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Complementarities and Differences in EU and US Policies in Northern Europe

INTRODUCTION

IN RECENT YEARS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) AND THE UNITED STATES (US) HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CONTENTIOUS. The principal European critique has decried what many Europeans see as America's blatant disregard of global norms and what Chris Patten, the EU's External Affairs Commissioner, has labelled America's 'neuralgic hostility to any external authority over its own affairs' (Patten 2000). In its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol and the establishment of an International Criminal Court, its reluctance to pay its dues to the United Nations (UN), and its eagerness to scrap the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Europeans often see America as lurching towards a unilateralist stance based on America's military preponderance, whilst multilateral organisations, legal conventions and international norms are pushed aside.[1] With the declaration of the war on terrorism, and its re-focusing on Iraq, such concerns have been further fuelled by recurrent American protestations that the US will not shirk from acting alone and without the support of its allies if it feels it necessary.

The various merits or otherwise of such criticisms are not the concern of this article. However, such debates do provide an interesting background to American policy in the Baltic Sea region through its Northern European Initiative (NEI), which has been widely overlooked in EU debates on American policy. This is surprising since the NEI is precisely the type of inventive, norm-driven and multilateral-based policy that Europeans tend to champion. What is more, in the NEI the US has explicitly picked up on the EU's own Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI). Rather than being an arrogant hegemon with a simplistic understanding of the dynamics of world politics, which is often how Europeans characterise America, in the north of Europe American policy has been driven by a sensitive understanding of the region's dynamics and a distinct concern not to appear like an overbearing superpower.

This article explores the relationship between America's NEI and the EU's NDI. To begin, the article starts with a brief introduction of the policies and seeks to situate them in the context of the emergence of the new geopolitical order following the end of the Cold War. In offering this theoretical framework through which to examine the policies, the article argues that modernist concerns with organising the world into clearly defined territorial spaces are increasingly being challenged by globalisation

processes and the emerging postmodernity, perhaps best characterised by proponents of the neomedievalisation thesis.

In this context, the article then shows how the NEI and NDI have represented a relatively inventive and forward-thinking approach to this situation. This is achieved by analysing the complementarities between the policies in which they are shown to break out of traditional Westphalian frames of governance and reference. The NEI and NDI are instead seen as embracing multiple identities and the creation of overlapping spaces of governance, whilst as a central part of this process also prioritising questions of "soft" societal security over those of "hard" military security. Despite this shared agenda and their many complementarities, however, certain tensions and differences between the policies can also be identified. This is the focus of the third section of the article. These tensions and differences are particularly evident in the position accorded to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in each of the policies, with the NEI being tied to a policy of NATO enlargement in a way the NDI has not. Also notable is that whilst the US has been relatively enthusiastic in drawing a link between the NEI and NDI, the EU has been considerably more reluctant in this regard. In trying to explain the reasons for these similarities and differences, to a certain degree the relationship between the NEI and NDI can be seen as standing as a microcosm of the tensions and compatibilities in EU-US relations more generally.

Before concluding, the article speculates on how the post-September 11 environment and the future enlargement of NATO and the EU to the Baltic States will affect developments in the region and the dynamics between the NEI and NDI. The argument made here is that, although a desire is apparent to reinvigorate both the

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NEI and NDI and to enhance co-operation between the policies, all of which is to be welcomed, the measures currently proposed by which this might be done actually threaten to undermine the very innovativeness that has made the policies valuable and interesting by instead stressing a relatively traditional agenda of territorialised security issues.

Coping with Postmodernity: The Geopolitical Background

With the end of the Cold War it has become increasingly common to hear arguments pronouncing the end of the nation-state, the erosion of state sovereignty and the emergence of a borderless world.[2] In this view, a new world order driven by the unstoppable forces of globalisation is seen as emerging in which modernist Westphalian concerns for territorial sovereignty and governance are seen as increasingly irrelevant. Instead, postmodernity is upon us in which, to borrow from Castells (1989), the "space of places" is being replaced by the "space of flows". It has, of course, also become common to argue that such pronouncements are overstated. States are not disappearing, ideas of state sovereignty are still with us, whilst territorial borders in some parts of the world are becoming more, not less, important.[3]

In the midst of this debate, however, a consensus is emerging that holds that, whilst states and territorial boundaries are not about to disappear, their MEANINGS, ROLES and FUNCTIONS are increasingly open to redefinition and development (Newman and Paasi 1998:193; Newman 2000:17).

In the case of state borders, this is particularly apparent in the way that in some parts of the world they are now often reconceptualised as frontiers, or fuzzy zones,

metaphors indicating both the borders' openness but also the fact that the distinction between previously distinct territorial spaces is becoming blurred (Christiansen *et al.* 2000). Moreover, state borders are also losing their saliency as other boundaries of jurisdiction, legitimacy and authority have gained in importance. Indeed, whereas the Westphalian order has been characterised by a concern for establishing the territorial differentiation between different societies, differentiation is nowadays as likely to be drawn along functional lines. As Albert (1998:62-3) has put it, whereas in the modern order functional and territorial boundaries and jurisdictions were for the most part understood as overlapping and mutually reinforcing, today this is less the case. As such, it is the idea of territorial sovereignty as the absolute form of political legitimacy that is today being questioned (Newman 2000:20).

Analytically, one response has been to draw parallels between the feudal past of Europe with present developments, which are now seen as heralding a NEW MEDIEVAL-ISM. Through the use of the medieval label reference is made to a past when various overlapping authorities had legitimacy in the same territory. As Ruggie (1993:149-50) has noted, the medieval period differed from the modern age because the various territorial boundaries of governance — of the Church, the State, town and feudal barons *etc*. — were not understood as exclusive but as an overlapping patchwork — a situation anathema to idealisations of the Westphalian system.[4]

However, whilst for some the new medievalism of postmodernity has been welcomed as liberating, for many others the contingencies and uncertainties associated with postmodernity and globalisation/glocalisation have been considered much more problematic. Indeed, and as Bauman (1996) has ably summarised, with its lack of fixities and its implicit question-ing of all foundations of truth, tradition, culture and identity the postmodern world can be a considerable cause of anxiety. In postmodernity, the Enlightenment tendency to think in terms of life-long projects (or as Bauman puts it, to structure life as a pilgrimage) appears foolish and set to be overtaken by the next passing fad. Rather than searching for definite fixed identities and structures, individuals, social groups and organisations would be better to embrace short-termism and adopt a mentality of perpetual adaptability. As he puts it, 'It seems that we have entered a time in which formlessness is the fittest of forms' (Bauman 1996:52). This, however, is a situation that many find difficult to come to terms with.

In the realm of international politics, the end of the Cold War has contributed considerably to these feelings of uncertainty. As Ó Tuathail (1996; 1997) has summarised, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of Communism caused a crisis of meaning in global politics because it deprived international affairs of its central organising script. The long enduring geopolitical frames of a world split between two competing blocs became irrelevant almost overnight and a significant de- and re-territorialisation was unleashed, contributing to what Ó Tuathail (1996:225-6) terms an unnerving sense of 'geopolitical vertigo.'[5] In Ó Tuathail's (1997:43) terms, geopolitical vertigo refers to the fact that 'global space appears less perspectivist, more hybridized, and moving in multiple, decentred flowmations beyond the power of sovereign states.' Amidst such processes feelings of insecurity have grown.

One result of this sense of insecurity and anxiety has been certain notable attempts at re-territorialising the post-Cold War world in relatively traditional modernist ways in order to try to reassert order onto the perceived unfolding disorder and chaos. These attempts essentially

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result from a crisis of identity and the desire to reassert our space and place and sense of being in relation to that of others. As Ó Tuathail points out, in America two of the clearest examples of this have come from Huntington and Luttwak. Both have been concerned to overcome the spatial blurrings of postmodernity by sketching what they see as the crucial geopolitical lines of conflict in the twenty-first century (Ó Tuathail 1996:230-1). Thus, for example, in 1990 Luttwak argued that the future conflicts and challenges facing America will come in the realm of economics where America must be prepared to thwart the challenges of Japan and the EU, otherwise America is in danger of slipping to the status of a third world country (Luttwak 1990; Ó Tuathail 1996:231-40).

Huntington's geopolitical script for future world conflict differs. Rather than focusing on nations, Huntington shifts analysis to the world's civilisations, which he sees as geopolitical entities, with more or less clearly defined borders, and between which future conflict is assumed to be virtually unavoidable (Huntington 1993; Ó Tuathail 1996:240-9). Notably, however, both Luttwak and Huntington re-territorialise global space according to Cold-War strategic culture, meaning they divide the world into spaces of ours and theirs and conceptualise international politics as a never-ending 'zero-sum struggle for power between competing states or state-like entities' (Ó Tuathail 1996:231).

On the European side of the Atlantic similar geopolitical concerns, if of a less overtly conflictual nature, can be seen in the EU's Schengen policy, a border regime aimed at clearly demarcating insiders from outsiders and providing a barrier for the inside against the more pervasive threats of illegal immigration, drug smuggling and so on (Grabbe 2000; Walters 2002; Browning 2003b). What the Schengen policy shares with the writings of Luttwak and Huntington is a modernist presumption about the sanctity of "our space" in the face of the threats seen as lying "outside".

It is in this broader context of uncertainty and anxiety about the increasingly globalised and de-territorialised post-Cold War world, and the consequent desire of some to re-impose a fixed modernist shape to global politics, that the policies of the NEI and NDI should be understood. As will become clear below, in contrast to the fear-driven views of Huntington and Luttwak, and that are also evident in the Schengen policy, these policies represent attempts to embrace the postmodern fluidity of the post-Cold War period. Rather than trying to encase space behind specific borders and to "fix" the geopolitical landscape of northern Europe, the policies appear to be an attempt to move beyond traditional geopolitical concerns, to play with multiple identities, to build overlapping spaces and to experiment with organising governance more along functional (and variable) lines than territorial lines. Moreover, instead of thinking of world politics as a realist inspired zero-sum game in which conflict is endemic, both policies resonate a more liberal idealist agenda, with the belief being that benefits can accrue to all. As we will see, it is this liberalist inspired belief that has led to northern Europe being conceptualised in both policies as a unique site where new forms of governance beyond that of sovereign states can be experimented with.

Even further, a developing neo-medievalism is not feared as a portent of future anarchy but instead is seen as a wise developmental model. This is apparent in the comparisons that are often drawn in these policies with respect to the medieval Hanseatic League that emerged during the thirteenth century, and can be seen as having been a pre-state system of international governance. More specifically, the Hanseatic League was a network of some two

hundred towns stretching from Novgorod in Russia through to Holland, and also with links to London. The system was, however, centred round the Baltic Sea with cities such as Lubeck, Königsberg and Hamburg being three of the more important towns involved. This league of towns established its own rules for trade and commerce alongside a system of penalties and punishments for breaking the League's laws, it had an overall decision-making assembly with each town having a single vote, but it also had local assemblies to deal with regional issues affecting only a few towns. The League also had the ability to sign treaties. However, this system of governance was not exclusive but existed alongside that of the many kingdoms, territorial lordships and church jurisdictions in which the different towns existed.[6] The symbolic importance of the Hanseatic League to both the NEI and NDI will be further stressed below.

Finally, whilst the content, aspirations and limitations of the NEI and NDI will become apparent in the rest of the article, a few introductory words are necessary. In the first instance, it should be noted that both policies can be seen to have had relatively traditional security motivations deriving from uncertainties in the future course of Russia's development.

The NDI, for example, originated as a Finnish initiative in 1997 (Lipponen 1997) that, it has been argued, was intended to multilateralise Finnish-Russian relations by bringing Finnish concerns onto the EU agenda, but also to enhance the voice of northern Europe in EU affairs more generally (*e.g.*, Vaahtoranta and Forsberg 1998; Ojanen 1999:13-26; Pursiainen 1999; Arter 2000:677-97). As such, for the Finns the NDI has in part existed as a subtle and unprovocative security policy *vis-à-vis* Russia. Subsequently, the NDI has been seen in broader terms as a policy that might also have a positive security dividend in EU-Russian relations, particularly in view of the

EU's planned enlargement to the Baltic States. Although the slow institutionalisation of the NDI has received criticism, it was successfully raised to the EU agenda and in 2000 was provided with an Action Plan for 2000-2003 (Council of the European Union 2000). A second Action Plan is currently in preparation with discussions on providing the NDI with its own budget line taking place. At a general level, the NDI's goal has been to provide a forum for co-ordinating the EU's different activities in northern Europe, with a particular focus on breaking down the East-West divide and providing space for Russia's integration into the European economic project, a process through which it is believed security would also be enhanced. In this respect, and as will become clear, the innovative element of the NDI lies in the fact that it deliberately aims at blurring the distinction between the spaces of "us" and "them". To this extent, it exists somewhat in contradiction with the EU's Schengen border policy.

America's NEI also emerged in 1997. However, the initial point of concern here was preserving the security and independence of the Baltic States. The question, as Asmus and Nurick (1996) put it in an article that provided the foundations for the NEI, was how to preserve the Balts' security in light of NATO enlargement to states in Eastern Europe. In this respect, the NEI originated as a policy designed to signal to Russia that, even though the Baltic States would not be included in the initial round of NATO enlargement, this did not mean that the US regarded them as lying within the Russian sphere of influence. As such, the NEI was initially underlain with quite traditional geopolitical concerns (Browning 2001a:89-91). However, the NEI has paralleled the NDI in its approach to Russia, the goal being to include Russia in the emerging Baltic Sea region and to foster co-operation between the different societies of the

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region in the hope of building a more enduring peace. With only a limited budget, the NEI has not been a priority of US policy.[7] However, the fact that the policy has been maintained and has survived the initial transfer from the Clinton to the Bush Administration is important and, as we will see, there is support for the judgement of Rhodes (2000:91) whereby in many respects the NEI stands out as a 'revolution in American thinking.'

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COMPLEMENTARY POLICIES

TO DRAW OUT THE INNOVATIVENESS OF THE NEI AND NDI AND TO ELABORATE ON WHAT THE POLICIES ENTAIL, IN THIS SECTION THE COMPLEMENTARITIES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE POLICIES WILL BE FURTHER EXAMINED. As indicated above, an initial similarity between the policies can be seen in the original security motivations underlying them, even if the initial geographical reference points for the policies differed slightly. The proposed solutions of both the NEI and NDI to such traditional geopolitical security concerns, however, have not involved falling back on traditional realist conflict-driven frames that presuppose the continuing hostile division of Europe. Instead, drawing on the principles of democratic peace theory and the insights of liberal institutionalism/interdependence the aim has been to prevent the conflicts of the past from infecting the politics of the present by building a community of shared interests and identities.

In American rhetoric, the aim is to finally create a 'Europe whole and free,' to 'fix' Europe once and for all by finishing a process that began after the end of World War II with the institution of the Marshall Plan (Asmus 1999). For its part, European rhetoric on the NDI talks of the need 'to avoid new dividing lines in Europe' and 'to involve all our neighbours' (Patten 1999).

In short, both the NEI and NDI represent attempts to shift concerns within the European north away from questions of hard military security towards a new agenda of co-operative security. This is to be achieved through promoting mutual dependencies by building a series of multilateral organisations and regimes that include all actors in the region, especially Russia. Also central is the encouragement of foreign direct investment in the region and the opening up and integration of the Russian northwest with the global economy, the belief being that this will create wealth for all in the region (but also in the US and the EU more generally) and therefore contribute to soft security (van Ham 2000b:279) — with soft security understood in terms of social and individual well-being as opposed to hard (military) security considerations, with its preoccupation for preserving the territorial integrity of the sovereign state.

Importantly, therefore, security in the NEI and NDI is not conceptualised as a zero-sum game in which if the security of one side increases then that of another must necessarily be undermined. Instead, by encouraging cross-border interaction and building up networks of interdependence it is believed a win-win situation can be created to the benefit of everyone's security. This is reflected in the priority goals of the NEI and NDI, which are virtually identical. Of particular import is promoting co-operative regimes in the areas of the environment, business promotion, civil society creation, law enforcement, energy linkages and public health (Council of the European Union 2000; Overview of the Northern European Initiative 2001).

Given the European concerns of American unilateralism highlighted at the start of this article, it is also interesting to note that the US has been explicit in affirming that it has no intention of creating its own institutions. Instead, the US'

goal is to work through the many existing multilateral structures and institutions in the region, such as the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Nordic Council, and the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) (Talbott 1998; Ries 2002).[8] Indeed, unlike US policy in many other parts of the world, in the Baltic the US has taken a decidedly back seat, instead looking to the governments and people of the region for leadership.[9] This appears to be the result of American awareness of Russian sensitivities to US involvement in a region many Russians continue to view as belonging to their sphere of influence.[10]

Moreover, whilst opportunities are seen to exist to move towards a co-operative security agenda in the European north, the NEI and NDI are also similar in that both see the emergence of new forms of governance in the region as having wider global application. This is clearest in the case of the NEI where American discourse frequently refers to the European north as a 'laboratory,' 'experiment' and a 'testing ground' for a new type of politics and regional governance (Council on Foreign Relations 1999; van Ham 2000a:63). For America, the key is to try to integrate Russia into liberal democratic norms and institutions of governance and in the process overcome the Cold War division once and for all, the idea being that if Russia can be successfully integrated into regional co-operation in northern Europe then the NEI will provide a model to be transposed elsewhere in order to extend the democratic peace to more tumultuous regions. For example, in comparing the Baltic Sea region with the Balkans, in 1999 Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Ronald Asmus (1999) noted that, 'The sense is that if we could figure out a way to translate your experience and plant similar seeds in south-eastern Europe today, we would be very, very well advised.'

As pointed out elsewhere, such goals reflect a tradition of Wilsonian idealism and liberal internationalism in US foreign policy that depicts American identity as imbued with a moral purpose to spread the liberal democratic principles of American civilisation around the world.[11] Central to this liberal internationalist vision is the assumption that there is nothing inherently conflictual about international politics, and if only liberal democratic institutions were widely accepted then conflict between different societies, cultures and states could be mediated peacefully. Thus, in commenting on US policy in northern Europe Hunter in 1997 even went so far as to proclaim that 'We are trying to do nothing less than to repeal and abolish that most failed principle of international politics of the last 350 years, which is the balance of power itself' (Hunter 1997). Such thinking differs radically from that of Huntington and Luttwak with their desire to re-inscribe a geopolitics of conflict onto the post-Cold War scene.

Notably, this missionary element to American identity is also paralleled in widespread understandings of the EU as being founded in and imbued with a peace mission to spread its practices beyond its borders. As French President Jacques Chirac (2001:20) put it, 'The purpose of the European Union is to establish lasting peace on our continent. This is its task. It will take up this task gradually but irreversibly.' In this respect, for many within the EU the NDI is seen as simply one further manifestation of this peace mission as the EU now disseminates its liberal democratic values across the EU's external borders to the Baltic States and Russia. As Antola (1999:126) notes, 'This role of the EU is very much at the heart of the Northern Dimension.'

At the same time, the EU is relatively less eulogistic than the US in its rhetoric on regionalising developments in the European north. This is probably partly because,

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for the EU, some of the novelty has no doubt worn off, after all the EU has already been engaged in the European north for a decade through the CBSS and BEAC. However, to some extent the NDI is also seen as somewhat troubling to the EU. Whilst this point will be expanded below, for now it can be noted that there is something of a contradiction between the EU peace mission, as most clearly embodied in its internal decentralised and multi-layered system of governance, and the EU's current relatively modern desire for strict territorial sovereignty along its external borders, as epitomised by the Schengen visa regime (Grabbe 2000; Browning 2003b). Notably, the NDI plays directly on this tension, aspiring to include non-members in decision-making and thereby blurring divisions between the inside and outside of the EU, and further promoting the regionalisation of European governance not just within the EU, but also across its borders.

Finally, and as indicated in the previous section, it should also be noted that in their promotion of regional co-operation and cross-border interaction, in their focus on non-governmental organisations, civil society, business and the private sector, and in the fostering of inter-regional and sub-regional networks that largely bypass the modern state, both the NEI and NDI promote developments that actually go well beyond the traditional notions of transcending the Cold War and that actually envisage a relatively profound reorganisation of political space in the European north. Put pejoratively, in their explicit goal of transcending borders, encouraging multiple layers of governance and providing a forum for non-state actors to have a voice the NEI and NDI exhibit relatively postmodern features. As pointed out above, this is particularly clear in the metaphors attached to both policies.

Most evocative in this respect is the widespread comparison of the possibili-

ties of the present with the Hanseatic League of the 13th and 16th centuries, a pre-state system of international governance that, it is contended, united northern Europe in a liberal free-trade framework. In this respect, the construction of a NEO-HANSEATIC LEAGUE is presented as representing a return to normality following the unnatural division of the region during the Cold War. As Anthony Wayne, then a US official dealing with European and Canadian Affairs, put it in 1998:

> *With the disappearance of the artificial divisions of the Cold War, the Baltic sea is resuming its role as a regional unifier rather than a divider. The old Hanseatic ideal of an open trading area can once again become the model for how the region can grow politically and economically* (Wayne 1998).[12]

In particular the CBSS, with its focus on bringing about the cultural, commercial, economic and environmental unity of the region, has been depicted as the contemporary equivalent of the Hanseatic League. The metaphor is also important because it extends the region to Russia since Russian cities like Novgorod were also participants in the Hanseatic League (Shearer 1997). The implication is that, without taking Russia into account, little will be accomplished in terms of moving towards a new security agenda (van Ham 2000a:68). Similarly, the metaphor encourages actors to think regionally, to re-conceptualise national identities in regional terms and to thereby undermine the previous tight link between the nation and the state's territorial sovereignty that has been characteristic in the region (and European politics more generally) for much of the last century.

The other key metaphor is, of course, that of the NORTH which is indicative of how in the NEI and NDI the US and the

EU have been able to step outside the constraining conceptual boundaries of East and West. As van Ham (2000a:88) notes, as such 'Since "Europe" is no longer defined on the basis of "westernness" but also on a more diffuse notion of "northernness", Russia is offered a new focal point, a new route for co-operation which may make it feel at home.' This is to say, by opening up the notion of northernness the NEI and NDI appear to depoliticise the significance of East-West categorisations of Europe. This rhetoric transcends Huntingtonian notions of civilisational divides, in favour of a more variegated European geography which offers Russia the opportunity to be included.[13]

These ambitions are far reaching and represent a relatively enlightened and inventive approach to tackling the problems of the post-Cold War period. In particular, these ambitions stand in contrast to an enduring post-Cold War tendency on the part of some to resort to traditional and conflictual frames of reference, not least regarding the presumed inherently different and threatening nature of Russia for the West and the rest of Europe. The same frames, in reverse, can of course also be found in Russia. Such perceptual frames tend to see processes of globalisation, and its attendant effects of de-territorialisation, in a negative light. On one hand, these processes are seen as threatening in their ability to break down the territorial integrity of a reified sovereign self. Similarly, they are seen as opening up the self to infiltration by potentially threatening outsiders. In contrast, the NEI and NDI are attempts to embrace and enhance the fluidity that has emerged in the European north since the end of the Cold War, to move beyond questions of territorial sovereignty and existential military security to a new environment in which interests, identities and spaces are shared and in which the previous concern with exclusiveness is replaced by goals of inclusiveness.

Tensions and Differences

Having laid out some of the principal similarities between the NEI and NDI, and pointed to their wider significance, it is however, also important to highlight where the policies of the US and EU in the European north differ. Thus, despite shared proclamations of a Europe "whole and free" and "without dividing lines", this section will show that such sound bites also mask points of contention in the US-EU relationship.

NEI: Conflating NATO with "Europe"

Perhaps the clearest difference between the two initiatives is the distinct positions they have accorded to NATO in the forthcoming Europe "whole and free". Notably, in American discourse on the NEI a link with NATO enlargement to the Baltic States has always been made. In contrast, at least until the November 2002 NATO conference in Prague at which enlargement to the Baltic States was agreed on, the NDI tended to eschew any discussion on such a linkage and has instead appeared more concerned with making reliance on NATO for security in the region redundant.[14] Moreover, given that the US has seen the NEI as a policy aimed at overcoming the geopolitical divisions of the Cold War by fostering interdependence and a new politics of co-operation, the link to NATO enlargement has appeared somewhat perplexing in view of enduring Russian suspicions of the organisation. The first question we need to explain, therefore, is why it is that the NEI and NATO enlargement have been so closely linked in US policy?

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A case can be made that, at least initially when the policy was launched in 1997, the NEI's link to NATO enlargement to the Baltic States was simply rhetorical and nothing more. In the first instance, it should be remembered that the NEI emerged in relation to the question of how to preserve the security of the Baltic States in the wake of NATO enlargement in Eastern and Central Europe. That NATO should have appeared in the policy at a discursive level is therefore not surprising. In this respect, at times the Balts have expressed some concerns that, rather than being an actual commitment to their future membership in the Alliance, the NEI was actually crafted as little more than an empty appeasement policy designed to defer any decision on the issue altogether (van Ham 1998:224). Evidence for this can be seen in the 1998 US-Baltic Charter of Partnership. On the positive side, the Charter made an explicit commitment to the Baltic States' future membership in NATO. At the same time, however, the Charter was also devoid of any timetable for membership and emphasised that enlargement would be dependent on NATO concluding 'that the inclusion of these nations would serve European stability and the strategic interests of the Alliance' (Charter of Partnership 1998).

From the perspective of the Baltic States, such provisions clearly opened up the possibility for delaying their membership and also appeared to give the lie to the claim of the very next paragraph in the Charter that no non-NATO country would have a veto over membership decisions of the Alliance. Clearly, if enlargement to the Balts was going to be staunchly opposed by Russia then enlargement would be unlikely to contribute to European stability or the strategic interests of NATO. As Karp (2002:105) has noted, essentially what has been at issue in debates like this, is whether America places greater priority on their liberal obligations to the Baltic States or on *realpolitik* considerations of their relationship with Russia. As the Prague agreement confirmed, in this particular case the agenda of liberal obligations came out on top.

However, there have also been other reasons to suggest the US commitment to the Baltic States' membership of NATO was genuine from the beginning. First, the missionary rhetoric of liberal internationalist discourses that construct American identity in terms of a crusading role that it is America's destiny to play in Europe has been important. Not only was this missionary view of America's role in the world central to President Clinton, but also it remains important to the Bush Administration. For example, President Bush has spoken of the need to confine talk of East-West divides to history and to complete the project of creating a 'Europe whole and free' (Bush 2001). In this vision, all previous Eastern bloc states have the right to be 'welcomed into Europe's home' (Bush 2001).

However, such notions mask the very particular understanding of what "Europe" and "belonging to Europe's home" means in US thinking. In short, the US maintains a highly institutionalised view of the definition of Europe that equates belonging with membership in Western organisations, in particular NATO and the EU. This was evident in rhetoric in the run-up to the Prague summit that the Baltic States have a "right" to "join Europe", membership of which was denied to them as a result of the Cold War. As van Ham (2000a:73; original emphases) put it:

> *The aspiration of becoming a full member of NATO and the EU (and to a lesser extent the WEU [Western European Union], is considered a necessary and natural element of being a European country, of not just being an integral part of GEOGRAPHICAL Europe, but also of a POLITICAL Europe.*

This is further evidenced by the fact that American officials have also drawn on rhetoric of the Baltic states as "coming home to the West", that is "coming home to Europe", the implication being that it is NATO and the EU that represent the essence of the "real" Europe (*e.g.*, Talbott 2000).[15] Consequently, the US' desire to create a Europe whole and free is seen to require expanding the institutional framework of Europe as embodied in NATO and the EU. As Madeline Albright contended in April 1997, a central reason for enlarging NATO 'is to right the wrongs of the past. If we don't enlarge NATO, we will be validating the dividing line Stalin imposed in 1945 and that two generations of Americans and Europeans fought to overcome' (Albright, quoted in van Ham 2000b:217). In June 2001 President Bush backed this up, emphasising that all of Europe's new democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, should have the chance to join Europe's institutions; whilst on NATO enlargement Bush stated, 'we should not calculate how little we can get away with, but how much we can do to advance the cause of freedom' (Bush 2001; Gordon and Steinberg 2001). As such, the desire to erase all borderlines in Europe has in fact become synonymous with the need for NATO expansion.

Second, this position in US policy is further inscribed by the way in which NATO has been re-envisioned as a security community and a community of values since the end of the Cold War, thereby naturalising NATO's enlargement in the future. As Williams and Neumann (2000:367) have noted, NATO is no longer simply understood as a military alliance but has been re-conceptualised in civilisational and cultural terms as a security community centred around the shared democratic foundations of its members. This transformation became evident during the Kosovo war when NATO justified its bombing missions in terms of the need to uphold the values of Western civilisation, loosely understood in terms of human rights, democracy and freedom. As van Ham (2001:395-6) has put it, in its quest for a post-Cold War role and identity, 'By bombing the "barbarians" in Serbia, the allies took advantage of a unique occasion to underscore their shared values, meanwhile assuring NATO's continued importance.'

Much the same development appears to be taking place with NATO's current attempts and debates on adapting itself to the demands of the War on Terrorism. However, one implication of re-conceptualising NATO as part of a Western civilisational project is that, in order to retain legitimacy, NATO membership must be open to all those who wish to join and who comply with the values of the security community. Rejecting applicants solely on the basis of strategic thinking is becoming difficult. For example, whilst a member of the Clinton Administration, Madeline Albright asserted that, 'We have said all along that NATO is open to all democratic market systems in Europe' (Albright quoted in Sergounin 1998:36). Similarly, the US-Baltic Charter affirmed that the Baltic States 'will not be left out or discriminated against due to factors of history or geography' (Charter of Partnership 1998). Having proclaimed such policies there has been a certain obligation to live up to the promises. The role assigned for the NEI in this has appeared to be that of de-politicising the issue of NATO enlargement by enhancing soft security and constructing border-breaking regional identities and affinities so that questions of hard military security drop off the agenda. To refer to Albright again, what the US has really hoped for is that through such policies as the NEI Russia would eventually get bored with NATO enlargement and focus its energies on more fruitful areas of co-operation (Albright, cited in Asmus 1997).

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Of course, waiting for Russia to get bored with the question of NATO enlargement may take some time. Despite the more positive signals from President Putin that were apparent even before 11 September 2001, and despite Russia's acquiescence to the decision to enlarge NATO taken at Prague in November 2002, alongside the establishment of a new NATO-Russia partnership, many Russians clearly continue to view NATO as a geopolitical threat that seems intent on trespassing in Russia's traditional sphere of influence.[16] Thus, whereas for NATO the Kosovo war was understood as a chance to assert NATO as a democratic security community protecting the values of Western civilisation, Russia instead noted how the NATO mission lacked a UN Security Council mandate. In NATO's general disregard for Russian opinions, it also 'violated the letter and spirit of the Founding Act with Russia' that in 1997 had created a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (Moshes 2000:11). As such, NATO's unilateral action was seen as moving geopolitical boundaries closer to Russia's borders, whilst at the same time reaffirming Russia's exclusion from Europe.

It remains to be seen whether the new partnership agreed on in Prague will be able to overcome such suspicions. However, rather than seeing NATO as the central security institution in Europe many Russians have often preferred to highlight the UN, the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and the Council of Europe, organisations within which Russia has the equal status that is denied to it in NATO (MacFarlane 2001: 286). Moreover, Russian sensitivities to the very independence of the Baltic States, as well as to their future membership in NATO, are also apparent in the Russian Duma's continuing refusal to ratify the border treaties the government has negotiated with the Baltic States. They are also apparent in the alleged pressure the Russian government has applied to Kyrgyzstan since the US began its operations in Afghanistan, to stop Baltic soldiers entering the country as part of the Balts' contribution to the War on Terrorism, a contribution that the Balts have clearly seen as a signal to NATO of their acceptability to the Alliance as contributors, not simply consumers of security, but a signal that Russia, in this instance, is undermining (Glasser 2002).

What all this points to is that there is a certain irony in the close tie the US has made between the NEI and NATO (and to a lesser extent EU) enlargement. In short, there is a danger that the Europe envisaged by the US as embodied in the institutions of NATO and the EU is becoming presented precisely as a Huntingtonian-type civilisational empire gradually extending its borders through enlargement. Placing so much emphasis on NATO and EU enlargement has the potential to undermine the more multiperspectival view entailed in postmodern Hanseatic discourses on the NEI, which emphasise the role of multiple overlapping organisations and institutions without any particular hierarchy amongst them. By focusing so much on NATO there has been a tendency to re-inscribe a hierarchy in which NATO is seen as the primary actor. Further, given the history of the organisation, linking the NEI so closely to NATO has to some extent jeopardised attempts to get beyond traditional East-West divisions in order to promote less politicised notions of Europe as being open to a new plurality of which northernness would be one part.

Notably, the EU has also shared some of Russia's concerns. Whilst, like the US, the EU is motivated by a civilisational discourse in which the EU is understood as having a mission to continually extend its peace project, in contrast the EU has rarely linked its peace mission to NATO enlargement. In the EU perspective, NATO is generally associated with ques-

tions of military/hard security, whilst the EU is the paradigm of the soft security approach of mutual interdependence. In this respect, it is notable that until 2001 and Putin's more positive views on NATO, a number of the EU NATO members had been relatively cool about the issue of NATO enlargement to the Baltic States, seeing it as provocative and only likely to complicate relations with Russia (Schmidt 2000:79; Hubel 2002:2).[17]

Likewise, linking definitions of Europe to NATO membership does not fit the neutrality and non-alignment policies of a number of EU member-states. Not least this is the case with Finland, the inspiration behind the NDI, and a country that until recently appears to have seen the NDI as a way to keep the question of NATO enlargement to the Baltic States on the back burner.[18] The difference between the NEI and NDI in this respect, therefore, is that the NEI appears to be trapped in a discourse in which membership of "Europe" is equated with membership in a hierarchy of Western organisations headed by NATO, but with the EU not far behind. In contrast, in not having membership in PARTICULAR and hierarchically prioritised institutions as an end goal the NDI steps outside these potentially exclusionary definitions and more fully embraces the multiperspectivism of the HANSEATIC metaphor, with its call for multiple and overlapping spaces of governance and political order. Particularly notable in this respect is that, in its deliberations on the future of the NDI, the EU Council recently asserted that the initiative should build on its multiplicity by linking in with a wide range of actors at the national, EU, regional and local levels and that it should be driven by the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity. Thus, whilst the Commission may increasingly assume the role of overall co-ordinator, the aim is to move away from a top-

down approach to co-operation and to instead promote a certain decentralisation (Council Group Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2002).[19]

Another reason for the US' emphasis on NATO in the NEI can perhaps be seen in terms of US-EU relations more generally and the fact that NATO remains America's most significant instrument of representation in European affairs (Schmidt 2000:80; Walker 2000:466). This may also explain the positive links the US continually draws between the NEI and the EU's NDI. Notably, American speeches on the NEI virtually always make a link to the NDI and stress that it is in northern Europe that a new post-Cold War US-EU partnership can be forged (*e.g.*, Tribble 2000:62). In particular, the NEI is sometimes presented as little more than a supplement to EU policy in northern Europe (*e.g.*, US Department of State 2000).

To some extent, these persistent references to NATO and to a relationship of partnership with the NDI appear to betray American fears that, as the EU develops into an increasingly unified actor with its own foreign policy and currency, the US is in danger of being isolated from Europe and being marginalised in the triangle of EU-Russia-US relations (Serfaty 2001:601-2). These fears are clearest in recurrent concerns over European efforts to create a common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which will involve the establishment of a European army, and which has been positively encouraged by some Russians who have seen it as a chance to slide in between the US and the EU and to foster the multipolar world order they desire. American concerns in this regard have been vocal and the US has been quite adamant in asserting that NATO must remain the centrepiece of European security. As Colin Powell has put it, NATO 'is the bedrock of our relationship with Europe. It is sacrosanct. Weaken NATO,

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and you weaken Europe, which weakens America' (Powell, quoted in Daalder and Goldgeier 2001:76). Of course, if since September 2001 NATO has been weakened then the US itself must carry much of the blame with its sidelining of the Alliance in the War on Terrorism. Regardless of this, however, what is important here is that the NEI's focus on a relationship of partnership with the NDI and its promotion of NATO enlargement has established the policy as a vehicle for the US to remain engaged in Europe. Put another way, through the NEI the US finds space and a forum within which it can retain a constitutive voice in European affairs, and more particularly in the relationship developing between the EU and Russia.[20]

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In stark contrast to US interest and references to the NDI, the EU's attitude to America's NEI has been characterised by ambivalence — although there are now signs of change (see below). This ambivalence is no more evident than in the Action Plan on the Northern Dimension, the policy's foremost document to date, that was presented to the European Council at Feira, Portugal, in June 2000. Notably, the Action Plan fails to make a single reference to the NEI. On the other hand, the US is mentioned three times but only to say that there MAY be some gains to be made through co-operation with the US and Canada in the areas of energy, the environment, nuclear safety, legal reform, health and issues of sustainable development in the circumpolar and adjacent northern regions. However, the Action Plan is bereft of specifics of what this co-operation might entail, how it will come about, through which institutional forums, and who might be involved (Council of the European Union 2000).

In 1999, amid proclamations of how both sides desired to enhance the effec-

tiveness of their co-operation, the EU and the US actually decided to continue dialogue on northern Europe through the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) (Joint Statement by the European Union and the United States on Northern Europe 1999). In practice, however, the results have at best been haphazard, at worst non-existent. Indeed, by the EU's own admission concerning the NTA in general, 'Despite the NTA emphasis on action-oriented co-operation, the formal structures for EU-US dialogue have largely been dominated by ad-hoc exchanges of information and delivered little in terms of concrete co-operative action' (Commission of the European Communities 2001:10).

Despite this general ambivalence, however, European opinions on the relationship between the NDI and the NEI have actually been divided. For example, the Finns have been decidedly positive in their attitudes to including the US in European policies in northern Europe. Notably, when Finnish Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, first introduced the NDI in 1997 it was made explicit that the US and Canada were also included in the concept's geographical scope (Lipponen 1997), and the Finnish government has continued to emphasise the US' role in northern Europe and the similarities between the NEI and NDI ever since (*e.g.*, Lipponen 2000). Such enthusiasm can partly be explained with regard to Finnish security concerns. Although, until President Putin began to take a more open approach to the issue, the Finns had been reticent to see NATO enlarged to include the Baltic States, they have all the same been keen to keep the US interested in the region. For the Finns, this is vital to prevent the peripheralisation and regionalisation of north European security concerns and reflects latent Finnish fears of Russian revanchist ambitions. Notably, such a desire to preserve and enhance American interest in northern Europe is also apparent in

Sweden and Denmark (*e.g.*, Ahlin 2002; Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002:29).

In contrast, however, other EU states have explicitly sought to marginalise any links with the US in the NDI, a position that tends to reflect the way some Europeans relate themselves to America more broadly. As Arter (2000:689) notes, France has been particularly important in this regard and was initially suspicious of Finland's NDI, believing it to be US inspired.[21] Such negative attitudes again reflect European concerns of US hegemony and a desire to restrict American influence in Europe. One result of this has been that when the Action Plan came to define the geographical scope of the NDI, the US and Canada were excluded.[22]

Importantly, EU ambivalence towards the NEI also derives from the difficulties the EU faces in trying to forge unity of purpose amongst its 15 member-states. Thus, whilst the northern members (led by Finland and Sweden) tend to give the NDI high priority, southern members find it much harder to get motivated about the initiative, a problem that gains importance when southern members hold the presidency of the Union and when the NDI comes into danger of dropping off the agenda altogether. Moreover, even amongst the northern members there can be important differences. For example, in contrast to Finland, which has seen the NDI as an opportunity to multilateralise aspects of its foreign policy with Russia and would like to see the NDI oriented to its specific national concerns of relations with Russia's northwest regions and St Petersburg, when Sweden held the presidency of the EU it shifted focus more towards its priority areas of the Baltic Sea and Russia's Kaliningrad exclave.

For its part, Denmark, which held the presidency during the latter half of 2002, has made an effort to shift the emphasis towards the Atlantic north, and in particular towards its national interests in Greenland — where it is notable they held a ministerial meeting to discuss the future of the initiative. In short, lacking a coherent approach for its own policy it is perhaps not surprising that the EU has found it difficult to embrace the NEI with the same enthusiasm that the US has approached the NDI.

Moreover, to return to a point made earlier, EU ambivalence to the NDI and thus also to the NEI is also clear in that the EU has been relatively less prone than the US to eulogise about the European north and the Baltic Sea region as a testing ground for a new type of politics. This is probably because, for many, it is precisely the EU that should be the model people draw on when they go looking for alternative models of governance to traditional *realpolitik*-dominated perceptual frames. To quote Romano Prodi:

> *we have a unique historic experience to offer. The experience of liberating people from poverty, war, oppression and intolerance. We have forged a model of development and continental integration based on the principles of democracy, freedom and solidarity and it is a model that works. A model of a consensual pooling of sovereignty in which every one of us accepts to belong to a minority* (Prodi, quoted in van Ham 2001:397).

In this regard, it is the forging of the (western) European security community since 1945 that should be considered the laboratory, testing ground or experimental space for a new type of politics, not the European north. Indeed, developments in the European north are actually problematic for the EU in some ways, which is making it difficult for the EU to fully embrace the NDI and NEI. Although this point cannot be explored in detail here, at issue is that in their calls for breaking borders and promoting multiple layers of gov-

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ernance the NEI and NDI pose a signifi-cant challenge to the organisation of space in the EU. On the one hand, in its internal organisation the EU is, of course, precisely a model of the "postmodern" Hanseatic approach to governance being promoted in the European north. However, external-ly the EU tends to favour the maintenance of relatively strict state-like borders that preserve a clear division between insiders and outsiders. The Schengen visa regime is the most obvious example here. The NEI and NDI directly put the exclusionary nature of the EU's borders in question and as such open the whole nature of the EU project to critical analysis.[23]

Finally, to return to Europeans' con-cerns over America's role in Europe, it is perhaps ironic that growing fears of US unilateralism in international politics may actually now be providing an incentive for the EU to focus renewed attention on the European north and the link between the NEI and NDI, precisely in order to draw America into the multilateral approaches the EU prefers. Since George Bush became President these fears have increased and both Commission President Romano Prodi and External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten have given speeches stressing the need to persuade the US to embrace multilateralism (Patten 2001; Prodi 2001). The hope of rejuvenating the NTA is clear-ly apparent (Commission of the European Communities 2001), whilst it was notable that, during the Swedish Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2001, efforts were explicitly made to play up the level of co-operation between the EU and the US through the NDI and NEI. At the same time, new areas for co-operation were also identified (Highlights of EU-US Co-opera-tion under the New Transatlantic Agenda 2001). Therefore, despite the differences and tensions clearly existing between America's NEI and the EU's NDI, the European north clearly does contain the potential for forging new types of under-standing in US-EU relations.

Post-September 11 and EU/NATO Enlargement

Before concluding it is worth-while speculating a little on how the post-September 11 environment and the future enlargement of NATO to the Baltic States, and the EU's future enlargement to the Baltic States and Poland, both of which were decided on near the end of 2002, will affect developments in the European north and the dynamics between the NEI and NDI.

At first sight, the future for the inven-tive postmodern politics encouraged by the NEI and NDI in the European north might appear bleak. After the liberal inter-nationalism of Bill Clinton, George Bush's presidency has undoubtedly seen a return to prominence at the White House of rela-tively traditional realist power-political thinking, that prioritises questions of sov-ereignty and territorial control and military solutions to international disputes. As explained by Condoleezza Rice (2000:62), Bush's foreign policy advisor, responsible state policy derives from a strict reading of the national interest, not from notions of what might benefit an illusory internation-al community. Multilateralism and adher-ence to global norms, therefore, have not been placed particularly high on the priori-ty list of the Bush Administration. Indeed, on coming to power it is notable that in try-ing to define America's identity and role in world politics the Bush Administration has focused rather less on placing itself in a wider community of friends than it has on deciding who America's enemies are. As van Ham (2001:400) has put it, much of Bush's first months as president were dedi-cated to what he calls 'threat procurement,'

even if there was little understanding of quite who or what was threatening the US. To quote Bush in January 2001:

> it [the Cold War] *was a dangerous world, and you knew exactly who they were ... It was us vs. them, and it was clear who them was. Today, we are not so sure who they are, but we know they're there* (quoted in van Ham 2001:400).

Such threat procurement is accompanied by the US' huge defence budget. This arguably, however, also tends to push the US towards unilateral militarised solutions or at least reflects a tendency to such an approach. To quote van Ham (2001:400), 'With such a big and expensive hammer, the whole world apparently starts looking like a nail.' In contrast, with their more limited military capabilities European states are more likely to ensure their security through other means such as multilateral institutions and upholding the value of international norms. As Nye has warned, there is a danger that America's military preponderance will result in it becoming blinkered to the effectiveness of other forms of power, such as economic, cultural and ideological levers, in enhancing American interests (Nye, cited in Ricks 2001). This is perhaps evident in the fact that, whilst the NEI seems set to continue at least in the short-medium term, it certainly has not been a priority of the Bush Administration and the funds dedicated to it remain modest.[24] Indeed, as part of his initial thrust to undo Clinton's foreign policy legacy Bush actually signalled an intention to cut back on economic assistance to Russia, which he saw as having been completely ineffective in assisting Russia's transformation to liberal democracy (BBC News 2001).

The events of 11 September have clearly enhanced some of these realist tendencies and, from a European perspective, America is becoming more unilateral than ever.

Thus, at first sight the notion of the NEI and NDI as representing an opportunity to overcome the divisive politics of the past seems to be being buried in the militarist fallout of the terrorist attacks of 2001 and the US-led response in Afghanistan and towards Iraq.

On the other hand, if the terrorist attacks of September 2001 and the war in Afghanistan have done one thing it has been to settle the question of who America's enemy is — even if the "terrorist threat" remains rather vaguely understood. In contrast, having flirted with negative images of Russia, Moscow has now assumed the position of one of America's most prized friends and allies. In a simplified worldview that divides international society into a realm of "us" and a realm of "them", Russia is now firmly on the "us" side of the divide, which largely precludes dealing with Russia in purely realist terms and can be seen to open up space for more innovative approaches.

Also important, however, has been President Putin's utilisation of the situation to integrate Russia into the Western world and to gain acceptance for a "Western" and "European" identity for Russia. Most notable, of course, has been Putin's decision to allow US military flights over Russian territory during fighting in Afghanistan, his tacit acceptance of phasing out the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) treaty and his reassertion that Russia would be prepared to negotiate and accept NATO enlargement to the Baltic States — a position Putin had expressed before 11 September. In this respect, several points can be made that could indicate a rosier future for the visions of the NEI and NDI than one might initially expect.

Firstly, the latter point of Putin's basic acceptance of NATO enlargement to include the Baltic States is highly significant. Whilst it should not be doubted that many in the Russian Establishment con-

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tinue to see NATO enlargement as highly provocative, throughout the post-Cold War period many Russians have realised that if NATO wants to enlarge its borders in the Baltic then there is not much Russia can actually do about it.[25] In this context, veiled Russian threats of retaliation and negative consequences that have accompanied the debate about NATO enlargement during recent years might better be seen in terms of posturing. This is to say that, throughout the 1990s, Moscow used the threat of negative reactions over NATO enlargement as a bargaining tool in its relations in the Baltic, particularly with the Baltic States. As a result, questions such as the still unresolved territorial disputes and the position of Russian minorities in the Baltic States have easily been securitised and placed on the high politics agenda of prestige and power.[26]

For their part, the Balts have also engaged in the same processes in reverse arguing, for example, that the presence of potential "fifth column" Russian minorities has made their NATO membership an urgent consideration. Putin's decision to ally with Bush and to accept NATO enlargement to the Baltic States is therefore going to make it very difficult for Russia to securitise its relations in the Baltic States in the way it used to. Indeed, the Prague Summit's endorsement of enlargement to the Baltic States has arguably removed what has been the most contentious security question in the European north from the agenda altogether. In this new situation and assuming that a real rapprochement in West-Russia relations is on the cards, with enemy images consigned to the pre-September 11 past, to have influence the only real option for all parties in the Baltic will be to engage in questions of societal security and regionalisation. This is because, with the NATO issue decided, the central questions of the region are likely to be of a low politics

nature. Such a development would, of course, make the frameworks of the NEI and NDI more relevant than ever.

Secondly, but perhaps more debatably given the disagreements which have emerged over US policy on Iraq, the prospects for more multilateralism on the part of the US may also have been enhanced since September 2001. Put in simple terms, Bush owes Russia and America's European allies. Russia has, of course, already received some benefits from its support, not least in the less critical attitude the West has taken over Chechnya. Also important, though, has been the Prague decision to give Russia a greater voice in NATO and the fact that Russia's membership of the WTO (World Trade Organization) looks closer than ever before. For their part, the Europeans are expecting to be taken into account much more than before, while hopes for multilateral solutions building on soft power remain as strong as ever. In this respect, the relationship between the NEI and the NDI can indeed provide an ideal testing ground for more multilateral approaches across the US-EU-Russia triangle through which confidence, trust and strengthened friendships can be cemented. Moreover, with NATO enlargement to the Baltic States now agreed on the single most obvious tension existing between the approaches of the NEI and NDI has been resolved, thereby opening space for much greater co-ordination in addressing the problems of the north than hitherto possible.

Finally, both NATO and EU enlargement raise other important questions, in particular regarding the very focus of the NEI and NDI in the future. The EU has already begun to address such questions in its recent discussions on the future of the NDI. This reflects the fact that to some extent the NDI has been understood as a policy facilitating EU enlargement to the

Baltic States through a process of building confidence in EU-Russian and Baltic States-Russian relations. The same has also been clearly the case with the NEI's stated policy of smoothing the way for the Baltic States' membership of NATO (but also the EU).

The question that therefore arises is for what will we need the initiatives after enlargement has taken place? Three directions appear to be emerging to answer this question. Firstly, the EU has quite rightly noted that the regional issues are not going to disappear overnight and, in the case of the NDI, there is always going to be a need for a forum in which dialogue and co-operation over issues relevant to the region, and bringing Russia together with EU members and other northern partners, can take place (Council Group Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2002:5).[27] Indeed, with the enlargement the EU-Russian border is set to grow considerably, making it even more important for the EU to enhance cross-border dialogue and co-operation with Russia across the new external border. The same will also be the case with NATO enlargement, which in turn could motivate the US to build on the NEI as a low cost instrument for preserving stability between the new NATO members and Russia.

Secondly, both the EU and America have begun to indicate that their respective policies may begin to head north, taking on an enhanced Arctic aspect. It is, as Ries (2002) has put it, America's membership in the Arctic Council which, after all, makes America part of northern Europe 'geographically, not just spiritually.' As already noted, Denmark was keen to emphasise this Arctic component during its EU presidency, whilst Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen also recently stated that it is 'Arctic co-operation [that] ties the United States and Canada to co-operation in the north.' Moreover, Lipponen also noted that it is the globally important nature of Arctic

issues that makes trans-Atlantic co-operation essential (Lipponen 2002). As such, this Arctic aspect could well provide the spark to enhancing the currently relatively limited nature of co-operation between the NEI and NDI.

Thirdly, there has also been an increasing amount of talk that the successful policies of regionalisation and border co-operation in the Baltic Sea region could also be extended towards the south after enlargement. For example, EU discussions nowadays often refer to the idea of broadening the NDI to include co-operation in Central and Eastern Europe with the Union's future new neighbours, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova (Council Group Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2002:5; Haarder 2002; Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002:30). The US has talked of extending the Baltic model even further to the Caucasus and Central Asia in order to help combat terrorism, stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to curb the spread and effects of disease and environmental degradation (Ries 2002). Such shared frames of reference indicate another opportunity for US-EU co-operation through the NEI and NDI.

To make a final point, however, with respect to the second two points of enhancing the Arctic and southern components of the NDI and NEI, a few concerns need to be raised. In the first instance, this relatively extensive broadening towards the north and south would seem to indicate a certain lack of clarity and vision for the NEI, the NDI and for the future of co-operation in the Baltic Sea region more generally. A lack of focus seems to be evident and in this broadening there is a danger that the relatively specific decentralised and low-key approaches of these policies will be lost. Secondly, and linked to this, there appears to be a significant danger that the soft security approach that has been an essential ingredient of these innov-

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ative policies is losing emphasis. In pushing the NEI and NDI further north, but in particular orienting them further to the south, these policies appear to be being infused with the securitised agenda of high politics issues. This is particularly evident in the fact that, when talking about pushing these policies towards the south, the concerns of regional and local people which has been the driving force of the bottom-up co-operation in the Baltic Sea region, are dropping off the agenda to be replaced by centralised state (as opposed to non-state) top-down concerns of broader US and EU policy. This is especially apparent in the fact that the US has begun to see Baltic Sea region co-operation as a model to be applied in the war on terrorism — as opposed to a model for how societies and regions may best be able to cope with the challenges of globalisation and the changing nature of borders and territory in the postmodern age.

From the EU's perspective, when it comes to relations with Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, similar concerns are also likely to be evident, as are fears over immigration and crime from the East. In this respect, it is no surprise that the Justice and Home Affairs agenda of the EU has begun to play an ever more important role in the NDI. A certain securitisation is also apparent in the move to enhance Arctic co-operation, which is being focused around issues of the treatment of nuclear waste and the exploitation of energy resources, issues from which regional and local agents are likely to be excluded (Möller 2002:80-1). The point, therefore, is that whilst opportunities for enhancing dialogue and co-operation between the NEI and NDI are clearly apparent, and perhaps even increasing, one question that needs to be asked is precisely for what it is we want this co-operation, what is the agenda we are pursuing and why? In the opinion of this writer, whilst the opportunity to enhance NDI-

NEI co-operation is certainly welcome, much would also be lost if that co-operation begins to shift from the promotion of local and regional co-operation to co-operation over issues of more concern to the state-led agenda of high politics. Such issues can easily be tackled through a range of different institutions. The value of the NEI and NDI, by contrast, has been precisely the fact that their focus lies elsewhere in an alternative approach to politics and governance.

Conclusion

As noted at the start of this article, the end of the Cold War coupled with processes of globalisation and an emergent postmodernity generated a certain amount of anxiety in the 1990s as the old bipolar order that had been central in organising global politics fell apart. Moreover, it is not just the certainties of the Cold War order that have been undermined, the Westphalian system of sovereign states of the modern age is also being increasingly challenged. A popular response to the feelings of uncertainty and insecurity that have resulted has involved attempts at re-territorialising global space once more in exclusionary modern terms, such as Huntington's parcelling of the world into different civilisational spaces, or Luttwak's parcelling of it into competing economic zones. In these discourses, world politics remains conceptualised in terms of a realist anarchic struggle where conflict, even with one's allies, can never be ruled out.

In contrast, this article has shown how in northern Europe both the EU and the US have adopted policies that respond to post-Cold War challenges in quite different ways. Rather than reflecting fear and uncertainty at recent developments, through the

NDI and NEI the EU and America have shown an ability to embrace and make the most of the de-territorialisation of the end of the Cold War. In building a new partnership with Russia and securing an enduring peace in the region, traditional patterns of governance premised on sovereign territoriality have been set aside for the adoption of a different type of order drawing its inspiration from the functional arrangements of the medieval Hanseatic League. Success here has been considerable, with a discourse of overlapping spaces, multiple identities and open borders becoming an increasingly mundane aspect of regional interaction.

Whilst the complementarities between the NEI and NDI are considerable and may well be further developed, the article has also shown that enduring differences and tensions between the policies have also been apparent. Particularly important, however, is that it has been shown how the NEI and NDI have also come into conflict with other positions and policies of the US and the EU, whether they are President Bush's increasingly realist approach to international relations in general, or the EU's Schengen policy with its concern for making a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders.

In this respect, this writer would like to conclude by making some points about the broader significance of the NEI and NDI. Firstly and most importantly, the fact that through these policies the US and the EU have signalled a willingness to question the Westphalian organisation of political space that has served as the foundation for international order in the modern world is highly significant. This is particularly so on the part of the US which, as the world's supreme power, has more to gain from traditional approaches to governance and the use of geopower than any other actor in the system and therefore has little obvious need to resort to innovative thinking about new forms of order and governance. Secondly, and closely linked, is the fact that the NEI and NDI as such implicitly also represent alternative discourses of American and EU identity, moving away from the modernist preoccupation with centrality and uniformity to embrace openness and provide a space for the margins and peripheries to also have a say in the constitution of (multiple) subjectivity/subjectivities. Finally, what should also be apparent from the article is the extent to which our theories and conceptual frameworks regarding the world significantly impact on our practices within it.

Notes:

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1 For an overview of European views, see Everts (2001). The debate between multilateralism and unilateralism is, of course, also a lively American debate (Walker 2001).

2 Particularly notable here are the following works: Ohmae (1990; 1995), Guehenno (1995).

3 As Mann (1997:490) points out, projects of regional co-operation that are often considered to be a challenge to the sovereignty and future relevance of states are, for the most part, actually reliant on the consent of states and the states' willingness to mobilise their resources to support such projects.

4 For other works analysing the neo-medieval theme,

see Bull (1977), Caporaso (1996:44-48), Rennger (2000), and Gamble (2001).

5 Ó Tuathail takes the term "geopolitical vertigo" from a 1992 article in *New Perspectives Quarterly*.

6 For an overview of the Hanseatic League and its system of governance, see Spruyt (1994:108-29).

7 Since its initiation only around USD 30 million has been invested in the region through the programme (Ries 2002).

8 The CBSS was established in 1992 in order to strengthen co-operation in the Baltic Sea region. The CBSS has 12 members. The members are the nine littoral states of the Baltic Sea, plus Norway, Iceland and the European Commission. See http://www.cbss.st/. The BEAC was established in 1993 to support and promote regional co-operation in the most northerly parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and north-western Russia. Participants also include Iceland, Denmark and the European Commission. There are also nine observer states. See http://www.beac.st/. The Helsinki Commission facilitates environmental co-operation with its aim being to protect the Baltic Sea from pollution. The convention behind HELCOM was signed in 1974 and entered into force in 1980. The littoral states of the Baltic Sea, plus the European Commission, are members. See http://www.helcom.fi/.

9 For a positive interpretation of this approach, see Möller (2002:78-9). For a more negative view, see Karp (2002:96-7).

10 Thus, in reflecting these concerns Asmus (1999) noted that, 'We know that the US won't be the major player in these areas, but we think we can play a modest and, in some niche areas, a really crucial role. We are prepared to be a junior partner or a bigger partner depending on the issue and depending on what we can bring to the table.'

11 On such missionary tendencies in the NEI, see Rhodes (2000:107), and van Ham (2000a:58). On this missionary heritage in American identity more generally, see Harle (2000: chapter 4), and O'Loughlin (2000:38-9).

12 For a more detailed analysis of the Hanseatic analogy in the NEI, see Rhodes (2000:94-6).

13 For a more extensive analysis of the emancipatory potential of the concept of the North, see Joenniemi (1999; 2002), and Joenniemi and Lehti (2001).

14 Notably, the Action Plan of the Northern Dimension for 2000-2003 makes no mention of NATO whatsoever. Similarly, neither do the recently released guidelines for the next Action Plan (2004-2006). See Council of the European Union (2000), and Presidency Conclusions on the Future of the Northern Dimension Policies of the European Union (2002).

15 Such thinking is, of course, also paralleled in the Baltic States themselves. For example, as Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga (2002) recently put it: 'For the people and nations of Central and Eastern Europe, the invitation to join the EU, together with the expected decision this November in Prague to expand the NATO Alliance, will signify their genuine return to the European family of free and democratic nations. This dual enlargement of the EU and NATO will have enormous impact on the Baltic Sea Region. It will become the last step in erasing once and for all the sequels of the Second World War.'

16 On Russian attitudes to NATO, see MacFarlane (2001).

17 A notable exception here is Denmark, which has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Baltic States' NATO aspirations.

18 Notably, as NATO enlargement to the Baltic States became increasingly likely during the course of 2002, Finnish officials revised their views and began to argue that NATO enlargement would not be negative and might actually further promote stability in the region (*e.g.*, Tuomioja 2002). This position differs significantly from that of even a couple of years ago when the Finnish government clearly indicated it did not want the Balts to opt for membership because this would be provocative to Russia. To some extent, the new line could be seen in constructivist terms. This is to say that, by expressing the view that NATO enlargement will have a beneficial security dividend, it is hoped perceptions around the region might be moulded so that it does.

19 This stands in contrast to earlier criticisms that the EU initially sought to assert its hegemony over regional bodies such as the CBSS, BEAC and the Arctic Council and that in the NDI's first Action Plan it downgraded the role accorded to these organisations in an attempt to centre decision-making with the EU Council and the Commission (Catellani 2001:58, 65-6).

20 Two further reasons for the US' desire to link the NEI to the NDI can also be given. Firstly, making such a link and pooling resources plays well with those who want to see America's allies sharing more of its international financial burdens. Secondly, the link also reflects American awareness that playing down the US role is less likely to raise Russian sensitivities and avoids creating the impression of the US as a hegemon throwing its weight around northern Europe.

21 Whether French suspicions are correct is difficult to say in view of the current evidence. What is clear, however, is that Finland has been a pivotal location for the NEI. Notably, Derek Shearer, the US Ambassador to Finland at the end of the 1990s, appears to have played a central role in drawing American attention to the regionalising developments in the European north. An alternative interpretation might therefore be that, rather than the US being behind the NDI, it was Finnish policy (and that in the region more generally) that provided the inspiration for the US.

22 The Action Plan defines the NDI as extending from Iceland in the west to northwest Russia in the east, and from the Barents and Kara Seas in the north to the southern coast of the Baltic Sea in the south (Council of the European Union 2000).

23 For an exploration of some of the themes raised here, see Browning (2001b; 2003a).

24 As noted earlier, since its initiation only around USD 30 million has been invested in the region through the programme (Ries 2002).

25 For such an impression, see Talbott (2002).

26 "Securitised" here refers to the securitisation theory of Waever (1995), with securitisation being understood as a process by which issues are raised onto the security agenda and thereby become understood as matters of supreme and even existential importance. Once an issue has been securitised, compromising on the issue is likely to become problematic.

27 It is notable that this document only mentions Iceland and Norway as "other Northern partners" - *i.e.*, the US and Canada remain excluded here.

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