

## ***Casualties of War*** ***Transatlantic Relations and the Future of NATO*** ***in the Wake of the Second Gulf War***

by Christopher Layne

### **Executive Summary**

The Iraq War represents a turning point in transatlantic relations. Euro-American ties have been ruptured, and never again will be the same. But the growing estrangement between the European powers and the United States is tied primarily to the nature of power in the international system and to America's dominant role in the world today.

Several explanations have been put forward for the growing U.S.-European split. Some have argued that the United States and Europe are drifting apart because their respective cultures, values, and interests increasingly are diverging. But that is not a new phenomenon. The United States was created partly as an explicit rejection of European culture and values.

Others point to a divergent view between the United States and its allies with respect to the purpose of NATO. Notwithstanding the accession of several new NATO members, the alliance has not adapted to meet the new threats of the post-Cold War world. The Iraq War merely points to the utter irrelevance of the "new" NATO. Although some NATO member states have supported the United States in the War on Terrorism, NATO made no contribution either to the campaign in

Afghanistan or to the Iraq War. The Bush administration could easily have assembled the same limited "coalition of the willing" even if there was no NATO.

NATO has failed to live up to expectations in the post-Cold War world for three main reasons. First, the military capabilities of the European NATO members are limited. Second, the European members of NATO do not share Washington's enthusiasm for confronting "out of area" threats. And, third, Washington has deliberately chosen to bypass the alliance because it regards the European NATO military capabilities as a drag on American power rather than a contributor to it.

The real source of transatlantic conflict is America's role as a global hegemon, and the concomitant power imbalance between the United States and Europe. Unless and until America's foreign policy elites adopt a new foreign policy vision, one that does not presume that the United States will retain its hegemonic position in perpetuity, relations between the United States and its European allies will only continue to worsen. The eventual rupture arising from this long-simmering dispute may ultimately prove damaging to security on both sides of the Atlantic.

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## **Introduction**

These days, students of transatlantic relations have to be scratching their collective heads. Many are asking questions about the state of U.S.-European relations and the future of NATO. Anyone trying to get a handle on these questions must surely be confused, because when it comes to assessing the current state of transatlantic relations, American foreign policymakers seem to be suffering from a case of schizophrenia. This was true even before the Iraq War, but is even more so now. On the one hand, it's hard to avoid gloomy prognostications that America and Europe are drifting apart, and that a transatlantic divorce is imminent. French and German opposition to the Bush administration's Iraq policy certainly lends credence to the view of a transatlantic rift. Yet—at least before the Iraq War—for every claim that transatlantic relations are in crisis, one could find plenty of analysts making precisely the opposite point: that while not completely devoid of friction, relations between America and Europe fundamentally are healthy. Proponents of this view cited NATO as an example of vibrant U.S.-European ties. Although the dispute over Iraq has muted their voices, transatlantic and NATO optimists still assert that U.S.-European relations will be restored once the dust settles.

That optimism is misplaced. The Iraq War represents a turning point in transatlantic relations. Euro-American ties—and NATO—have been ruptured, and will never again be the same. The evidence supporting this thesis is structured around three main themes. First, I examine the claims that the United States and Europe are drifting apart because their respective cultures, values, and interests increasingly are diverging. I argue that there is nothing new here. There is a cultural divide separating the United States and Europe, but that does not explain the widening policy chasm between countries on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Second, I look at, and reject, the claim that there is a new NATO. In fact,

NATO is the same old NATO. After the Iraq War, the only thing “new” about NATO is the revelation of its irrelevance. The alliance has been irrelevant for a long time, and the recent crisis merely served to underscore that point. Third, I argue that the real source of transatlantic conflict is America's role as a global hegemon and the concomitant power imbalance between the United States and Europe. Yet, even though U.S. hegemony is a source of friction in transatlantic relations, it is this very hegemony that has kept NATO in business more than a decade after the Cold War's end because policymakers in Washington believe that the alliance serves American interests.

My conclusion is not a cheery one: Although NATO is obsolete as a military alliance, many will resist the retraction of U.S. power from Europe. As long as there is a consensus among the American foreign policy elite that the United States should be a global hegemon, NATO will continue to be perceived as an indispensable instrument of U.S. geopolitical preeminence. The problem, in other words, is not NATO itself, but rather the American grand strategy of which the alliance is the chief expression.

## **Transatlantic Rift?**

Several years ago, Harvard professor Stephen M. Walt argued that the ties that had linked Europe and America together during the Cold War were beginning to fray.<sup>1</sup> Walt identified a number of factors that he believed would ultimately result in a transatlantic divorce: the rise to power of “successor” generations who did not share their predecessors' Atlanticism, forged during the Cold War; intensifying commercial competition between the U.S. and the European Union; diverging geopolitical interests; and domestic changes on both sides of the Atlantic reflecting growing disharmony in the realms of culture and values. Walt's argument was insightful, though unoriginal. Various analysts had made the same points—and similar predictions of

NATO's impending unraveling—during the 1970s and 1980s<sup>2</sup>

There was one thing new in Walt's argument, however. In contrast to those who had advanced similar arguments before him, Walt was writing after the disappearance of the Soviet Union. Building on neorealist theories of alliance formation, Walt argued that although there had been pronounced fissiparous trends in transatlantic relations during the Cold War, the Soviet threat had kept those trends in check, and thus kept the alliance intact. However, with the Soviet Union removed from the geopolitical equation, Walt noted, there was no longer a common external threat to hold at bay the forces undermining the alliance's cohesion.

Whether NATO will continue to exist hinges on two key questions: the severity of the transatlantic rift and the nature of America's strategic interests in Europe. Consider the issue of the transatlantic rift. Although the widespread perception that America and Europe are drifting apart predates September 11 and the Iraq War, it has deepened following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, and the Bush administration's decision to go to war to bring about regime change in Iraq. As Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace recently wrote in a widely discussed article, "It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world."<sup>3</sup> On both sides of the Atlantic it has become the conventional wisdom that in the realm of culture, values, and beliefs, America and Europe are separated by a chasm that is beginning to reach Grand Canyon-like proportions. For example, a recent article in *The Economist* reported that Europeans have come to be imbued with a cultural contempt for the United States, reflected in their rejection of American views on such topics as the death penalty, gun control, and abortion. The currently prevailing stereotype of the United States held by Europeans regards U.S. society as a violent, Wild West culture, that is simultaneously still in the thrall of religious

traditionalism unsuited for the post-modern world of the early 21st century. By the same token, Americans view Europe as morally flaccid: a too-secular Europe is thought to have become unmoored from traditional moral values. Europeans are seen as the indolent offspring of the welfare state and the Eurocracy in Brussels.<sup>4</sup>

To be sure, these caricatures have become staples of the current debate about the future of U.S.-European relations. But when one looks at the evidence, it seems pretty clear that America and Europe have not drifted nearly as far apart as alarmists on both sides of the Atlantic assert (although it remains to be seen what the Iraq War's long-term fallout will be in this regard). On the one hand, recent surveys of public opinion suggest there is indeed a culture/values gap between the United States and Europe. This is reflected in the increasing unwillingness of Europeans to distinguish between their views of Americans and their views of American policy.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, as *The Economist* observes "Even though most Europeans say they like America, between half (in Britain) and three-quarters (in France) also say that the spread of American ideas and customs is bad. As many Europeans say they dislike American ideas about democracy as like them."<sup>6</sup> Yet at the same time, recent surveys—including one by the Pew Research Center and a combined report of the German Marshall Fund and the Chicago Council for Foreign Relations—show little evidence to support the conclusion that Europe has become pervasively anti-American, or vice versa, notwithstanding overwhelming public opposition in Europe to America's Iraq policy.<sup>7</sup>

No doubt there is a culture/values gap between the United States and Europe. There always has been. Going back to the colonial era, American relations with Europe have been complex, nuanced, and ambivalent. Historically, the United States itself expresses both the embrace and the rejection of Europe. So the fact that there are today transatlantic differences over culture and values should not surprise anyone.

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The real question is, “does it matter?” And, in terms of geopolitics, the answer is “probably not.” Alliances are based on common interests, not on common values and a shared culture.<sup>8</sup> So in assessing the future of NATO, and U.S.-European relations, the crucial issue is whether Europe and the United States still share enough common interests to hold the two entities together in a formal alliance.

Since September 11 there has been plenty of evidence to suggest that the United States and Europe perceive their external interests in very different terms. The transatlantic falling out over Iraq underscored this. In the United States, there is a growing tendency to regard Europe as a spent force geopolitically—an inward-looking group of nations lacking the backbone, and the military capabilities, to shoulder its fair share of the burdens of providing defense against common threats. Europeans, on the other hand, are inclined to view the United States as something of a geopolitical rogue elephant—overly eager to resort to the unilateral use of military force, and disdainful of international institutions and international law. In recent years the United States and Europe have been at loggerheads over a number of specific issues, including Washington’s decision to deploy a national missile defense (NMD) system and to withdraw from the 1972 ABM treaty, the Bush administration’s lack of support for the Kyoto Protocol on global warming and the International Criminal Court, major policy differences over the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and—last but not least—Iraq.

To leap to the conclusion that these policy differences inevitably presage a transatlantic divorce, however, is to indulge in historical myopia. As then Harvard professor Henry Kissinger observed in the mid-1960s, NATO and U.S.-European relations have been a “troubled partnership” since the late 1940s.<sup>9</sup> The alliance has surmounted challenges to its cohesion that were arguably far more severe than those it faces today, including, for example, Suez, Vietnam, the Gaullist challenge of the 1960s, and the “second” Cold War that followed the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (when Western Europe

essentially opted to take itself out of the Soviet-American rivalry and become an “island” of detente).

Europe and the United States have never seen eye to eye on the question of whether NATO should operate “out of area,” that is, outside of Europe.<sup>10</sup> During the Cold War, Washington and the Europeans clashed repeatedly over issues of nuclear strategy and arms control. And, of course, “burden-sharing” disputes have been the hearty perennial of transatlantic relations almost literally from the moment NATO was established. Not even the power imbalance between Europe and the United States is new: Europeans have been complaining about American hegemony since the earliest days of the alliance. Despite all of these disagreements and controversies, NATO held together through the Cold War. The key question in the wake of the Iraq War is: Will the “new” NATO be equally successful in surmounting the current crisis in transatlantic relations caused by Iraq? To answer this question one must go to the strategic foundation of the alliance itself.

## **A “New” NATO? The Alliance after the Cold War**

If asked before the Cold War’s end what NATO was about, most Americans (and most Europeans) would have said that the alliance’s purpose was to contain the Soviet Union. This answer would track both with neorealist alliance theory and with the commonly held view among U.S. strategic thinkers (notably University of Chicago political scientist John Mearsheimer) that America traditionally has acted as an “off-shore balancer” with respect to Europe. As an off-shore balancer, the United States would remain on the sidelines unless a single state threatened to dominate the continent. America’s European grand strategy, therefore, is said to be “counter-hegemonic”: the United States intervenes in Europe only when the European balance of power appears unable to thwart the rise of a would-be European hegemon.

As noted above, neorealist alliance theory holds that alliances and coalitions are formed in response to a common external threat. As the doyen of neorealist theorists Kenneth Waltz puts it: "Alliances are made by states that have some but not all of their interests in common. The common interest is ordinarily a negative one: fear of other states."<sup>11</sup> Neorealist theory thus provides a concise explanation of why NATO was created: NATO was America's strategic response to the concern that the Soviet Union would establish hegemony in Europe following World War II.

Neorealist alliance theory also made a very clear prediction about NATO's post-Cold War fate: without the Soviet threat to bind the United States and Western Europe strategically, the alliance would dissolve. Similarly, the offshore balancing interpretation of U.S. grand strategy predicts that once the Soviet Union was no longer a contender for European hegemony, American military power would have been withdrawn from Europe. Of course, that did not happen: NATO is still in business, and the United States still maintains a sizable military presence in Europe including more than 100,000 personnel, and an extensive network of bases. The Pentagon is considering a new basing system that would downgrade the large American bases in Germany in favor of a new deployment posture based on the use of "forward operating bases" in Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary but has not jettisoned its commitment to a military presence in Europe.<sup>12</sup>

### **Maintaining the Transatlantic Link**

As the Cold War wound down to its conclusion, American policymakers recognized that they faced a big problem: without the Soviet threat, how could Washington keep NATO as a going concern, and continue to justify the deployment of U.S. forces in Europe? Following the Soviet Union's collapse, both the first Bush and Clinton administrations were determined to preserve NATO and to ensure that the United States remained a "European power." To achieve its strategic objectives in the post-Cold War

world, Washington determined it would have to reinvent NATO and invest the alliance with new roles and missions that would provide a convincing rationale for keeping it in business. As Ronald D. Asmus, deputy assistant secretary of state for Europe from 1997–2000, explains, the Clinton administration "wanted to update and modernize NATO to assume new roles that the American public could relate to and support, thereby ensuring its future relevance."<sup>13</sup>

Above all, Washington was determined to refashion the alliance to maintain the transatlantic link with Europe; that is to ensure that the United States remained a "European power" with the preponderant voice in managing security in post-Cold War Europe.<sup>14</sup> Richard Holbrooke, then assistant secretary of state for European affairs, forcefully articulated this case. In 1995 Holbrooke predicted: "In the 21st century, Europe will still need the active American involvement that has been a necessary component of the continental balance for half a century. Conversely, an unstable Europe would still threaten essential national security interests of the United States. This is as true after as it was during the Cold War."<sup>15</sup> Then secretary of state Madeleine Albright's views on this subject encapsulated those of the Clinton administration and much of the U.S. foreign policy establishment. As one official who served under her recounts, she believed:

America was a European power. It had fought the Cold War not only to defeat communism but to win the peace as well. We had an historic opportunity to lay the foundation for a Europe whole and free in alliance with the United States—and we had to use it. Albright firmly believed that America's interest and role in Europe transcended the Soviet threat, but that the alliance had to be reshaped if it was to survive.<sup>16</sup>

As Albright herself said, the United States had a window of opportunity to "recast the

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foundation of the alliance.”<sup>17</sup> “If we get it right,” she said, “NATO will last for another fifty years. . . . If we don’t, the U.S. and Europe are likely to slowly drift apart and the alliance will atrophy.”<sup>18</sup>

**The “Double Enlargement” Policy**

As it evolved during the Clinton administration, the “new” NATO was based on a policy of “double enlargement.”<sup>19</sup> Double enlargement encompassed both NATO’s geographic expansion (by admitting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to the alliance), and the expansion of the alliance’s roles and missions. NATO’s geographic enlargement reflected Washington’s concerns with ensuring stability in Central and East Central Europe.<sup>20</sup> “Stability in Central Europe is essential to general European security, and it is still far from assured,” claimed Holbrooke, who also observed that “local conflicts, internal political and economic instability, and the return of historical grievances have now replaced Soviet expansionism as the greatest threat to peace in Europe.”<sup>21</sup> By expanding NATO, the United States sought to defuse the potential causes of turbulence in Europe while simultaneously consolidating free market democracy in East Central Europe. As President Clinton put it:

I came to office convinced that NATO can do for Europe’s East what it did for Europe’s West: prevent a return to local rivalries, strengthen democracy against future threats, and create the conditions for prosperity to flourish. That’s why the United States has taken the lead in a[n] . . . effort to build a new NATO for a new era.<sup>22</sup>

The second component of the alliance’s double enlargement was the expansion of NATO’s roles and missions. Increasingly, American officials believed that the “new” NATO would have to focus on security threats emanating from beyond the alliance’s traditional geographical purview. Well before September 11, 2001, American policymakers

were arguing that the “new” NATO had to assume responsibility for combating security threats arising from “out of area”—whether that be ethnic turmoil in the Balkans, rogue states like Iraq, or Islamic terrorism. The extent to which NATO shifted its focus away from the Atlantic was displayed by a comment by then–undersecretary of defense Walter Slocombe. In 1995 Slocombe argued:

Real, immediate challenges to NATO allies have been mounting to the south. Flash points have emerged in the Mediterranean, in Southwest Asia, in the Balkans and in North Africa. The potential spread of instability across the Mediterranean would not only threaten friendly regimes of North Africa and the prospects for peace in the Middle East, it would also threaten Europe with new social and security problems.<sup>23</sup>

U.S. policymakers argued that NATO had to prevent instability on Europe’s periphery from spilling over and affecting Europe itself. Thus, as Albright put it, the alliance had to go out of area, because “instability that is dangerous and contagious is best stopped before it reaches NATO’s borders.”<sup>24</sup> In reinventing the alliance, President Clinton said, the United States was “building a NATO capable not only of deterring aggression against its own territory, but of meeting challenges to our security beyond its territory.”<sup>25</sup>

How has the “new” NATO stacked up with respect to fulfilling its post–Cold War missions? Not very well. The various battles of the War on Terrorism, including the problem of Iraq, are precisely the kind of out-of-area threats with which the “new” NATO is supposed to deal. But NATO as an institution has made no contribution either to the campaign in Afghanistan or the Iraq War. It is true that after September 11, the alliance invoked the collective defense provision of Article V of the NATO charter for the first time. And, to be sure, individual members of the alliance have effectively cooperated with

the United States on the anti-terror campaign by sharing intelligence, tracking down terrorist cells operating in their own countries, and going after the terrorists' sources of financial support. NATO members the United Kingdom and Canada contributed small contingents to fight against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, and Germany and Turkey have stepped forward in helping to stabilize post-war Afghanistan. The British, of course, have contributed a substantial military contingent to fight alongside the United States in Iraq. All of those contributions, however, have been made on an individual, ad hoc, basis. They were not cast in the context of obligations under NATO. And a strong case can be made that Washington would have been able to assemble this same limited "coalition of the willing" even if there was no NATO.

## **Why Has the "New" NATO Been Such a Disappointment?**

NATO has failed to live up to expectations in the post-Cold War world for three main reasons. First, the military capabilities of the European NATO members are meager. Second, the European members of NATO do not share Washington's enthusiasm for confronting "out of area" threats. And, third, Washington has deliberately chosen to bypass the alliance because it wants to maximize its own strategic freedom of action. Simply put, the United States prefers to rely on ad hoc "coalitions of the willing" rather than be constrained by the need to forge consensus among the NATO allies.

Except for Britain and France, NATO Europe lacks the ability to project military power outside of Europe. And, as became evident during the Kosovo war, all of the European NATO members lag well behind the United States in leading-edge conventional military power such as precision-guided munitions, advanced command and control, and reconnaissance/surveillance capabilities.<sup>26</sup> Even

NATO secretary general Lord Robertson, who previously served as Britain's defense minister, has warned that NATO Europe is a military "pygmy" and must do more to enhance its military capabilities. Although the European NATO members have made some noises about increasing their military spending (and France, notably, is doing so), it is—to put it mildly—an open question about whether NATO Europe really is going to allocate the resources necessary to close the transatlantic gap in military capabilities.<sup>27</sup> As *The Economist* observes, "Europeans do not want to give up their butter for guns, not least because they feel there is no threat at present that would justify attempting to close such a yawning gap in capability."<sup>28</sup>

That the Europeans do not view "out of area" threats—including Iraq—in the same way Washington does is clear. This divergence of view traces to well before the Iraq war, and even before the end of the Cold War. Since the United States refused to back Britain and France in Suez, and the French in Algeria in the 1950s, most Europeans have taken the position that NATO's area of strategic responsibility is confined to the European continent, and consequently they have been unwilling to have the alliance used in support of U.S. actions outside of Europe. This is one reason why France, Germany, and other western European nations refused to back the Bush administration's Iraq policy. A second reason for the divergence between Washington and NATO Europe is that the Europeans have different interests at stake in the Middle East and Persian Gulf than does the United States, and they believed (and still do) that those interests could be affected adversely by a war with Iraq. Finally, throughout much of NATO Europe—especially the alliance's old Western European core—the Bush administration's Iraq policy has been opposed both because some Europeans are uneasy with Washington's "unilateralist" proclivities and because of concerns about the implications of American hegemony.

These two factors—worry about the imbalance of power in America's favor, and concern about how Washington exercises that power—are obviously closely linked. European concerns

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have been evident since President Bush's State of the Union speech in January 2002, in which he denounced Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the "axis of evil." The speech fanned European fears that America intends to use its awesome military power unilaterally.<sup>29</sup> French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine denounced the administration's expansion of the War on Terrorism to include the axis of evil as "simplistic," and the German foreign minister Joschka Fischer warned that the Europeans would not consent to be treated by Washington as "satellites."<sup>30</sup> "The international coalition against terror," Fischer added, "is not the foundation to carry out just anything against anybody, and particularly not on one's own."<sup>31</sup>

Fueled by the Bush administration's emphasis on preemptive strategies to deal with rogue states and Washington's manifest unwillingness to have its Iraq policy constrained by NATO Europe, West European elites—especially in Germany and France—have made clear their fear that America has become too powerful in the international system and needs to be reined in by countervailing power.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the run-up to war with Iraq—including the wrangling between the United States and other members of the United Nations Security Council about the weapons inspection process and the UN's role in sanctioning military action against Baghdad—it became evident that, like much of the rest of the world, many in Europe regard America's unchecked hegemonic power as a greater threat than Iraq to long-term global stability.<sup>33</sup>

Washington's growing belief that NATO is more of a grand strategic hindrance than an asset is the final nail in the coffin with respect to NATO's irrelevance as a military alliance. This belief rests on a core truth: given the huge disparity between America's military capabilities and those of NATO Europe, the alliance really does not have much to contribute to U.S. military operations. With the partial exception of British forces, NATO militaries do not possess the sophisticated capabilities to fight on the same battlefield alongside American troops. European NATO forces lack

stealth technologies, advanced real-time reconnaissance/surveillance systems, precision guided munitions and power projection capabilities, among other things. Put more bluntly, the United States does not need any help from NATO Europe to fight wars like those conducted in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, it is noteworthy that throughout the lead-up to war with Iraq, all the military planning for the looming campaign was done by the United States (primarily through Central Command headquarters) without any formal NATO input. Given that NATO Europe's military contributions to U.S. military efforts in the Gulf and Central Asia are superfluous, it is hardly to be wondered that Washington prefers to avoid the political strings that might be attached if NATO Europe had become formally, and substantially, involved in the war with Iraq.<sup>35</sup>

#### **Plus Ça Change: Why the "New" NATO Isn't**

It is hard to disagree with former defense secretary James Schlesinger's recent observation: "The fact of the matter is that the main threat is gone and NATO has become far less relevant."<sup>36</sup> Indeed, it would be more accurate to say that as a military alliance the "new" NATO is a virtual nullity. Yet NATO persists and is likely to do so for a long time to come. The obvious question is why.

The simple answer is that the alliance is still the indispensable instrument for maintaining American hegemony in Europe. The alliance did not end when the Cold War ended because containing the Soviet Union was not the driving force behind America's post-World War II commitment to Europe. Even if there had been no Soviet threat, the United States would have become militarily committed to postwar Europe because American policymakers believed that the United States had an overriding interest in maintaining stability in Western Europe.

This conception of U.S. interests reflected a complex set of interlocking "Open Door" interests arising after World War II. First, U.S. officials believed that America had crucial economic interests in postwar Europe. Second,



American strategists perceived that these economic interests would be jeopardized if Europe relapsed into its bad habits of nationalism, great power rivalries, and realpolitik.<sup>37</sup> To ensure stability in Europe after World War II, the United States sought to create a denationalized, economically (not politically) integrated (not unified) Europe in which Washington would assume primary responsibility for West European security, and thereby preclude the reemergence of the security dilemmas (especially between France and Germany) that had sparked the two World Wars. Those goals dovetailed nicely with another of America's key post-1945 grand strategic objectives: preventing the emergence of new poles of power in the international system (in the form either of a resurgent Germany, or united Europe) that could challenge U.S. geopolitical preeminence. As the historian Melvyn P. Leffler observed, while committed to reviving Western Europe and Japan economically, Washington was also determined that "neither an integrated Europe, nor a united Germany nor an independent Japan must be permitted to emerge as a third force or a neutral bloc."<sup>38</sup>

There is a well-known quip—usually attributed to NATO's first secretary general, Lord Ismay—that NATO was created to "keep the Russians out, the Germans down, and the Americans in." It would be perhaps more accurate to say that NATO's primary *raison d'être*, from the U.S. standpoint, was to keep America in so that Germans could be kept down, to keep the Europeans from being at each other's throats militarily, and to encourage a degree of European unity, but not to the point of creating a strategic rival. In other words, for U.S. strategists, NATO remains important because it serves to advance long-standing American objectives that existed independent of the Cold War and hence were not invalidated by the Soviet Union's collapse.

### **What the U.S.-Europe Split over Iraq Teaches Us**

Sometimes recent events do a lot to shed light on the past. The fact that American poli-

cymakers did not miss a beat when the Cold War ended with respect to reaffirming NATO's continuing importance reveals a great deal about the real nature of the interests that shaped America's European grand strategy after World War II and still do so today.

For the first Bush administration, the Soviet Union's collapse did not necessitate any reconsideration of the U.S. military commitment to Europe, or of NATO. As Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, both of whom served as foreign policy officials in the first Bush administration, observe:

[The first Bush] administration believed strongly that, even if the immediate military threat from the Soviet Union diminished, the United States should maintain a significant military presence in Europe for the foreseeable future. . . . The American troop presence thus also served as the ante to ensure a central place for the United States as a player in European politics. The Bush administration placed a high value on retaining such influence, underscored by Bush's flat statement that the United States was and would remain 'a European power.' . . . *The Bush administration was determined to maintain crucial features of the NATO system for European security even if the Cold War ended.*<sup>39</sup>

The Clinton administration took a similar view. As one former State Department official in the Clinton administration avers, NATO had to be revitalized after the Cold War because American interests in Europe "transcended" the Soviet threat.<sup>40</sup> And, using phraseology reminiscent of Voltaire's comment about God, Albright said, "Clearly if an institution such as NATO did not exist today, we would want to create one."<sup>41</sup>

Albright's comment in April 1997 is just as applicable to the late 1940s: the perception of American interests held by the foreign policy elite—especially the overriding goal of main-

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taining “stability” in Europe—would have caused the United States to create NATO, or something very much like it, even if there had not been a Soviet threat. After all, postwar U.S. policymakers viewed Europe’s traditional balance of power security architecture as a “fire trap” that had involved the United States in two world wars, and as Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett said, Washington wanted to make certain that this firetrap was not rebuilt.<sup>42</sup> Europe’s reversion to a multipolar balance of power system would lead to renewed nationalism, security competitions, regional instability, and possibly war, all of which would undermine U.S. interests.<sup>43</sup> The kind of Western Europe that was central to postwar U.S. grand strategic objectives, therefore, was one in which the freedom of the West European states to act as sovereign national entities was severely constrained.

NATO was the key to ensuring America’s fundamental interest on the continent: maintaining peace within Western Europe. As a Robert McNamara era Pentagon memorandum put it, “the preservation of the political stability and security of Western Europe” was “important to our national security.”<sup>44</sup> Adverting to the purported “lesson” of the two World Wars, the Pentagon observed that, quite apart from the Cold War, it was “very clear that the United States is needed in Europe” to create a political environment that permitted “a secure and easy relationship among our friends in Western Europe.”<sup>45</sup> As Secretary of State Dean Rusk said in 1967, the U.S. military presence on the continent played a pivotal role in assuring stability within Western Europe: “Much progress has been made. But without the visible assurance of a sizeable American contingent, old frictions may revive, and Europe could become unstable once more.”<sup>46</sup> Former secretary of state Acheson observed in the mid-1960s that, as the vehicle for America’s stabilizer role in Western Europe, “NATO is not merely a military structure to prepare a collective defense against military aggression, but also a political organization to preserve the peace of Europe.”<sup>47</sup> Simply put, NATO came into busi-

ness—and remains in business—because of the perceived U.S. interest in maintaining stability in Europe, an interest that existed in the minds of policymakers with or without the Soviet Union.

## **Looking to the Future**

What can be said about the future of NATO and the state of U.S.-European relations? The answer is paradoxical. There is a real, and widening transatlantic rift. That schism will grow, although there is little reason to think there will be an outright rupture between the two parties any time soon. The Iraq crisis has underscored that NATO has outlived its usefulness as a military alliance. There is no reason, however, to think that the dissolution of the alliance is in the offing, because U.S. policymakers perceive, rightly or wrongly, that NATO furthers American grand strategic interests.

Iraq is the immediate cause of the friction between the United States and Europe. During the lead-up to the war, the governments and the public in both Germany and France were profoundly uneasy with the Bush administration’s policy.<sup>48</sup> In Germany and France it was widely believed that Iraqi president Saddam Hussein had been successfully contained for a decade, that there was little danger that Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons might be transferred to terrorist groups, and that containment remained a viable policy. Given their fears about America’s unchecked power and doubts about the course Washington is charting in the Persian Gulf and Middle East, France and Germany (and leading non-NATO states like Russia and China) sought to constrain American power by pressuring the United States to refrain from going to war with Iraq. Inherent in the widespread opposition of the international community was a conviction that Iraq posed no threat to the United States.

### **The Virtue of Selfishness**

Many American foreign policy analysts have concluded that the Iraq crisis has

demonstrated the folly of a unilateralist American grand strategy. To heal the transatlantic breach, they say, the lesson from the Iraq crisis is of the imperative need for the United States to work multilaterally in concert with Europe. The debate about whether the U.S. should act multilaterally or unilaterally rests on a false dichotomy, however. In international politics, great powers always put their self-interest first. And they must do so; international politics is an especially competitive realm. In the jargon of international relations scholars, international politics is an “anarchic” system because there is no central authority able to make and enforce laws and maintain order. Consequently, international politics is a “self-help” system in which each actor must rely primarily on its own efforts to ensure its survival and security, and in which each can employ the means of its choice—including force—to advance its interests. As University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer says: “States operating in a self help world almost always act according to their own self-interest and do not subordinate their interests to the interests of other states, or to the interests of the so-called international community. The reason is simple: it pays to be selfish in a self-help world.”<sup>49</sup>

The nature of international politics impels great powers to think of themselves first—thus, their natural inclination is to act unilaterally. If Iraq posed a serious and imminent threat to the United States, then Washington need not be constrained by the opposition of NATO Europe (or at least its hard core, centered on France and Germany). The best argument against the Bush administration’s Iraq policy was not that the United States needed to placate Paris, Berlin, or London, but rather that there were—and despite the battlefield success, there remain—serious questions about the wisdom of the administration’s policy. First, as the leading realist scholars John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt recently have pointed out, containment was an effective strategy for dealing with Saddam Hussein.<sup>50</sup> Second, the administration’s policy toward Iraq is—in the memorable phrase of German

chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg in July 1914—a leap into the dark. Although the ultimate success of American forces on the battlefield never was in doubt, wars are fought to attain political objectives. And it is far from clear that the United States is going to be more secure now that Saddam Hussein is removed from power. At best, as the early months of the postwar occupation suggest, the United States faces the prospect of a lengthy and costly period of pacifying and reconstructing Iraq. And if recent acts of violence against American military personnel are indicative, it is far from clear that the people of Iraq are prepared to acquiesce either to the U.S. military occupation or to accept an American-imposed government. At worst, there still is a risk that Iraq will come apart at the seams. What does seem apparent is that the unsettled political situation in Iraq following the war is likely to have crucial ramifications for regional stability. These considerations, not the failure to defer to Paris and Berlin, are the real defects in U.S. policy.

Unilateralism is the default strategy of great powers. That does not mean, however, that they should never cooperate, or ally with, other states. In assessing the depth of current transatlantic tensions, and NATO’s future, a simple question must be asked: How does the alliance contribute to American security? As already pointed out, the United States has received valuable help from many NATO states in the War on Terrorism in the realms of intelligence, police work, and choking off terrorists’ access to money. But this assistance owes little to NATO as an institution. The advanced industrial states have a common interest in fighting terrorism and would cooperate in this endeavor even if there were no NATO.

#### **NATO’s Shortcomings as a Military Alliance**

NATO also falls short as a military alliance. As already noted, there is a huge gap between the respective military capabilities of the United States and NATO. This gap is not simply quantitative, measured by the difference in the defense burdens borne by the

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United States and the Europeans (e.g., the U.S. spends nearly 3.5 percent of GDP on defense compared with 2.5 percent for France, and 1.5 percent for Germany) but is, more importantly, qualitative. As already pointed out, the European NATO militaries lack the kind of advanced, technologically sophisticated weaponry and supporting systems that are the backbone of the U.S. military. To be blunt, NATO Europe has nothing to offer the United States militarily. At the same time, Washington has little need, or interest, in becoming mired in the kinds of missions now performed by the alliance on the European continent. For example, American troops have more important things to do than Balkan peacekeeping—specifically, defending Americans against genuine threats to U.S. security. No doubt, preventing ethnic and national conflicts from spiraling into war is an important *European* interest, but it is an interest for which the Europeans themselves should be responsible. Similarly, consolidating free market democracy in East Central Europe may, indeed, be a key objective for the United States. But it is a task that is better left to the European Union than to a military alliance like NATO.

As I have already noted, however, the alliance's military utility has little to do with America's interest in maintaining NATO intact. Washington remains wedded to the alliance because it is committed to pursuing a hegemonic grand strategy. There is nothing new about this. Since World War II ended, the U.S. has pursued a hegemonic strategy with respect to Europe. And, of course, with the Cold War's end, the last three administrations have not been shy about proclaiming Washington's goal of perpetuating American hegemony and maintaining the U.S. role as the sole great power in the international system. This objective is bluntly stated in the Bush administration's 2002 National Security Strategy, which declares that the United States will act, preventively if necessary, to preclude other states from surpassing—or even equaling—U.S. military

capabilities.<sup>51</sup> Hegemons are like monopolists: neither likes competition. And, as has been true since the late 1940s, the United States today is determined to ensure that no new great powers emerge.

Europe is, of course, one region where a new pole of power could emerge, either in the guise of a resurgent Germany (and a "German Europe") or a politically unified European Union. Through NATO, the United States keeps both Germany and the EU in check. In the latter regard, notwithstanding Washington's oft-voiced complaints about "burden-sharing," the truth is that the last thing the United States wants is for Europe, through the EU, to develop significant *independent* military capabilities. The United States insists that any EU efforts to develop enhanced military capabilities must be within the context of NATO. As Richard Holbrooke put it: "It would be self-defeating . . . to create military structures to duplicate the successful European integration already achieved in NATO. But a stronger European pillar of the alliance can be an important contribution to the European stability and transatlantic burden-sharing, provided it does not dilute NATO."<sup>52</sup> Addressing the EU's plans to develop an autonomous defense and foreign policy known as the European Security and Defense Initiative, Madeleine Albright said: "We believe that ESDI is a very useful way to think about burden sharing." For the United States, Albright explained, ESDI must be based on "the principle that these institutions should be the European pillar of a strong transatlantic alliance and not separate and competing entities." To ensure that ESDI does not undercut NATO, Albright proclaimed the so-called "Three D's": ESDI must not diminish NATO's role, must not duplicate NATO's capabilities, and must not discriminate against the United States.<sup>53</sup> Of course, if these "Three D's" are implemented—especially the proscription on the EU duplicating military capabilities already possessed by NATO—Europe would be foreclosed from achieving strategic autonomy and would

remain subordinate to the United States, which is precisely the aim of U.S. policy. This explains why the United States has been so hostile to the EU's European Security and Defense Policy, and its attempt to develop its own Rapid Reaction Force, which is intended to be the forerunner of an EU armed force.<sup>54</sup>

Employing a form of divide-and-rule, Washington is also seeking to maintain its preponderance in Europe by encouraging the European members of NATO to forego either national or collective efforts to acquire the full spectrum of advanced military capabilities and instead to concentrate individually on carving-out "niche" capabilities that will complement U.S. power, rather than potentially challenging it.<sup>55</sup> At the political level, the United States also is trying to do what it can to sabotage the EU's "state-building" process to ensure that a united Europe never emerges as an independent pole of power in the international system. Washington seeks to accomplish this objective by playing off the Central European NATO members (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania) against Europe's Franco-German core. Another tactic is pressuring the EU to expand—especially by admitting Turkey—in the hope that enlargement will create insuperable obstacles to the deepening and consolidation of the EU's institutions, which is a prerequisite if it is to have an effective common foreign and defense policy.<sup>56</sup>

### **Is a Hegemonic Grand Strategy in America's Best Interest?**

Keeping NATO in business makes a lot of sense if America is going to pursue a hegemonic grand strategy. The real question, of course, is whether hegemony is the wisest grand strategy for the United States.<sup>57</sup> There are compelling reasons to think that it is not. Hegemony has never been a winning grand strategy for great powers over the long term. In international politics, when one state becomes too powerful, other states feel threatened. Hegemony begets opposition in one of two forms: new great powers emerge to counter the hegemon's power, and/or states form countervailing alliances to "balance" against

the hegemon.<sup>58</sup> The prevailing view in the American foreign policy community is that "it won't happen to us"—that the United States, in other words, somehow is exempt from the lessons of history, and the laws of geopolitics. The arguments are familiar: America's power advantages—economically, technologically, and financially—are so great that no other state can hope to catch up, and others won't balance against the United States because it is a qualitatively different kind of hegemon, a "benevolent" hegemon.<sup>59</sup> One can understand why the American foreign policy elite wants to believe these arguments. But self-delusion is not a good way to make grand strategy. There is no reason to think the United States will escape the fate of past hegemons.

In the short term, using NATO to perpetuate American preponderance in Europe may prevent a new pole of power from emerging in Europe. That is the conventional wisdom. But it is more likely that the current imbalance of power between America and Europe will stimulate European efforts to balance against American hegemony. After all, the real reason that Washington can dismiss European views on issues like Iraq is because Europe's voice is not backed up by hard power. The primary lesson from Iraq, therefore, is that hard power counts in international politics. If Europe wants to be taken seriously, it must develop the kind of military capabilities—and the willingness to use them to project power beyond the continent—that will command the respect of others, not least the United States.

A strong case can be made that, even before the imbroglios triggered by the War on Terrorism and the War on Iraq, Europe was, inch by inch, moving in the direction of becoming an independent pole of power in international politics.<sup>60</sup> During the past decade, a number of European leaders have voiced unease about the imbalance of power in America's favor, and spoken of the need for a European counterweight. The most recent example is the drive to create a common European foreign and security policy, which is clearly intended to make concrete the emer-

**The primary lesson from Iraq, therefore, is that hard power counts in international politics.**

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gence of a European counterweight to American hegemony. The April 29, 2003, meeting of the European “gang of four”—France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg—to discuss plans for further development of an autonomous European defense capability (a step, as French president Jacques Chirac said, toward a “multipolar world”) marked yet another stage in this progression.<sup>61</sup>

Although American hegemonists obviously disagree (after all, they think the United States is best off in a unipolar world), there are powerful reasons to believe that the return to a multipolar world actually would be strategically advantageous. Whether the United States benefits from multipolarity, or is harmed by it, however, depends largely on how it comes about. In the final analysis, Washington probably cannot prevent a reversion to a multipolar system in the next decade or two (a system in which Europe, China, Russia, and Japan—and perhaps India—would also emerge as great powers). By accommodating multipolarity, and embracing an offshore balancing strategy, the United States can capitalize on the realignment of the international system by devolving many of the security responsibilities it now bears for others.<sup>62</sup>

However, if Washington tries to heavily suppress the emergence of new great powers, it will lose doubly. First, the United States won’t be able to stop the emergence of new great powers over the long term. And second, by having tried to block such efforts, it virtually ensures that these new great powers will direct their security efforts against the United States. This is why the “new” NATO is such a bad bargain for the United States. The attempt to subordinate Europe to perpetual American tutelage is bound over time to poison transatlantic relations fatally.<sup>63</sup> As Henry Kissinger wrote in the mid-1960s, the emergence of a united Europe as an independent pole of power would have pluses and minuses for the United States.<sup>64</sup> But on the whole, if managed properly, it should be a net benefit for the United States. True, there always will be frictions—political, economic, and cultural—

between the United States and Europe. In those same realms, however, there are also many common interests. The challenge for the future is to ensure that the heavy hand of American hegemony does not destroy the bases for future cooperation between the United States and a Europe that has become an independent pole of power in the international system.

The “new” NATO is an empty vessel. The new NATO—like the old NATO—is merely the embodiment of American hegemony. From every other perspective it has become an irrelevant alliance. The United States derives no added value militarily from NATO. Without the Soviet Union, the new NATO advances no compelling vital American interest. The advocates of offshore balancing are correct: in the absence of a rival hegemonic threat, the United States does not need to be present in Europe militarily. There is no need to stabilize an already stable Europe; there is no need for peacekeeping in a peaceful Europe. The United States does not need to play the role of Europe’s stabilizer (or “pacifier”) and peacekeeper.

The United States should act as an offshore balancer; and America should come home from Europe militarily (because the Cold War really is over, over there). Unfortunately, the commitment of American foreign policy elites to a hegemonic grand strategy shows no sign of weakening. Indeed, the Bush administration’s hegemonists will trumpet forcible regime change in Iraq as confirming the wisdom of pursuing a grand strategy that aims at maintaining American dominance of a unipolar world. The future of transatlantic relations, and NATO, are tied inextricably to the outcome of the needed debate about American grand strategy. Until a new grand strategy is adopted, the United States will remain in Europe militarily; act as a hegemon, not as an offshore balancer; and do what it takes to keep NATO in business. Although it is commonly said that September 11 changed everything, that is not true. Before that fateful day, American hegemony was the key issue in the foreign policy debate. It still is.

## Notes

1. Stephen M. Walt, "The Ties That Fray: Why Europe and America Are Drifting Apart," *The National Interest*, no. 54 (Winter 1998/99), pp. 3–11.
2. Earl Ravenal, "NATO: The Tides of Discontent," *Policy Papers in International Affairs*, no. 23, University of California, Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, May 1985; James Chace, *Atlantis Lost: U.S.-European Relations after the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 1976); Ronald Steel, *Pax Americana*, revised edition (New York: Penguin, 1977); Christopher Layne, "Ending the Alliance," *Journal of Contemporary Studies* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 5–31; Christopher Layne, "Atlanticism without NATO," *Foreign Policy* 67 (Summer 1987): 22–45; and Christopher Layne, "Superpower Disengagement," *Foreign Policy* 77 (Winter 1989/1990). See also Ted Galen Carpenter, "Competing Agendas: America, Europe, and a Troubled NATO Partnership," in *NATO at 40: Confronting a Changing World*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990), pp. 29–44; and Ted Galen Carpenter, *A Search for Enemies: America's Alliances after the Cold War* (Washington: Cato Institute, 1992), pp. 11–46.
3. Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review* 113 (June 2002): 3–28.
4. On this traditional/secular divide between the United States and Europe, see Special Report, "American Values: Living with a Superpower," *The Economist*, January 4, 2003, pp. 19–20.
5. Sonni Efron, "U.S. Losing Popularity in the World," *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 2002, p. 3; Richard Morin, "World Image of U.S. Declines," *Washington Post*, December 5, 2002, p. A26.
6. "American Values," p. 19.
7. For a summary of the findings of the Chicago Council/German Marshall Fund study, see Craig Kennedy and Marshall M. Bouton, "The Real Trans-Atlantic Gap," *Foreign Policy* 133 (November/December 2002): 66–74.
8. Typical of the belief that the culture/values gap does affect NATO's future is the view of *The Economist*, which worries that transatlantic differences on culture and values will spill over into the policy arena and affect perceptions of common transatlantic interests, and the fear that U.S.-European elites will no longer be able contain the culture/values gap among their respective publics because the elite consensus on culture and values is itself breaking down. "American Values," p. 20.
9. Henry Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership: A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).
10. The most notable proponent of the view that America's grand strategy toward Europe is one of offshore balancing is John Mearsheimer, who argues that the United States is not a global hegemon. Instead, he asserts, the United States is only a hegemon in its own region (the Western hemisphere), and acts as an offshore balancer toward Europe, intervening only when the European balance of power has been unable to stop a continental hegemon. As an offshore balancer, Mearsheimer claims, the United States will not remain in Europe to play the role of regional stabilizer or pacifier. For elaboration, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); and John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 5 (September/October 2001): 46–61. Although I believe that the United States *ought* to be an offshore balancer with respect to Europe (and East Asia), I argue that, in fact, the United States, contrary to Mearsheimer's characterization, is following a strategy of global hegemony, and, consequently, will remain in Europe as a regional stabilizer/pacifier. See Christopher Layne, "The 'Poster Child' for Offensive Realism: America as Global Hegemon," *Security Studies*, forthcoming.
11. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 209.
12. Bradley Graham, "U.S. Plans New Bases in Eastern Europe," *Washington Post*, April 29, 2003, p. A6.
13. Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 25. While at RAND in the early 1990s, Asmus—who later would help implement NATO expansion as a State Department official—concluded that enlargement "was necessary not only to stabilize Central and Eastern Europe *but to ensure that NATO remained relevant and survived*" (p. 30). (Emphasis added.)
14. See Richard Holbrooke, "America, A European Power," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995), pp. 38–51. Asmus makes clear that Clinton administration officials were deeply concerned with keeping NATO "relevant" in order to preserve America's position as the major player in European security. See Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, pp. 118–119, 124–125, 132, 178–179, 260–261, and 290–291.
15. Holbrooke, p. 38.
16. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, p. 178. (Emphasis added.)

17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., pp. 178–179.
19. Ronald D. Asmus, “Double Enlargement: Redefining the Atlantic Partnership after the Cold War,” in David C. Gompert and F. Stephen Larrabee, *America and Europe: A Partnership for a New Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 19–50.
20. Polish and Czech leaders, and American conservative supporters of NATO enlargement frequently argued that expansion was needed as a hedge against a resurgent Russia. However, the Clinton administration officials responsible for the Alliance’s first round of expansion regarded as remote the prospects of a future Russian security threat to East Central Europe. See Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door*, p. 103.
21. Holbrooke, pp. 42, 38.
22. Bill Clinton, “Remarks to the Community in Detroit,” Detroit, Michigan, October 22, 1996, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, William J. Clinton, 1996, Book II-July 1 to December 31, 1996* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1998), pp. 1890–1896.
23. Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocombe, “Partnership for Peace and NATO-Russian Relations,” Speech to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, March 2, 1995. The most robust vision of how NATO should serve to defend a geographically expansive notion of U.S. strategic interests is Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). Brzezinski calls for transforming NATO into a Trans-Eurasian Security System that would encompass all of Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and East Asia.
24. Madeleine K. Albright, “Press Conference at NATO Headquarters,” Washington, United States Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, December 8, 1998.
25. Bill Clinton, “Remarks on United States Foreign Policy in San Francisco,” San Francisco, California, February 26, 1999, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, William J. Clinton, 1999, Book I-January 1 to June 30, 1999* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2000), pp. 271–280.
26. See Craig R. Whitney, “Hey, Allies, Follow Me. I’ve Got All the New Toys,” *New York Times*, May 30, 1999, Sect. 4, p. 5; Roger Cohen, “Dependent on U.S. Now, Europe Vows Defense Push,” *New York Times*, May 12, 1999, p. A12; John-Thor Dahlburg, “Battle for Kosovo Shows Europe Still Needs U.S.,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 1999, p. A1.
27. Keith B. Richburg, “Allies Alter Tune on Defense,” *Washington Post*, December 7, 2002, p. A21.
28. Special Report, “America and Europe: Who Needs Whom?” *The Economist*, March 9, 2002, p. 32.
29. Suzanne Dailey, “Many in Europe Voice Worry U.S. Will Not Consult Them,” *New York Times*, January 31, 2002, p. A12.
30. Suzanne Dailey, “French Minister Calls U.S. Policy ‘Simplistic,’” *New York Times*, February 7, 2002, p. A14; Steven Erlanger, “German Joins Europe’s Cry That the U.S. Won’t Consult,” *New York Times*, February 13, 2002, p. A14.
31. Erlanger, “German Joins Europe’s Cry.”
32. European concerns about unchecked U.S. power, Washington’s preemption policy, and the administration’s go-it-alone-if-necessary attitudes were very much on display at the February 2002 annual Wehrkunde Conference in Munich, an event that in most years is an Atlanticist love-fest. See Thomas E. Ricks, “U.S. Mission Concerned about NATO Support,” *Washington Post*, February 4, 2002, p. A10; Thomas E. Ricks, “European Security Leaders Alarmed by Bush’s Stance,” *Washington Post*, February 3, 2002, p. A16; and Carol J. Williams, “Terror War Expansion Troubles Allies,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 2002, p. A1. See also Keith B. Richburg, “Europe, U.S. Diverging on Key Policy Approaches,” *Washington Post*, March 4, 2002, p. A13; Steven Erlanger, “Europe Seethes as the U.S. Flies Solo in World Affairs,” *New York Times*, February 23, 2002, p. A8; and David E. Sanger, “Allies Hear Sour Notes in ‘Axis of Evil’ Chorus,” *New York Times*, February 17, 2002, Sect. 1, p. 18.
33. See Glenn Kessler and Walter Pincus, “Fear of U.S. Power Shapes Iraq Debate,” *Washington Post*, October 30, 2002, p. A16; Maggie Farley and Doyle McManus, “To Some, Real Threat is U.S.,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 2002, Part 1, p. 1; and Tyler Marshall, “Unlike in ‘90, Fear of U.S. Defines U.N. Iraq Debate,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 2002, Part 1, p. 1.
34. This is a source of concern for Atlanticists worried about the Alliance’s future. For them, NATO Europe’s participation in a war with Iraq has important political ramifications with respect to NATO’s viability. As Strobe Talbott argues: “If there is to be a war against Iraq in coming months, its justification, conduct, and outcome must vindicate the relevance not just of the UN but also of the U.S.-led alliance that rightly claims to be the most successful



in history. Otherwise, NATO may not survive to serve as general contractor for the pan-Eurasian renovation project symbolized by its plans for a shiny new home in Brussels." Strobe Talbott, "From Prague to Baghdad: NATO at Risk," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2002, p. 49.

35. NATO is not the driving factor behind either British or French policy. For the British, being in on the action reflects the imperatives of the Anglo-American "special relationship," not those of the Alliance. The U.S. apparently is willing to have NATO Europe contribute to noncombat missions such as "force protection" of U.S. bases in the Gulf and in Europe. On this point, see Vernon Loeb and Thomas E. Ricks, "Aid from NATO Allies Asked for Iraqi War," *Washington Post*, December 6, 2002, p. A35. The U.S. is more interested in post-conflict NATO contributions to peacekeeping and reconstruction in Iraq. This continues the new division of labor in the Alliance that has evolved in Bosnia, and Kosovo: the U.S. fights the war, and Europe gets to clean up the mess.

36. Quoted in Patrick E. Tyler, "In Search of a Mission," *New York Times*, November 20, 2002, p. A1.

37. There is no doubt that the American foreign policy establishment *perceives* that U.S. interests in an open international economy require the United States to play the role of regional stabilizer in Europe (and East Asia). However, there is ample doubt about whether this perceived link between U.S. security commitments and American economic interests reflects reality. For a powerfully persuasive argument that the costs of American hegemony outweigh the possible economic losses that would be incurred if instability in Europe (or East Asia) led to war, see, Eugene Gholz and Daryl G. Press, "The Effects of Wars on Neutral Countries: Why It Doesn't Pay to Preserve the Peace," *Security Studies* 10, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 1-57.

38. Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 17.

39. Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 169-170. (Emphasis added).

40. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, p. 290.

41. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 260.

42. See, Minutes of the First Meeting of the Washington Exploratory Talks on Security, July 6, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948*, vol. 3, p. 151 (Hereafter cited as *FRUS*); Minutes of the Fourth

Meeting of the Washington Exploratory Talks on Security, July 8, 1948, *FRUS 1948*, vol. 3, pp. 167-68.

43. Warning of the risks if Western Europe returned to its traditional geopolitical patterns of behavior, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles stated in 1953: "Surely there is an urgent, positive duty on all of us to seek to end that danger which comes from within. It has been the cause of two world wars and it will be disastrous if it persists." Statement by Dulles to the North Atlantic Council, December 14, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54*, vol. 5, p. 461. Dulles returned to this theme when he told West German Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard: "The people of the US and Congress believed firmly that the division of Europe was the cause of wars in the past. The Europeans have an obligation to tie themselves together and to attain strength in that way so that it will not be necessary to call upon the US again. Any weakening in the move toward unification would be disillusioning here." Memorandum of a Conversation, 6/7/55, *FRUS 1955-57*, vol. 4, p. 292.

44. Talking Paper Prepared in the Department of Defense, undated, *FRUS 1964-68*, vol. 13, p. 728.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Letter from Rusk to Senator Mansfield, 4/21/67, *FRUS 1964-68*, vol. 13, p. 562.

47. Memorandum by the Acheson Group, undated, *FRUS 1964-68*, vol. 13, pp. 406-7.

48. Keith B. Richburg, "Opposition to War Growing in France," *Washington Post*, January 11, 2003, p. A15.

49. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 33.

50. John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2003), pp. 50-59; an extended version of this article is published as "Can Saddam Be Contained? History Says Yes," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Cambridge, Mass., November 12, 2002, [http://bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu/BCSIA\\_content/documents/can\\_saddam\\_be\\_contained.pdf](http://bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu/BCSIA_content/documents/can_saddam_be_contained.pdf).

51. George W. Bush, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," September 2002, [www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html), p. 30.

52. Holbrooke, p. 47.

53. Albright, "Press Conference at NATO Headquarters."

54. See Christopher Layne, "Death Knell for NATO?: The Bush Administration Confronts the European

Security and Defense Policy," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 394, April 4, 2001; and Christopher Layne, "U.S. Hegemony and the Perpetuation of NATO," in *NATO Enters the 21st Century, Journal of Strategic Studies*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter (Portland, Ore.: Frank Cass, 2001), pp. 59–91.

55. "NATO Reaction Force Proposal Speaks to Dual U.S. Priorities," *Stratfor*, November 20, 2002, [www.stratfor.info/Story.neo?storyId=207681](http://www.stratfor.info/Story.neo?storyId=207681).

56. Ian Fisher, "In Vast Expansion of the European Union, Pluses but Also Perils Lie Ahead," *New York Times*, December 13, 2002, p. A16; John Vinocur, "The Big Winner in EU Expansion: Washington," *International Herald Tribune*, December 9, 2002, p. 1.

57. For representative arguments in favor of American hegemony, see Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*; Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 4 (July/August 2002): 20–33; Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "The Present Danger," *The National Interest*, no. 59 (Spring 2000), pp. 57–69; William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 4 (July/August 1996): 18–32; Zalmay Khalilzad, "Losing the Moment? The United States and the World after the Cold War," *Washington Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 87–107; Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World* 70, no. 1 (1990/91), pp. 23–33. For critiques of the strategy of preponderance, see Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 2 (March/April 1999): 35–49; Christopher Layne, "Rethinking American Grand Strategy," *World Policy Journal* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 8–28; Charles William Maynes, "The Perils of (and for) an Imperial America," *Foreign Policy*, no. 111 (Summer 1998), pp. 36–49; and Christopher Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's New Grand Strategy," *International Security* 22, no. 1 (1997): 86–124.

58. For a detailed explanation of the theoretical and empirical foundations of this argument, see Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion. Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993), pp. 5–51.

59. For the argument that others lag too far behind the United States in hard power capabilities to be able to catch up, see William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1999): 4–41. For arguments that the United States is a benevolent hegemon, see Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The Power We Must Not Squander," *New York Times*, January 3, 2000, p. A19; G. John Ikenberry, "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of Postwar Order," *International Security* 23, no. 3 (Winter 1998/99): 76–77; and G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "The Legitimation of Hegemonic Power," in *World Leadership and Hegemony*, ed. David P. Rapkin (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Reiner, 1990).

60. See, for example, Layne, "U.S. Hegemony and the Perpetuation of NATO."

61. On reactions to the "gang of four" summit, see Gareth Harding, "U.S. Allies Rap EU Defense Summit," United Press International, April 28, 2003; Ian Black, "Iraq: After the War: France, Germany, Deepen UK Rift," *The Guardian* (London), April 30, 2003, p. 4; and Rory Watson and Rosemary Bennett, "EU Gang of Four Agree to Form New Defence Force," *The Times* (London), April 30, 2003, p. 4.

62. For elaboration, see Benjamin Schwarz and Christopher Layne, "A New Grand Strategy," *Atlantic Monthly* 289, no. 1 (January 2002): 36–42; Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing"; and Christopher Layne, "Less Is More: Minimal Realism in East Asia," *The National Interest*, no. 53 (Spring 1996), pp. 64–77.

63. Even dyed-in-the-wool Atlanticists recognize that American hegemony could cause serious long-term damage to U.S.-European relations. As Strobe Talbott has written: "The strength of the Alliance has always derived from American power, which has never been greater, and from American leadership, which has never been more assertive. Yet these days many allies are feeling not so much led by the United States as bossed around; for them, the exercise of American power has become less a source of protection and more a cause of resentment and a problem to be managed." Talbott, "From Prague to Baghdad," p. 47.

64. Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership*, p. 40.

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