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Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy

From the European Union
to the Atlantic Union

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Europe and the Atlantic community have arrived at a historic turning point. With the wrenching ideological and geopolitical cleavages of the Cold War behind them, the Western democracies are seeking to consolidate their gains and extend peace, democracy, and free markets across Europe. To do so, the European Union is preparing for enlargement at the same time that it introduces a new level of supranationality through a single currency and a stronger defence identity. And NATO is embarking on its own plans for enlargement, getting ready to embrace in successive waves Europe's new democracies. At least on the surface, the West is triumphantly charting a course for the next century.

Beneath the surface, however, a profound disquiet accompanies on-going efforts to transform the institutions of the West. Preparation for monetary union is proceeding, but amidst widespread doubts about its economic desirability and political viability. NATO enlargement is on track, but also amidst deep reservations on both sides of the Atlantic about its purpose and consequences. Anxious self-doubt rather than triumphalism increasingly characterises debate about the future of the West.

This sense of unease is all too appropriate. Despite their good intentions, the leaders of the established democracies have embarked on a course that will lead to the demise of the West, not its renewal. At the core of the problem is that they are trying to broaden the community of peaceful, democratic nations even as they deepen it. But if enlargement is to be both politically feasible and strategically desirable, they must first loosen the West's structures.

Absent the Soviet threat, the vision of Europe embodied in the Maastricht Treaty is now but a legacy of a former era. Preparations for monetary union notwithstanding, efforts to move toward centralised governance of Europe and a common foreign and security policy are foundering as national states dig in and resist further attempts to whittle away their sovereignty.¹ Worse still, the futile push toward federalism is absorbing the energy and resources that should be devoted to the EU's most important and urgent mission: its enlargement to the east.²

NATO, on the other hand, is addressing the task of enlargement with the urgency it deserves. But NATO has been misdirecting its energies into a heated debate over which Central European countries to admit and when to do so, failing to recognise that the problem is in the very nature of the alliance, not its membership. Formal military blocs and the rigor of territorial guarantees are no longer necessary or politically sustainable. Rather than asking 'who gets in when?' NATO should be asking 'what are they getting into?'

Unless the EU and NATO undertake fundamental reform, they risk coming apart just as they draw within reach of completing their historic mission to unite a peaceful and democratic Europe. The excessive ambition of current policies will overextend Western institutions, undermining the transatlantic community as Member States defect from unwanted commitments. Instead, Western leaders must scale back their vision and seek to strike a balance between institutions that demand too much and those that deliver too little. They must devise a framework that occupies a new and vital centre and that promises to match commitments and responsibilities to political realities.

The solution to the West's dilemmas is an Atlantic Union (AU) that would subsume the EU and NATO. The EU would abandon its federal aspirations and concentrate instead on the extension of its single market East to Central Europe and West to North America. NATO would become the defence arm of the AU, but its binding commitments to the collective defence of state borders would give way to more relaxed commitments to uphold collective security through peace enforcement, peacekeeping, and preventive diplomacy. The AU could then open its doors to the new democracies of Central Europe in a manner acceptable to both Russia and commitment-weary electorates in NATO countries. Once democracy takes root in Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union, the AU would include them in its security structures and single market. Institutions that promote civic engagement and legislative oversight at the transatlantic level should be created to undergird and legitimate an Atlantic Union of democratic states.

An AU would sacrifice depth for breadth. But a looser and more comprehensive transatlantic union would ensure that the bridge between North America and an enlarged Europe rests on solid economic and political trestles, not just on increasingly weak strategic ones. It would thus lock in, and eventually extend, perhaps the most profound transformation of our century: the creation of a community of democratic nation states among which war has become unthinkable. The Western democracies have built much more than an alliance of convenience among countries that are each out for individual gain. They enjoy unprecedented levels of trust and reciprocity and share a political order based on capitalist economies and liberal societies.³ The consolidation and expansion of this democratic core holds the greatest promise for a stable peace in the Atlantic region and beyond, and it is a sensible and prudent starting point as the United States casts about for a new grand strategy.

Asia-first vs Europe-first

Asia's economic ascendance and geopolitical instability have raised questions about the continuing relevance of a special Atlantic link. Just as Asia-firsters attacked America's Atlanticism during the early post-World War II years, they are now arguing that preserving the transatlantic community is not worth the effort.⁴ Asia-firsters contend that Atlanticism has served its purpose and that the United States has far more pressing needs at home and in the Pacific. Now that threats to European peace are limited in geographic scope and severity, Europe no longer requires American attention and resources; Europeans can and should assume responsibility for their own security. Asia is far more deserving of the top spot in America's new geopolitics. It promises to emerge as the next century's engine of global economic growth.⁵ The United States should be poised to tap into the region's new markets and capital flows. And unstable regional alignments, in combination with uncertainty about how China will cope with its new-found power, necessitate the deterrent and stabilising effect of a robust American military presence. With Asia's ascendance, the argument runs, must come the end of America's Euro-centrism and the beginning of a grand strategy anchored in the Pacific rather than the Atlantic.

The Pacific Basin's economic dynamism and political volatility notwithstanding, an Asia-first grand strategy is fundamentally flawed. Europe still matters for three potent reasons. First, despite the end of the Cold War, the US-European partnership continues to serve as the fulcrum for broader multilateral action in the international arena. A transatlantic coalition was behind all the central diplomatic initiatives of this decade - countering Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf, bringing to a successful conclusion the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, paving the way for a lasting peace in the Middle East, helping to build democracy in the former Soviet bloc, and enforcing the Dayton Accord in Bosnia. In addition, the transatlantic partnership is at the heart of the institutional infrastructure that underpins ongoing efforts to liberalise the international trading system and prevent and stop conflict. To the extent that a set of norms and rules are gradually becoming embedded in the international system, the driving force emanates from the common values and efforts of the Western democracies. For the foreseeable future, no Asian power or coalition of powers will be able to fill the shoes of America's European allies in helping to construct an international order based on the principles of liberal multilateralism. The United States should by all means sustain a cooperative relationship with Japan and seek to channel China's coming economic and military might toward constructive ends. But a strong Atlantic coalition will enhance, not diminish, American leverage in East Asia.

Second, Europe itself would be deeply unsettled should the Atlantic connection wither and America disengage from the continent. Whether by design or default, NATO has greatly facilitated Europe's coming together by assuming responsibility for hard-core security issues, leaving the European Community (the EU's forebearer) free to pursue political and economic integration. As Europe's failure to act decisively and effectively in Bosnia made clear, the EU is not ready to take over the management of European security. Indeed, an American withdrawal would send shock waves across Europe, perhaps threatening even the Franco-German coupling by forcing Germany to reconsider its security needs. Should this unravelling of Europe come about, the bedrock of US foreign policy - a cohesive Western Europe at peace - would be shaken loose.

Third, to allow the transatlantic community to erode would be to miss an opportunity to lock in the zone of democratic peace that North America and Western Europe have succeeded in constructing. Countries within this zone have all but eliminated the security competition and jockeying for relative advantage that have characterised international politics for millennia. It may be that without a common threat, it will not be long before relations among the Western democracies again fall prey to traditional power balancing and the search for individual gain. But it is worth trying to do better and to make permanent the establishment of a grouping of nations among which war is no more.

The Fallacy of the Rest Against the West

The most effective and familiar means of ensuring the vitality of the West would be to find it a new enemy. A transcendent external threat would provide a new 'other' against which the Atlantic democracies could renew their common identity and sense of shared purpose. Whether motivated by concern about restoring the West's cohesion or by a sincere assessment that dire threats are looming on the horizon, the search for new fault lines is all the rage. Samuel Huntington, for example, sees other civilisations as the new enemy against which America and Europe should gird their loins.⁶ Profound cultural differences, Huntington contends, will ultimately lead to a clash of incompatible civilisations. While Huntington sees the most serious threat to the West emanating from a Confucian-Islamic connection, others worry more about a coming divide between Western and Orthodox Christendom.

Robert Kaplan argues that the coming cleavage will fall along socio-economic rather than civilizational lines. Poverty, illness, and violence in

underdeveloped regions promise only to worsen, threatening to engulf the industrialised West. In a variation on the same theme, Matthew Connelly and Paul Kennedy fear overpopulation and migration from the poorer south to the richer north. 'Demographic-technological fault lines,' they contend, will define the landscape of the twenty-first century.⁷ The wealthy West must now come together to combat poverty and overpopulation lest it be overrun by the world's poor.

These efforts to provide the West a new mission and *raison d'être* are dead ends. Ideological and religious affinities do not translate into geopolitical alliance any more than ideological and religious differences necessarily trigger conflict.⁸ The Confucian and Islamic worlds - let alone the two together - are hardly coherent political actors; both are riven by ethnic, religious, and national divides. And Orthodox Europe is not preparing to do battle with Western Christendom. Former Soviet republics are still in the midst of efforts to reclaim nationhood and rediscover their cultural distinctiveness. But Russia and its neighbours are, for the most part, looking westward with hope, not fear. A new east-west divide in Europe may ultimately take shape, but it should not do so because of a self-fulfilling prophecy set in motion by the West's own actions. The challenge for the West is to live comfortably alongside these other civilisations, not wilfully or by accident to orchestrate a collision with them.

Overpopulation and poverty are far more worrisome than trumped-up cultural clashes. The South's scarce resources will grow ever more strained as its population soars. Wealth inequalities between the North and South will widen. But the connection between social breakdown in, say, Africa and the well-being of the West is at best tenuous. As they have well demonstrated, the industrialised democracies are very good at tolerating and cordoning off suffering in far-away places. Efforts to instil public alarm by concocting visions of millions of diseased and dispossessed storming the beaches of New Jersey - or even the Côte d'Azur - are simply too far-fetched. The Western democracies should soberly assess how they might help avoid the humanitarian disaster looming in Afri, and get on with doing what they can. But a call to arms based on the imagery of 'the rest against the West' will neither help the rest nor galvanise the West.

Too Much Europe

Decision makers on both sides of the Atlantic appear to recognise that the West must seek to hang together because of common values and purposes, not common fears. Increasing integration within Western Europe and the opening of

the EU and NATO to the new democracies of Central Europe are supposed to invigorate the West while erasing, not recreating, geopolitical cleavages.

Because they have mapped out futures for the EU and NATO that are far too ambitious, however, the leaders of the West are in the process of bringing about the demise of these institutions, not their revitalisation. As they should, both bodies intend to take advantage of the historic opportunity to open their doors to Central Europe. But they have yet to loosen their internal structures, a necessary step if their plans for enlargement are to have the intended consequences.

The EU continues to move toward a federal Europe - monetary union and a common foreign and security policy are the next steps - even as it prepares to double its membership. But the ambitious vision laid out in the Maastricht Treaty no longer enjoys the popular support that it did five years ago, when the treaty passed national referenda by the narrowest of margins.⁹ Indeed, the ongoing Intergovernmental Conference in Turin, Italy is primarily an exercise in damage control, masking the reality that nation states across Europe are reasserting their sovereignty, not giving it up.

Deepening European integration has lost not only its popular appeal, but also its strategic purpose. Enlargement is now the geopolitical necessity - and not just to the east. The EU's current plans for a Europe-only single market, even if it promotes the welfare of its Member States in the short run, will likely harm the global economy in the long run. Although the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum also aim to promote regional integration, they differ from the EU in one crucial respect: the United States links the two regions through its participation in NAFTA and membership in APEC. As trade within North America and Asia increases and becomes more liberal, so will trade between the two regions. In contrast, if the EU forges ahead on its own to build a single market, single currency, and central bank, Europe's integration into the global economy will be jeopardised. Enlargement to the east makes this drift all the more likely as the free flow of goods from Central Europe will threaten producers in Western Europe, generating new pressures for protection from non-EU imports. Because Europe's welfare state is more extensive and its corporate and financial structures less adaptive than their counterparts in North America and East Asia, lagging competitiveness will also create incentives for the EU to put up protective barriers.¹⁰

The Geopolitical risk of EMU

A single currency is expected to help Europe climb out of its extended period of slow growth and become more competitive. And there is little doubt that the *Euro* will bring economic benefits. The economic gains a single currency is likely to produce, however, do not alone confirm the desirability of monetary union. Precisely because political objectives have been paramount in fuelling the push for a single currency, EMU must be evaluated in terms of its political as well as its economic merits. After all, elected leaders looking to endow Europe with a more pronounced supranational character, not corporate leaders looking to increase profits, have been monetary union's main sponsors.

Within Europe's dominant narrative, EMU is meant to fulfil two geopolitical objectives. First, it is intended to lock in the Franco-German coalition by transferring authority over monetary policy from the national to the supranational level and by abolishing one of the most powerful symbols of sovereignty - national currencies. Second, it is supposed to create an inner core of expanding, integrated economies that will act as a magnet, drawing the EU's smaller states toward the centre. A Europe of concentric circles should emerge, with successive enlargements of the inner core taking place as states not initially included in EMU meet the criteria and are prepared to keep pace with France, Germany, and those other EU Member States moving most rapidly along the path of deeper integration.

The appeal of this vision notwithstanding, it is by no means clear that a single currency will have these intended geopolitical effects. The integrity of the Franco-German coalition is, to be sure, essential to preserving an integrated, cohesive Europe. Indeed, the Paris-Bonn (soon to be Paris-Berlin) axis is the centrepiece of the European construction. It provides the EU an identifiable power centre and a hierarchical structure of governance extending outward from this centre. At the same time, the coalition also serves as an instrument that binds and moderates the influence of Europe's core. This dual function is what allows France and Germany to guide the EU without appearing to dominate it. Europe's smaller states are willing to enter the EU precisely because it provides reassurance that the continent's power centre will exercise its influence in a moderate and benign manner.¹¹

The problem is that EMU may well strain, rather than strengthen, the Franco-German coalition. Less than 40 per cent of the German electorate favours currency union, largely because the deutsche mark remains a powerful symbol of national identity. Establishing a supranational monetary authority, by triggering a popular backlash against increasing integration, may well induce a

reassertion of French and German sovereignty. So too might the economic austerity needed to meet the Maastricht criteria jeopardise the Franco-German relationship. Workers in France and Germany have resorted to strikes to protest the cutbacks in spending implemented by their governments. And the efforts of France's new Socialist government to renegotiate the terms of monetary union have already produced strains between Paris and Bonn. As austerity continues and squabbling intensifies over preparations for the single currency, the temptation will increase for French and German elites to blame each other for any setbacks. Monetary union, which is intended to lock in the Franco-German coalition, may have precisely the opposite effect.

Even if a common currency succeeds in locking in a prosperous and cohesive Franco-German core, the broader construction that results may well consist of concentric barriers rather than concentric circles. Monetary union will have the greatest payoffs among the advanced economies of northern Europe. Similar structures and levels of performance will maximise the benefits associated with larger economies of scale and lower transaction costs while minimising EMU's distorting effects on national labour markets. In the economies of southern Europe, however, EMU promises to cause considerable dislocation and substantial increases in unemployment because of its effect on wages.¹² EU members initially outside the inner core may therefore choose to remain where they are. Those that ultimately choose to join EMU may eventually wish they had not.

The symbolic politics of EMU will create its own barriers. In deciding to proceed with a single currency, the EU is entering a new phase of its evolution in which the *de jure* equality of its members will give way to their *de jure* differentiation. *De jure* differentiation, at least on deductive grounds, risks turning the centrifugal force that has drawn Europe's periphery toward its centre into centripetal force that will drive centre and periphery apart.

Exclusion from the inner core could raise concern about relative gains, concern that has thus far been sublimated by *de jure* equality. Even if the benefits of participation in the EU remain strong in absolute terms, new dividing lines might make peripheral states more sensitive to their position relative to the core.¹³ EMU might also lead to relative losses in the periphery as the inner circle reaps the benefits of a single currency and leaves behind its less fortunate neighbours. Barriers could also result from the explicit relegation of some states to a second-class status, producing a sense of injury and rejection in affected states and an effort to distance themselves from the source of that injury. Finally, EMU could cause fragmentation in the construction of Europe by triggering competition among peripheral states to attain entry into the inner

circle. Fearful of being left out of monetary union or other aspects of integration pursued by the core, neighbouring states may vie with each other to clear the hurdles for entry, triggering both old and new rivalries.¹⁴ At a minimum, the EU needs to think through these issues before it goes ahead with a multi-speed construction, only to find that an inner circle, far from serving as the engine behind deeper integration, begins to delineate new fault lines across Europe.

Unlike in the past, Europe's wealthier states will no longer bear the cost of ensuring that the EU's poorer members stay on track. The EU has thus far been able to deepen and widen simultaneously in large part because less developed countries have been kept happy through side payments. The pie for aid is shrinking, however, even as claims on it promise to balloon. Germany, for one, is unlikely to continue covering almost one-third of the EU budget. The cost of integrating eastern Germany has been enormous. High wages are forcing major German firms to move production outside the country. And daunting demographic figures loom on the horizon. By 2020, there will be one German pensioner for every German worker.¹⁵ Come the next century, Germany will not be expending resources to ensure that Greece joins a European currency union. Despite all the talk of concentric circles and widening cores, monetary union between France and Germany may well leave much of Europe's poorer periphery just where it is.

CFSP adrift

Political integration has lagged considerably behind progress on the economic front, ensuring that the Maastricht agenda will be more a mantra than a map. The EU has gone far in nurturing a European identity that sits comfortably alongside national identities. But Europeans are not, and may never be, ready to move from a fundamentally intergovernmental union to one that smacks of federalism. The hallmark of a federal system is the existence of a legitimate, representative arena of politics that operates above individual state units. The European Parliament, however, is still without real legislative authority and remains a forum for speech making, not decision making. The European Commission continues to churn out proposals for increased political integration, but most have to be approved at the national level. Even as borders become more porous, powerful cultural and linguistic dividing lines continue to fortify the national state. Opinion polls reveal that publics are at best ambivalent about further encroachments on national sovereignty, with support for a single currency hovering at about 50 per cent.¹⁶

The Maastricht Treaty envisioned a common foreign and security policy, but the outlook on this front is bleak as well. The Western European Union (WEU), the Europe-only defence organisation that has effectively lain dormant since its inception in 1948, is to develop the capability to operate independently of NATO and intends ultimately to extend collective defence guarantees to states that have recently joined the EU or intend to do so in the future. But if West European countries could not more fully integrate their foreign policies during the Cold War, why should they be able to do so now?

Absent a unifying Soviet threat, the security interests of individual states are drifting apart, not coming together. Germany is far more concerned about developments in Central Europe than is Spain, Portugal, or France, countries that at least for now are preoccupied with North Africa. The failure of the EU and NATO to take more effective and timely steps to stop the slaughter in Bosnia made clear that Europe's security is now divisible. Which EU members, for example, would today defend the Finnish border against a Russian attack, a task to which all should be committed in principle since Finland entered the EU in 1995?

The EU's notable lack of progress in forging a common foreign and defence policy stems from two main sources. First, the union continues to strive for a consensus among all its members, ensuring that it gravitates toward the lowest common denominator. Waiting for a union-wide foreign policy to emerge is a recipe for paralysis. Not until the EU is ready to act via ad hoc coalitions of the willing can it succeed in taking on more defence responsibilities. In practice, this approach means relying more heavily on the Franco-German coalition to orchestrate collective action, enlisting the participation of other EU members on a case-by-case basis.

Second, France and Germany share less common ground on defence matters than they do on matters of economic integration. Part of the problem is the weight of history and Germany's continuing reluctance to participate fully in multilateral military operations. But French and German leaders also hold incompatible conceptions of the ultimate objectives and character of the union. For Germany, Europe is a construct for binding, moderating, and managing power - in short, for ensuring that the continent never again falls prey to the destructive forces of national rivalry. This perspective is not just a reaction against World War II. It has deep roots in the Holy Roman Empire, which aimed to dampen ambition and diffuse power in Europe. For France, the EU is more about amassing and projecting power, aggregating the union's military and economic resources so that it can assert itself as a global actor. The EU is to do for Europe what the national state is no longer strong enough to do for

France. This perspective too has deep historical roots that trace back to Napoleonic and Jacobin conceptions of France's destiny as a great power.

Melding these competing visions of Europe will be no easy task. Germans will need to become more comfortable with leading a Europe that is more engaged and active in global affairs. The French will need to adapt their conceptions of what constitutes a more assertive Europe, choosing to apply their efforts to facilitate Europe's equal participation in broad multilateral undertakings instead of pursuing an independent course under the illusion that doing so constitutes leadership. Unless they arrive at a common conception of the broad objectives of integration, Germany and France together will be unable to provide the guidance needed to forge a coherent European defence policy.

The Labour Party's recent victory in Britain raises the novel possibility that London might be able to help Paris and Bonn forge a compromise vision. Tony Blair shows signs of trying to push Britain toward much deeper engagement in the EU. The first trip of Blair's Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, was to Paris and Bonn, not Brussels or Washington. It is at least conceivable that Britain will not just cease being Europe's caboose, but that it will become one of the EU's engines. The British share Germany's perception of the EU as an instrument for binding and managing power, but also share France's appreciation of the importance of projecting influence beyond Europe. Britain could also help define a middle road between Germany's desire to sacrifice national sovereignty for a deeper union and France's Gaullist insistence on preserving a strong national state. It would indeed be a strange twist of fate should Britain become part of Europe's core and provide a vision of the EU that ultimately carries the day.

Deepening vs Widening

The EU's plans for simultaneous widening make these numerous obstacles to deepening only more formidable. Integrating the economies of the new democracies into the EU would bloat the organisation's budget and pit Central and Southern Europe against each other in a competition for regional development funds. Because of Central Europe's sizeable farming sector and the Common Agricultural Policy's price supports and export subsidies, the eastward enlargement would burden the EU with enormous outlays. Swelling the EU to twice its present membership would, by complicating decision making, put an end to Maastricht's already unrealistic political agenda. A common foreign and security policy that would reconcile the interests of some 30 states, for example, would be out of the question.

By overreaching, the EU opens itself up to two missteps of geopolitical consequence. First, in light of the trade-offs between deepening and widening, the EU's pursuit of a federal Europe comes at the expense of its eastward enlargement. The tighter the internal structures, the higher the hurdles for entry. The more energy and resources expended in deepening, the less left over for widening. Enlargement will require reform of the EU's cumbersome decision-making procedures, expensive agricultural subsidies, and regional development program. But to delay the inclusion of the new democracies into Europe's markets and councils while the EU pursues illusory aspirations of federalism is to miss a historic opportunity to widen the continent's zone of democracy and peace. Though less urgent, the westward enlargement of the single market to North America is equally important as a bulwark against Europe's drift from the global economy.

Second, the EU's excessive ambition could jeopardise the progress that Western Europe has already made in building an integrated union of democracies at peace. The vision only dreamed of by the original architects of European integration is now a reality. Trying to do more at this juncture risks overburdening institutions and triggering a backlash among nation states bristling at what electorates will view as unjustified and unwanted infringements on national sovereignty. If it continues to cling to a vision its Member States will summarily reject, the union will suffer irreparable damage. The EU should consolidate its achievements rather than gamble for more and risk Europe's undoing in the process.

Too Much NATO

Current plans for the enlargement of NATO are equally problematic. Despite the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the establishment of a consultative council open to Moscow, NATO is a traditional military alliance whose purpose is to concentrate power against an external threat; its enlargement will continue to alienate Russia. It will also leave in strategic limbo those states left between Russia and NATO's new eastern border. Expanding NATO in its current guise thus promises to resurrect, not eliminate, rivalry between Europe's east and west. Enlargement will also erode the alliance from within as current members balk at assuming new responsibilities. The days of expansive strategic interests are no longer; faced with shrinking threats, status quo powers are becoming less willing to take on defence commitments. As for ensuring American engagement in Europe, NATO enlargement promises to do just the opposite. If institutions evolve as planned, economic and security matters will still be addressed in separate bodies, leaving NATO as America's primary institutional link to

Europe. But defence policy no longer enjoys a position of primacy among either electorates or their leaders, making NATO in virtually any form a weak foundation for bridging the Atlantic.

NATO must take the lead in consolidating a democratic peace in Central Europe and incorporating the region into a meaningful security structure. But these tasks need not and should not entail its eastward expansion as a Cold War military alliance. It is the formal extension of the mutual defence provisions of Article V of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty that would irk Russia and relegate those Central European states not admitted to a grey zone of uncertainty. So too is it the formality and cost of treaty-based territorial guarantees that make NATO enlargement problematic from the perspective of America's domestic politics.

The risks of enlarging NATO as a traditional military alliance might be justified were a major external threat to Central European states to arise. But Russia is neither interested in nor capable of mounting such a threat. Moscow does not protest NATO's increasing engagement in Europe's east. Russia has joined the Partnership for Peace, watched passively as NATO troops conducted exercises with local forces in Poland and the Czech Republic, sent its own troops to the United States to train with US forces, and agreed in all but name to put under NATO command its soldiers enforcing the Dayton accord in Bosnia. What Russia objects to - justifiably - is the formal enlargement of a military bloc from which it would be excluded.

Similarly, electorates in NATO countries, if they care at all, are happy to see their militaries collaborate with former adversaries. But when it comes time for the US Senate to ratify the defence guarantees that come with full NATO membership, and the associated costs and responsibilities become apparent, the electorate will be neither apathetic nor acquiescent. Party discipline should ensure approval of the first wave of new entrants - Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.¹⁷ But it is hard to imagine that voters will continue to respond favourably as NATO embarks on second and third waves of expansion, asking electorates to extend iron-clad defence guarantees to a host of countries most could not locate on a map. Not just prospective entrants would suffer a setback were NATO legislatures to reject enlargement. If it stakes its future on moving east, only to have its plans shot down by the public, NATO would be dealt a crippling blow.

An Atlantic Union

America belongs in Europe, and Central Europe belongs in the West. But if Western leaders are to achieve these aims, they must scale back their aspirations and focus on consolidating what already exists - a peaceful, integrated community of democratic nation states. The challenge is to find a balance between an institutional structure that demands too much and falls prey to overextension and one that delivers too little and atrophies from irrelevance. In addition, strategic matters must no longer be divorced from economic considerations. National security concerns will not remain sufficiently salient to serve as the West's binding glue. The Western democracies ultimately will hang together only if their citizens sense that they occupy a unique political community and have vested interests in seeing that community preserved. Economic and political arguments will have to carry at least part of the weight once borne by strategic concerns.

An Atlantic Union that would incorporate the EU, WEU, and NATO fulfils these criteria.¹⁸ The initial members of the AU would be the current members of these three organisations. The AU would then expand at a steady pace not just to Central Europe, but also to Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union. The infrastructure of the EU and NATO would serve as a ready foundation for the new body. States joining the AU would take on three basic commitments: to introduce a single market, to uphold collective security, and to expand political engagement at the transnational level.

Calls for the negotiation of a free trade area encompassing North America and Western Europe have already surfaced on both sides of the Atlantic. Part of the impetus comes from economic prospects; the removal of today's barriers would, by 2000, increase transatlantic trade by at least 20 per cent.¹⁹ The introduction of a single market would likely be accompanied by an investment protocol and more convergence on regulations and standards, increasing the flow of capital and prompting industrial restructuring in Europe and North America.²⁰ It would also help prevent both areas from drifting toward protectionism and emerging as regional trade blocs. Instead, the United States would serve as the pivot of an integrated global economy, connecting a transatlantic free trade zone with one encompassing the Pacific Rim.

The most potent appeal of the Atlantic Union's single market is, however, its political significance. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations reduced trade barriers in most sectors to minimum levels. And the EU and the United States agreed at their summit in Madrid in 1995 to pursue a host of follow-up measures. The elimination of remaining impediments would

threaten powerful sectors such as agriculture and textiles, and thus would call for heavy lifting. But just as the introduction of a single market in Europe made borders more porous, facilitated political integration, and promoted a sense of common identity, so would the creation of a single Atlantic market strengthen the underpinnings of the community of North American and European democracies. Winning congressional approval of a transatlantic free trade zone would not be easy, but a high-profile debate connecting America's prosperity with Europe's fate would drive home to Americans that they share a unique political space with Europeans.

Building an Atlantic community of strong national states that are closely integrated economically is a far more realistic enterprise than constructing a federal Europe that sublimates the nation state and that omits North America from its central project. Returning to some elements of the EU's current agenda for deepening may prove expedient down the road. A single Atlantic currency, for example, is not unimaginable. But first steps first. Deepening makes sense only when it will not come at the expense of the far more vital enterprise of consolidating and enlarging a stable, prosperous union of Atlantic democracies.

The Atlantic Union's commitments to collective security would be looser and less automatic than NATO's current commitments to collective defence, removing the key stumbling block to a broader Western security community.²¹ The AU would replace NATO's Article V guarantee and its emphasis on territorial defence with a focus on peacekeeping and peace enforcement; confronting external threats as well as those that might arise from within, it would coordinate multilateral operations across Europe. Members would affirm their intention to solve conflicts peacefully whenever possible and, when necessary, to use military force to defend against common threats. Case-by-case decision making and a broad mandate to preserve peace in the Atlantic area would be the organising principles of a new US-European security bargain and a revamped NATO. The elimination of NATO's Article V guarantee would weaken the alliance's deterrent power. But as long as Russia continues to pose no threat to Central or Western Europe, compromising deterrence and holding out to Russia and its immediate neighbours a realistic prospect of inclusion in the West makes good strategic sense.

Scaling back NATO's mission and relaxing the commitments its members are expected to uphold is both a logical necessity in the absence of an enemy and a manoeuvre that would circumvent many of the problems plaguing current plans for NATO's enlargement. Under the guise of the AU, a transformed NATO could soon open its doors to the new democracies of Central Europe without appearing anti-Russian. Defence concerns would recede into the

background; joining the AU would be joining a civic community, not a military alliance. Collective security commitments would provide the Central Europeans some, but not all, of the assurance they seek. American troops would stay in Europe. NATO's existing infrastructure would remain intact. Militaries in the new democracies would continue the planning and exercising already begun through the Partnership for Peace, furthering their integration into the Western security community and their ability to operate with the forces of current NATO members. But this steady integration would occur quietly, avoiding the fanfare and political histrionics that would make the admission of new members to today's NATO so problematic.

To be sure, these new arrangements would involve sleight of hand. Central Europe, via AU membership, would secure a place under the West's protective umbrella. But couching new commitments in a broader political context and making them more contingent on strategic circumstance and less formal would render Central Europe's early inclusion in the West far more palatable to Russia as well as to electorates in NATO countries. Central European states would get to join the club, even if that club proves to be less exclusive and selective than the new entrants would like.

Doing away with Article V commitments also permits a broader definition of Europe's boundaries. Because NATO is still a formal military alliance, only countries deemed of sufficient strategic value to warrant their defence will ultimately be eligible for membership. Some proponents of NATO expansion have already begun to argue that enlargement should go no further than Poland and the Czech Republic, the two countries that occupy the main corridor between Russia and Western Europe. But this plan leaves most of Central Europe out in the cold.

In contrast, states would join the AU as they demonstrate a commitment to democracy, markets, and international norms of behaviour, offering the prospect of inclusion to all of Central Europe as well as the former Soviet Union. A pan-European collective security system could become a reality, not just rhetoric to placate Russia as Poland enters a NATO everyone knows will never go farther east. At the same time, should Russian democracy falter, the AU's military infrastructure could serve as the foundation for a new, enlarged anti-Russian alliance.

Finally, merging NATO with the EU and WEU avoids a looming crisis over the responsibilities of these institutions. The three already have incongruent memberships that will grow only more inconsistent should they independently pursue their respective plans for enlargement. If, as in the most

likely scenario, the EU and the WEU incorporate ten or more Central European countries while NATO stops after accepting only three or four, the United States and its main European partners would no longer share parallel strategic commitments on the continent. The AU, on the other hand, would keep American and European commitments in step, preserving the sense of common purpose that undergirds the Atlantic community.

Regardless of how far east the AU ultimately reaches, its major powers should form a directorate to prevent the sequential entry of new members from making the body unwieldy. A small, flexible forum in which the major powers could forge a consensus, this directorate would guide the AU on both military and economic matters. The absence of a formal mechanism for great power leadership has prevented the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe from fulfilling its potential. Moreover, an informal concert of major states already calls the shots on the continent. The Contact Group formed to seek a settlement in Bosnia consisted of the United States, Germany, France, Britain, and Russia. In practice, both NATO and the EU function through the fashioning of agreement among their leading members. A major power directorate at the core of the AU would only formalise present realities, while making possible effective decision making and timely collective action.

Galvanising domestic politics

The final pillar of an Atlantic Union is deepened civic engagement on the transnational level.²² Civic society among nation states emerges from political participation and community association, just as it does within nation states. If the Atlantic community is to survive and prosper, its citizens must share a sense of belonging not only to their nation states, but also to a transnational political space that the Western democracies inhabit. The legitimacy that the institutions of the EU enjoy in its Member States, for instance, is not just a function of the services they provide. It is also a reflection of the degree to which Europe has come to compete with the nation state as a defining element of individual identity and allegiance.

The Cold War bequeathed to the West a rich network of public institutions and associations as well as private enterprises and groups that transcend national boundaries. Thickening this network so that it becomes the enduring social and political fabric of an Atlantic Union entails several tasks. The European Parliament should be enlarged into an Atlantic Parliament and charged with providing legislative oversight of the AU. National parliaments would retain the lion's share of legislative authority, but handing over a

substantive portfolio of responsibilities to an Atlantic Parliament would nurture a Western political identity that complements national loyalties, thereby legitimating a transatlantic polity. The Atlantic Parliament's duties would include designing the AU's budget, aligning American and European social policies, and developing union-wide laws and regulations.

Public and private groups should ensure the flowering of the many forms of transatlantic association - business contacts, religious and cultural activities, social causes, and leisure activities. These associations will intensify citizens' engagement in and identification with a transatlantic polity. Educational and vocational exchanges and scientific and industrial collaboration should also be promoted. Finally, Western governments should launch ambitious education campaigns to inform their electorates of the importance of public engagement in preserving and widening the transatlantic community. The West is unravelling in part because it lacks the defining images and projects that galvanise domestic polities. Constructing an Atlantic Union of democracies will not call up the same sense of collective commitment and sacrifice as the struggle against communism. Yet it need not. Bold leadership in laying out a vision of a peaceful, prosperous union of Atlantic democracies and proceeding with the necessary institutional innovations will suffice to wean citizens away from domestic preoccupations and inspire them to construct a new West.

Europe, America, and the Global Order

Constructing an Atlantic Union is not just a prudent move aimed at making permanent the historic transformation of the Atlantic area from a zone of war into a zone of peace. It would also lay the groundwork for a more integrated and cooperative global order. To make the renovation of the West a top priority of US foreign policy is not to demote other regions or indicate that the Western democracies must prepare to do battle against them. On the contrary, locking in peaceful relations among the Atlantic democracies will free the Western powers to address challenges elsewhere. A strong Atlantic coalition will also increase the West's leverage in other regions. As they work to build an Atlantic Union, the United States and EU members should explicitly seek to augment cooperation with powers outside the Atlantic area and help promote stability in those areas. Although its results were less substantive than symbolic, the EU-Asia summit in Bangkok in 1996 was an important step in the right direction.

While strengthening its ties to other regions, the AU should also foster regional integration elsewhere. Linked by global trade and coordination among the great powers, regional unions along the AU model in Asia and Africa could

eventually consolidate new zones of peace and provide the foundation for a more stable international order. The main reason for not inviting Japan, one of Asia's most democratic and prosperous nations, to join the AU is that a focus on the Atlantic community would distract Japan from facilitating further integration in its own neighbourhood. The AU is thus the first step toward the creation of a global concert of democratic great powers that would coordinate relations among and within regional organisations.

The AU would also serve as the driving force behind the liberalisation of global trade. Through successive accessions to NAFTA, a transatlantic free trade zone would gradually extend throughout Central and South America. Because the EU is already looking south as well as east, an Atlantic single market might eventually include the Middle East and North Africa. Fearful of being excluded from the AU's widening trade zone, other areas would face pressure to open their own markets in return for access. The geoeconomic move toward globalisation would balance the geopolitical move toward regionalisation.

Constructing an Atlantic Union is a conservative enterprise. Plans that call for further sacrifices and increased responsibilities, like monetary union and NATO expansion, have little public appeal in this era of waning internationalism. A more modest set of objectives is needed to fashion a new consensus. Rather than deepen institutions, the AU would merely extend their reach, reasonably asking electorates on both sides of the Atlantic to form a single market, uphold collective security, and send representatives to a common parliament. By solidifying a transatlantic community at peace, an Atlantic Union would do much more for the West and the rest of the world than monetary union among Germany, France, and Luxembourg or tank traps on the Poland-Belarus border. If the AU successfully consolidates democratic peace, what appears mundane today will, in the longer course of history, prove revolutionary.

Notes:

¹ The Intergovernmental Conference in Turin has made clear that Europe is falling far short of many of the objectives laid out in the Maastricht Treaty. It appears unlikely to produce significant progress on key issues such as institutional reform and a common foreign and security policy.

² EU officials argue that Europe's internal construction must be settled before it proceeds with taking in new members. See, for example, 'Reinforcing Political Union and Preparing for Enlargement,' *Official Commission Opinion* (February 28, 1996), prepared for the Intergovernmental Conference in Turin. I accept that some institutional change - in particular reform of voting rules and of agricultural and regional assistance policies - is needed to pave the way for enlargement. But, for reasons outlined below, I challenge the general proposition that deepening needs to precede or even accompany widening.

³ See Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, 'The Logic of the West,' *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1993/94): 17-25.

⁴ For discussion of this earlier debate between Asia-firsters and Europe-firsters, see Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁵ The collective GDP of East Asia is already 75 per cent larger than that of the EU. Asia's savings and investment rates are roughly 50 per cent higher than Europe's and its near-term growth rate is expected to be more than twice that of Europe.

⁶ Samuel Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs* 72:4 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

⁷ Robert Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy,' *Atlantic Monthly* 243:2 (February 1994): 44-76; Matthew Connelly and Paul Kennedy, 'Must It Be the Rest Against the West?' *Atlantic Monthly* 244:6 (December 1994): 76.

⁸ For evidence that ideological factors are weak determinants of alliance formation, see Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

⁹ In France, for example, a referendum held in September, 1992 approved the Maastricht Treaty by 51.05 per cent to 48.95 per cent. In Denmark, a referendum rejected the treaty in June 1992. In a second vote in May 1993, Danes approved the treaty by 56.8 per cent to 43.2 per cent.

¹⁰ For an excellent discussion of European and American industrial structures and patterns of innovation, see David Soskice, 'Openness and Diversity: Thinking about Transatlantic Commercial Relations,' in *Transatlantic Economic Relations in the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. Barry Eichengreen (New York: Council on Foreign Relations forthcoming, 1997).

¹¹ For a more detailed exposition of the dual character of contemporary power centers, the notion of self-binding, and the application of these ideas to the EU, NAFTA, and APEC, see Charles Kupchan, 'Regionalism and the Rise of Consensual Empire,' unpublished manuscript

(New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996).

¹² See Erik Jones, 'Economic and Monetary Union: Playing with Money,' in *The Prospects for European Union: Deepening, Diversity and Democracy*; ed. Andy Moravcsik, and Lloyd Gruber. 'Power Politics and the Transformation of European Monetary Relations,' presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August 1996.

¹³ *De jure* equality, by promoting a sense of collectivity, may enable members to be concerned more with the well-being of the EU as whole than with their own welfare. *De jure* differentiation, by eroding a sense of the collective, increases the likelihood that members will be more concerned about individual gain.

¹⁴ Efforts to gain early entry into NATO have already triggered jockeying among the new democracies of Central Europe. Rather than cooperating with each other on security matters, states in the region have focused almost exclusively on attaining NATO membership, showing little concern for the strategic and political implications of their admission for neighboring countries.

¹⁵ Martin Walker, 'Overstretching Teutonia,' *World Policy Journal* 12:1 (Spring 1995).

¹⁶ *The Sunday Times*, January 16, 1996.

¹⁷ During 1994 and 1995, the US Senate and House both approved by wide margins motions calling for the rapid inclusion of the Visegrad states into NATO. These motions were, however, largely symbolic in nature. In neither the Senate nor the House did debate focus on the financial costs associated with defending these states, nor did legislators consider whether Americans would and should be prepared to die in their defence. Opinion polls show that some 62 per cent of the American public favours admitting 'some Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.' This figure drops to roughly 45 per cent when respondents are made aware of the costs and responsibilities associated with enlargement. See 'Americans on Expanding NATO,' Program on International Policy Attitudes, School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland, Steven Kull, Principal Investigator, October 1, 1996.

¹⁸ On the general notion of establishing a union of Atlantic democracies, Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*; and Clarence Streit, *Union Now: A Proposal for a Federal Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic*, 8th ed. (New York: Harper, 1939).

¹⁹ Clyde V. Prestowitz, Jr., Lawrence Chimerine, and Andrew Szamoszszegi, 'The Case for a Transatlantic Free Trade Zone,' in *Open for Business: Creating a Transatlantic Marketplace* ed. Bruce Stokes (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1996): 22.

²⁰ I am not suggesting that an Atlantic single market should aspire toward the same degree of standardisation as a European single market, nor that the EU should relax its rules on standardisation in order to attain a better fit with the North American market. Rather, both sides should strive for as much convergence as possible, while recognising that incompatibilities will remain in certain sectors - such as electrical plugs and voltage.

²¹ For discussion of the difference between collective security and collective defence see Arnold Wolfers, 'Collective Defence versus Collective Security,' in *Discord and Collaboration*, ed. Arnold Wolfers (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962); and Inis Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962). For different interpretations of the nature of commitments to joint action under collective security, see John Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institutions,' and Charles Kupchan and Clifford Kupchan, 'The Promise of Collective Security,' *International Security* 20:1 (Summer 1995): 52-61.

²² For discussion of civic engagement within and among the members of the Atlantic community, see Josef Janning, Charles Kupchan, and Dirk Rumberg, eds., *Civic Engagement in the Atlantic Community* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, forthcoming, 1997).



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