

EUI WORKING PAPERS

RSCAS No. 2004/12



The United States and Western Europe: Transatlantic
Drift or Just Another American-European Crisis?

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
Transatlantic Programme Series

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE
ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

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GEIR LUNDESTAD

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BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO DI FIESOLE (FI)

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This paper was presented at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies in October 2003.

ISSN 1028-3625

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Printed in Italy in October 2004
European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50016 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)
Italy

<http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/publications/>

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

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Abstract

The Cold War years are, at least in retrospect, often seen as the golden period in American-Western European relations. Yet crises were a nearly constant feature of the NATO relationship even in those years, so one might argue that the Atlantic relationship has never really had a golden period. However, the crises of those years were rather different from the situation today, for three general reasons. First, the Cold War is over, and terrorism is unlikely to be a major new unifying factor for the Atlantic allies. Second, American unilateralism is much stronger now than it has been in the past. Finally, there have been very important changes in Europe not appreciated on either side of the Atlantic. In total, there appears to be, and is likely to remain, a fundamental shift in the character of relations between America and western Europe, away from a relationship characterized by periodic crises and towards greater overall drift and distance between the Alliance partners. But despite the continued weakening of Atlantic ties, there will be limits to future transatlantic conflict and the drifting apart of Europe and America.

Keywords

Transatlantic relations, NATO, Cold War

Introduction

The Cold War years are, at least in retrospect, often seen as the golden period in American-Western European relations. This was the time when the two sides of the Atlantic agreed ‘to keep the Russians out, the Germans down, and the Americans in.’ And there may be considerable truth to this analysis, because NATO was in many ways a stunning success. Yet it bears pointing out that crises were a nearly constant feature of the NATO relationship even in these years, so in that sense one might argue there has never really been a golden period in the Atlantic relationship.

Still, although no one can be certain what the future will bring, I am going to argue that the crises of those years were rather different from the situation today. The differences we have seen recently are more significant, in that they run deeper and extend to more areas than tended to true of crises in the Cold War years. Why is this? Three general conditions seem to be at work. First and most obviously, the Cold War is over; in addition, I will argue, fear of terrorism is unlikely to be a major new unifying factor for the Atlantic allies. Second, America unilateralism is much stronger now than it has been in the past (and especially the recent past, that is to say the 1990s). In part this is a result of 11 September: the half-sleeping giant has been reawakened, and it is once again using its vast strength much more determinedly. Finally, there have been very important changes on the European side as well, changes that are probably not fully appreciated on either side of the Atlantic. It is true that there remains considerable division within Europe, as there has almost always been division in the past, making it possible for Washington to play governments off one another. This, though, has been a relatively constant feature of transatlantic relationship; but there are important new developments as well.

These new developments can be summarized quite succinctly. France, not Russia or China, has become the leader of the international opposition to America’s domination. United Germany, so close to the United States during the Cold War, now clearly favours France over the United States. The European Union is combining geographical widening with a deepening of content that is slowly also including foreign and defence policies. And public opinion in virtually every European country is clearly sceptical of the Bush administration’s foreign policy.

The net result of these developments—changes in the direction and tenor of US policy, in both the substance and articulation of European interests, and in the global environment that conditions the Atlantic partnership—appears to be, and is likely to remain, a fundamental shift in the character of relations between America and western Europe. That shift is from a relationship characterized by periodic crises of high politics towards a greater overall drift and distance between the Alliance partners. But before sketching out the nature of that drift, I briefly remind readers of the problematic nature of the NATO partnership during its supposed heyday.

Always a Crisis

During the Cold War, hardly a year has passed without a crisis of one sort or another in Atlantic relations. In the aftermath of World War Two there was great confusion about what the role of the United States would eventually play in Europe. Would Franklin Roosevelt turn out to be another Woodrow Wilson, a president who sought the active involvement of the United States in European politics but who saw his course undercut by the Senate and the American people? Many European governments, including especially the British, were concerned that Washington would not take a sufficiently active interest in their affairs. And there seemed to be plenty of evidence to vindicate these fears. Anglo-American cooperation in atomic weapon development was quickly ended by the Truman administration once the war was over; the American loan to Britain in 1945-46 was less generous than London had expected; America was repatriating its occupation forces from the continent. Only the international crisis in the spring of 1948 made the Truman administration agree to create an Atlantic security organization instead of simply supporting a European system.

On European integration, Washington was pushing hard for as supranational a unit as possible, but it quickly met with disappointment. Under the Marshall Plan the Europeans refused to integrate their national economies to the extent the Truman administration wanted. On the political side, Britain was firmly opposed to any supranational framework, and France hesitated to take the lead without Britain's involvement. Later, no sooner was NATO created than the crisis over German rearmament erupted. Paris proposed a European army in 1950, only to reject its own initiative four years later. The rearmament question was finally solved only in 1955, and only by bringing West Germany directly into NATO.

During the following year the United States had a bitter conflict with its two main European allies, Britain and France, over Suez. The fact that Washington forced its two partners to stop their joint invasion of Egypt in mid-track was to cast long shadows over future relations between the three capitals. The British decided that never again would they rebel directly against the United States; the French concluded that they had to rely more on Europe and less on America. Beginning soon after Charles de Gaulle's 1958 ascension to power in France, disputes between the United States and France proliferated. The most serious ones occurred in 1963, when the General said *non* to British membership in the EEC and concluded a German-French treaty that briefly made the Kennedy administration panic and apply rather direct pressure to keep the Germans in their loyal place vis-à-vis the United States; and in 1966, when *le general* decided that France should leave NATO's military structure.

Soon the Vietnam War led to considerable tension between Americans and Europeans. *Ostpolitik* likewise created problems, especially between Richard Nixon and Willi Brandt; but the American president was not the only one who felt that the Germans were becoming just too independent in their approach to Moscow and the eastern European capitals. Later, when Nixon and Henry Kissinger themselves began to cooperate intimately with the Kremlin's leadership, many Europeans feared that their détente would go too far. And when Washington tried to mend fences in 1973 with the 'Year of Europe' initiative, relations deteriorated even further.

Along came Jimmy Carter with the best of intentions, only to find himself in a bitter dispute with many Europeans over the deployment of the neutron bomb in Europe. The bitterness was particularly pronounced between Carter and German chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Then came the prolonged crises about the deployment of American intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe. Indeed virtually every European leader, including to some extent even Margaret Thatcher, initially found Ronald Reagan just too tough with the Soviets (particularly when he wanted the Europeans to curtail their trade with Moscow). For his part, Reagan was irked when François Mitterrand included the Communists in his 1981 government. And later, when Reagan began his love-fest with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Europeans became quite concerned that this would go much too far. Thatcher worried that Reagan would give away the store in the form of America's strategic nuclear weapons; the French feared another Yalta, a division of Europe over the heads of the Europeans, as Paris alleged (rather incorrectly) had taken place in 1945. When George Bush Sr. joined forces with Helmut Kohl and the east German people in supporting the rapid unification of Germany, this too led to worries in London and Paris; lacking practical alternatives, however, they had to move with the course of events.

If these were the golden years, what indeed would the future hold! And indeed following the Cold War tensions continued. During Bill Clinton's tenure in office (which has benefited from some nostalgic retrospection), the Alliance partners faced a host of crises. The two sides of the Atlantic were soon at odds over Bosnia, where America's emerging 'lift-and-strike' policy differed dramatically from Europe's reluctance to take sides in ex-Yugoslavia's civil wars. No sooner had the allies recovered at Dayton than the Kosovo conflict again threatened unity. As if this was not enough, there were the differences over NATO enlargement, Kyoto and the environment, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and a host of increasingly complex economic issues.¹

1 The story of all these crises is told in my 2003 book, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945. From 'Empire' by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

11 September, Afghanistan, and Iraq

In a way 11 September represented the climax of Atlantic cooperation. For the first time NATO invoked its famous Article V. Everybody had assumed that would happen over some crisis in Europe; now it was invoked to show unlimited solidarity with the United States. President Jacques Chirac was the first foreign leader to visit Washington and New York after the attacks, and he expressed his 'total support' for the United States. *Le Monde*, generally quite sceptical of the US, declared that 'we are all Americans' now. In Germany Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder announced his 'unlimited solidarity' with the United States; he indicated that Germany actually expected to be asked for military assistance. In Britain Prime Minister Tony Blair emphasized that the United Kingdom would cooperate with the United States to the full extent permitted.

This was not to last. In Afghanistan the United States preferred to conduct the war completely on its own terms. In the language of the Pentagon, 'The mission should determine the coalition; the coalition should not determine the mission.'² There was to be no more war by committee, as there had allegedly been in Kosovo. This meant that, with the important exception of Britain, the NATO allies would hardly play any role at all. Chancellor Schroeder's offer of assistance was not taken up. It was of course a different matter once the war had been won, as Washington expressed gratitude for European peacekeeping and economic assistance in Afghanistan.

Then came Iraq. Again, Britain was firmly with the United States. France, on the other hand, became the main antagonist of the US in the UN Security Council, preventing Washington from getting the world organization's explicit support for a military campaign against Saddam Hussein and his alleged weapons of mass destruction. In this new environment, America's traditional enemies (Russia and China) could simply hide behind the French. And in the run-up to German elections in the fall of 2002, Schroeder made it perfectly clear that he would offer no military or economic assistance to the United States in Iraq even if Washington's campaign gained the eventual support of the UN.

These developments suggest a fundamental break with the past. Previously, especially in the most serious crises, France in the end sided with Washington on virtual on critical matters: German rearmament, Berlin, Cuba, to a lesser extent Afghanistan and Poland in the early 1980s, and the 1990-91 Gulf War. But in 2003, Paris became the champion of opposition to the United States in a crisis that the administration in Washington considered of supreme importance. Previously Germany had been the most loyal of America's partners in Europe. But in 2003, Berlin sided firmly with the French; in fact it took an even more anti-American position than did the French. With the country no longer divided, with only friendly neighbours, and with no Iron Curtain running down its middle (making its security almost entirely dependent on the United States), Germany was free to act; and for the first time it chose to go directly against the United States.

Having said this, it must be pointed out as well that, with Britain in the lead, the Bush administration's Iraq policy received the support of half the governments of the European Union, and that it was also backed by almost all the former Warsaw Pact members in central and eastern Europe that were on their way to joining both NATO and the EU. Yet three qualifiers to this suggestion of widespread support should be stressed as well.

First, while Britain again made the choice in 2003 not to contradict the United States on an overriding policy issue, this did not mean that the two sides shared broad agreement about their foreign policy aims. Tony Blair clearly disagreed with George W. Bush on Kyoto, on the ICC, and on how to balance relations between Israelis and Palestinians. In general, Blair had been more in tune with Clinton's liberal multilateralism, however assertive, than with Bush's conservative unilateralism. Still, as had been the conclusion since Suez, London determined it could best influence Washington by working with it, not against it, and Blair regarded it as potentially more damaging to peace and

2 See for example Donald Rumsfeld 2001. 'A New Kind of War', *New York Times*, 27 September.

security if the Americans defeated Saddam alone than if they had international support in doing so.³ Given this view, he concluded that nothing should be done to endanger NATO and the Atlantic connection.

Much the same considerations applied to the other European leaders that sided with the United States over Iraq, including Silvio Berlusconi in Italy and José Maria Aznar in Spain. They too disagreed with Washington on much the same points, but—like Blair's Britain—they also had a strong traditional Atlantic orientation. The central and eastern European governments that did not have these traditions wanted to develop them, and in the process to receive explicit military guarantees and facilitate substantial economic investments from the United States. In addition they had a more tactical motive: to challenge the French and German assumption that these two states could decide the policy of the EU more or less on their own. A few even shared a certain sympathy with Bush's domestic conservatism.

Second, except during brief periods (particularly in Britain right after the war started) public opinion in virtually every European country was clearly sceptical about the Bush administration's foreign policy not only towards Iraq, but also in more general terms. This was true even for the central and eastern European countries. Such a broad European consensus represented something new in transatlantic relations. Not even during the Vietnam War had attitudes been so universally negative towards Washington.⁴

Finally, the failure to identify weapons of mass destruction after the war caused enormous problems for America's allies in western Europe, and in particular for the most crucial ally of all, Tony Blair. For a time the lack of public support for the war, the missing weapons, and the furious subsequent debate about the Blair government's credibility threatened the very political survival of the Prime Minister.

In retrospect, the war against Saddam was an impressive demonstration of the revolution in military affairs that had taken place in the United States. In other ways, however, the war was less of a triumph. On the ground, Saddam Hussein was not caught until some eight months after the end of major combat operations; weapons of mass destruction have yet to be found. Diplomatically, France never fell into line, as the Bush administration had initially expected it would. Schroeder became the first German chancellor to win an election on the basis of his opposition to the United States, and he too stayed the promised independent course. Even Turkey, so dependent on the United States for military, political, and economic support, did not sign up with the Anglo-American coalition; that meant that there was no northern front in the Iraqi war, with the exception of what the Kurds took upon themselves to do. And later efforts at transatlantic reconciliation have been surprisingly half-hearted. The bitterness from the Iraqi war was still there, evident to all. Washington insisted on making most of the important decisions for the early future of Iraq; Paris and Berlin remained equally insistent that the United Nations should play a vital role, and that the Iraqis themselves should soon take charge. As a result, European military and economic contributions to the Coalition Provisional Authority of Iraq have been much smaller than the Bush administration had hoped.

Do these developments signal something new and deeper than the many transatlantic crises that preceded them? Although nobody can know for certain at this early stage, I am inclined to believe so. As suggested earlier, I see three points as the primary reasons for concern about the continued close relationship between the United States and Western Europe.⁵ First, the Cold War is over and terrorism is not the unifying factor many think. Second, American unilateralism, while always an element of that country's foreign policy, is definitely growing. And third, attitudes are changing in Europe, particularly in France and Germany, and the EU is slowly but steadily taking on an ever stronger role.

3 Peter Stothard 2003. *Thirty Days: Tony Blair and the Test of History*. New York: Harper Collins.

4 See, for example Thomas Crampton 2003. 'Europeans' doubt over US policy rises', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 September, p. 1.

5 The following section follows fairly closely my argument in *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*, *supra* note 1, at pp. 281-93. Statements that are documented there will not generally be documented again here.

It is partly because of the combined weight of these three factors that we are also seeing a proliferation of transatlantic economic disputes and even cultural disagreements. Some of these many issues are more divisive than others, but the sum of them is bound to affect significant change. The following sections examine these points more closely.

The Cold War's End

First and foremost, the end of the Cold War has already taken some of the cohesion out of NATO. Lingering suspicions about Russia and the new challenges faced by the Allies are hardly likely to measure up to the old and constant fear about Soviet intentions. Thus in the long run the traditional momentum working in NATO's favour is likely to peter out.

In fact, NATO is already being redefined with the emphasis moving away from its military side and to more general political functions. This process will accelerate with the addition of the many new members from central and eastern Europe. To exaggerate the point only mildly, NATO could become 'an OSCE with an integrated military structure.' And this outcome is likely to be reinforced as new generations assume leadership roles on both sides of the Atlantic. Those who matured during and immediately after the Second World War have already disappeared from the scene; Helmut Kohl was probably the last of that generation. Born in 1930, he fondly recalled that his first dark suit, the one he wore on the night of his prom, had come out of an American CARE package, as had the gown of his future wife. Today the German government is instead dominated by '1968ers' who cut their political teeth in the streets, protesting *inter alia* against the United States. Schroeder himself was head of the Social Democrats' youth wing when it still described itself as Marxist, and acted as a defence lawyer to a member of the terrorist Red Army Faction. The Bushes, the Blairs, the Chiracs, and the Schroeders of today tend to have less emotional and instead far more coldly pragmatic reasons for supporting varying degrees of Atlantic cooperation. Yet even they experienced the Cold War and still see that period as the more or less automatic historical backdrop for thinking about international relations; the next generation of leaders will lack even that framework.

Of course it is possible that terrorism or some other new threat could become as important in holding the two sides of the Atlantic together as the Soviet threat was during the Cold War. Major terrorist incidents in Europe would undoubtedly lead to national responses similar to those seen in the United States after 9-11. Barring parallel catastrophes, however, the responses to terrorism are already developing along different lines in America and in most of Europe. September 11 remains a huge event in American thinking, a much smaller one in European thought.

For example, while the United States is emphasizing military means of combating terrorism, most European governments want to address what they see as the political and economic causes of the problem. As Bulgarian political scientist Ivan Krastev has stated, 'The Americans feel they are engaged in a war, the Europeans feel they are engaged in preventing one.' In fact, the single most disturbing finding for Atlantic cooperation in the flood of polls taken on both sides of the Atlantic during 2002 was probably that a majority of Europeans (55 per cent) thought that US policies contributed to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC.⁶

During the Cold War Allied unity was premised on the fact that the situation in Europe was what mattered. That was where the Americans and the Europeans had common interests, and outside of Europe interests quickly diverged. In the early years after the Second World War Washington wanted to disassociate itself from European colonialism; in the later years Europeans wanted to distance themselves from US intervention in the Third World. On the other hand, and although there is still a feeling that the two sides of the Atlantic are facing at least some common threats and vulnerabilities,

6 Craig Kennedy and Marshall M. Bouton 2001. 'The Real Trans-Atlantic Gap', *Foreign Policy*, 133 (November/December), p. 70.

the new potential conflicts are no longer focused within the traditional NATO area. True, at its fiftieth anniversary celebration in 1999 NATO's strategy (though not the treaty itself) was redefined at Washington's insistence to include the entire 'Euro-Atlantic' region. It was argued that either 'NATO goes out of area or it goes out of business.' Military cooperation in the 1991 Gulf War and, at least after the defeat of the Taliban, even in Afghanistan went fairly well and establish helpful precedents. Still, the historical truth remains that it has generally been easier for the Alliance to cooperate on matters close at hand than on those at distance. Out-of-area frequently meant conflict within the Alliance, and Europe has tended to dislike America's focus on non-European crises at least since the Vietnam War. Even in Europe's near abroad, that is to say ex-Yugoslavia, Atlantic relations in the early 1990s were very strained until Washington finally took charge and sorted matters out at Dayton.

Now, however, virtually all the conflicts are out-of-area, and the United States will generally be more activist than the Europeans. As the Bush administration does not tire of stating, the mission will determine the coalition, not the other way around. In other words, NATO will no longer be the more or less automatic framework of cooperation for Washington. The recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate this well; in Afghanistan, for example, the role of Uzbekistan was clearly more important than that of most NATO allies. If the Europeans are either not interested or not able to act, Washington will continue to act alone. In Iraq, after all, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld pointed out that the United States was prepared to act even without the support of Britain. This process is likely to be self-reinforcing; if Europe does not behave in the desired way, Washington will lose even more confidence in Europe and NATO's role will be further reduced. This is especially true because the American definition of security is much more absolutist than the European one. Washington wants to eradicate threats many European capitals are prepared to live with, and its vast military arsenal gives Washington options the Europeans quite simply do not have. Most Europeans instead emphasize the options they have at their disposal: diplomatic negotiation and economic instruments.⁷

The Middle East exemplifies these out-of-area problems. This region has consistently been the most thorny issue in American-European relations, and polls suggest that this was still the case in 2002.⁸ Despite the work of the so-called Middle East Quartet, consisting of the US, the EU, the UN, and Russia, differences between the first two appear to be growing rather than becoming smaller. The recent period is in fact in some ways unusually difficult. While a Republican administration with very close connections with American oil interests might have been expected to be more sympathetic to the Arabs, the current White House is instead bringing the United States closer to Israel than almost any previous administration; and it bears noting that this is the rather more extreme Israel of Ariel Sharon, not the more moderate Israel of Rabin, Peres, or Barak. After September 11 Washington increasingly viewed the Palestinian *intifada* as a terrorist phenomenon, and repeatedly criticized Yasser Arafat for not doing enough to control the situation—and then almost abandoned him altogether. The Europeans, on the other hand, while disapproving of the *intifada*, saw the Palestinians as underdogs deserving a state of their own and the Israelis as occupiers of Arab land conquered in the 1967 war. And Arafat, they did not tire of pointing out, was after all the elected leader of the Palestinians.

These differences may well have something to do with the Europeans being more dependent on Arab oil than are the Americans, but other factors are at work too. These no doubt include differing notions of social and political justice, and with the relative strength of both the Jewish lobby and the Christian right in the United States. In many European countries, particularly in France, there is instead a significant Moslem population. Thus it remains to be seen how the 'road map', presented by the Quartet but largely left to be implemented by the United States, will develop. But so far at least

7 This is the somewhat overstated argument made by Robert Kagan in his 2003 book *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Knopf. In the 1990s and in the first decades after 1945, when the US was even stronger in relative terms than today, the United States exercised these options in quite different ways.

8 Kennedy and Bouton, 'The Real Trans-Atlantic Gap', *supra* note 6, at pp. 68-70.

there have been few signs that the Bush administration is willing to confront Sharon on the Israeli settlements and other key issues.

American Unilateralism

A second deep factor affecting the Atlantic relationship is the increasing unilateralism of the United States. Although unilateralism has always been part of America's foreign policy, it has definitely been gaining strength in recent years; and it seems that the stronger this impulse becomes, the greater the chances of conflict with Washington's European allies.

The reasons for unilateralism's renewed appeal are many. While in some historical periods unilateralism, and particularly its feebler variant of isolationism, has been associated with weakness, in recent years it springs from America's strength. The Soviet Union has collapsed; the United States is clearly the world's only military superpower; in the 1990s the US witnessed stronger economic growth than any other Great Power except China (which started from a much lower base); the military triumphs of the Gulf War, ex-Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq have finally chased the memories of Vietnam and Somalia away; etc. If the twentieth century belonged to America, the twenty-first will allegedly be even more American.

America's military power is indeed colossal. It now spends as much on defence as the rest of the world added together. Americans are clearly willing to spend substantially more on defence than are Europeans, and huge new increases in US defence spending have already been announced. With its vast lead, particularly in the new technologies, the United States is presumably more able to go it alone; with its global concerns its allies will vary from event to event; and even these temporary partners will apparently have less to offer, at least in purely military terms, and will indeed have large problems in keeping up with America's new way of warfare.

Still, American unilateralism derives as much from a heightened sense of vulnerability as from relative strength. America is uniquely powerful, but now it also feels itself to be uniquely vulnerable. As a result, the Bush administration has reserved to itself the right to strike pre-emptively against anything that might threaten America's rapidly expanding security interests. Indeed this new security doctrine aims rather more at prevention than pre-emption, since Saddam was clearly not about to strike out directly against the United States.⁹ Thus the heightened sense of vulnerability after September 11 may help the US to appreciate allies, but it also drives it to dominate them. As Julian Lindley-French has argued, this is reinforced by a political culture that 'seems to see security as a series of zero-sum absolutes: one either has it or one does not.'¹⁰ Missile defence and the war against terrorism are now presumably to give America its security back; Europeans, with their entirely different geography and history, find such an ambition difficult to grasp. They have never felt really secure; they never controlled their surroundings in the way that Americans did.

At the same time, terrorism is only the newest and most dramatic example of the fact that globalization has finally begun to challenge the sovereignty of even the United States. The outside world is intruding more and more on the United States, in a variety of ways. Economically the US is much more dependent on exports and imports than it used to be, and new organizations such as WTO have more 'bite' than their predecessors. Similar developments are taking place in the environmental and cultural fields. Congress and the American public often respond negatively to these encroachments, thus strengthening the unilateralist impulse still further. All kinds of international conferences are held and measures are adopted that the United States has to address, but where it

9 Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. 2003. 'Eyeless in Iraq', *New York Review of Books*, 23 October, pp. 24-27.

10 Julian Lindley-French 2002. *Terms of Engagement: The Paradox of American Power and the Transatlantic Dilemma post-11 September*. Paris: The European Union Institute for Security Studies, Chaillot Papers, May, pp. 27-31, 77-8. The quotation is from p. 77.

cannot it impose its own views. Many Americans find it puzzling that the United States is voted down in many international forums when it is so powerful and since, as most Americans automatically assume, its intentions are so good. The result is an increasing sense of frustration.

A related but different point has been America's swing to the right. Although the supporters of unilateralism are many and varied, the particular strength of America's recent unilateralism obviously also had much to do with the Republican control of Congress after 1994 and of the presidency after 2000. While the public may not necessarily be so unilateralist in orientation, it is simply not particularly interested in foreign policy. Gone are the leaders in Congress who took a strong interest in foreign affairs, often in a spirit of bipartisanship; the new leaders are generally more partisan and have their eyes sharply focused on domestic matters.¹¹

It is difficult to predict what course America's renewed unilateralist impulse will assume in the future. The United States could come to see that a variety of global concerns, terrorism being perhaps the most prominent, require broad international cooperation and hence a fair amount of give-and-take. If the US is to lead effectively, it must reorient itself toward the global community and not automatically assume that the American standard is the world standard.¹² But at the moment trends appear to point firmly in the opposite direction. The US is likely to remain 'number one' among powers, it will be increasingly influenced by global forces to which many of its citizens will respond negatively, and domestic considerations will probably continue to take precedence over foreign policy issues for both political leaders and voters. This would represent a fundamental shift from past practices: if the US is to set global norms all by itself, this will dramatically reduce its international legitimacy. Such a development may, in fact, make it a more traditional imperial power, and no longer the special 'empire by invitation' of my earlier accounts.¹³

Further strengthening America's unilateralist impulse are demographic changes that threaten to make the Atlantic wider. The 2000 census revealed the extent of these changes, and showed that the relative strength of America's four main regions is definitely shifting. In 1970 the Northeast and the Midwest still had combined total populations in excess of the South and the West by some 8 million. By 1980 the South and the West had reversed the situation, with 10 million more inhabitants. In 2000 they had 46 million more than the Northeast and Midwest. And the South is by far the most populous region, with some 100 million people.

This dramatic shift in regional population growth has already produced dramatic political consequences. From the American Civil War through John F. Kennedy's inauguration, almost all of America's presidents came from the Northeast and the Midwest. After Kennedy they have all come from the South or West (with the sole exception of Gerald Ford, who was not elected). We all know what happened when the Democrats nominated traditional, liberal, and usually European-oriented candidates from the Northeast and the Midwest during this period: they all lost (Humphrey in 1968, McGovern in 1972, Mondale in 1984, and Dukakis in 1988). Even Al Gore, himself a Southerner (and who won the popular vote in 2000), lost his home state of Tennessee. This suggests that one has to be quite conservative to win in the South, and for that matter in the Mountain West.

The domestic consequences of America's move to the right have become rather obvious. The consequences of the population shift have been less dramatic for foreign policy, but then again the separation between foreign and domestic policy is being progressively blurred. And while the attention

11 For a study underlining the moderate nature of American public opinion, see Steven Kull and I.M. Destler 1999. *Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

12 See for instance Joseph S. Nye, Jr. 2002. *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

13 Andrew J. Bacevich 2002. *American Empire: The Realities & Consequences of US Diplomacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. For my own views, in addition to *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*, see particularly my 1990 book *The American 'Empire'*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

of the Northeast and the Midwest has been directed primarily toward Europe, in the South the focus is relatively more on the Western hemisphere; in the West, on the Pacific Rim and east Asia. This regional development is reinforced by the slow but steady decline in the relative number of Americans of European descent. The proportion of the population that is non-Spanish speaking and has European ancestry declined from 76 per cent in 1990 to 69 per cent in 2000. In California, this group made up 90 per cent of the population in 1950; today they are a minority, 47 per cent. Nationwide, Hispanics now constitute 12.5 per cent, African-Americans 12 per cent, and Asian-Americans 4 per cent of America's population;¹⁴ and with present immigration and fertility rates, these trends are likely to accelerate in the future. It would be surprising indeed if over time these developments do not have significant foreign policy consequences in the direction of weakening America's relative interest in Europe.

Furthermore, these demographic shifts in America are being matched by equally important developments in Europe. Europe's centre is slowly drifting away from Britain and France and towards Germany. United Germany's population is between 23 and 25 million larger than that of France, Britain, or Italy; German GNP is a third again as big as any of the other big EU member states (1.9 trillion US dollars as compared with 1.1–1.4 trillion for the other three). Slowly Germany is also taking on a position of political leadership; it is also becoming much more independent of the US. The eastward population shift is being strongly reinforced by the accession process. While during the Cold War the eastern European countries were shut out of western Europe, most of them are now in the process of joining both NATO and the EU.

In short, regardless of the side one sits on, the Atlantic is looking wider. On the other hand, it is important not to present an unbalanced analysis. Despite all the shifts outlined above, Americans and Europeans continue to like each other. When Americans were asked in 2002 to measure the depth of their positive feelings towards various countries, the leading European countries came out significantly higher than countries in other parts of the world (with the exception of Canada). Europeans on the whole likewise continue to express warm feelings toward the United States.¹⁵ The climate of German–American relations may eventually improve again. And most important, the central and eastern Europeans, who will steadily count for more in European politics, are bound to be quite sympathetic to the United States. After decades under Soviet domination they are eager for all forms of cooperation with the United States, military, economic, and cultural.

These are important offsetting factors—but they will tend to mitigate the central tendency, not to reverse it. And that central tendency will be for America's political leadership to be more responsive to the unilateralist impulse than was the case for the last half century.

European Political Change

The final source of deep change in the Atlantic relationship has taken place on the European side. Under the deep layers of French nationalist rhetoric, it is easy to forget that since 1919 France more or less consistently sought a security guarantee from the United States—first against Germany, then against the Soviet Union. After the First World War the guarantee disappeared with the Senate's rejection of US membership in the League of Nations. After the Second World War Paris got its guarantee in multilateral form, with NATO. During the Cold War de Gaulle in particular wanted to limit America's influence on developments in Europe, but even *le general* favoured the American nuclear guarantee and a US troop presence in Europe (although not in France itself). In times of crisis France therefore virtually always ended up supporting the United States. Now, with France leading the opposition to the United States, this long historical line seems to have come to an end.

14 Census figures are available in US CENSUS BUREAU 2001. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2002*. Washington, DC: pp. 8-29.

15 Kennedy and Bouton, 'The Real Trans-Atlantic Gap', *supra* note 6, p. 68.

Similarly, during the Cold War the massive Soviet troop presence in East Germany made Bonn's support for the American security guarantee virtually automatic. Germany's slowly growing assertiveness would have been limited by the underlying need to have the Americans in place in case anything dramatic happened on the security front. But now Germany is united, it is on good terms with all its many neighbours, the Russian troops are back in Russia, and Germany's freedom of action has increased dramatically. And over Iraq Germany used this freedom to side decisively with Paris against Washington. Thus, another long-term historical line has come to an end.

On the European side more generally, the regional integration process is progressing steadily if often slowly. This process has always been driven to a very considerable extent by France and Germany. Historically the EU has been able to combine 'widening' and 'deepening'. It has increased its membership (or widened) from the EEC of the Six to the EC of the Nine, and then of the Twelve, to the EU of Fifteen; in 2004 it will be joined by an additional ten new members. It has at the same time expanded the number and depth of European functions (or deepened) by evolving from the Coal and Steel Community to the Treaties of Rome, to the Single Market, to the single currency and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The progress in the last decade on both fronts, widening and deepening, has been particularly impressive. The pattern has often been the same: ambitious goals were established, goals that many felt were in fact too ambitious, but that were still largely reached if not by all then certainly by most of the EU's members.¹⁶

Having said as much, the EU has far to go before it will have developed a genuinely common foreign and defence policy. Beneath the constant meetings and consultations there are still widely diverging national interests that were on full display in the different responses to the situation over Iraq. Still, European mechanisms are slowly being developed and national interests slowly redefined. A common foreign economic policy has long been in existence; increasingly development assistance is also coordinated (and together the EU countries are by far the world's leading foreign aid donor). Not only humanitarian assistance but also crisis management and peacekeeping, the so-called Petersberg tasks, are becoming EU matters. Slowly the EU is beginning to take on even more difficult security tasks, as we have most recently seen in Macedonia, the Congo, and Bosnia.

Many impatient people, such as Americans and journalists, have made a habit of underestimating the force of European integration, since progress has tended to be so slow and has been accompanied by so many acrimonious meetings. If and when the EU is able to develop a truly common foreign and defence policy, however, it is bound to change the US-EU relationship dramatically. The EU already has a population that is almost a hundred million larger than that of the America, and a gross national product somewhat larger than that of the US (depending particularly on how one accounts for exchange rates). Despite the EU's problems in working out its proposed new constitution, in the end it will undoubtedly strengthen the EU's supranational nature in many fields and improve coordination even in foreign and security policy. In fact, if the Europeans really accepted the American exhortations about even modestly increasing their military capabilities this could come to mean that there would be little or no need for American forces in Europe. And this is not to mention what would happen if the EU countries developed a military strength commensurate with their economic position.

But these are big 'ifs'. The EU has shown great willingness to develop the institutions necessary for a common policy; less progress has been made on the substance of such a policy, and particularly on the means to carry it out. The conflict over Iraq has shown how deep the rift is between Britain and the Atlantic-oriented members of the EU on the one side, and France, Germany, and their supporters on the other. On the one hand, the EU's governments were divided right down the middle on this critical question. On the other hand, the fact that public opinion in almost every European country was so sceptical of the Bush administration in general and its Iraq policy in particular is a sign that fundamental change may be under way in Atlantic relations.

16 For a very optimistic study about what the EU is likely to achieve, see Charles A. Kupchan 2003. *The End of the American Era. US Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Knopf.

The crucial question remains how willing the EU countries will be to develop their defensive capabilities. In the late 1980s and early 1990s defence expenditures in Europe actually fell at a slower rate than in the United States, but compared with the European objective of a more independent defence this was still not very satisfactory. When defence expenditures rose sharply in the United States after 1997 and particularly after September 11, while most European countries showed little sign of reversing their declining expenditures, the Europeans became in some ways more rather than less dependent on the United States. This was certainly the lesson of the wars in ex-Yugoslavia and in Afghanistan. In several crucial fields of warfare the Europeans still rely almost entirely on the United States.

It is true that the necessary increase in defence spending would be somewhat smaller if the national armed forces of the EU members were indeed integrated. But again, while there is definitely movement in this direction, the process is slow. With the EU countries feeling a continued need for some 100,000 US troops in Europe, European independence in foreign policy is bound to be limited. Plainly the Europeans have at least so far found it easier to continue their reliance on the United States than to increase their own defence budgets.

What, then, is happening to the European invitations to the United States that have played such a prominent part in Atlantic relations until the present?¹⁷ The Europeans clearly do not want any dramatic reduction in the American position and are afraid of the repercussions of any significant weakening in America's military role. Thus when the US military suggested that they move many of their troops from Germany to eastern Europe, the German government reacted negatively and saw this as punishment for its stand on Iraq. American investment in the troubled economies of Europe is still highly desired, as are most aspects of American popular culture.

Nevertheless, the emphasis is now definitely on what the Europeans can and must do for themselves, not what the Americans can do for them. Comfortable majorities (65 per cent) in European countries want the EU to become a superpower like the United States, although one generally cooperating with the US.¹⁸ In fact, some argue (particularly in the United States) that the Europeans are so busy organizing themselves that they are not able to give the attention to the outside world that its many problems deserve. European governments understand they have to cooperate much more closely if the EU is not to lose its foreign policy credibility. With Paris and to some extent Berlin in the lead they are more and more defining themselves also vis-à-vis the Americans. Tony Blair's Britain views the situation differently, but London too sees the need for a stronger Europe. Only in that way can Blair enhance his leverage with the Americans. As the Prime Minister himself has pointed out, 'Europe's citizens need Europe to be strong and united. They need it to be a power in the world. Whatever its origin, Europe today is no longer just about peace. It is about projecting collective power.'¹⁹

Although the concrete new contributions may be meagre and the Europeans still badly divided, the integration process has already started to influence security policy (at the margins), and this process will likely continue. The constant meetings on foreign and security policies, even if held in part to paper over the disagreements over Iraq, will probably end up shifting the focus somewhat away from Atlantic and towards European cooperation. In the search for a possible compromise France and Germany will not be able to impose their will, but neither will Britain and its supporters. In the long run public opinion will certainly also matter. In the past there have been several instances when public opinion in one or more countries was sceptical to Washington's policies, but now public opinion in every European country, however pro-American its government, is highly sceptical of the

17 My original (1986) article on this topic was 'Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952', *Journal of Peace Research*, 23 (3), pp. 263-77. See also my 1999 "'Empire by Invitation" in the American Century', *Diplomatic History*, 23 (2), pp. 189-217.

18 Kennedy and Bouton, 'The Real Trans-Atlantic Gap', *supra* note 6, at pp. 68, 70.

19 Quoted from Charles A. Kupchan 2003. 'The Rise of Europe, America's Changing Internationalism, and the End of US Primacy', *Political Science Quarterly*, 118 (2), p. 211.

administration in Washington. Such a situation has not existed before; it will likely have serious ramifications for the future.

The Proliferation of Disputes

The new climate between the United States and Western Europe has led to a proliferation of economic and even cultural disputes, which have in turn soured political relations still further. True, there have almost always been economic disputes between the United States and various European countries. But with the end of the Cold War and the globalization of the world economy, such disputes have taken on added prominence and importance. During the Cold War political-military considerations almost always took precedence over economic ones; that is unlikely to remain the case. Meanwhile, globalization increases the number of potential conflicts dramatically, as we can see from the flood of issues both large and small. America's steel duties are only the most recent example: the Bush administration, though allegedly strongly in favour of free trade, imposed restrictions on foreign steel for the most blatantly obvious electoral reasons. The result was howls of protests from all corners of the world. Meanwhile agriculture remains the most contentious economic issue on both sides of the Atlantic. As the saying goes, 'all politics is local politics', and agricultural interests have deep local political organizations.

With globalization bringing so much change, the protection of jobs has become a crucial concern for voters in most countries. Globalization also wipes out the traditional separation between foreign and domestic matters; tax, anti-trust, and environmental legislation are good examples. On the one hand, many Europeans now see globalization as synonymous with Americanization, and they do not necessarily like it (particularly in France). On the other hand, many Americans are also responding negatively. Though still somewhat less affected by globalization, Americans are also less used to foreigners intruding in their affairs. For many, it is simply not acceptable that various international institutions—the WTO, the ICC or the Kyoto protocol, for example—should determine the actions of the United States.

Nevertheless, if there ever were a time when an Atlantic economic community existed, that would seem to be today. The economies of America and Europe are so inextricably linked that this would appear to argue strongly against economic disputes growing out of control. Exports between the United States and the European Union are also much more balanced than in the case of American trade with China and Japan, where the US runs large and (to many Americans) irritating deficits. And investment is even more important than trade. Here, in relations with nearly every western European country the value of American exports are far surpassed by the sales of American affiliates based within that country. In 1998 US affiliate sales from Britain amounted to \$224 billion USD, compared to \$39 billion USD in goods exported to Britain—a ratio of almost 6 to 1. Overall, the many American companies doing business in Europe represent 50 per cent of America's total affiliate sales.²⁰

It is difficult to assess how the proliferation of economic disputes balances against the undoubted fact that the United States and the European Union are becoming more and more economically dependent on each other. Judging from the media and political debate, it would seem that conflict drives out cooperation; but for political and business leaders the calculations must be far more complex. The general downturn in the economy in the United States and western Europe that took place in 2001–2 could, however, come to threaten Atlantic relations in the longer term by having strengthened protectionism and made the necessary free trade compromises more difficult. The outcome of the WTO's Doha round will be a very important indicator in this context.

20 Joseph Quinlan and Marc Chandler 2001. 'The US Trade Deficit: A Dangerous Obsession', *Foreign Affairs*, 80(3), pp. 87-97, particularly at pp. 94-5.

Traditionally, culture has been a field of transatlantic cooperation. And although the impact of America's cultural hegemony did not result in Europeans becoming Americans, they did become somewhat more like Americans than they had been in the past. This could be easily seen in so many fields: movies, television, popular music, literature, clothing, etc. More and more the English language became the *lingua franca*, first for scientists, eventually for tourists and people in general. Today even some of France's biggest corporations are using English as their business language.²¹

But a deep split is developing even in this area of traditional cooperation between the United States and western Europe. Now, rather suddenly, Americans are increasingly blamed by Europeans not for what they do, but for who they are. America is allegedly morally retrograde in that it does not respect international law abroad and practices the death penalty at home, while being violently opposed to abortion and having a gun culture that most Europeans find senseless. America is likewise castigated as socially retrograde in that it does not care much about the plight of the poor, the inner cities, or public infrastructure. It is culturally retrograde in that it 'gorges itself on fatty fast food, wallows in tawdry mass entertainment, starves the arts and prays only to one God, which is Mammon.'²² In opposition to all this stands Europe with its alleged tolerance, sense of community, taste, and manners.

Obviously much of this is caricature. Until recently unemployment was generally almost twice as high in major European countries as in the United States; most of the vulgar new television concepts sweeping the airwaves have been developed in Europe, not in the United States; and although the European TV industry and to some extent even the movie industry are becoming stronger, American popular culture remains on average as popular in Europe as it has been. Indeed even American high culture, ranging from its world-leading universities to its literature and music, remains very strong. So the pat American response was obvious: if Europe is so superior to the United States, why then is it still so dependent on America in everything from its security and economic policies to its cultural activities?

But the point is not who will win this fruitless debate, but that Europeans and Americans appear to be moving apart even culturally. Indeed according to a recent poll, almost 80 per cent of Europeans and Americans agree there are different social and cultural values on either side of the Atlantic.²³ And, deeper down, there *are* significant differences between the two sides of the Atlantic. On the whole Americans are more religious and moral(istic) than Europeans; Americans do tend to see the world more in terms of black and white, while Europeans frequently see things as ambiguous and grey; Americans do generally define security in more absolutist terms than Europeans do, and the methods they employ to protect their security are different; socialism and social democracy have long and honourable histories in Europe, while in America they have hardly existed; the experiences of the two sides with war and terrorism are different. As Robert Kagan has argued (though with some exaggeration), Americans are in some senses from Mars and Europeans from Venus.²⁴

But on the other hand these differences have not prevented cooperation between the two sides in the past, and on the whole the United States and Western Europe are still closely bound together even in cultural terms. Compared to the differences with most of the rest of the world, it could indeed be argued that one common Atlantic culture still exists, characterized by democracy, relatively free markets, Christianity, and a high-consumption popular culture. Whether these ties will be sufficient to bind the Atlantic partners together as their perceptions of self-interest drift apart remains to be seen.

21 For a good historical account of cultural relations, see Richard Pells 1997. *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated and Transformed American Culture since World War II*. New York: Basic Books.

22 Josef Joffe 2001. 'Who's Afraid of Mr. Big?', *The National Interest*, 64, pp. 43-52. The quotation is from p. 44.

23 See Crampton, *supra* note 4, at p. 1.

24 Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power*, *supra* note 7. Americans may be on Mars right now and many Europeans on Venus, but in the years since 1945 this has not always been the case. One only has to go back to Clinton to find a Washington rather more reluctant to intervene militarily. So Kagan's conclusion is probably less structural than he seems to think.

The More Distant Future

If history repeated itself, historians would be experts not only of the past but of the future as well. But history does not repeat itself, at least not really; only historians do. Several of the points discussed above are, as we have seen, ambiguous, and it is far from obvious in what ways they will ultimately work themselves out. And undoubtedly many other points may be relevant as well. Thus while the central trends I have identified are generally negative for the transatlantic relationship, there may be additional counterbalancing factors beyond those I have enumerated. Thus, were I to hazard a guess for the more distant future, I would certainly not be predicting any direct confrontation between the United States and western Europe as a whole. Instead, what seems more likely is an extensive political conflict between the US and some European countries, and a general continued slow drifting apart between the two continents. The two sides of the Atlantic are just not as important to each other as they were during the Cold War, particularly in military terms. And they are considerably further apart on many of the crucial issues of the post-Cold War world.

However gradually, the EU is growing closer together, even in its foreign and security policies. France and Germany may have chosen, at least temporarily, to drop the plans for a separate EU military headquarters that they announced with Belgium and Luxembourg after the Iraq crisis. On the other hand, Britain is reverting to the ways of the St. Malo agreement of December 1998 with France. Tony Blair has recently agreed to 'structured cooperation' within the EU on some important defence matters.²⁵ Slowly the EU is improving its defence coordination. Again, most likely France will continue to emphasize Europe's institutional autonomy and Britain increased capabilities. Either way, however, the EU is slowly creating a capacity that is more independent of the US. Despite NATO's continuing predominance, this is bound to have significant long-term consequences.

The Atlantic structure has proved remarkably resilient and long lasting. Recall that Eisenhower always insisted that the American troops in Europe were there on a 'temporary or emergency' basis. As the Supreme Commander of NATO, he frequently expressed the hope that they would go home in three to four years.²⁶ In this sense NATO and the American troop commitment have already lasted much longer than anyone could have expected in the early years of the Cold War. But nothing lasts forever, and the changes in Atlantic cooperation in the last decade have been dramatic, particularly during the last few years.

While the economic and to a much lesser extent even the military balance between the two sides of the Atlantic has changed dramatically since the Atlantic system was set up, the overall relationship has never really been redefined. Consider first the changes in the two sides structural positions. In 1945 the United States was producing almost as much as the rest of the world added together; now the EU is producing as much as the United States. In 1945 the United States was the world's largest creditor; now it is running increasingly bigger balance of payments deficits. While the EU is still dependent on the US militarily, with the Cold War over this dependence is seen as less significant than it used to be. Now the EU countries are preparing, however slowly, to take on new tasks that will reduce their dependence still further.

Repeated attempts have been made to redefine the Atlantic relationship to reflect these changing realities, most explicitly by Kennedy, Kissinger, and George Bush Sr. In each case the point of these efforts was always that, in return for greater influence, the Europeans should be paying more toward the common defence. These efforts never met with any more than limited success, although in fact events were moving in the desired direction anyway. The Europeans *were* becoming more influential and they *were* paying somewhat more, at least in a long-term perspective. Yet it could be argued that as far as the basic situation is concerned, little has actually changed. Indeed the Bush administration is now insisting on a leadership role that is even more explicit than it was during the Cold War.

25 John Vinocur 2003. 'Subtle shift by Britain on defense in the EU', *International Herald Tribune*, 15 October, p. 1.

26 Stephen E. Ambrose 1984. *Eisenhower. The President*. New York: Simon and Schuster, at pp. 143-4.

Sooner or later there has to be a true redefinition of the American–European relationship. This will be difficult since the United States has never had a truly balanced relationship with western Europe. Under isolationism the US stayed away; it feared that the New World would inevitably be corrupted by the Old. For years after the Second World War the United States was so strong that it did not need to worry about being unduly influenced by the Europeans; influence went almost entirely in the other direction. Even in the more balanced state of affairs today, America remains the undisputed leader: it is impossible for Europe to be equal to the United States as long as it remains militarily dependent on it. Still, the need to define a new basis for Atlantic cooperation is rising, as I have explained in this chapter.

The jury is still out on whether it will actually be possible for the US and western Europe to have a truly balanced relationship. Slowly the day is approaching, however, when we will find out. The new US security strategy insists on US predominance. Among the public, in America 52 per cent want the US to be the only major force in the world, and only 33 per cent welcome the idea of EU superpower status.²⁷ While many have argued that a balanced relationship will be more harmonious than the existing one, there would seem to be good reason to doubt this. In the many decades when the United States pushed hard for European integration it was always assumed that this integration would take place within an Atlantic framework, which was really code for continued American leadership. Washington never favoured an independent European third force in international relations, alongside the United States and the Soviet Union.²⁸ A stronger EU would presumably have no need for American troops in Europe; once they had left this would have significant consequences for the relationship between the two sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, such a development might strike even at Washington's relationship with its favourite Atlantic partner, London. After all, Anglo-American relations only became 'special' when, after 1945, Britain became so clearly inferior to the United States. Before 1940, when Britain was relatively much stronger, there was no special relationship.²⁹

But despite the continued weakening of Atlantic ties, most likely there will be limits to future transatlantic conflict and the drifting apart of Europe and America. NATO, the pre-eminent symbol of Atlantic cooperation, is likely to survive, although in much modified form compared with the Cold War years. From Washington's point of view, especially given NATO's new and more global orientation, the organization remains useful, for instance in its significant role in post-war Afghanistan. Even more important, NATO has been America's primary instrument for taking charge in Atlantic affairs. The EU is really the only power that in the foreseeable future could challenge the United States for the top position in international affairs; it would therefore be self-defeating for the Bush or any other administration to abandon such a useful instrument, particularly when there is nothing to take NATO's place. We have already seen how America's position was weakened by the struggle with France and Germany; a deeper and more lasting falling-out with the entire EU would obviously have even more dramatic consequences for the position of the US in the world.

Nor are the key European powers likely to abandon NATO completely. It is possible that France has now abandoned its policy, going all the way back to 1919, of wanting guarantees from the United States for its protection; certainly Paris's desire to lead the fight for a multi-polar world suggests that it has. Yet even France probably has no desire to make NATO disappear entirely. Germany definitely does not; Berlin has even made it abundantly clear that it does not want the American troops in Germany to leave the country, for a variety of military, political, and economic reasons. Indeed most European countries in NATO and in the EU still want a firm link to the United States.

Thus while the relationship between the two sides of the Atlantic has cooled considerably, it is simply not possible to unite Europe in a policy of confrontation with the United States. Too many countries are too dependent on the United States for that to occur. A more united Europe will therefore

27 Kennedy and Bouton, 'The Real Trans-Atlantic Gap', *supra* note 6 at p. 70.

28 Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*, *supra* note 1 at pp. 77-86.

29 See Robert Skidelsky 2002. 'Imbalance of Power', *Foreign Policy*, 129, pp. 46-55.

have to maintain fairly close ties with the United States; a more divided Europe will mean that at least some European countries will be maintaining even closer ties with Washington. Either way, some continuation of present arrangements seems likely. But the golden years—although never as golden as now so often presumed—are most likely gone forever.

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