

# INTRODUCTION

Discussion about the nature and direction of the Atlantic Alliance has perhaps never been as heated as in the past few years. In some measure, this is a reaction to the pace and extent of change in the international security environment and the ever-growing demands placed upon NATO by events. As the Alliance has sought to transform itself to address the challenges of the 21st century, so has the debate about its future intensified.

The seven debates contained in this, the second volume in the series *For and Against: Debating Euro-Atlantic Security Options*, all originally appeared in online editions of *NATO Review* and reflect the wider discussion about the Alliance's future. The book is structured chronologically beginning with the earliest debate from the spring 2004 issue and ending with the most recent debate from the spring 2006 issue. The format for the debates is simple: the first participant makes an initial case, the second responds, and the exchange is repeated twice. By the final exchange of letters, the debaters – all experts in their fields – have usually found some common ground while pointing the way towards future analysis and discussion.

The common denominator of the debates is the necessity of change. The world has evolved and the Alliance must continue to adapt to remain relevant to the Allies' security needs. While the aftershocks resulting from the end of the Cold War continue to reverberate and NATO peacekeepers are still required in the Balkans, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have greatly expanded the potential scope of NATO's missions and operations. Global challenges are giving the Alliance an increasingly outward focus. Mechanisms such as the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and the Partnership for Peace have encouraged cooperation with countries far removed from the Alliance's original territories. NATO has even been called upon to provide humanitarian assistance to Pakistan and logistical support to the African Union's mission in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The Alliance is preparing for missions its founders never envisaged, and the theme of transformation runs through the debates presented in this volume. If there is one overarching message, it may be that the challenges that face the Alliance today now are diffuse and varied, and that flexibility will be the key to addressing them effectively.