PROPOSALS FOR RENEWING THE ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

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NATO must adapt to the new geo-political realities and forge new "rules of the road." To move forward successfully, the Alliance must develop common policies on how to deal with irresponsible states, the use of military force, the role of multilateral institutions, and how to bring political and economic reform to the Greater Middle East. It is also time to clarify the purposes and benefits of European integration.

The accomplishments of the Atlantic Alliance are remarkable. History records few, if any, alliances that have yielded so many benefits for their members or for the broader international community.

Despite these accomplishments, the transatlantic relationship is under greater strain today than at any point in at least a generation. Many Europeans assume malign intent on the part of the United States. Many Americans resent European behavior and dismiss European perceptions of today's threats. The conviction that the United States is a hyper-power to be contained has become fashionable in Europe. Reliance on coalitions of the willing to act when the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will not has become the policy of the United States.

The war in Iraq brought these strains to the point of crisis. France and Germany organized resistance to the United States in the U.N. Security Council — alongside Russia, historically NATO's chief adversary. The Bush administration, in turn, sought to separate these states from other members of the Alliance and the European Union (EU). For a time, rhetoric replaced diplomacy as the primary instrument for taking positions, making criticisms, and shaping coalitions.

These events were, to say the least, unusual. The particular outcome was influenced by domestic politics, personality, miscommunication, and unfortunate circumstance. What happened, however, was more than an intersection of unexpected developments, disputes over policy, and bad luck. The roots of the Iraq conflict extend at least as far back as 11/9, the day in 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down; they were strengthened, in turn, by the events of 9/11, the day in 2001 when terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center, attacked the Pentagon, and killed nearly 3,000 innocent people.

When the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe collapsed, the greatest reason for NATO solidarity disappeared. If 11/9 increased the scope for disagreements between the United States and Europe, 9/11 created the grounds for disagreements that are truly dangerous for the transatlantic relationship. The attacks of that day produced the most sweeping reorientation of U.S. grand strategy in over half a century. Washington's goal now would be not only to contain and deter hostile states, but also to attack terrorists and regimes that harbor terrorists *before* they could act. European strategies, in contrast, underwent no comparable revision. Indeed, many NATO allies complained of American unilateralism, while questioning the administration's insistence that the security of all nations was now at risk.

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These shifts in the relationship between the United States and Europe — the consequences of 11/9 and 9/11 — make it clear that the transatlantic relationship urgently needs reassessment.
In the face of mounting challenges to the integrity of the West, what can be done to put the Atlantic partnership back on a sound foundation?

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Europeans and Americans must now work together to ensure that the Iraq crisis becomes an anomaly in their relationship, not a precedent for things to come. To do so, the Atlantic nations should draw from the lessons of their common past:

Lesson One: No alliance can function successfully in the absence of a common strategy, or in the presence of competing strategies.
An alliance has meaning only when its members adjust their policies to take into account their partners' interests — when they do things for one another that they would not do if the alliance did not exist. If the transatlantic relationship is to continue to mean what it has meant in the past, both sides must learn from their failure over Iraq. The Americans will need to reaffirm the insight that shaped their approach to allies throughout the Cold War: that the power to act is not necessarily the power to persuade; that even in an alliance in which military capabilities are disproportionately distributed, the costs of unilateralism can exceed those involved in seeking consent. The Europeans, in turn, will need to acknowledge that the post-9/11 world is by no means safe for transatlantic societies, that the dangers that make it unsafe do not come from Washington, and that neither nostalgia for the past nor insularity in the present will suffice in coping with those threats. The objective is not so much a formal consensus — the quest for which can be debilitating and paralyzing — but a common sense of direction.

Lesson Two: A common strategy need not require equivalent capabilities.
Complementarity is an asset, not a liability. If the United States is the indispensable nation in terms of its military power, then surely the Europeans are indispensable allies in most of the other categories of power upon which statecraft depends. Whether the issues are countering terrorism, liberalizing trade, preventing international crime, containing weapons of mass destruction, rebuilding post-conflict states, combating poverty, fighting disease, or spreading democracy and human rights, European and American priorities and capabilities complement one another far more often than they compete with one another.

Lesson Three: The time has come to clarify the purposes and benefits of European integration.
The pace and scope of European integration are matters for Europeans to decide. But the American response to this process will be affected by how the EU's leaders and electorates perceive the union's role. Casting the EU as a counterweight to the United States, even if only for rhetorical purposes, will surely fuel transatlantic tension and encourage Washington to look elsewhere for international partners. If, however, the EU frames its policies in complementary terms, as it has done in the past, Washington should continue to regard Europe's deepening and widening as in America's interest. A deeper Europe could ensure the irreversibility of union and could lead to a more militarily capable EU — one that could in time become a more effective partner of the United States. A wider Europe could ensure that peace, democracy, and prosperity continue to spread eastward, thereby converging with what could be similar trends in Russia.

Both sides of the Atlantic, therefore, have important roles to play in shaping the future of the EU. American leaders must resolve their long-standing ambivalence about the emerging European entity. Europe's leaders must resist the temptation to define its identity in opposition to the United States. Those who believe in Atlantic partnership need to be heard calling for a Europe that remains a steady partner of the United States, even as it strengthens itself and broadens its international role.

COMMON TASKS

As the Atlantic democracies work to renew their partnership, they should focus on the following common tasks:

Adapt NATO to New Geopolitical Realities.
Today NATO's principles remain valid, but not all of its historic practices do. There is no further need for a large American military presence in the middle of Europe; redeployments elsewhere are already taking place. The threats confronting the Alliance are more diverse than they were during the Cold War; hence American and European security interests will no longer correspond as precisely as they once did. NATO needs to be more flexible in its procedures and more ambitious in its missions than it has been in the past.

Even as the United States draws down the number of its troops deployed on the continent, it should maintain a sufficient presence to ensure both the interoperability and the sense of collective purpose that arises from an integrated military structure. At the same time, it must be more receptive to EU efforts to assume a more prominent role in the management of European security.

The overall direction of policy should be clear: that the United States continues to welcome what it has sought since the earliest days of the Cold War — a Europe in which Europeans bear the primary responsibility for their own security.

NATO must recognize the extent to which the aftermaths of 11/9 and 9/11 transformed the strategic priorities of the United States. As the United States redeploys its forces outside of Europe, the Alliance must find the appropriate balance between a new emphasis on out-of-area missions and its traditional focus on European security. Although NATO will continue to remain active both within and outside the geographical confines of Europe, there needs to be a common understanding that NATO must increasingly concern itself with threats emanating from outside Europe if the Alliance is to prove as central to the post-11/9 (and post-9/11) world as it was throughout the Cold War.

Establish New Guidelines for the Use of Military Force.
Over the past half-century, a hallmark of transatlantic partnership has been agreement on basic principles governing the employment of military capabilities. Today, new challenges require a reassessment of those principles. The Atlantic Alliance can help to solve this problem by establishing "rules of the road" regarding preventive uses of military force. These could begin with a consensus on what not to do: for example, Europeans could agree not to reject preventive action in principle, while Americans would agree that prevention would be reserved for special cases and not be the centerpiece of U.S. strategy. Both parties could then acknowledge the progress that has already been made in specifying the conditions in which intervention is justified: to combat terrorism (as in Afghanistan), to back multilaterally sanctioned inspections (as in Iraq), or to achieve humanitarian goals (as in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor). Recent EU planning documents have called for robust action to forestall threats from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, as has U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. These trends suggest that the United States, NATO, the EU, and the U.N. might find more common ground on this issue than one might expect from the rhetoric.

Develop a Common Policy toward Irresponsible States.
Preventive strikes should always be a last resort. The Transatlantic Alliance should also agree on how to forestall situations that might require it. That means developing compatible policies toward states that possess or seek to possess weapons of mass destruction, that harbor terrorists or support terrorism, and that seek through these means to challenge the international order that Europeans and Americans have created and must sustain. Europeans should acknowledge the need for credible threats, not just inducements, in dealing with irresponsible states: coercive diplomacy is at times necessary to achieve results. Americans need to be prepared to include inducements in their strategy: threats do not in all instances produce acquiescence.

The Atlantic partners need to ensure that their search for common ground does not become a pretext for procrastination, thereby providing irresponsible states more time to develop their weapons capabilities. Ongoing initiatives should, therefore, be stepped up — including deepening cooperation on securing nuclear materials in the former Soviet

Union; strengthening links between U.S. and European intelligence services; expanding the recently launched naval search-and-seizure program more formally known as the Proliferation Security Initiative; closing loopholes in the nonproliferation regime that allow countries to legally accumulate stockpiles of nuclear fuel; and tightening enforcement mechanisms to respond to violations of existing counter-proliferation regimes.

Agree on the Role of Multilateral Institutions.
Disagreement over the efficacy and responsibility of international institutions has been a major source of transatlantic discord since at least the mid-1990s. In the aftermath of disputes over the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, and the International Criminal Court, there is now a growing sentiment in Europe — and among critics of the Bush administration within the United States — that Americans are becoming uncompromising unilateralists, while Europeans are seen by their American detractors as uncritical and naïve multilateralists whose real aim is to constrain American power.

These perceptions miss the nature of the problem. Disagreements on policy, not differences over the utility of international institutions, have caused most of these clashes. Had Americans and Europeans reached a consensus on the issues involved, disputes over procedure would have seemed much less serious.

As the experiences of World War II and the Cold War made clear, when the United States and its European allies agree on policy objectives, the institutional frameworks for implementing them usually follow.

There are compelling reasons now, on both sides of the Atlantic, to revive this tradition of function determining form. Europe will find international institutions much less effective if the world's only superpower has stepped away from them. The United States loses support abroad when it is seen to be acting unilaterally, making it harder for Washington to enlist allies in pursuing its objectives and in marshaling domestic support.

Build a Common Approach to the Greater Middle East.
The Greater Middle East is the part of the world with the greatest potential to affect the security and prosperity of Europeans and Americans alike. The transatlantic community must tackle four central issues, the first of which is Iraq. Europeans and Americans must set aside narrow political and economic ambitions in the region and jointly shoulder responsibility for stabilizing the country. NATO, already demonstrating its value in Afghanistan, is a natural successor to the current international military presence in Iraq. If a substantial increase in financial and military support from Europe is to be forthcoming, the United States must be prepared for greater European participation in the political management of Iraq.

Iran is a second issue. Iran is experiencing considerable internal debate over the direction of its domestic politics and foreign policy. Americans and Europeans should coordinate their policies — if possible, with Russia as well — to ensure that Iranians fully understand how the international community will react to their decisions regarding proliferation, support for terrorism, and democracy. The importance of encouraging political reform in Iran and neutralizing potential threats should give Europe and the United States a strong incentive to act in unison.

A third issue is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The widespread perception in Europe that the United States one-sidedly favors Israel weakens support for American foreign policy in Europe. Meanwhile, many American policymakers see European policy toward the dispute as reflexively pro-Palestinian. Both sides need to make an effort to achieve a common position: the United States needs to define more precisely its concept of a Palestinian state; Europe must take more seriously Israel's concern for security.

A fourth area for transatlantic cooperation in the Greater Middle East concerns the area's long-term economic and political development. Many countries

in the region have lagged behind the rest of the world in moving toward democratic societies and market economies. Addressing this problem requires a concerted effort by Europe and the United States to promote political and economic reform. The goal should be not to impose change on traditional societies, but rather to work with local political, economic, and civic leaders in supporting a gradual process of reform.

CONCLUSION

Farsighted vision and political courage sustained the transatlantic partnership for half a century, to the overwhelming benefit of Europeans, Americans, and the world. Today's challenges are different, but the benefits of partnership are still substantial — as are the costs if the partnership is allowed to erode. Recent acrimony demonstrates not only the difficulties that arise for America and Europe when they fail to act as partners, but also that pressing problems are best addressed together.

In the end, Europe and America have far more to gain as allies than as neutrals or adversaries. With enlightened leadership, governments and citizens on both sides of the Atlantic are sure to grasp and act upon that reality.

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