

**THE POWER OF VALUES OR THE VALUE OF POWER?
AMERICA AND EUROPE IN A POST-9/11 WORLD**

Paper prepared for

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Introduction¹

In the wake of the Second Gulf War and the very real divisions within the North Atlantic Alliance that attended its advent and prosecution, it is worth asking whether the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can survive. Have the costs of the transatlantic bargain begun to exceed its benefits? Have too many spans fallen out of the transatlantic bridge, revealing a chasm that no amount of diplomatic mending can repair? Is this is result of a “value gap” between Europe—especially the “old NATO” allies—and the United States?

This paper will examine this question. It begins with a brief overview of previous “gaps” in the NATO alliance during the Cold War era. It then turns to what may be called the new “trans-European” bargain that emerged in the post-Cold War era, or what U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld referred to as the differences between the “old” and “new NATO.” This is followed by an examination of current trends in American national security policy and what they mean for NATO. Accepting that the impact of trends in American national security policy since 1993, and especially since September 11, 2001, have resulted a changed approach to NATO on Washington’s part, the paper argues that, given the current differences amongst the NATO allies, this gap in values will not in the short term, if ever, be fully reconciled. The reason for this does not rest in the so-called value gap, but rather in the gap between Europe and America over the value of power, especially the exercise of American military power, in contemporary international affairs. Yet this gap is itself only a reflection of the realities of American

¹ Parts this essay are drawn from papers given at the Atlantic Council of Canada’s Annual Spring Seminar, Toronto, May 21, 2003, and the Conference on “Canada and the Globalizing World,” Seventh Biennial Conference, Russian Association of Canadian Studies, Institute of the USA and Canada, Moscow, June 25–27, 2003.

national security policy and the international security environment, and indeed it must be taken into account if the Alliance is to survive.

The Value of Flexibility: NATO in the Cold War

When representatives of the original twelve members of NATO stepped forward to sign the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949, the U.S. Marine Band played two selections from George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*: "It Ain't Necessarily So," and "I Got Plenty of Nothin'." As then-Secretary of State Dean Acheson observed in his memoirs, the choice of music "added a note of unexpected realism."² Until the end of the Cold War, the Alliance could never quite shake the suspicion that behind the burgeoning bureaucracy, the elaborate military command structure, and the carefully crafted nuclear and conventional strategies all was not necessarily so, and that in a real crisis NATO would be found to have plenty of nothing. These concerns seemed well founded as the Alliance coped with a never-ending series of internal divisions, dilemmas, and seemingly insoluble contradictions about how it dealt with the threat from the East while holding itself together.

But survive it did. This was because "flexible response" was not simply the official name given to the strategy adopted in 1967; it was, in a profound sense, the way the Alliance approached all its seemingly intractable and inherently contradictory problems of a strategic and, above all, political nature. True to the messy nature of democratic government itself, this collection of (mostly) democracies managed to surprise and confound its critics and attain victory in the Cold War by adopting a series of

² Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 284.

initiatives that placed political compromise above military and strategic orthodoxy and intellectual rigor. The end result was that the allies stayed allied and, in doing so, achieved ultimate victory in the Cold War.

What Michael Mandelbaum has called “the ideas that conquered the world”—peace, democracy, and free markets³—were fundamental to the creation of the Alliance. But while NATO existed to defend Western democracy and capitalism, there was never any uniformity among its members on how the values associated with liberal-democratic government were to be practiced. Two World Wars and a large American military and cultural presence did not negate centuries of European culture and tradition. There were always differences between the United States and its European allies on the role of the state in the economy, for example, as well as with regard to social issues. Nor should it be forgotten that, in the early days of the Alliance, when Western collective defense and unity were so important, NATO, with Washington taking the lead, admitted several members, such as Portugal and Turkey, whose domestic political cultures shared few of the values associated with liberal democracy.

Faced with a common threat, the allies were able to operate together in spite of historic as well as emergent gaps in their views on how to implement the values they shared by adopting a more or less unified approach to military security issues. Yet even here there were major differences, and gaps that were never reconciled. The “nuclear dilemma” about how, when, or whether atomic weapons would be used remained unresolved, as did the exact role of conventional forces in the event of an attack from the East. The position of France within the Alliance remained problematic, and Greece and Turkey engaged in open hostilities. From the beginning, Washington pressed its

³ Michael Mandelbaum, *The Ideas That Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy, and Free Markets in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002).

European allies to spend more on defense, and toward the end of the Cold War there was little agreement about how NATO should handle “out of area” problems. On Vietnam, the Middle East, relations with China, and a host of other global and regional questions, allied unity was often paper-thin, if not completely non-existent. And while behind the deterrent shield free markets were established and flourished, economic and trade disputes were never wholly absent from Alliance relations.

The point is that there were always gaps within NATO, especially between the United States and its European allies, but also between the Europeans themselves. Henry Kissinger was writing about the “troubled partnership” already in the early 1960s, and the U.S. Secretary of State named 1973 the “Year of Europe” in an attempt to mend the transatlantic gulf during the Nixon administration.⁴ It was not sentimental idealism that overcame these differences, but an underlying hard realism on the part of allied leaders on both sides of the Atlantic on the need to maintain fundamental unity in spite of such differences. The transatlantic bargain was a mechanism created to cope with and reconcile divergent national approaches to national and international politics. It succeeded in the Cold War not only because of the discipline imposed by a common threat, but because of the collective flexibility that was deployed in meeting this threat.

⁴ William Wallace, “Europe, the Necessary Partner,” *Foreign Affairs* 80 (May/June 2001): 19.

The United States and the ‘Trans-European Bargain’ in the 1990s:

Unilateralism with a Smile.⁵

In the first decade of the post-Cold War era, NATO continued to display its renowned capacity for survival through flexibility when, despite greatly exaggerated predictions as to its imminent demise, it seemed to flourish. But the Alliance of the 1990s must be viewed in the context of American foreign and national security policy during the immediate post-Cold War years. While the Bush II administration has been explicit in its unilateralist approach, the Clinton Administration was no less determined to maintain America’s freedom of action—a freedom that, after the fall of the USSR, now appeared unlimited. As Michael Mastanduno observed in 1997, the Clinton Administration “followed a consistent strategy in pursuit of a clear objective—the preservation of the United States’ pre-eminent global position.”⁶ There was, however, a difference in tone on Washington’s part under these two administrations, and therefore in the response on the part of old allies and adversaries alike to America’s unipolarity. Far from alienating other countries, in the 1990s the United States seemed to be able to maintain its traditional ties and forge new ones, and it sought to engage itself across the globe, especially in Europe.

The Alliance was quick to respond to the breath-taking fall of the Warsaw Pact and then the Soviet Union itself. Beginning in the early 1990s, it revised its strategic

⁵ Parts of this section appeared in Joel J. Sokolsky, “Glued to Its Seat: Canada, Peacekeeping and the Western Alliance in the Post-Cold War Era,” in *The Transatlantic Link in Evolution: What Has Changed Since 11 September 2001*, ed. Charles Pentland, *Martello Papers* 25 (Kingston, Ont.: Queen’s University Centre for International Relations, 2003).

⁶ Michael Mastanduno, “Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy After the Cold War,” *International Security* 21 (Spring 1997): 51.

concepts and then its very organization and structure. It immediately reached out to the East. A North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was created to bring old adversaries (neutrals) into a consultative process. Special agreements were concluded with Ukraine and with Russia. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) program provided a mechanism for the involvement of more than thirty countries in European security through a web of military exchanges and exercises. The Alliance became involved in the new peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations of the 1990s. Most importantly, the main impetus was to expand, beginning with the admission of three new members: Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. The process has continued with the addition of Slovakia, Romania, and the former Baltic Republics of the old USSR.

Behind the Alliance's expansion and change (stood?) the U.S. In essence, this program has provided Washington with a multilateral institutional framework for further extension of American influence in Europe in a way that has diminished the importance of the older, and especially the smaller, Western European allies. It resembled in some ways the old transatlantic bargain, whereby the U.S. guaranteed the security of Western Europe. In this new "trans--European" bargain, American links to the former Warsaw Pact members and Soviet republics extend directly across Western Europe, so that, even before the crisis over the Second Gulf War, such links were the core of the new NATO, at least insofar as concerns the U.S.

To be sure, the Western European allies are deeply engaged in the PfP process. Moreover, they are also concerned about the relationship between the countries of the East and the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) and the European Union (EU). But given the absence of any kind of threat to Western Europe and the inability of the Western Europeans to develop any common policy toward the East, it is not

surprising that the links now binding America to Europe run over and around these countries. Even the admission to the Alliance of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic and the forthcoming new members may be viewed less as the accession of these states to NATO and more as the formalization of their security ties to the U.S. The same applies to Partner (PfP) countries. When Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia signed a new Adriatic Charter, s U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell noted, these countries were “adamant that the fourth signatory in that charter should be the United States of America—not the EU....”⁷

Moreover, while the new trans-European bargain included the older allies in its multilateral approach to U.S. security, it still reflected the American approach to collective efforts. U.S. multilateralism has always been a tool to be employed by Washington only when it suited American interests. The multilateralism of the 1990s, including wide-ranging use and involvement of the UN, was possible because by and large it was used to deal with issues that did not touch vital American interests. It was, as Coral Bell argued in 1999, only the “pretense of concert.”⁸ This led to the wholly misguided view that military force could *only* legitimately be employed pursuant to a Security Council resolution, or, as in the case of Kosovo, when NATO had adopted a unified response.⁹

The Alliance invoked Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty in the aftermath of September 11, the allies offered assistance to the campaign on terrorism “out of area,” and NATO Airborne Warning and Control System planes were dispatched to patrol

⁷ Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, “Foreign Policy Association’s Annual Dinner,” www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2003/20331pf.htm.

⁸ Coral Bell, “American Ascendancy and the Pretense of Concert,” *The National Interest* (Fall 1999): 60.

⁹ The former Canadian Ambassador to Washington, Allan Gotlieb, noted this misunderstanding on the part of the Canadian government in its response to the Second Gulf War. See Allan Gotlieb, “The Chretien Doctrine: By Blindly Following the UN, the Prime Minister is Hurting Canada,”

American skies. But the unity of the immediate post-September 11 world could not conceal the fundamental differences that had arisen in the Alliance. As the United States responded to the most immediate and real foreign threat to its security since the War of 1812, it reached back to the bedrock fundamentals of unilateralism and the protection of liberty at home which had long been the basis of American national security policy.¹⁰ Robert Kagan has noted that, “America did not change on September 11. It only became more itself.”¹¹ Can the same be said of the European allies? Has this transatlantic transformation brought to the fore long-observed gaps that no amount of allied flexibility can bridge?

The Value Gap or the ‘Bush’ Gap?

During recent years, there have been a number of multinational surveys, such as that done by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (which is discussed at length below), to gauge public attitudes towards the United States and differences in how Americans and others view public policy issues and international affairs. In general, these surveys confirm that people outside the U.S., including Europe, hold different views that are based upon different values.

The University of Michigan World Values Surveys have been conducted over the years between 1981 and 1998 in 65 societies and 75 percent of the world’s population. In their analysis of the results, Richard Inglehart and Wayne Baker found that values could be

Maclean’s, March 31, 2003.

¹⁰ Walter McDougall, “Back to Bedrock,” *Foreign Affairs* 76 (March/April 1997).

¹¹ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 85.

different despite industrialization. In particular they looked differences in values according to two criteria, “traditional vs. secular-rational values and “survival vs. self-expression values.” Traditional values emphasize belief in God, the importance of children learning obedience and religious faith, family, oppose abortion, have a strong sense of national pride and favor more respect for authority. These are generally found in low- income societies and developing economies. Secular-rational values emphasize the opposite and are most pronounced in advanced industrial societies. Societies in which survival values are more dominant are those where people emphasize the priority given to economic and physical security over self-expression and quality of life, are not very happy, are not politically active, oppose homosexuality, and are very careful about trusting people. People in these societies are “shaped” by feeling of insecurity, low levels of well being, are intolerant of “outgroups” and generally feel threatened. Again these attributes characterize poor and developing societies, as well as those in the former Soviet bloc. In contrast, post-industrial societies with high levels of security have a greater measure of “trust, tolerance, subjective well-being, political activism and self-expression.”¹²

It is important to note that Inglehart and Baker stress that the surveys have consistently shown that viewed according to these two criteria the United States, while a leader in modernization, has always differed from other major industrial countries. America it seems is not “a prototype of cultural modernization.”

In fact the United States is a deviant case, having a much more traditional value system than any other advanced industrial society. On the traditional/secular dimension, the United States ranks far below other rich

¹² Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, “Modernization, Cultural Change and the Persistence of Traditional Values,” *American Sociological Review* 2000, 65, 19-65 24-26.

societies with levels of religiosity and national pride comparable to those found in developing societies. The United States does rank among the most advanced societies along the survival/self expression dimension, even here, it does not lead the world...¹³

The data also show that in the years since 1981, most Western European countries such as France and Germany have placed greater emphasis on self-expression values. The United States too, has moved in this direction. And, with the exception of a slight rise in traditionalism in France, other industrial countries have become more secular/rational and less traditional, while the United States has remained at roughly the same level in terms of traditional values and stands out amongst its major allies in the Western world.¹⁴ For example, while those attending religious services at least once a month declined in the U.S. between 1981 and 1998 from 60 to 55 percent, only Ireland has consistently registered a higher level. Even discounting formal religious participation, Americans were more likely to rate God as important in their lives than those other industrial nations.¹⁵ It appears then that while Americans and Europeans are quite similar in terms of survival/self-expression values (and they are moving in the same direction), Europe and America have grown further apart on the issue of religion.

But the level of religiosity in America needs to be placed in the perspective of what has long been regarded as American “exceptionalism.” While Americans may be more inclined toward identification with traditional religious beliefs, there exists in the United States—in contrast to most European countries, both West and East—a strong tradition of the separation of Church and State. Americans may well go to church more on a regular basis than Europeans, but they go to many different churches, synagogues,

¹³ IBid, p.31.

¹⁴ IBid p.40

¹⁵ Ibid pp.46-47.

and mosques. And while their leaders may well invoke biblical imagery to a greater extent than their European counterparts, this has more to do with “Americanism.” “It has been our fate as a nation,” Richard Hofstadter once observed, “not to have ideologies but to be one.”¹⁶ But Americanism is more than ideology. Americanism is a “civil-religion” that draws upon a Christian heritage, but one that binds all citizens regardless of religious affiliations: the idea that the United States was the “New Jerusalem,” the heavenly, exceptional “City on the Hill” that was unique among nations. For many, this gave the United States, as Walter Russell Mead has put it, a “special providence” to change the world.¹⁷

The end of the Cold War and the advent of the “unilateral moment” seemed to justify America’s faith in itself, its exceptionalism, the universality and rightness of its political system, (as well as) its claim to world leadership. During the Clinton years it appeared that the rest of world, including old allies of the U.S., were not greatly troubled by this celebration of Americanism. Democracy and free markets expanded, and the U.S. attracted new allies. However, toward the end of the 1990s, the mood abroad seemed to shift.

In July and October of 2002, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press conducted a survey of more than 38,000 people in 44 countries on “what the world thinks.”¹⁸ The results seem to indicate that something is going on between Americans and Europeans regarding what each side perceives as important and how the U.S. and its policies are viewed, and that events are affecting each differently. But some contradictory

¹⁶ As quoted in Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 25.

¹⁷ Walter Russell Mead, *A Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁸ What the World Thinks in 2002: The Pew Global Attitudes Project,
<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/165.pdf>

patterns emerge from the survey results.

Support for America overseas was relatively high, with between six and seven of every ten Europeans expressing a favorable view of the U.S. But while support for America has declined in the past two years, America is still viewed positively in a majority of the surveyed countries. People around the world envy American technology and know-how, while being more negative about American culture. Many countries, including most of Western Europe, view American-style democracy negatively. In Western Europe, only about four out of ten admire “U.S.-style democracy,” while in Eastern Europe (with the exception of Russia) the number is slightly higher, with a majority of Eastern Europeans admiring American democracy.

A majority of people in every European country surveyed—except for the Slovak Republic—view crime as a “very big problem in their country.” Yet Europe is not oblivious to the threat of terror. Surprisingly, while only 50 percent of Americans identified terrorism as a major problem, when asked, 65 percent of the French citizens and 71 percent of Italians saw terrorism as a national/local threat. In Western Europe and Canada, roughly seven out of ten people surveyed favor the war on terrorism, while in Eastern Europe (with the exception of the Slovak Republic) the figure is noticeably higher, at roughly eight out of ten. It is clear that the U.S. has found a strong “new” ally in Eastern Europe.

Both Eastern and Western Europe on the whole have grown less favorably disposed towards the U.S. in the last two years, but public opinion across Europe remains quite high; as was mentioned above, between six and seven out of every ten Europeans have a favorable view of the United States. In Western Europe, the greatest changes are occurring in Germany. Both France and Germany appear to be moving away from other

European countries. With the exception of the Slovak Republic, Eastern Europe's support for America is a few percentage points above that of Western Europe, but nothing dramatic.

In general, the survey's authors found that "discontent" with the United States has grown and that criticism of America was on the rise. But the picture is much more complex, for the study also showed that the United States and American citizens are viewed positively overall by majorities in the countries surveyed. Moreover, people around the world are still attracted to all things American, such as pop culture and technology, even as they complain about U.S. influence on their societies.

Perhaps most interesting of all is the fact that the survey did not show support for the emergence of a rival superpower to check the United States. Most viewed this as a development that would make the world a more dangerous place. This was a sentiment even shared by Russians and citizens in Middle Eastern countries.

Indeed the PEW study noted observed that: "There is little doubt that the way in which Washington conducted itself prior to the Second Gulf War had a detrimental impact on European public perceptions of the U.S. In March 2003, the Pew Research Center interviewed people in eight countries on their feelings towards America in the run-up to the Iraq War.¹⁹ The survey found that:

- Favorable "opinions of the U.S. have plummeted in the past six months in countries actively opposing war—France, Germany, and Russia—as well as in countries that are part of the "coalition of the willing." In Great Britain,

¹⁹ For the full report see, The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "America's Image Further Erodes, Europeans Want Weaker Ties" <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=175>

favorable views of the U.S. have declined from 75 percent to 48 percent since mid-2002.”

- “In Poland, positive views of the U.S. have fallen to 50 percent from nearly 80 percent six months ago; in Italy, the proportion of respondents holding favorable views of the United States has declined by half over the same period (from 70% to 34%).
- “But ironically, most publics surveyed think that in the long run the Iraqi people will be better off and the Middle East will be more stable if Iraq is disarmed and Hussein is removed from power. More than seven in ten of the French (73 percent) and Germans (71 percent) see the Iraqi public benefiting.”

In March 2003, a majority of Europeans were opposed to war in Iraq.

Surprisingly, opposition was equally strong in coalition and non-coalition countries alike, with 81 percent of Spaniards opposing the war compared to only 75 percent of Frenchmen.

The survey revealed the impact of the war on perceptions of Americans and Europeans alike regarding the desirability of maintaining close transatlantic links. More and more Europeans favor weaker transatlantic ties, while Americans retain their support for multilateralism. Thus, in February 2003, 62 percent of Americans surveyed felt that security and diplomatic ties with Europe should “remain close,” while 29 percent thought the U.S. should be “more independent.” In contrast, only 30 percent in France favored

maintaining close ties, down from 33 percent a year earlier. In Italy and Spain, whose governments supported the war on Iraq, there was a similar decline.

Apart from European unease over the war, the survey also indicates that Americans and Europeans both favor multilateralism. But Americans believe that Washington tries to act in concert with its allies while, Europeans doubt that the present U.S. administration is committed to real multilateralism even in the war on terrorism, which they support. What Europe does not like about America is this unilateral approach, even in the case of the war on terrorism, which most believe is important. The survey found that:

... three quarters of west Europeans and an even higher share of east Europeans, support the American war on terrorism, but more than half in both places say America does not take other countries into account (whereas three-quarters of Americans think their government does).²⁰

Eric Alterman, surveying European commentary regarding American policy, challenges the notion that the U.S. and EU are diverging in the 21st century. Some change is discernable, but he suggests that commentators are misdiagnosing it. He argues that the roots of the differences between the two lie at the level of leadership, and not in the values of the citizens themselves. It is “anti-Bushism” and not anti-Americanism that has swept across the European continent. As one European put it, “George W. Bush is like a cartoon stereotype” representing “the worst side of the U.S. culture,”(p.1) while Italian political scientist Robert Toscano has argued that to be anti-American is to disapprove of the United States “for what it is, rather than what it does.” (p.1) Europeans are suspicious of Bush’s Christian fundamentalism; his use of the language of “good and evil” and religious quotes frightens the secular Europeans. Jürgen Habermas, the German

²⁰ “Living with a Superpower,” *The Economist* (January 2, 2003).

philosopher, suggests that, “The emotional gap may well become deeper than it has ever been since the end of World War II.”(p.2) Alterman suggests that those who see a “value gap” are only right if you look at the opinions of the leadership (be it Bush in Washington or Schröder in Berlin). At the most common level (the people themselves), Europe and the U.S. are still close. And, despite trade disputes, Europe and the U.S. still maintain strong economic relations based upon the shared values of free markets. Both Europeans and Americans also favor the involvement of the UN in international affairs (such as the recent Iraq war). Alterman suggests that the greatest differences between Americans and Europeans are emerging over the issue of American government, particularly President Bush. While Europe was sympathetic to the U.S. following 9/11, many believe Bush squandered that political power with his arrogance and cowboy diplomacy.

Jacques Rupnik, a former aide to French President Jacques Chirac and Czech President Vaclav Havel, has said, “Americans are fond of saying, ‘The world changed on September 11.’ But what has changed is America. The extraordinary moral self-righteousness of this Administration is quite surprising and staggering to Europeans.” (p.3)

Nor is it a question of party. Europe has worked well in the past with other Republicans, such as Reagan. Why? Because, as Alain Frachon, a writer for *Le Monde*, put it, “When Reagan was president, we never had the impression he was motivated by fundamentalism ... this George Bush is totally foreign to us. He quotes the Bible every two or three sentences. He is surrounded by Christian fundamentalists. ... No one told us that the Republicans had moved this far to the right.”(p.4) As another *Le Monde* journalist put it, “The hostility to U.S. policy would be lessened with Clinton in the White House, even assuming that these policies were exactly the same as Bush’s. Clinton’s ‘I

feel your pain' worked well in the international arena too, much better in any case than Bush's 'I don't give a damn what you think.' I assume people prefer to be lied to than they do being overtly despised."(p.4) As Alterman concludes, "There is a pro-American world out there, in Europe in particular but elsewhere as well. It is just waiting for an America it can respect as well as admire."²¹(p.6) If Europe is waiting for an America it can respect, it also expects this respect to be mutual. Writing in early 2001, William Wallace, a Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and a Liberal Democrat Spokesman on Defense in the House of Lords, argued that the EU wants respect. It wants to be listened to in Washington. Placing particular blame on the Bush Administration, he argued that this lack of respect has led to the transatlantic rift. Europe wants to be seen as providing an alternative—it wants to show the world that the American version of democracy and capitalism is not the only model that works. The U.S., however, is still caught up in its unilateral superpower moment and thus is unwilling to acknowledge the new place of the EU in the world. According to Wallace, the U.S. and EU do share common values, but their interpretations of the 'liberal tradition' have changed in the 1990s. He argues that the U.S. can no longer go it alone, and must recognize the economic and military power of the EU. "The United States now acknowledges the EU as an economic partner, but the idea of sharing leadership in political and military matters has yet to gain acceptance in Washington." American policy makers "must understand that the United States cannot continue to call on its allies to share the burdens unless it is prepared to share its decision-making as well."²²

Thus what looks like a widening in the value gap between Europeans and

²¹ Eric Alterman "USA Oui! Bush Non!" *The Nation* (February 10, 2003). Available at <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20030210&s=alterman1>

²² Wallace, "Europe, the Necessary Partner," 20–21.

Americans may be more of a “Bush gap,” an unease among some European leaders and their populations, not with America, but with “Americanism” as it is expressed and practiced by the current administration in Washington. The Clinton Administration was no less anxious to perpetuate U.S. dominance, but it somehow made others believe that “preserving the unipolar moment” was in everybody’s interest. The Bush Administration—although after September 11, 2001 the beneficiary of the greatest outpouring of international sympathy for the United States since the Kennedy assassination—has managed to alienate some of America’s oldest allies and their populations.

However, it is not entirely evident that this is just a temporary phenomenon that will disappear with a change in attitude (or regime) in Washington. It is easy to paint a caricature of a super-patriotic, gun-toting, Bible-thumping president leading his country on a series of dangerous cavalry charges around the world to explain U.S. actions. But amusing as this may be, it obscures rather than clarifies the fundamentals of American policy. As Owen Harries has argued, many in Europe and elsewhere still do not understand the America they think they know so well. And one of things that they do not yet fully understand is the profound impact that September 11 has had on the United States and on American national security policy. As he observed a year ago:

After the outrage of September 11, I do not believe that the United States could have reacted in any way other than as she did. But doing so will carry a cost. The long-term significance of what happened ... may be that it forced America decisively along a course of action that—by emphasising her military dominance, by reducing her to use her vast power conspicuously, by making restraint and moderation virtually impossible, and by making unilateralism an increasing feature of American behaviour—is bound to generate widespread and increased

criticism and hostility toward her.²³

The gap that developed between America and Europe over the value and proper use of military power by the United States was dramatically highlighted and reinforced by the diplomatic prelude to the Second Gulf War. It is this gap which poses the most serious challenge to the future of transatlantic relations.

American National Security Policy, NATO, and the Second Gulf War:

Unilateralism With a Vengeance

In his celebrated book, *Of Paradise and Power*, Robert Kagan looks at the “gap” between the United States and Europe and declares that, “Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus.”²⁴ The refusal of several major allies to support the United States in the Second Gulf War has only reinforced this view. Another American commentator has observed that, “For everyday, non-political Americans, Europe is simply not a preoccupation one way or the other. It is Canada with castles ... a nice place, but hardly the furnace where our future will be forged.”²⁵

Kagan, after describing and explaining the differences between America and Europe, urges that Americans and Europeans count their blessings:

Certainly Americans, when they think about Europe, should not lose sight of the main point: The new Europe is indeed a blessed miracle and a reason for enormous celebration—on both sides of the Atlantic. For Europeans it is the realization of a long and improbable dream; a continent

²³ Owen Harries, “Understanding America,” Centre for Independent Studies (Australia), at www.cis.org.au/Events/CISlectures/2002/Harries030402.htm.

²⁴ Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, 3.

²⁵ Karl Zinsmeister, “Old and In the Way,” <http://www.theamericanenterprise.org/taedec02a.htm> (as of May 20, 2003).

free from nationalist strife and blood feuds, from military competition and arms races ... the new Europe really has emerged as a paradise. It is something to be cherished and guarded, not the least by Americans....²⁶

However, writing before the final pre-war diplomatic moves and the beginning of the Second Gulf War, he also noted that this new Europe is not one on which America can rely as it did in the past. The strategic relationship has changed. “Can the United States,” he asks, “prepare for and respond to strategic challenges around the world without much help from Europe?”

The simple answer is that it already does. The United States has maintained strategic stability in Asia with no help from Europe. In the various crises in the Middle East and Persian Gulf over the past decade ... European help, even when enthusiastically offered, has been token. Whatever Europe can or cannot offer in terms of moral and political support, it has had little to offer the United States in strategic military terms since the end of the Cold War—except, of course, that most valuable of strategic assets, a Europe at peace.²⁷

The new transatlantic divide is similar to and encompasses that which now exists between the United States and the Group of Seven (now G8) major industrial countries. This was vividly demonstrated by President Bush’s decision to cut short his attendance at the latest G8 summit to attend to implementation of the “Road Map” for peace in the Middle East. As George Friedman has noted:

A short while ago, the G8 meetings were the pivotal point in global diplomacy. Presidents did not cut these meetings short to get on with other pressing business—there was no more pressing business. There is now. ... U.S. priorities have shifted.

The geography of U.S. concerns has shifted dramatically. During the 1990s, the U.S. vision was that this was a world of opportunities. The G7 countries were all economically significant, even if some were

²⁶ Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, 97–98.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

militarily insignificant. The geography of the world focused on economic development, and these nations drove economic development. The inclusion of Russia in the original G7 meetings was done with some hesitation. Russia's economic powers seemed to exclude it from the group. It was included as a reluctant concession. In a world in which borders and military power were seen as increasingly archaic, the G7 meetings of the world's greatest economic powers were seen as the arena in which the world's expanding economic horizons would be managed.

That is not the U.S. view of the world since September 11, 2001. This is no longer a world of opportunities. It is a world of danger. The danger originates in the Islamic world and it is a danger that must be faced militarily. Therefore, the G8 countries are, except in particular circumstances, not particularly relevant. The geographic diffusion of these countries reflects a decade that's passed.

A schism has developed within the G8 that does not involve only the French, German and Russian opposition to the war in Iraq. That opposition is there, but the issue is much deeper. The G8 represented a generation that thought that economic issues had supplanted all other issues. Japan and Canada were there because they had economic significance. From the Bush Administration's point of view, this is an outmoded view of the world. It does not address American hopes and—above all—fears.²⁸

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Second Gulf War has only reinforced the differences between Europe and America over the use of American military power. As with September 11, the Europeans have not fully comprehended the profound impact this war has had on the United States and its relations to the rest of the world. In the failed diplomacy that preceded the war, and in particular the bitter confrontation between Germany and France on one hand and the United States on the other, NATO Europe did not offer Washington its unqualified moral and political support. Quite the opposite: it was on moral and political grounds that the war was opposed. In an ironic geopolitical twist, it seems that America has created in Europe a Frankenstein's Monster in reverse. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Europe was a problem for America because it was made up of disparate parts that were too warlike, too willing to take up the

²⁸ Dr. George Friedman, "The G8 and its Crisis of Relevance," *The Stafford Weekly* (May 29, 2003). On-line edition.

sword against itself and in engage in imperial conquests. Now, according to Kagan, it appears that, at least the more unified “old Europe” is too reluctant to apply force but is very willing to criticize Washington when it does apply military power. It is a Wilsonian’s dream, but a realist’s nightmare. America has succeeded too well. Peace, democracy, and free markets are indeed the ideas that have helped turn Europe into the “paradise” Kagan describes, but at the price of making the Europeans less willing to follow the American lead when Washington’s vital interests are at stake.

This situation cannot simply be put down to a European aversion to military power as such, or a rationalization of the relative powerlessness that Europe possesses in comparison to what is undeniably, as Andrew Bacevich argues, the American Empire.²⁹ European allies, especially Britain and even France, are prepared to use the considerable power they still have, and even to use it in support of the United States. The gap between Europe and America over the value of power is an uneasiness over the willingness and determination of the United States to exercise its power unilaterally, even when major allies are in disagreement. Europe, in other words, does not question that America is “bound to lead.” But some in Europe question whether they are bound to follow,³⁰ especially when the rallying call from Washington sounds more like a demand for imperial tribute than a call for real multilateralism.

Flexible Response Redux: Not Your Father’s NATO

²⁹ Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

³⁰See the discussion of the allied role in the first Gulf War in Andrew Fenton Cooper, Richard A. Higgott and Kim Richard Nossal, "Bound to Follow? Leadership and Followership in the Gulf Conflict," *Political Science Quarterly* 106 (Fall 1991), 391-410.

The Second Gulf War was indeed a watershed in transatlantic relations. While some allies, especially the U.K., supported the United States, NATO as a unified entity was not there for Washington, and Americans, including those who had doubts about the war, will never forget it. Infidelity in a marriage can lead to separation and divorce, or the couple may stay together in the same home. But though forgiven, it will never be forgotten, and the relationship will never be quite the same. So it will be with NATO. The “gap” is not really one of values, but it does relate to the value of American power and thus cannot be ignored. There are, nevertheless, reasons to believe that the capacity for flexibility, that particular genius of democracies in alliance, is alive and well and able to cope with the gap and thus preserve the Alliance.

First, while the gap between Europe and America is important in the post-Cold War, post-September 11, and post-Second Gulf War worlds, there have always divisions between the United States and some of its European allies as to the proper exercise of American power. The Alliance survived not because it was able to reconcile these differences. Quite the opposite, it endured because its leaders had the wisdom to recognize that, fundamentally, complete agreement was impossible. Realism dictated that they live with these differences because the costs of breaking up the Alliance far exceeded the unknown and unlikely benefits of having Europe and America go completely separate ways.

Second, as it has demonstrated since the end of the Cold War, NATO can change with the times. The NACC, the PfP, and its most recent revisions to the military command structure demonstrate a capacity for innovation in the face of new realities. Thus the disestablishment of Atlantic Command, at Norfolk, Virginia—the one operational allied command in the U.S.—and its replacement with Allied Transformation

Command is simply indicative of the changing U.S. relationship with Europe. It reflects the diminished relative priority that European security has in the global calculus of American national security policy.

Third, America still has a vital stake in the future of Europe itself, and NATO will remain an integral part of that future. For the United States, NATO will mainly be a mechanism for the projection of American power and influence into the “new NATO” of Eastern Europe, and will act less as a means of binding the United States to the “old NATO” of Western Europe. Yet this ‘trans-European bargain’ is in accord with the reality of American power, and it is the point in Europe where U.S. interests are most at stake.

Fourth, while the Alliance as a unified entity did not support Washington in the Second Gulf War, individual governments did, and offered various kinds of support and levels of interoperability with American forces. In addition, a number of allies are making contributions to the on-going campaign in Afghanistan. Both the “old” and “new” Alliance should have enough of the old flexibility to provide the United States with military support, even if only in small, symbolic contributions, for “out of area” operations.

Finally, while the capacity of America’s allies to restrain the Bush Administration, given its present mood, is decidedly limited, the Allies may have allies amongst the very people whose values they supposedly no longer share. The ability of the American people, led by Congress, to check and balance the executive’s use of U.S. power can never be forgotten. While the United States has the military might, determination, and talent for “imperial” adventures, and the American people will usually support those efforts, especially once the battle is joined, public support is not a blank

check. Thus it is unlikely that the American public and Congress would back new confrontations with North Korea or Iran. The situations in Afghanistan and Iraq might remain unsettled for some time, with U.S. forces continuing to battle resurgent elements and taking casualties. Combined with continued sluggishness in the American economy and high deficits, there could well be a domestic backlash against unilateralism when it comes to imperial policing. In these circumstances, both the public and Congress could demand that the Bush Administration adopt a more conciliatory tone toward allies in order to secure more allied assistance, both in Afghanistan, where NATO is already active, and in Iraq.

While unilateralism in the face of direct threats to vital national interests is a dominant foreign policy tradition in the U.S., there are other long-standing traditions that are always present as well. The United Nations, NATO, and a host of other multilateral institutions, which are now out of favor in Washington, have their origin in the progressive and Wilsonian strains that still imbue the U.S. approach to the world with the idealism that is the realism of American political culture. As noted above, most Americans already think that their country is acting in concert with others. The Bush Administration could well find that multilateralism, which it dismissed as being unnecessary in winning the war, could well be useful in winning the peace, both in the Middle East and at home.

This will not be ‘your father’s NATO.’ But in changing to cope with the realities of a different strategic environment, including a transatlantic gap in the value accorded to American military power, the Alliance can continue to preserve and protect the values still held in common on both sides of the Atlantic.

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