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VERDICT : a good insight into the NATO, US and European strategies which enables the reader to identify the fault lines within and between them that will influence political perspectives and actions in these areas over the coming years. The introduction to this paper comprehensively argues the fundamental question of the role and necessity of strategies in this 'globalised yet increasingly fragmented world'. It highlights the Western culture of promoting and merging political and economic systems instead of meeting the security needs of the global population, compared to the cyclical and recurring vision of the great philosophies of the Asian world. This introduction provides a thought provoking setting for the essays that follow.

David Yost analyses the origin and principles of NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept in great detail and then carefully argues whether a new strategic concept may be unnecessary or just inopportune. The main difficulty is that NATO's strategic concept reflects the policy of the member countries that, prior to 9/11, were far more in accord than they are now. Unfortunately this essay fails to look at the role of the North Atlantic Council and whether it could realistically broker a new strategic concept and instead concentrates on justifying the relevance of the 1999 Strategic Concept. It argues that the various summits and agreements that have taken place since the 1999 Strategic Concept have allowed member nations to adapt it to new circumstances and requirements. However, in noting the sensitivity of nations to initiate military action since the Kosovo conflict, it would have been useful if the author had pointed out that whereas Article 5 operations are binding on all members, non-Article 5 operations are conducted on an 'opt-in' basis.
Peter Faber's look at the US National Security Strategy (NSS) and reconciling it with European concepts of security identifies the complexity as well as the historical and intellectual roots of the NSS. In laying out the 6 principles underlying the 2002 NSS perhaps the most striking is that the core themes are human freedom and personal opportunity, not security and stability which would reflect a European perspective. Faber finds many points of coincidence with the EU European Security Strategy (ESS), principally in the security problems and engaging them at source via a variety of means. However, the detailed philosophy underlying the threats and risks is quite different as is the relative importance of means versus ends. Faber identifies 6 major
stress points between the NSS and the ESS and considers how far a revised NSS might improve the strategy of the US Administration and reassure long-standing Allies of its transatlantic commitment.
The equivalent essay on the Union Security Strategy (i.e. the ESS) is argued to be an important step towards a European strategic culture in that it is an articulation of the perceived collective strategic interests of the EU members. Given the divisions over the Iraqi crisis it contributed to the containment of strategic fragmentation within the EU as well as being an attempt to repair the damaged relationship with the US. The ESS identifies 5 key threats but

offers little depth of thought whilst in addressing the way-ahead it has a generalised and sometimes a slightly negative aspect.

Ponsard offers strengths and weaknesses of the document but the strengths are far from robust and the weaknesses are all too obviously the result of compromise to avoid exposing the underlying strategic differences within the European states. The ESS has clearly limited its horizon by allowing its concerns over relations with the US to drive the document and dismissing consideration of those areas of the world like India and China that are increasing their influence in the global context. The reader is left with the feeling that it is a political exercise to overcome the US perception of an 'Old and New Europe' and in so doing has deliberately side-stepped the issue of the UK's historical link with the US and the global strategic issues. Therefore, it might be argued that the ESS is a flawed document.

The final essay by Carlo Masala is entitled 'Comparing the Incomparable' and that in itself is a meaningful phrase. It attempts to explain the different underlying nature of the documents and the influences that drove them. Furthermore, it highlights the differences between the 1999 Strategic Concept agreed by the primary members of NATO and their individual national strategies, and the differences between the NATO strategy and both the NSS and ESS. The Masala conclusion is contrary to David Yost in that he sees a case for a new NATO strategy but suggests that the Comprehensive Political Guidance currently in work with NATO should be the first of a twofold strategy, the second part of which should look at the political objectives and

aims of the alliance. However, whilst this sub-concept approach may offer a way of avoiding the most controversial issues being met head-on in developing a new Strategic Concept, that does not mean that they will go away in the meantime.