided, and no answer was given for Question 3.</i> ]
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Yes to Questions 1 and 2.</b> According to the constitution, deployment of troops abroad or foreign troops on Hungarian territory requires prior approval by the National Assembly by a two-thirds majority. This is regardless of, whether the operations are for an Article V operation or not. [ <i>Exceptions:</i> Some training, NATO overflights, logistic transport, etc. ‘The government has been authorised to approve certain ... troop movements for PfP, NATO and other bilateral peacetime exercises on a case-by-case basis. In the case of air defence of the country, the government also has the right to allow the use of Hungarian airspace for Allied aircraft’.] Examples: Hungary’s contribution to IFOR/ SFOR and KFOR, which is based on separate parliamentary resolutions. For ‘Essential Harvest’, Hungary deployed only civilian ordnance experts, so no approval was required.  <b>Yes to Question 3.</b> Practically, this approval can be obtained almost immediately, it was done for the recent decision to invoke Article V.
<b>Iceland</b>	<b>No to Questions 1 and 2.</b> Iceland does not have armed forces. For civilian personnel assigned to Allied peace support operations, the government decides after consultations with the Foreign Relations Committee of the parliament.  <b>No to Question 3.</b> The North Atlantic Treaty was ratified by the parliament, which obliges Iceland to fulfil commitments under Article V. ‘Government decision is required for collective NATO actions under Article V, after consultations with the Foreign Relations Committee, but the parliament’s approval is not required by law’.
<b>Italy</b>	<b>No to all.</b> There are no constitutional requirements that necessitate parliamentary approval, but the government is obliged to consult parliament. In practice, however, the government is likely to seek official approval via a vote.

<b>Luxembourg</b>	<p><b>No to Questions 1 and 2.</b> Following the peacekeeping law of 1992, no parliamentary approval is required. There is, however, a formal procedure of consultation, according to which: the government must inform the Foreign Affairs Committee and solicit its opinion, the government must ask the Council of State for advice, and the government must inform the presidents of the parliamentary political parties. After these consultations, a government decision will be taken, and then published in the official government journal.</p> <p><b>No to Question 3.</b> The government will decide to either simply inform the parliament of its decision to take part in an operation under Article V, or to submit its decision to parliament and request approval by a simple majority vote.</p>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<p><b>No to all.</b> The government has the authority to deploy troops in any situation. For NATO commitments, the parliament will assess government decisions only after they have been taken. For non-NATO missions, the government will inform parliament it is considering deployment, take a decision, the decision will be debated in parliament, then the offer will be made by the Dutch government. In order to structure the parliamentary debate, a framework for 'verification of the relevant points of interest' (Toetsingskader) has been developed. It seeks to facilitate a critical exchange between parliament and government. Only after this procedure has been completed can the operation be authorised or participation offered.</p>
<b>Norway</b>	<p><b>Yes to Question 1.</b> 'Approval may be obtained through a formal contacts with parliament, requesting a formal consent. In such cases approval could come through a formal vote'. More common is the consultation with the Extended Committee on Foreign Relations (parliamentary party leaders as well as members of the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Defence), which would lead to an approval through joint agreement. This process is regarded as sufficient to allow deployment of troops abroad, but it may also be followed by a presentation by a government representative to the parliament. [<i>Exception:</i> In case of emergency, or when parliament stands adjourned, it may be sufficient to consult only the parliamentary leaders of each party.]</p> <p><b>Yes to Questions 2 and 3.</b> Article V and non-Article V cases are treated as above. The procedure chosen depends on the 'nature of the operations, the seriousness of the situation and the time factor'. In extremely serious cases the government would combine consultations with a formal meeting of parliament.</p>
<b>Poland</b>	<p><b>No to all.</b> Since 1998, the president is authorised to decide on the use of Polish troops abroad. The decision is taken upon formal written request made to the President by the Prime Minister. The prime minister has the authority to initiate the procedure in a legal and political sense. The decision is made in the form of a resolution, entering into force upon his signature, and is later published in the official government journal. The government is then obliged to promptly inform the speakers of parliament about the resolution.</p>
<b>Portugal</b>	<p><b>No to all.</b> The government takes all decisions regarding national defence and international defence commitments. Parliament is then informed and the High Council for National Defence is convened (made up of the PM, ministers, two MPs, Heads of three defence branches and Azores and Madeira representatives). Finally, the Defence Minister lays down arrangements in a ministerial decree, officially authorising specific action and terms of engagement. Currently under discussion is a Parliamentary Commission for National Defence which would oversee military engagement abroad.</p>

## Appendix 4

	<b>ERRF</b>	<b>NRF</b>
Date of creation	1999	2002
Fully operational by the year	2003	2006
Amount of forces	± 60.000	± 20.000
Time of deployment	Within 60 days up to a year	Within 5 days up to 30 days
Tasks	Petersberg Tasks: 1. Humanitarian tasks 2. Rescue tasks 3. Peacekeeping tasks 4. Tasks of combat forces in crisis management	1. Consequent management (including NBC) 2. Peace enforcement (including mass migration) 3. Embargo and interdictions 4. Strike (counter terrorism) deterrent and reactive operations (anti terrorism) 5. Non-combat evacuation operations 6. Theatre missile defence
Intensity of conflict	Low	Low – High

## Summary

At the Prague Summit in November 2002, NATO leaders unanimously agreed to the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF), a fully interoperable and integrated high-readiness capability, able to act as 'the first boots on the ground' in the Alliance's full conflict spectrum. Developments taking place at the level of the NRF have been called remarkable by many. The force is on its way of reaching full operational capability within less than two years. According to the Prague Summit's Final Declaration the creation of the NRF serves two purposes. First, the creation of the NRF is an answer to changes taking place in the international security environment, which is marked by a globalisation of threats, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism. The force presents the Alliance with a new and agile fighting capability, which is can respond quickly and effectively to these new security threats. Second, the NRF has to be regarded as an instrument to streamline European military investments and a means to convince the European NATO member states to reform their defence apparatus, as to ensure complete interoperability between the Allies on the battlefield. On top of this, by encouraging the European partners to restructure and update their military assets, NATO hopes that the force can act as a spearhead in closing the transatlantic military capabilities gap. A third objective mentioned in the Prague Summit's Final Declaration is the desire to avoid a duplication of capabilities on a European level.

But, although substantial progress seems to have been made with regard to this force, it remains to be seen whether the objectives that NATO has set out for the NRF will be realised in the near future. Lack of clarity as to the nature of the threats that the NRF is supposed to counter, the lengthy decision-making procedures that proceed its deployment, the current economic situation in the member states, the ambiguous relationship between the NRF and its European brother, the European Rapid Reaction Force, and the current state of transatlantic relations influence the developments taking place at the level of the NRF. Especially the later is an element of great importance in understanding why NATO member states agreed to the creation of this force in the first place. The current state of US-EU relations can also serve as an explanation as to the way the proposal has been formulated. The role of the United States in this process is one of importance.

The fundamental issue underlying the creation of the NATO Response Force and its future deployment is the difference between the United States and its Allies on how international security issues should be dealt with, and on what role NATO and the NATO Response Force should play. Throughout the last decade the United States have started to display a more unilateralist attitude towards international foreign policy, which has also had its effects on NATO. According to the United States, NATO has not been able to transform fast enough to deal with the 21st century security environment and has therefore openly started doubting the organisation's relevance. Although the changes to US-foreign policy can be traced back to the end of the Cold War, the '9/11' terrorist attacks have brought the differences related to international security co-operation to full light and the NRF concept, that in the eyes of many has to be regarded as a final US attempt to keep NATO relevant to the United States, has been heavily influenced by both this shift in US-foreign policy and the current terrorist threat. The current US-attitude can be explained by the neo-realist theory of international regimes. The United States are trying to control NATO by proposing a force that serves their interests best.

The country has been acting like a true hegemon, when convincing other NATO member states to accept the NRF-concept. However, there seems to be a wide consensus amongst observers and analysts that there is no longer a common conception of security and military strategy. The current transatlantic drift has been these differences painfully visible. Over the last couple of years US-EU relations have remained strained, which will make NRF deployment more uncertain. With regard to the NATO Response Force, both its objectives – fighting new threats and closing the capabilities gap – can be reduced in an American perception of how to deal with current international security issues. As far as the first objective is concerned, the NRF fits neatly into the US's conception of how to fight today's battles, thereby not shying away from the use of preemptive or preventive action, and passing over the United Nations. Holding on the NRF concept in this particular form might eventually only strengthen the differences between the Allies. Especially with regard to the formulation of the concept and the nature of threats that the NRF has to counter, the United States should have a better eye for the differences in strategic culture, and should understand that most European member states will not want to deploy their troops in that particular way. On the other hand, a more proactive European attitude with regard to fighting new threats is desirable.

With regard to the second objective, one can subsequently argue that the US's perception requires a certain type of capabilities that the Europeans do not have. Convincing the Europeans to make a better effort to close the gap has more to do with ensuring a NATO that is capable of US-type warfare in the future instead of bringing Allies closer together. At the Prague Summit the European NATO member states approved of the NRF, and thus of the American way, but it remains to be seen whether this approval can and will be translated into concrete action. The United States should make more technology available to Europe and should at the same time understand that a real transformation will take a very long time. Besides that, they should accept that some of the differences on the level of these capabilities will not be solved. Finally, with regard to the third objective it remains to be seen if NATO can succeed in avoiding an overlap between the NRF and its European counterpart, the ERF. It seems that complete complementarity in the future will ultimately be an illusion.

One cannot deny that over the last two years important developments have taken place with regard to the NRF, but clearly a lot of work remains to be done. Factors that stand in the way of the NRF reaching its objectives can be traced back to the underlying fundamental differences in strategic-military conception and can therefore only be solved if these differences are being dealt with in a satisfying manner. Trying to keep NATO relevant to only the United States will not do NATO or the NRF any good. Instead of making NATO more relevant, the NRF might in fact magnify the difficulties between the Allies. In other words, unless more fundamental issues are being dealt with first, the NRF will not be the success story NATO is hoping for. Although, of course, quite a few practical issues related to the future development of the Force can be solved in the long run, it remains to be seen if the Europeans will ultimately accept the American attitude towards NATO and the NRF. If they do not, this will mean that it is unlikely that the United States will be able to achieve its main goal, which is keeping NATO relevant by means of the NRF. Only if they are willing to adapt their views to European reality the NRF could end up to be far more than a paper army. If the United States fail to do this, the fundamental differences between the United States and Europe on how to approach the issue of international security will undermine any future deployment of the NRF. Ultimately, the problem of how to keep NATO relevant to the United States will not be solved by means of the NRF.

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