Dr. Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall began by discussing the concept and purposes of alliances. She noted that since “coalitions of the willing” had been in greater use in recent years, it was time to review exactly what an alliance is. Alliances are designed to be binding, durable security commitments based on a shared recognition of a common threat. To maintain alliances there is a need to have a process involving on-going meetings that are used to build consensus. There must also be an element of preparation for combined military operations. However, in the future the definition of what is vital to national security will need to encompass a broader set of activities.

What the US gets from its allies:

- Alliances generate capabilities that enhance US power
- Alliances create a basis of legitimacy for the exercise of that power
- Alliances avert the impulse in some countries to counterbalance US power
- Alliances steer countries away from strategic apathy of excessive self-reliance
  - By extending its nuclear umbrella to its allies, the US has been successful in dissuading many countries from developing their own nuclear weapons capabilities

NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is the gold standard of alliances

- It has a standing military command ready for action
- The Article 5 guarantee (an attack on one is an attack on all) has been important
  - Never had to use it but NATO forces were deployed and on high alert for a long time throughout the Cold War
- Focus was definitely on Europe during the Cold War,
- But the US often wanted allied help outside Europe
  - Korean War supported the development of a military backbone for the Alliance
- External crises brought about by the end of European colonialism occasionally affected relations among NATO members
  - However, there was fundamental agreement on compelling nature of the Soviet threat
- Today there is no single threat
  - Diffusion of threats makes it difficult to agree on what to do within the organization
Out-of-area operations was the term used in the Cold War for activity outside the borders of the NATO member states
• NATO largely avoided such activity
• The US now wants NATO to focus on these tasks but European publics are not convinced

The Bush Administration has been working on a new chapter in relations with NATO
• Emphasis has been on the Global War on Terror
• Allies have been unsure about the GWOT definition and could see ways that this might make matters worse
• Newer NATO members were generally more willing to go along with the US on this but recently this support has been eroding

A 60th Anniversary Snapshot
• NATO will turn 60 in April 2009 – a good time to reevaluate it and generate a new mission statement
• A paradox: NATO is doing more than ever before but at the same time it is doing less than it should be doing
• Most citizens have no idea how many NATO troops are currently deployed around the world
  ▪ 66,000 on 3 continents
  ▪ The largest contingent is in Afghanistan – 50,000 troops from all 26 member nations and 10 Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries and 4 non-NATO partners
  ▪ Second largest deployment is to the Balkans – 16,000 troops in KFOR – 25 NATO nations plus 9 PfP members and 1 non-NATO member
  ▪ On a smaller scale, there is a training mission in Iraq and a small number are providing logistical support for potential airlift of African Union troops into Somalia or Darfur
• NATO naval forces are working with Russian and Ukrainian naval vessels to deter maritime terrorism in the Indian Ocean
• It is important that everyday NATO forces are operating together
  ▪ They must work on big, real-world challenges
  ▪ They were really not trained to do counterinsurgency work but called on to do it now
  ▪ The US is improving its counterinsurgency capabilities and NATO allies serving alongside the U.S. in Afghanistan are doing so too.
• NATO PfP countries are learning improved standards and operating procedures and developing interoperability with NATO forces
• NATO is also building bridges to countries that are not members
  ▪ Working with the Australians in Afghanistan
  ▪ At Bucharest, NATO leaders invited other countries and organizations with capacity to support NATO efforts to participate to boost interoperability
  ▪ NEW SECTION – Next bullet should not be indented
  ▪ However, with the high pace of operations, NATO is doing far less than it should be doing on the political side
  ▪ NATO’s political and military leaders have little time for strategic discussion or reflection
  ▪ There is much to do in a challenging environment
  ▪ Problem: there is a lack of agreement on strategic concepts and no real vision for the future despite the urgent need
Public Support
In public opinion in many NATO countries, there is a substantial split between their willingness
to support post-conflict reconstruction and their opposition to participating in combat operations
- If sustained, such divisions could undermine long-term support for NATO
- Since all the countries involved are democracies, public opinion matters.

![Approval of Deployment of National Troops in Afghanistan](source: Transatlantic Trends 2007)

- Positive opinions about NATO have declined since 2002
  - Governments need to make the case to their people about why NATO is important to their security
  - Leaders are out of sync with their population

![Is NATO Still Essential?](source: Transatlantic Trends 2007)
• Most larger European countries are facing challenges that could undermine support for NATO even further
  ▪ Graying populations, especially in Germany, Italy, and Spain, will leave smaller working populations to support growing numbers of retirees
  ▪ Growing domestic welfare needs could further reduce willingness to pay for military operations
  ▪ There will also be significant competition for the declining number of military-age citizens
  ▪ On average NATO countries (not including the US) spent only 1.75% of their GDP on defense
  ▪ Only 5 countries hit the NATO recommended 2% level

![Military Expenditure as a Share (% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP))](chart)

• Such low-level of investment is already causing problems of interoperability during operations where other countries are trying to work with the US
  ▪ Can slow down operations and may even be dangerous
  ▪ US may need to increase
  ▪ its leadership in this area or even make some investment in developing technological capabilities of allied military forces

Major challenges for NATO
• NATO’s future purpose is not fully embraced by all member country citizens
• Demographic shifts in the European countries will cause continuing problems

Recommendations to the next US Administration
• All three candidates have stated overall support for American alliances, but the new president must operationalize that support
• The US must lead by showing that working together the members of NATO can rebuild a common threat assessment
• The first action is to listen to the other members
  ▪ That the US is willing to listen is very important to the other NATO countries
Listening shows that the US takes allied views into consideration
Would help develop that necessary new sense of purpose
• There is a good opportunity to reexamine NATO’s purpose with the celebration of its 60th anniversary in April 2009
  ▪ There is interest in generating a new mission statement – what the Bucharest Summit described as a “Declaration on Alliance Security” – that would be forward looking
  ▪ Conducting and completing this process will be challenging since the 60th anniversary takes place shortly after a new US president is inaugurated
  ▪ Work on this document needs to start now
  ▪ The NATO staffs recognize this need but the leadership must be willing to work on the issue
• General James Jones, former SACEUR, has published a list of vital security issues that NATO should take on involving a broader agenda:
  ▪ Energy security
  ▪ Critical infrastructure protection
  ▪ Climate change
  ▪ Terrorism
  ▪ WMD proliferation
  ▪ Illegal immigration
  ▪ Drugs and arms smuggling
  ▪ Impact of new powers that will shift the dynamics of the international environment

Some will wonder whether NATO will be moving out of its appropriate areas of operations
• It is important that NATO provide a place where 26 countries meet on a daily basis
• There is no other forum like it
  ▪ All delegations must go back to their capitals for instructions on given issues
  ▪ Forces those in the capitals to think about important security matters
  ▪ Issues involved may not always be strictly NATO military issues
    ▪ May involve national health ministries or other parts of governments not previously tasked to think about national security

Second, NATO must also work more closely with the European Union (EU)
▪ A proposed Comprehensive Approach would synchronize and integrate military, civilian, UN and NGO capabilities
▪ Europeans say that they want to get more involved in post-conflict reconstruction operations – and they should generate those capabilities.

Third, there is a need to enhance Europe’s defense capability both for operating within NATO and on their own
▪ There is always a question of whether a strong Europe is good or bad for the US
▪ The answer should be “YES”: A strong Europe is in the best interest of the US
The next Administration must push this; it requires investment
▪ Fourth, NATO should develop more connectivity with like-minded states and institutions.
- It should pursue a greater degree of interface and potentially more formal coordination, focusing especially on interoperability.

- These concepts are further developed in Dr. Sherwood-Randall’s 2006 *Joint Forces Quarterly* article *The Case for Alliances.*

- Some of this interface development is already going on in Afghanistan and could be used as a model for future work

- More of the political/headquarters level work must be included to further enhance mutually beneficial international cooperation.

While it will remain regionally-rooted, NATO needs to think globally about opportunities for cooperation to advance shared goals.

**Question & Answer Session**

Declining defense budgets

- The US can encourage other countries to do better with what they are spending and to invest more in defense

- Countries could better rationalize their funding if they reduce duplication of national efforts

- The US could help with offering transformational concepts

Working together

- In a perfect world NATO countries would not go into military operations with a set of caveats as has happened in Afghanistan
  
  - There is a need to look at lessons learned in Afghan operations

- Having countries emphasize only niche military capabilities is not optimal
  
  - Must determine what the 26+ countries should bring to the table to start with
  
  - Major problem that needs more work

  - More consensus means better interoperability

The Comprehensive Approach

- Decisions must be made about whether Europe will have a real military force

- Will European countries be able to do post-conflict reconstruction?

- It is not clear that some countries really could be involved in all of these efforts

- Need to identify expectations and then hold individual countries accountable to meet those expectations

NATO vs. Russia

- NATO should neither coddle nor isolate Russia
  
  - Must try to work with the Russians
  
  - There have been formal relations since 2004 involving consultations at 26 + 1

- NATO should hear Russia’s concerns about NATO expansion into the former Soviet states as well as its concerns about vulnerability to missile defenses and general feelings of “encroachment”

  - Must engage Russia about all of these topics

- Russia’s concerns should not create a veto on NATO policy decisions
  
  - But the way NATO expansion took place was not optimal.
- Russian cooperation is needed in a number of areas -- for example, in addressing Iran’s proliferation goals in seeking reliable access to energy supplies
- Need to look for more ways to cooperate with Russia
  - Maritime patrols are a good example
- More transparency would help
  - The more things are explained, the better the relationships can be

NATO’s Threat Assessment
- Public opinion data come from Pew Global Attitudes Project surveys which are the most comprehensive and long-term studies available
- The US needs to hear the European view of the threat
- US is more agitated about terrorism than is Europe at this point
  - European attitudes may change should there be any more attacks
  - Some attitudes may already be changing in areas where there have been major attacks
- US and Europe need to take each other’s concerns to heart
- Europe is currently more worried about climate change
  - Because the US has done so little about climate change, it image as an overall leader is tarnished
  - Although NATO was not created to address subjects like climate change, it makes a good initial conduit for discussion since 26 countries meet there so often

Working together
- Part of the value of the consultative process is to get the ideas of the other parties involved
  Can identify where the sides agree and disagree
  Just talking about the topic can be helpful as long as both sides do keep talking, but it is not realistic to reach consensus on every issue

Who should be members of NATO
- Discussions go all the way back to NATO’s earliest period
- There has always been concern about appropriate scope and domain but now there are new challenges
- May need new categories of membership
- May not have Article 5 relations with all the new members
- Must understand what the new potential members are willing to do and what their capabilities are and will be in the future