

This is a post-print version of:

Rottem, Svein Vigeland
'The Ambivalent Ally: Norway in the New NATO'
Contemporary Security Policy, Vol 28, No 3, 2007, pp. 619-638.

The original publication is available at <http://www.informaworld.com>

The Ambivalent Ally – Norway in the New NATO¹

Svein Vigeland Rottem

Fridtjof Nansens Institute, P.O. Box 326, N-1326 Lysaker, Norway
Phone: +47 67 11 19 00 Fax: +47 67 11 19 10 E-mail: svr@fni.no

Abstract: NATO's future has long been in question, with the core of the debate revolving around US and other "great powers" policies and attitudes towards the alliance. This article examines the case of Norway as a small member of the alliance. It will be argued that, since the end of the Cold War, Norway has lacked a clear mandate for its role in NATO, and as such should be considered an "ambivalent ally". This ambivalence comes to show in the Norwegian debate when we find political statements such as "NATO is the cornerstone of Norwegian Defence policy" and at the same time Norway reluctantly follows through on NATO policy. NATO's readiness to act should a conflict break out in the High North is also questioned. I shall discuss Norway's NATO relations in terms of four dimensions, collective defence and collective security, position and values, influence and national priorities, scepticism and reliability. Here realism and constructivism can provide us with analytical "backdrop" to explain Norway's position as an ambivalent ally. International power structures create and constrain windows of opportunity for Norway, but national and international norms and identity should not be left out of the analysis. Norway is entangled in the geopolitics of the world but, at the same time, factors such as the legacy of neutrality and the perception of Norway as a peaceful nation cannot be ignored. On the basis of information obtained from NATO officials and civil servants at the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, public documents and wider defence policy debate in Norway, the article sheds analytical light on Norway's unsettled relationship with the new NATO.

Introduction

NATO's future has long been in question, with the core of the debate revolving around policies and attitudes of the US and other "great powers" towards the alliance. The work of neo-realists such as Kenneth Waltz well articulates the reason for the quandary. Waltz proclaimed in 1993 that NATO's years were numbered.² He modified his argument in 2000, but still maintained that NATO, as a collective defence organization, would not survive longer than the great allies would allow.³ To a certain extent, Waltz conceded, NATO's bureaucracy would probably impact on the longevity of the alliance, but in the final analysis NATO is best

¹ I would like to thank Gunhild Hoogensen, Marianne Sæther, Alf Håkon Hoel, Heidi Waagaard Johansen Chris Saunders, four anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts and members of the Norwegian NATO delegation for taking the time to answer my questions.

² Kenneth Waltz, "The New World Order", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. Vol. 22, no. 2 (1993), pp.187-193.

³ Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War", *International Security*, Vol. 25, no. 1 (2000), pp.5-41.

be understood as a tool of the great powers, one to be discarded when its usefulness was at an end. But this largely ignores the role of “small” states in the alliance, without which any analysis of NATO would be sorely lacking. In an attempt to address this omission, the article examines the case of Norway, without doubt one of the smaller members of the alliance. Although the analysis may have relevance for other small states, Norway’s uniqueness, as a state in the periphery of Europe and as an important energy exporter, makes generalizations difficult. Norway’s position as a promoter of peace complicates the picture further. During and after the Cold War, Norway followed a strategy of reassurance and deterrence. Oslo was confident the alliance would come to its rescue were problems with the Soviet Union to get out of hand. The same outlook pertains today, but now we find a lack of confidence in allied readiness to come to Norway’s rescue. The likelihood of a major confrontation with Russia is minimal, but Norway is unsure of NATO’s readiness to help out in conflicts. Hence the sense of ambivalence.

The New NATO and Norway’s perception of its role in the alliance will be in focus.⁴ It will be argued that since the end of the Cold War, Norway has lacked a clear mandate for its role in NATO, and as such can be considered an “ambivalent ally”. Nina Græger and Halvard Leira, addressing Norway’s general attitudes toward security and defence, see Norway as lacking a grand strategy.⁵ This article follows up on their findings, but narrows the focus to the relationship between NATO and Norway. As already stated, most of the literature on the role and future of NATO speaks of the allegedly widening gap between Europe and the USA.⁶ It would be misleading to say Norway’s role and attitude towards NATO has never been the subject of analysis; in fact the list of literature on Norway in NATO is long, but focuses largely on historical analyses during the Cold War.⁷ There are some recent contributions on the subject, though fewer in number, and more work clearly needs to be done.⁸

Despite its ambivalence, Norway has been quite active in NATO since the end of the Cold War, participating in NATO operations abroad, such as stabilizing the Balkans and fighting terrorism alongside the US. The policy derives legitimacy from three directions. First, military intervention is presumed to encourage democracy and human rights; second, the role of the Norwegian defense establishment is said to articulate with Norway’s alliance commitments; and third, Norway’s defense and security policy is justified in terms of

⁴ The term “new” connects to NATO’s post-Cold War mission providing stability beyond its borders, see Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). See also the two new strategic concepts, The Alliance’s Strategic Concept, Roma 7-8. november 1991,

<http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b911108a.htm>

The Alliance’s Strategic Concept, Washington 23–24 April 1999, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>

⁵ Nina Græger & Halvard Leira, “Norwegian Strategic Culture after World War II: From a Local to a Global Perspective”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp.45-67.

⁶ See David P. Calleo “The Broken West”, *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2004), pp.29-38, Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945 – From “Empire” by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.19–21, Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

⁷ See for example; Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk utenrikspolitisk historie. Oljealder 1965-1995*.

(Oslo:Universitetsforlaget, 1997), Jacob Børresen, Gullow Gjeseth, & Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk forsvarshistorie. Alliansforsvar i endring*. (Bergen: Eide forlag, 2004), Olav Riste *Norway’s Foreign Relations – A History* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2005).

⁸ See for example Nina Græger, “Norsk NATO-debatt etter den kalde krigen”, *Internasjonal Politikk*, Vol. 63, No. 2-3 (2005), pp.217-241, Tormod Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation. Norway’s Adaption to US Transformation Efforts in NATO, 1998-2004*. Dissertaton (2006), Department of Political Science, University of Oslo.

protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁹ The empirical focus here will be on Kosovo and Afghanistan, contributing to an overall understanding of Norway's role in NATO. Norway's geo-political circumstances as a state on the outskirts of Europe and next door to the former Soviet Union, used to define the nation's perception of threat. Some would claim that after the collapse of the Soviet regime, threats became harder to locate and identify. Such sentiments are staples of the on-going domestic debate on security, where opinion is divided on how threats should be identified, and what difference they should make to conceptions of security.¹⁰ 'Human security' is one such contested notion, with Norway contributing extensively to this debate.¹¹ These debates give us the opportunity to look more closely at continuity and discontinuity within the Norwegian security discourse. Of course, Norwegian defence and security policy after the Second World War was largely defined by membership of NATO. This membership survived the end of the Cold War. And perceptions of the alliance were essential in defining Norwegian defence policy, during the Cold War and after. The end of the Cold War created a new balance of power in the international system, and a totally different situation.

We need therefore to analyze Norwegian defense policy in light of these changes in international power structures and NATO's own moves to accommodate the new security landscape.¹² At the same time EU is trying to grasp new security threats and widen its scope.¹³ Here European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) is central. Norway is not a member of the EU but takes part in EU security strategy through its participation in the Nordic Battle Group (NBG), with a contingent of 150 soldiers.¹⁴ At time of writing, the unit has not taken part in any military operations, and won't be ready for deployment until early 2008. We need also to take into account the Nordic dimension. By working closely with other Nordic countries Norway created an awareness and support of its position in the High North. The region has great natural resources (oil, gas and fish), though unsettled issues in respect of the Svalbard Treaty and borders with Russia are of importance. Norway is eager to elicit support of close allies and the international society as such. The operative consequence of this new security landscape has been the radical restructuring of the Norwegian Defense forces, from "quantity to quality".

Central to this argument is that Norwegian defence policy can be described as "catch all" oriented, where the legacy of realism is entangled within an idealistic understanding of how international politics function.¹⁵ Norway tries to build bridges over the transatlantic gap, not only because it is in the state's material or overall strategic interest, but also because it is

⁹ Svein Vigeland Rottem, "Hva forsvarer vi? Tre tilnærminger til norsk forsvars- og sikkerhetspolitikk", *Norsk Statsvitenskapelig Tidsskrift*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2005), pp. 334–360.

¹⁰ See e.g. Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1991), pp.211-239, Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *On Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

¹¹ Human security is a contested notion. In Government Proposal no. 42, 2003-2004, MoD it is stated that "human security (...) is about protecting individuals, thus human rights, protection of life and personal safety is in the forefront." The concept has been criticized for being vague. See Paris, Roland, "Human Security - Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?", *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2. (2001). I will not contribute in such a debate just state that the concept has been a buzzword in the Norwegian defence and security discourse.

¹² The operative response manifests itself in, among others, in a new command structure and NATO Response Force (NRF). NRF is to act as a force that can be rapidly deployed in the full spectrum of NATO missions, see www.nato.int

¹³ Important here are the Petersburg tasks first formulated in 1992 now incorporated within the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The tasks cover humanitarian, rescue and peacekeeping tasks and crisis management and peacemaking.

¹⁴ NBG consists of 2400 soldiers with Sweden as the largest contributor (2000 soldiers).

¹⁵ Riste, *Norway's Foreign Relations – A History*.

inherent in Norwegian political culture, which provides the backdrop for the nation's defence policy and even in its foreign policy more broadly speaking.¹⁶ A similar argument is found in the literature on Norway's self-perception as a promoter of peace.¹⁷ Here Norway sees itself as the bearer of some kind of moral obligation, borne aloft by sentiments like "we have never started a war" and "we are a peaceful and cooperative people". Reality is not that easy, as Iver Neumann has pointed out. Norway actually tends to go to war, he says, citing the Balkans and Afghanistan as recent examples.¹⁸ The point is that Norwegians see NATO as a security community, and a means of doing Realpolitik. To better understand Norwegian policy towards the outside world and more specifically NATO, it is useful to integrate Realpolitik and political culture. International power structures create and restrict windows of opportunity, but national, regional and international norms and identity should not be left out of the analysis. This translates, theoretically speaking, into realism and constructivism, two approaches that can provide us with the analytical "backdrop" for explaining Norway's position as an ambivalent ally, now, and likely in the foreseeable future. The ambition here is to use insights developed in the realist school and incorporate these thoughts with analytical concepts found among constructivists. The lack of a common epistemologic and ontologic ground between the two schools of thought could lay such an analytical strategy open to criticism. But by integrating the insights of both traditions one gets a more coherent picture of Norway's options. This is not to say that Norway has no margin of choice, or that Norwegian defence policy is determined by international power structures and fixed norms and identities. But in an analysis of Norway as an international actor the constraints and options should be stressed.

Threats and norms

In some respects the hallmark of the realist tradition is its pessimistic view of the nature of international relations.¹⁹ The struggle between the entities that compose the international system is over relative gains. John Mearsheimer tells us that "This cycle of violence will continue far into the new millennium".²⁰ Stephen Walt claims that "organized violence has been a central part of human existence for millennia and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future".²¹ According to the realist world view, there is no such thing as a peaceful international arena. The on-going competition for security between states is what defines realism and therefore must be included as a critical perspective in any analysis of security and defence policy, including military alliances.

According to Glenn Snyder's theory of alliances, alliance politics is played out in two games, the alliance game and the adversary game. Important here is the alliance game, which concerns politics pursued within the alliance.²² Using Snyder one can single out two basic alliance strategies, one of cooperation, the other defection. Norway, as will be argued here, mixes the two. Randall L. Schweller's theory on bandwagoning could also bring some

¹⁶ Nina Græger & Halvard Leira, "Norwegian Strategic Culture after World War II: From a Local to a Global Perspective".

¹⁷ Halvard Leira "Folket og freden. Utviklingstrekk i norsk fredsdiskurs", *Internasjonal politikk*, Vol. 63, No. 2-3 (2005), pp.141-162.

¹⁸ Iver B. Neumann, "Det er typisk norsk å krige", *Arr*, Vol. 16, No. 2-3(2004), pp.3-9.

¹⁹ Ole Wæver, *Introduktion til Studiet af International Politikk*. (Copenhagen: Forlaget Politiske Studier, 1992), John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).

²⁰ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp.xi.

²¹ Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies", p.213.

²² Glenn Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics", *World Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (1984), pp. 461-495.

valuable insight here. Bandwagoning, he explains, “gains momentum through the promise of rewards, not the threat of punishment.”²³ If we are witnessing a widening transatlantic gap Norway is an interesting case. But here one should be careful to make clear projections.

More particularly, realism sheds light on the power structures that establish the stage on which Norway’s NATO-related foreign and defence policies are played out. According to realism, the alliance is a collective defence organization; states are the primary actors; national interests and priorities are at the top of the strategic agenda; trust is lacking at the international level; and the focus is on threats not community. The merits of the realist approach can be better assessed in relation to other theoretical approaches. In this case, I would like to turn to constructivism insofar as its assumptions differ radically from those considered to have been one of the strengths of the realist paradigm.

If one were to emphasise two elements of the constructivist approach they would be, firstly, the notion that ideas and norms matter, and secondly, that agent and structure are co-constitutive. They cannot be separated; indeed, they are co-dependent or, more elaborately, the world of ideas and the material world are interdependent.²⁴ In general constructivists engage in empirical research.²⁵ Contrary to the realist assumption of an objective world view which everyone shares, constructivism investigates the multiple world views established by agents and embedded in ideas which circulate in a normative climate.²⁶ How is the world “made” in diverse normative and cultural environments? Emanuell Adler and Michael Barnett’s theory on security communities, united by shared understandings and values, is a much discussed approach.²⁷ There is no imaginable world outside our inter-subjective understanding of it. Or, as Thomas Risse puts it, “our interpretations of the world in which we live in and our intersubjective understandings about it are crucially relevant in understanding world affairs”.²⁸

Thus for constructivism, the military dimension is relevant only insofar as it is included in our perception of the material world. Theorizing in this field is connected to identity and the discourses that enable social interaction, asking such questions as “why is there no NATO in Asia?”²⁹ and “why did NATO prevail in Western Europe?”.³⁰ Normative coherence provides

²³ Randall I. Shweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In.” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1994), pp. 72-108.

²⁴ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Makes of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (1992), pp.391–425, Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Emanuel Adler, “Constructivism and International Relations”, in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse & Beth Simmons, (ed.) *Handbook of International Relation*,. (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

²⁵ See for example Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), Martha Finnemore & Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change”, *International Organization*, Vol 52, No.3 (1998), pp.887-917.

²⁶ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other. The “East” in European Identity Formation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*.

²⁷ Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett(ed.), *Security Communities*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.4.

²⁸ Thomas Risse, “Beyond Iraq: Challenges to the Transatlantic Security Community”, *AICGS/German – American Dialogue Working Paper Series*. 2003, p.4.

²⁹ Christopher Hemmer & Peter Katzenstein, “Why is There No NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism and the Origins of Multilateralism,” *International Organization*, Vol.56, No.2 (2002), pp.575-607.

³⁰ Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention" in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security*, (New York:Columbia University Press, 1996).

the answer. Such an approach, therefore, is relevant in an analysis of both the “new” Norwegian defence policy and the nature and role of NATO itself. NATO is a collective security organization, where values act as the independent variable. Reliability develops within the organization, given the influence of the independent variable, creating an alliance or community not only of interests but also of values. This analysis thus presents three levels of explanation or understanding, depending on whether the domestic, regional or international norms and identities are in focus.³¹ For example, Norway’s NATO policy could be viewed as a product of the legacy of neutrality (domestic factor); a community of values (regional factor); and as a consequence of/response to international power structures (international factor).

Bearing this analytical/theoretical marriage of realism and constructivism in mind, I will now turn to four dimensions of Norwegian policy on and within the New NATO, namely collective security and collective defence; position and values; influence and national priorities; and scepticism and reliability. These four dimensions will structure the middle section of this article. They lay out the main challenges to Norway’s role in the new NATO. Information obtained from interviews with NATO officials and civil servants in the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, from public documents and the wider public debate, it is possible to comment substantially on the relationship between the new NATO and Norway. What is the established Norwegian view on NATO, and on Kosovo and Afghanistan operations? I shall analyse the relative impact of realist arguments and constructivist values and norms and the idea of community, on the Norwegian agenda. Regardless of one’s personal preferences for one or another school of thought the label of “ambivalent ally” applies to Norway’s policy towards NATO.

Norway in NATO

Norway joined NATO in 1949; from then on, the Alliance has been the state’s “insurance policy”. Norway’s membership broke with a longstanding commitment to neutrality.³² The lesson Norway took with it from the Second World War paved the way for membership, but even as an ally in a military alliance, Norway tried to balance between deterrence and reassurance in its relations with its neighbours. .³³ Dramatic changes to the alliance, both organizational and political, caused public discomfort at home. Public opinion was also divided, during the Cold War, to Norway’s decision to keep other allies at bay by controlling where military bases could be set up and operations take place.³⁴ Nevertheless, with time Norway became more and more entangled within the Alliance. The persistent desire to get a Norwegian appointed NATO secretary general demonstrated the importance in which the Alliance was held by Norwegian foreign policymakers; Kåre Willoch (in the early eighties), Thorvald Stoltenberg (in the mid nineties) and Kristin Krohn Devold (this decade) were all floated at some point as secretary general material.³⁵ On the other hand, Norwegian military

³¹ Theo Farrell, “Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program”, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2002), pp. 49-72.

³² Riste, *Norway’s Foreign Relations – A History*.

³³ Rolf Tamnes & Knut Einar Eriksen, “Norge og NATO under den kalde krigen”, in *NATO 50 år. Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk med NATO gjennom 50 år* (Oslo: Den norske Atlanterhavskomiteé, 1999), p.11.

³⁴ Skogan, John Kristian, “Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk: en oversikt”, in Jon Hovi & Raino Malnes, *Normer og makt* (Oslo: Abstrakt forlag AS, 2001), pp.28-29.

³⁵ Stanley R. Sloan, *NATO, The European Union, And The Atlantic Community. The Transatlantic Bargain Challenged* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

ambitions have been rather vague.³⁶ These tactics – trying to be a prominent player within the alliance politically, but behaving more “non-committally” militarily, fit neatly into the overall Norwegian self-perception, if not tradition, as a peaceful nation.³⁷

When the Cold War ended the cards were re-shuffled and Norway was dealt a weaker hand in regards to the state’s position in NATO. The North was no longer at the centre of NATO’s attention. The new NATO shifted attention from classical territorial defence to new threats. Norway’s geographical location close to the former enemy no longer mattered. How could and should Norwegian policymakers respond? Norway tried to maintain the status quo, with allied forces visiting the Northern part of the country on a regular basis and by emphasising the need to give the Northern flank attention.³⁸ But as the conflicts in the Balkans intensified and Yugoslavia began falling apart, both NATO and Norway changed their perceptions of security.

While the Alliance adapted to a new security environment, Norway tried to remain a loyal ally, but was not so in all matters. Norway did not contribute military capabilities to the satisfaction of the other allies, particularly given Norway’s economic situation.³⁹ The balance of and interaction between defence forces going “out of area” and homeland defence were of great importance. Also important are Norway’s ambitions to maintain stability in the High North. Here NATO’s role is unclear, something I address later in this text.

Norway’s membership of the Alliance has never really been put to the test nor been seriously examined by the political establishment. Politicians have tended to express sentiments like “NATO is the cornerstone of Norwegian defence policy”,⁴⁰ without actually following through with military support.⁴¹ Thus, when it comes to small states such as Norway, it cannot be said that we witness a total adherence to the Alliance. New conflicts have changed the security environment as well as the way membership in the Alliance is legitimised. But at the same time, as already pointed out, we find continuity.

Kosovo and Afghanistan

Kosovo and Afghanistan are two quite different cases. The first was labelled a humanitarian intervention,⁴² the second as a response to September 11th. The implementation of ISAF forces under NATO command with an UN mandate is not specified as an article 5 operation, but NATO’s efforts to prevent a Taliban (and Al-Qaeda) renaissance is widely viewed as a self-defence measure. This distinction is important when discussing Norway’s policy and record on collective security and collective defence (to which I return below).

³⁶ One important exception is the Joint Warfare Centre, Stavanger, Norway, <http://www.jwc.nato.int/>. See also Jacob Børresen, Gullow Gjeseth, & Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk forsvarshistorie. Alliansesforsvar i endring*, pp.55-56.

³⁷ Halvard Leira, “Folket og freden. Utviklingstrekk i norsk fredsdiskurs”, *Internasjonal politikk*, Vol. 63, No. 2-3 (2005), pp.141-162.

³⁸ This is not to say there are no NATO exercises in Norway. For a list of forces visiting Norway see http://www.mil.no/ovelses/start/?jsessionid=2ZJVFCRODC3HQFIZYGSFEQ?_requestid=4830668

³⁹ At the same time it is important to stress that this was a generally felt challenge in the alliance’s past, remains in the present and will probably continue into the future. See for example Stanley R. Sloan, *NATO, The European Union...*

⁴⁰ Government Proposal no. 42, 2003-2004, MoD.

⁴¹ All translations are mine.

⁴² Kosovo report 2001, UD.

When the bombing campaign began against the regime in Belgrade, Javier Solana, Secretary General at that time, pronounced: “We must stop the violence (...) now taking place in Kosovo. We have a moral duty to do so.”⁴³ Solana first and foremost addressed the humanitarian consequences if NATO did not act.⁴⁴ Kosovo can be described as another chapter in the tumultuous story of the Balkans. NATO’s campaign against the rulers in Belgrade can only properly be understood in a broader context, namely the legacy of Srebrenica and the moral imperative it inspired. Two primary issues justified intervening. First, as already noted, the cruelty and ethnic cleansing witnessed by the international community throughout the 1990s made it evident that something had to be done to stop the atrocities. Scenes that many thought had vanished from the European continent were unfolding in NATO’s own backyard. The Alliance could not justify non-intervention. Second, it was not hard to argue that intervention in the Balkans was needed to prevent a destabilization of the entire region. NATO found its new mission; without it, NATO’s days were numbered. Arguably, though of little relevance to Norway, there was a territorial issue: the countries of South Eastern Europe were afraid refugees from the area could create an increasingly unstable situation within their own countries.⁴⁵ In March 1999 NATO launched a military campaign against the rulers in Belgrade. After the bombing campaign NATO deployed stabilizing forces (KFOR). By this time, Norway was seeing itself as an important player. At the most, Norway had over a thousand troops in the area.⁴⁶ But this large-scale engagement in Kosovo did not last long.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center altered global security politics. The impression was that the new millennium was re-born on September 11th 2001, and the attacks ushered in a new era. “We are all American” stated the French newspaper *le Monde*, and Europe and US were more united than ever. The unity faded as both sides found they had different opinions on how to react to the new security threats. But prior to realizing the extent of their differences, they invoked NATO’s article 5 for the first time. NATO entered, albeit awkwardly, the war against terror. The result was the operation Active Endeavour.⁴⁷ As time passed, NATO began to play a more significant role in Afghanistan, and stood behind the US. Once again Norway supported the operation initially, possibly even more readily than in the Balkans. Afghanistan is currently the most important operational area for Norwegian forces abroad (Norway’s contingent is about 700 strong).⁴⁸ Why and to what extent did Norway support the new role NATO undertook at the dawn of the new millennium? Here the balance between the nation’s legacy of peace, cooperation and community of values came up against the Realpolitik of international relations.

Collective security and collective defence

At the core of the distinction between collective security and collective defence are the questions of operational area and use of military power. A collective defence organization finds its justification in defending a defined territory, for example the transatlantic area.⁴⁹ It

⁴³ Press release, 24. March 1999 (041), <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-041e.htm>

⁴⁴ Thomas Risse claims that “the Kosovo war and the transformation of most of former Yugoslavia into a western protectorate can hardly be explained on material grounds” (p.6).

⁴⁵ Stanley R. Sloan, *NATO, The European Union, And The Atlantic Community. The Transatlantic Bargain Challenged*.

⁴⁶ Jacob Børresen, Gullow Gjeseth, & Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk forsvarshistorie. Alliansesforsvar i endring*.

⁴⁷ For the official description of the operation see http://www.nato.int/issues/active_endeavour/index.html

⁴⁸ For the exact number see <http://www.mil.no/fo/afg/start/>

⁴⁹ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

entails an “us” and an “other”, or an “inside” and an “outside”. The area of responsibility – what to defend? – is limited. The UN as a collective security organization is, on the other hand, a global organization with the world at large as its operational area and which emphasises the use of other political tools than the purely military ones. The difference can be further demonstrated through the “inclusivity” or “exclusivity” of the organization – collective defence organizations are exclusive as they defend and deter against external threats, whereas collective security organizations are inclusive, dealing with threats among members.⁵⁰

NATO was (and possibly still is) first and foremost a collective defence organization. This is most clearly stated in article 5: “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.” The Alliance finds further support and justification in the UN charter: “if such an attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary.”⁵¹ However, these broad ranging statements of intent do not tell us a lot about NATO in today’s climate.

In many respects NATO has moved from collective defence to collective security, such that article 5 is merely one dimension of a broadened agenda, and where the Balkans has been the most important operational area. Through the Partnership for Peace and other agreements, connecting non-members or coming members to the political side of the organization has been central.⁵² Thus, new members are both evidence of a widening and a deepening of NATO.⁵³ An interesting consequence of new membership is the new members’ perception of what membership entails, or, as one respondent at the Norwegian NATO delegation said, “The new members thought they were included in the old NATO, but they soon came to realize that was not the case”.⁵⁴ The collective defence dimension had lost its relevance. But the two operations in focus here tell us a more complex story: Kosovo, a collective security operation but without a clear mandate from the UN, and Afghanistan, a collective defence operation with a mandate from the UN. The picture is not clear. The balance between collective security and collective defence can be described as a continuum, and it is not all that obvious where NATO is heading. One could claim that this distinction is cracking in a world of transnational threats.

Norway has traditionally taken a rather sceptical view of NATO enlargement and out-of-area operations.⁵⁵ During the Cold War and largely until the present, Norwegian policy was based on the the UN being responsible for collective security and NATO for collective defence.⁵⁶ Such a policy can be attributed to the legacy of neutrality. Thus, the UN is an important organization for a small state like Norway, establishing an international framework constraining the actions of powerful states. Kosovo represented something new in respect to

⁵⁰ Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane & Celeste A. Wallander (eds.) *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions Over Time and Space* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1999).

⁵¹ The North Atlantic Treaty, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxtxt/treaty.htm>

⁵² For a list on agreements see NATO’s homepage, <http://www.nato.int/issues/partners/index.html>

⁵³ For a list on new members see NATO’s homepage, www.nato.int. See also Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

⁵⁴ Interview Norwegian NATO delegation, June 2006.

⁵⁵ Frode Liland & Helge Ø. Pharo “Norge og striden om NATOs geografiske virkeområde” in *NATO 50 år. Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk med NATO gjennom 50 år*. (Oslo: Den norske Atlanterhavskomiteé, 1999).

⁵⁶ Government proposal no. 45, 2000-2001, Ministry of Defence (MoD).

NATO, an intervention lacking a clear UN mandate. Norway was a reluctant partner to the intervention, despite a broad political consensus for taking action in Kosovo. Indeed, then Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, was reluctant to term it an act of war.⁵⁷ The concept of humanitarian intervention was more convenient.

The intervention in Afghanistan finds its justification in the logic of self-defence, and, as previously mentioned, NATO claimed the attack of September 11 was “an attack against all”. Thus, the attacks and the retaliation should be framed in the concept of collective defence. When an Article 5 response was invoked there was no question that Norway could stand on the sidelines. But this did not mean that it logically followed that Afghanistan became the Norwegian forces’ most important operational area, and it is not easy to identify the true motives for leaving Kosovo and deploying in Afghanistan. Additionally, Norway’s contribution to ISAF is under constant evaluation. When ISAF widened its operational area to the south in 2006, Norway was asked to contribute and there were expectations that it would.⁵⁸ The ambivalent ally, Norway, kept its forces in the less turbulent Northern region of Afghanistan. Some would claim that the forces Norway contributed to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) were enough evidence of its “good ally” credentials. In the event, it became an American-led operation (OEF did not come under the NATO mandate until October 2006).⁵⁹ Norway did not have the capacity to contribute to the extent desired by the other allies. There were not enough military personnel. This could indicate a lack of willingness to restructure Norwegian forces to meet the new security challenges faced by NATO.

Position and values

How can we understand Norway, and Norway’s role in NATO, with regard to the distinction between values and positions? Although NATO’s decision-making structure is based on consensus, it is clear that some members have more power than others. Thus, Norway needs to know how to position itself to achieve influence. Here there are two points to make. Firstly, during the Cold War Norway positioned itself as an idealistic actor; it was unhappy, for example, about letting the then fascist-run Spain and Portugal into NATO.⁶⁰ Norway was also sceptical to the latest NATO enlargement plans, stressing the need for security sector reform if new members were to come on board.⁶¹

The second contended area is territorial. By the end of the 1990s Norway ceased to see Russia as the most immediate threat.⁶² However, this new policy orientation does not illuminate the entire picture. While new transnational threats are emerging, the territorial threat given most attention in the Norwegian security discourse is still Russia. The former superpower is also the only state to seriously figure in classic defence strategy discussions. With the Northern flank’s diminished strategic importance, however, NATO will have to be given new tasks if it is to survive. This is where the “war against terror” comes in. Despite the fact that Europe and US have different opinions on how to handle such a threat.

⁵⁷ In 2003 he finally gave in after pressure and labelled the conflict a war, <http://www.mil.no/start/article.jhtml?articleID=51491>

⁵⁸ A point that has been given attention in the press (see for example debate in *Aftenposten* September 2006, www.aftenposten.no)

⁵⁹ The Norwegian engagement ended when the left/centre Government came to power autumn 2005.

⁶⁰ Frode Liland & Helge Ø. Pharo, “Norge og striden om NATOs geografiske virkeområde”.

⁶¹ Interview, members of the Norwegian NATO delegation, June 2006.

⁶² Government Proposal no. 45, 2000-2001, MoD.

The consequence of Norway's waning geo-strategic importance was the loss of its free ticket into NATO's inner circle. Clearly, if Norway wishes to be viewed as a loyal ally, something else had to be done. Norway has traditionally advocated values of democracy and human rights, not least when addressing security sector reform. A small state like Norway can never deploy substantial military forces to NATO, and must rely on political weight. Here, a concept like human security could be useful. Publicly available government documents suggest a distinction is made between human security and state security.⁶³ We find an ambition to cope with new threats by introducing a new vocabulary. On the other hand, in the Ministry of Defence the logic of state security seems to prevail.⁶⁴ When push comes to shove, deployment is the operative word. This is especially true of Afghanistan, and many of my respondents at the Norwegian NATO delegation emphasized the importance of "boots on the ground".⁶⁵ In this case, Norwegian government have to balance between domestic public opinion and pressure from other allied countries. If a member state is to have any influence on the strategic choices of the alliance, it has to deliver; however there is no doubt that "size matters", and Norway is small. In order to make a difference, Norway needs to invoke a kind of "soft" power and focus on security sector reform.⁶⁶ This again can be related to a notion of Norway as moral superpower, for example in peace mediation.⁶⁷ An awareness of this situation appears to exist among the Norwegian NATO delegation,⁶⁸ but it is nevertheless hard to detect a clear policy, making Norway's attitude appear, yet again, more ambivalent than anything else towards the Alliance.

Taking a closer look at the cases under consideration here, the engagement in Kosovo is often described as value based.⁶⁹ NATO tried to prevent ethnic cleansing in the area; a well-established argument if one looks at official documents and interviews with policymakers. In addition, a number of Norwegian politicians had themselves close ties to the region, notably former foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg, who had strong bonds to Yugoslavia, and who also functioned as a peace negotiator in the Nineties.⁷⁰ Knut Vollebæk, also a former foreign minister, played a significant role as chairman of OSSE, which at that time played an important role in the conflict. Such personal connections to the region made it easier for Norway to play a significant role in the Balkans. The former Norwegian ambassador at NATO, Kai Eide, headed a 2006 investigation of current status in Kosovo. This is further evidence that Norway still plays a political role in the region. Given Norway's enthusiasm for the Balkans, one central question is often omitted. Did Norway really have any other options when NATO put the Balkans at the top of the agenda? If Norway had decided not to participate militarily (or at the political level), the question is whether the other allies would have accepted the decision. In any case, Norway contributed militarily in the Balkans, and continued to build its political and social bonds to the area. As such the deployment of forces was a natural progression of Norwegian engagement in the region, at the same time as Norway positioned itself as a good ally. Realpolitik and idealistic considerations seemed to converge.

⁶³ Government Proposal no. 42, 2003-2004, MoD.

⁶⁴ Svein Vigeland Rottem, "Forsvarets mål og strategi: Sikkerhet for hvem?", *Internasjonal Politikk*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (2007), pp. 39-61.

⁶⁵ Interview, member of the Norwegian NATO delegation, June 2006.

⁶⁶ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

⁶⁷ Halvard Leira, "Folket og freden. Utviklingstrekk i norsk fredsdiskurs", Riste, *Norway's Foreign Relations – A History*.

⁶⁸ Many of my respondents underscored this, the Norwegian NATO delegation, June 2006.

⁶⁹ Kosovo report 2001.

⁷⁰ Jacob Børresen, Gullow Gjeseth, & Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk forsvarshistorie. Alliansesforsvar i endring*.

Afghanistan is a more clear-cut case. The allies stood together. As one of the Norwegian NATO representatives said: “If you’ve said A, you’ve got to say B”, stressing the importance of loyalty towards other allies in respect of article 5. At first, the events of September 11 functioned, albeit temporarily, to bring the Alliance together; Norway reiterated its allegiance to its closest ally, with then Minister of Defence Bjørn Tore Godal saying: “We are of course ready to give the US all our support. The US is Norway’s most important ally”.⁷¹

Nevertheless it is important to note that NATO as such did not play a significant role in Afghanistan in the first two years. NATO took command of ISAF in August 2003, and by then Norway had also shifted its focus from Kosovo to Afghanistan. In the end, there appeared to be agreement within NATO that something had to be done about Afghanistan. The question is whether that consensus on Afghanistan is rooted in a sense of a community of values or of material interests, a point that will be discussed later in the text. But first some words on influence in NATO and national priorities.

Influence and national priorities

Norway’s relations with the outside world have always been something of a balancing act. The state’s foreign policy, as already noted, is described as neutral but at the same time international.⁷² Norwegian policymakers have tried to influence world politics through international organizations and agreements, but also attempted not to entangle Norway in the world of geopolitics. A prime example is Norway’s neutrality during the First World War.⁷³ Neutrality was impossible in the Second World War, and with the emergence of the Cold War Norway found it best to adopt a foreign policy mix towards the Soviet Union of deterrence and reassurance. One instance of this policy was Norway’s ban on foreign military bases on Norwegian territory in peacetime.⁷⁴ Such a policy should be interpreted as part of the legacy of neutrality.

Turning again to Kosovo and Afghanistan, some of the points made earlier have relevance here. Norway made military and political commitments to Kosovo. This cannot be solely explained as a consequence of national interests or Realpolitik. The Norwegian establishment felt morally bound to help; and since Norway had experience of the Balkans, it was easier to offer more or less substantial military and political support, in return for influence in the region.⁷⁵ This was not the case in Afghanistan, where the Norwegian contingent is neither as large nor as visible as other allies would like.⁷⁶ At time of writing they remain in the North where the chances of casualties are less likely.⁷⁷ Some members of the Norwegian NATO delegation emphasized this point, noting that Norway’s most important allies (US and Great Britain) had asked for contributions to be increased. However, the 1990s saw a significant scaling down of the Norwegian military, particularly the army and its troops. Contingents like

⁷¹ Press release no. 044/2001, MoD, September 14.

⁷² (Lundestad 2003)

⁷³ Riste, *Norway’s Foreign Relations – A History*.

⁷⁴ Riste, *Norway’s Foreign Relations – A History*, pp.215–217.

⁷⁵ (Kosovo report 2001)

⁷⁶ Interview Norwegian NATO delegation, June 2006.

⁷⁷ The military contributions are under constant evaluation, and during spring 2007 100-150 special forces have been deployed in Kabul, see www.mil.no

the one in Kosovo are therefore impossible today.⁷⁸ It's quality not quantity that matters today. Central to the debate on Norwegian foreign policy is what kind of contribution attracts most attention and gives greatest leverage.⁷⁹ Of course, classical national interests, including defence, need to be taken into account here.

An interesting case that exemplifies Norwegian national interests and priorities is the Norwegian Navy. In 2006 Norway received the first of five frigates from a Spanish shipyard, at the cost of approximately 20 billion Norwegian kroner (2,5 billion Euros) for the lot.⁸⁰ The deal was not an uncontroversial. NATO had not urged Norway to buy them. So what was the reason? While I cannot give a conclusive answer, one of the reasons was to improve homeland security (coastal defence). NATO needs were not discounted, nor those of future policy planning.⁸¹ It showed moreover that Norway could act independently. The frigate deal was, importantly, a national priority, not something needed by NATO at the time. All the same, while frigates don't give leverage in NATO, one of them will be under NATO command from 2008.⁸² Influence in the Alliance and purely national priorities converge. Such considerations should also be taken into account in the next section.

Scepticism and reliability

The challenge of understanding motives and intentions lies at the heart of all social sciences, including international relations. Actors (read states) are constantly trying to decipher and assess each other's motives and intentions. This is of course true when speaking of countries that are easily identified as hostile to your own nation's interests (if not global interests), such as North Korea's testing of missiles in the Sea of Japan, but it is equally relevant amongst so-called "friendly" states as well. Reliability is the key. An alliance such as NATO is based on the idea of reliability. Articles 4 and 5 accentuate this idea of reciprocity. If one member comes under attack, the others are supposed to take action. When pressure was laid on the regime in Baghdad before the second Gulf War, and Turkey wanted NATO support under provisions of article 4, this was the pivotal issue in the ensuing debate. The article states: "The Parties will consult each other whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened" etc. Of course, article 4 and its implications are open to interpretation. There was clearly a lack of consensus on the Turkey issue. Norway's view favoured Turkey, however, and it endorsed invoking article 4.

Reliability and reciprocity are relevant to an analysis of Norwegian defence policy more generally, both within and outside of the defence establishment. Norway will want to know whether its allies can be trusted. Will the assistance Norway provides be reciprocated at some

⁷⁸ For an analysis of Norwegian military capabilities earmarked for international operations see Ola Aabakken, "Utenlandsoperasjoner. Ferdigpakket nisjefyll eller militærmakt i løs vekt?", *FFI/rapport-2006/01729*.

⁷⁹ If we look at actual military spending (% of GNP) Norway is one of the leading nations in the Alliance. I will not speculate on why this is so, but it's a point that is stressed by Norwegian officials. Two relevant analyses here are Jacob Børresen, *Forsvar uten trussel. Det norske Forsvarets rolle og funksjon etter den kalde krigen* (Oslo: Abstrakt forlag AS, 2005) and Tormod Heier, *Influence and Marginalisation. Norway's Adaption to US Transformation Efforts in NATO, 1998-2004*.

⁸⁰ "Fregatter for framtiden" 1. June 2006, Speech by Anne-Grete Støm-Erichsen (Minister of Defence), <http://odin.dep.no/fd/norsk/aktuelt/taler/minister/010051-210203/dok-bn.html>

⁸¹ The same line of argument can be used in respect to the introduction of new MTBs. See Government Proposal no. 82, 2002-2003, MoD.

⁸² <http://www.mil.no/fregatter/start/english/>

future time? Are there any hidden agendas? And so on. Questions like these animate the debate, and show an awareness of trust and reciprocity issues.⁸³ However, they are not at the forefront of the Norwegian debate on NATO membership.⁸⁴ A typical perception of the discourse on Norway and the use of military force, and consequently membership in NATO, is that it is not given enough public attention. The lack of public interest in NATO may mean that it is taken for granted.⁸⁵ The paradox we must wrestle with is the tendency to trust allies, but having to earn their trust. Norway is critically aware of the need to demonstrate that it can be trusted: “Norway must be seen as a trustworthy ally when it comes to the new challenges to security and defence.”⁸⁶ Norway has to give if it wishes to receive.

Kosovo is a clear case of Norway giving generously, politically and militarily, and it did not go unnoticed. Norway demonstrated its trustworthiness in NATO’s time of need. This level of reliability has changed. Norwegians are not that visible anymore. How can we explain the change in policy? Clearly, it has a great deal to do with alterations made to the Norwegian defence forces. Drastic cuts in military personnel made it impossible to give as liberally as before. “Quality not quantity” was, as noted earlier, put in the foreground.⁸⁷ The restructuring of the Norwegian Defence forces was also a response to the new security framework established by NATO. But at the same time there seems to be some scepticism towards NATO’s (read its member states’) intentions and commitment in the High North, which remains the main concern of the Norwegian defence discourse. In the Ministry of Defence you will find those who question NATO (read US) and its agenda in the region. Can Norway trust its allies to invoke article 5 if conflict breaks out in a region where NATO countries have divergent interests (like the North)? This is what advocates of a strictly national defence with fewer ties to NATO argue.⁸⁸ The ambivalence exhibited by Norway and its commitments to NATO support again the claim that Norway is an ambivalent ally.

Norms and threats

Bearing this discussion in mind I revisit in the last part of this article realist and constructivist understandings of Norway’s foreign and military policy. We found that during the Cold War Western allies at least shared a similar perception of threat. How immediate a threat and how it was to be met were up for discussion, but there was little disagreement that the Soviet Union was the enemy. From the realist perspective, a changing image of threat, caused by the fall of the Soviet Union in this case, would justify the restructuring of a nation’s military forces in accordance with newer challenges. In the case of Norway, such restructuring did not take place until early 2000.⁸⁹ Because the challenges altered so rapidly, Norway was slow to respond to the new and evolving security landscape. This could be understood and explained

⁸³ The Norwegian daily *Aftenposten* is the most influential forum for debates on defence issues, but specialized periodicals like *Norges Forsvar* and *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift* are also relevant here.

⁸⁴ Nina Græger Græger, “Norsk NATO-debatt etter den kalde krigen”.

⁸⁵ For a collection of opinion polls addressing public opinions towards NATO see www.folkogforsvar.no

⁸⁶ Government Proposal no. 1, 2002-2003, MoD

⁸⁷ Towards the end of the Cold War Norway could mobilize a military force of 320,000 men within 24–72 hours, Nina Græger & Halvard Leira, “Norwegian Strategic Culture after World War II: From a Local to a Global Perspective”. That mobilization strategy is now history, and, for example, the Army is counting around 3000, see http://www.mil.no/haren/styrker/start/?jsessionid=MBTN2TZOU3PKRQFIZYGSFEQ?_requestid=4845282.

⁸⁸ Kåre Dahl Marthinsen, “One Size Fits All? Multinationality and the Smaller Partner”, *Forsvarsstudier* No. 3 (2004).

⁸⁹ Ståle Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2002).

by using constructivist analytical tools.⁹⁰ The main problem was achieving consensus within the alliance about threats, an echo of Cold War consensus. As agreement proved difficult, the solution was to cling to status quo. When terror reached the top of the agenda, how great a threat it was and how to meet this new challenge to security split the alliance down the middle, with the US and Britain on one side, and most of the others on the other.⁹¹ Norwegian policy makers were aware of the split within NATO of course. Other factors helped hold the Alliance together, however, namely a sense of community of values, an allegiance to democracy, organizational culture and so on.⁹²

The two major expansions of NATO demonstrate its importance. The first one, saw the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland join NATO. Negotiations demanded diplomatic skill.⁹³ It was vital to avoid offending Russia and creating an unstable situation. A similar concern informed the second enlargement round. But even with the Baltic states knocking on NATO's door, the process was smoother.⁹⁴ Norway reluctantly welcomed both enlargements, reflecting a new post Cold War assessment. Norway feared that expansion would lead to a more marginalized position.⁹⁵ Some are concerned that Russia feels neglected. By the early 2000s, Norway realised there was no turning back,⁹⁶ and at the time of writing Norway is happy with the new members and especially the Baltic states. It shows in the reform of the security sector too. In short, Norway bided its time, and when the dust settled, surveyed the new opportunities. What this tells us is that Norway is not in the forefront when new challenges arise, but will most often adapt.

If we view the above arguments in light of the two theoretical traditions introduced earlier, many points can be made. The realist position brings at least two characteristics to bear on the situation. First, for an alliance to survive, members toned to agree on the nature of the threat.⁹⁷ Second, as Mearsheimer and Waltz have pointed out, a hegemon (US) will use the alliance as a tool to consolidate its power.⁹⁸ Waltz sees the US supporting NATO for as long as it remains relevant to the expansion of US national interests. Does this have any relevance to smaller member states? If we take a closer look at Norway's position some remarks can be made. It is hard to imagine Norway changing its policy on NATO unless, for example, Norway joined the EU. This would create a totally different situation and lead to a widening of the transatlantic gap. Norwegian participation in the Nordic Battle Groups should not be interpreted as an alternative to NATO, but as a strategy for gaining influence through cooperation.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945 – From “Empire” by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift*, Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*.

⁹² Kenneth Waltz gives another variable attention by arguing that the bureaucracy of NATO has self-interest in the Alliance's survival, Kenneth Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War”. Important contributions are; Rebecca Moore, “NATO's Mission for the New Millennium: A Value-Based Approach to Building Security”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2002), pp.1–34 and Helene Sjørusen, “On the identity of NATO”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 4, (2006), pp.687–703.

⁹³ Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*.

⁹⁴ Stanley R. Sloan, *NATO, The European Union, And The Atlantic Community. The Transatlantic Bargain Challenged*.

⁹⁵ Frode Liland & Helge Ø. Pharo, “Norge og striden om NATOs geografiske virkeområde”.

⁹⁶ Government Proposal no. 45, 2000-2001, MoD.

⁹⁷ Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).

⁹⁸ Kenneth Waltz, “The New World Order” and “Structural Realism after the Cold War”.

⁹⁹ Nina Græger, “Norway and the EU security and defence dimension: A “troops-for-influence” strategy” in Nina Græger, Henrik Larsen, Hanna Ojanen (ed.) *The ESDP and the Nordic Countries* (Helsinki; The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2002), pp. 33-90, Pernille Rieker, “The Nordic countries and EU security policy:

Addressing the three analytical and explanatory levels introduced earlier some remarks can be made. From a realist standpoint, Norway is entangled in the Realpolitik of the world. International power structures create and restrict Norway's options. In the eyes of a constructivist, things may look different. Threats are still important, but so are the international and regional communities along with domestic issues. The cultural legacy of neutrality and Norway's perception of its own smallness blend together in an ambivalent justification of NATO membership.

Norway needed to join the US and NATO in fighting the root causes of 9/11 to be taken seriously as an ally. Many of my respondents at the Ministry of Defence and on the NATO delegation emphasized, "if you are in, you are in", and that article 5 commitments could not be taken seriously enough.¹⁰⁰ However, Afghanistan also tells another story, one of Norwegian ambivalence, as it tries to disentangle itself from the Alliance. Nevertheless, "... the strong do what they have the power to do, and the weak accept what they must accept".¹⁰¹ The US defined the new NATO; both the Balkans and Afghanistan are examples of that. The US was initially reluctant to use NATO in the Balkans to solve political problems. The Balkans was a European problem, people said, and the US would do well to save its money.¹⁰² In other words, we see the reality of the continuous transatlantic bargaining.¹⁰³ The same can be said about Afghanistan. The US was not eager to start a new "war by committee". But NATO did play a significant role in the end, despite apparent lack of personnel on the ground.¹⁰⁴ If NATO of today is to have a future it must rely on a US administration that prioritizes the it and gives the organization new tasks.

Even if US clearly is the strong part in the Alliance that is not to deny a set of common values on which further cooperation can build. In this context the Norwegian case is interesting. Many would say that American and Norwegian values most of the time converge. Both see themselves as liberal democracies. As Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett say, the likelihood of a military conflict between Norway and US (or any other Western ally) is marginal, "they no longer fear the use of violence as a means of statecraft and to settle their disputes".¹⁰⁵

Is there any significance to Norway adopting priorities that are not necessarily consistent with NATO's wishes or the other way around? Norway is at one level not very eager to contribute military capabilities, so the answer is 'yes' it is significant. But this is just one side of the story. At the same time Norway has in fact contributed both in Afghanistan and Kosovo. The question is really how to handle diverging views. The Balkans and Afghanistan showed that NATO could unite, that it is a geopolitical game where Norway can't play any significant role, but one in which Norway will endeavour to make itself felt. In Kosovo Norway managed to play a part, in Afghanistan as well, but to a lesser extent, and even in regards to the conflict

convergent or divergent agendas?" in Alyson J. K. Bailes, Gunilla Herolf, Bengt Sundelius (ed.) *The Nordic Countries and The European Security and Defence Policy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁰ Interview Norwegian NATO delegation, June 2006.

¹⁰¹ Thucydides, "Reflections on the Peloponnesian War" in Phil Williams et al. (eds), *Classic Readings in International Relations* (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994).

¹⁰² Ryan C. Hendrickson, *Diplomacy and War at NATO. The Secretary General and Military Action after the Cold War* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2006).

¹⁰³ Stanley R. Sloan, *NATO, The European Union, And The Atlantic Community. The Transatlantic Bargain Challenged*.

¹⁰⁴ A point some of my respondents stressed. The number of allied forces in Afghanistan the time of writing was around 30,000, see www.nato.int.

¹⁰⁵ Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett, *Security Communities*, pp.32.

in Iraq and NATO's small contribution here, Norway tried to get noticed. A new left/centre coalition government took Norway out of Iraq in 2005,¹⁰⁶ partly to appease public opinion, partly to keep the coalition together. Again we see signs of Norway's ambivalence as an ally. And again we can address the three levels of understanding. Here domestic bargains are of importance, and these bargains are entangled in the legacy of a small state's neutrality.

Realists argue that international relations are a struggle for security. National interests are given highest priority. Many would claim that the Norwegian military, without NATO's help, would be unable to defend Norway in an emergency.¹⁰⁷ And as we have seen with the frigates and deployment in Afghanistan, there is also a tendency to see first to one's own interests. Strategies, buying influence with military concessions, putting own interests before those of the Alliance, are understandable to a realist. Alliances are a natural part of international system,¹⁰⁸ despite inter-state rivalry and suspicion.¹⁰⁹ Following Snyder, Norway follows a mixed strategy between cooperation and defection.

Theories of security communities tell another story. Cooperation and integration made NATO a community of values, with established standards, rules and norms serving to socialise members.¹¹⁰ It is additionally important to recognize the domestic factors. Norway sees the use of military forces as a last resource. This can be explained by looking at the uniqueness of Norway and its ambition as a peace mediator,¹¹¹ and as a small coastal state with great natural resources and bordering Russia. Regardless, Norway is, in case of a large scale conflict, entirely dependent on the Alliance. The point is that nobody really agrees on what a large scale conflict is. The paradox is really that Norway would like NATO to play a role in the High North, while sticking to a strategy of desecuritization.¹¹²

The realist Waltz notes that "In the absence of an external authority, a state cannot be sure that today's friend will not be tomorrow's enemy".¹¹³ We see the same thing in game theory, for example the prisoner's dilemma. However, small states like Norway are totally dependent on friends (or states with convergent interests) in times of crisis. One possible strategy is to be friends with everyone.¹¹⁴ The engagement in the Nordic Battle Group exemplifies such a strategy. From a constructivist point of view the normative climate in international relations tells us what is regarded good and bad, and if one is aware of the parameters of this normative climate, its strategic use may foster good will. Thus, the invoking of the concept of human security is relevant. The question of trust is also addressed by Adler and Barnett, who tell us that "Trust can best be understood as believing despite uncertainty".¹¹⁵ In an uncertain world,

¹⁰⁶ At that time Norway was part of NATO's training mission in Iraq and In 2003/2004 Norway had an engineer troop in Southern Iraq, but this was not in a NATO context and thus besides the argument laid forward in this text.

¹⁰⁷ Chief of Defence Sverre Diesen, *Forsvarets utfordringer*. Speech at Oslo Militære Samfund 13 November, 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*.

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

¹¹⁰ Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett, *Security Communities*.

¹¹¹ This is shown in conflicts in the Middle East (Oslo agreement), in Sri Lanka and Thorvald Stoltenberg in Bosnia in the mid 1990s.

¹¹² The concept of desecuritization is developed by Ole Wæver, see Ole Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization" in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.) *On Security*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995.

¹¹³ Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War". p.10

¹¹⁴ Iver B. Neumann, "Norges handlingsrom og behovet for en overgripende sikkerhetspolitisk strategi". *Det sikkerhetspolitiske bibliotek*, No. 3 (2002).

¹¹⁵ Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett, *Security Communities*, p.46.

trust is a cornerstone of any alliance. Here, constructivism and realism converge. Realists explain Norway's ambivalence by lack of trust in the international system. Constructivists partly explain it by Norway's peacefulness.¹¹⁶ But at the same time the Alliance is regarded as central in Norwegian defence planning.

Between a rock and a hard place

Norway's post Cold War NATO policy is neither one dimensional nor easily explained either as an expression of Realpolitik or unquestioned adherence to NATO and its values. Norway's conception of its own role is equally unclear. Not surprisingly, many might say. Although small states like Norway have to rely on their allies, global geopolitics makes total trust impossible, even between the best of friends, regionally or internationally. Although the realist sees anarchy as the principle identifier of the international system NATO must also be seen as a regional community of interests and identity, and as such an anti-anarchical force. But at the same time domestic factors such as the legacy of neutrality and the perception of Norway as a peaceful nation cannot be ignored. On the basis of the themes addressed in this analysis, the following concluding remarks can be made.

With regard to collective security and collective defence it is apparent that the distinction between them is not clear. Traditionally Norway has emphasised the role of UN, though the Kosovo intervention changed that. Additionally, the importance of bargaining position vs. domestic values, are distinguished by the fact that when they converge Norway are in, but if not the case is more troubling. This again is closely connected to influence and national priorities, maybe the most relevant distinction to mention. As pointed out the frigates and the lack of deployment in Southern Afghanistan shows that Norway on important issues makes purely national priorities, but again this is just one side of the story. In a large scale conflict Norway is totally dependent on support from NATO. Such a support is given to friends or if national interests converge. In the Norwegian NATO discourse a lack of trust can be found. After the Cold War the High North is not at the top of the Alliance agenda, a point that is stressed by Norwegian NATO officials, but where it is hard to see any common attitude on how to handle this challenge. This again can be related to the lack of a common understanding of threat. This is true both in regards to the new members and across the Atlantic. So one can claim that things were easier before. In this complex environment Norway is trying to grasp the new reality. The easiest solution is to cling to the policy of the past. Norway's policy towards the Alliance is still ambivalent, a statement that will find support in both the realist school of thought and by using analytical tools from the constructivist camp.

Norway is ambivalent and both realism and constructivism have insights to contribute to this subject.¹¹⁷ Norway's attitude towards membership in NATO should be analysed and understood both as a consequence of the nation's uniqueness and the fact that Norway is quite small, and the understanding that Norway is entangled in the Realpolitik of the world. This mixture has created a defence policy where values and interests cannot be separated and therefore both realism and constructivism can contribute to a more consistent understanding of how a small state like Norway interacts with NATO and its members.

¹¹⁶ Farrell makes a distinction between constructivists and culturalists, where the former are giving international norms attention and the latter domestic norms, Theo Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program", *International Studies Review*, Vol 4, No. 1 (2002), pp.49–72. I do not apply such a distinction here; both approaches sort under 'constructivism'.