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THE AMERICAN SECURITY ROLE IN EUROPE:
HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AGENDA?

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Prepared for delivery at the Biennial Conference of the European Community
Studies Association, George Mason University, on May 22, 1991.

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THE AMERICAN SECURITY ROLE IN EUROPE: HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE EC AGENDA?

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This paper is concerned with the future role of American military power in Europe. It first looks at the present security role, which revolves around the American commitment to NATO. It describes and explains that role in terms of American and European interests in American military commitments to NATO and of American leadership in NATO. Based on these assessments, and assuming that there will remain on both sides of the Atlantic an interest in an American military presence in Europe, it explores possible alternative ways the United States could maintain a military presence in Europe.

Further, the paper considers as the major competitor of an American military presence in Europe, a European pillar strong enough to induce, whether by design or unintentionally, the withdrawal of American forces from Europe. The European pillar could take several forms but it is assumed here that it will be integral to the Europe Community. In the final section it notes the political value that Europeans place on American military forces and an American military voice in Europe and consider the divergence between this valuing and the interests that support a Europe pillar. It argues that the United States is much less likely to be successful in maintaining a significant American military presence in Europe by defending the status quo of NATO and of American leadership in NATO than by more flexible policies which allow Europe's NATO members to confront their own need for that presence, and that such policies will have to put at risk particular aspects of the American military presence.

When NATO was founded forty years ago, in 1949, the United States was an occupying power in Germany. By 1949, the American occupation administration, at first run by the U.S. Army, was on its way to being civilianized. The Army's experience with military occupation duties after World War I had not been a happy one. Careers were ruined over it. Senior grade officers during World War II who were planning for the Army's role in governing it after surrender remembered these facts and planned to turn responsibility for administering the American zone in Germany over to a civilian authority as quickly as possible.

As it happened, American armed forces stayed on in Germany and are still there, but on quite different terms, as a defending force, assigned to serve with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO's principal military command headquarters, the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) has always been headed by a prominent American general. The first Supreme Commander — the one who organized the command — was no less than Dwight Eisenhower. American ground and air forces assumed vital missions on the Central Front. American sea forces assumed equally important tasks on the flanks and to support reinforcement. One could scarcely imagine what NATO might have been like in the absence of the American forces.

1. Imperatives for Change

By the end of last summer (1990), NATO's main military task of defending forward on the central front at the inter-German border had been substantially altered because the Soviet threat to Western Europe had radically changed.

Soviet forces in Warsaw Pact territory had not by that time been reduced much, but their threat potential had been severely weakened by the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact as a mechanism of Soviet control over satellite armed forces and by the disintegration of Soviet political control over the Warsaw Pact states. Since then, American and British forces in NATO have drawn down for the Gulf War. Some of the forces that deployed to Saudi Arabia Western Europe replaced by reserve forces from the United States. The Bush Administration, with the Gulf War over, seems determined to get American forces out of the Middle East as soon as possible. The NATO drawdown forces will evidently be returned sometime during 1991 to their European deployments. Whether this would be the occasion for a permanent reduction of American forces in Europe has been a subject of repeated speculation. These speculations have been succeeded by speculation, more directly, about what permanent drawdown to expect. It appears that the United States will be reducing its forces in Europe to about one-third of the size that it kept there throughout most of the Cold War, to just under 100,000.

NATO's premise was that the Soviet Union might want to attack Western Europe, or at least use the threat of attack to coerce NATO members. By last summer, some American defense officials believed that the disintegration of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe had already incapacitated the Soviet forces in Warsaw Pact territory. According to their view, it would take the Soviet Union at least two years to prepare itself for an attack on Western Europe. The official position, according to reports, was more cautious, "that once Soviet forces withdraw from Eastern Europe it would take Moscow up to two years to mobilize for a major invasion."¹ Since then, Soviet foot-dragging has been more evident. There have been more delays. But there has also been more chaos in the Soviet Union, which must be factored into any estimate of the Soviet ability to project force into Western Europe against sophisticated defenses. Here we assume that two years is, if not a present reality, then a foregone conclusion and that it will be realized in the short-run future.

This is the point of departure for this conference paper. Given the elimination of the Soviet threat, assuming the correctness of the estimate that we have two year's warning time of a Soviet attack in Europe, what will the United States do about its armed forces in Europe and with its participation in NATO? And how will its remaining military presence in Europe fit into the larger picture of American foreign policy with respect to Europe?

Much of the discussion about the future of American forces in NATO deals in terms of measures which need recalibrating. Over many years we have been used to talking about a German military commitment to NATO of nearly four hundred thousand troops. Now, an agreement with the Soviet Union assumes that a unified Germany will have no more than 300,000 troops, counting whatever contribution comes from the GDR. A similar change has occurred with respect to the American troop numbers. As late as 1989, almost without exception, it was assumed that substantially to reduce the 300,000 American troops would

¹ Michael R. Gordon, New York Times, August 2, 1990, p. 1. Gordon refers to a Defense Department planning document which either he saw or had described to him.

bring into question the American commitment to NATO itself. By mid-1990 the figure of 100,000 evoked scarcely any less doubt. Now, it is mentioned without seeming to evoke any doubt.

Little else is said about American forces, except for the observation that they will not be permitted to modernize their theater nuclear weapons. Who will not permit modernization? One is left to infer the answer: the Germans, mainly. Previously, it was necessary to meet West German concerns that NATO plan to defend all their territory and that NATO forces, including American and British as well as German forces, be positioned, equipped and trained to do that. With the threat receding, the requirement for defending forward is no longer a political necessity in the FRG.

With such large American force reductions expected, it is now beyond question that NATO's forces as a whole (more precisely, the national armed forces of NATO's member states that will come under the command of NATO command headquarters under certain eventualities) will be radically altered. Standing forces will be much smaller. Heavy reliance will be placed on reinforcement and mobilization. These changes will affect the American contribution to NATO as well as the contributions of American's NATO partners; and therefore it will alter how the numbers are interpreted — specifically, how high numbers it will take to demonstrate the expected commitment and resolve.

Other changes going on in Europe and in NATO itself change how we look at still other sensitive matters in NATO. One of them is whether SACEUR, who heads SHAPE, the integrated military staff at Mons, Belgium, and more than anyone else is the military spokesman for all of NATO, should be an American or not. But if the Western European members of NATO build a strong European military pillar, which is to say, if they come to rely less on NATO and more on Western European Community (WEU) or the European Community (EC) or some yet-to-be-invented organization to handle their military cooperation, then that will change the future significance of whether an American General is SACEUR, how active Americans are at SHAPE headquarters and how much U.S. national military commands articulate with NATO command arrangements and train and exercise under NATO command direction. These are scarcely trivial matters. Inevitably, any changes in NATO's military structure will involve changes in its political underpinnings, which are the terms of cooperation among NATO members. In turn, the future of U.S. forces in Europe will be determined largely by how successfully adjustments in the terms of cooperation between the U.S. government and its NATO partners are accomplished.

2. Partner or Leader

According to one line of reasoning, the United States maintains sizeable military forces in Europe because it is in the interest of the United States that it be a European military power. U.S. policy towards Europe is certainly national interest-regarding, but that fact does not define the terms on which the United States deals with its partners or on which they deal with the United States. The trans-Atlantic relationship has been troubled in part because of American behavior that is readily explained in conventional power political terms. By reason of its power position, the United States is not content with the leisurely pace of consensus formation required by NATO political clearance

procedures. Much to the manifest irritation of its partners, it often steps out in front of NATO consensus in the hope or expectation that it can "pull" its partners along with it. This behavior rarely disregards the interests and sentiments of its partners. It would fail to achieve its objectives if it did. Yet it clearly disregards commonly recognized standards of consultation in the NATO community.

Three examples illustrate this American propensity to step out ahead of NATO. The first was the Reagan Administration's conventional strategic air attack against Libya in April, 1986, which it took unilaterally. It was carried out after Spain and France denied the United States the use of their air space, which much complicated the operation. There is much that can be said about this punitive strike, not all of it positive. Suffice it here to note that the Reagan Administration was willing to act virtually alone when it might have argued (and surely thought, at least in passing) that Colonel Gaddafi was more Europe's problem than America's and, therefore, that if Europeans did not want to initiate, or at least support a punitive expedition, it was not for the United States to do it.

The other two cases, as it happens, involved the Persian Gulf. In 1987 the United States employed its naval forces in the Gulf to protect oil shipments against mainly Iranian threats. The second time began in 1990 as another naval blockade against Iraqi oil and turned into the massive build-up of the forces which fought the Gulf War in early 1991. The first time, the Western Europe NATO partners devised a way to lend support to the American naval effort without conceding that it was the business of NATO to do so. Meeting under the auspices of the WEU in Hague, they worked out the necessary arrangements to send their ships. Their deliberations reveal they recognized that there was a connection between supporting the United States in this case, even though they did not define it as NATO business, and their own concern about keeping the United States involved with them in NATO.² This is what I will call the Hague Solution.

Participation in the Gulf War by NATO members other than the United States — and in fact including the United States — occurred on a more unilateral basis, at least as it appeared in Europe. For this there is an easy explanation. Unlike the 1987 blockade, the Gulf War effort occurred under United Nations auspices. Participants contributed forces to what amounted, de facto, to a UN coalition force commander by an American general, Schwartzkopf. The arrangements were much more like NATO forces than most people realize, for NATO forces are in fact national forces and they remain national forces until, at least according to long-standing NATO plans, they are to be brought under actual NATO command.

NATO itself was built on American initiatives to keep America forces in Europe and rearm Western European states. The American initiative in the Gulf was more stark, more conspicuous, much quicker. But it demonstrated the

² Paul Y. Hammond, Assessment of the Organizational Future of NATO, Final Report, TR-5377-1-1, Arlington, VA: The Analytical Sciences Corporation, 1989, p. 1-24.

persistence of an American pattern of leadership which its allies accept, a pattern in which U.S. leaders avoid being constrained by consensus-based procedures. President Bush's commitment of military force to the region began and remained ahead of any other government's inside the region or outside of it. His move from naval presence to naval blockade was also ahead of any clear authorization from the U.N. Security Council. Thereafter, the question of authorization became more complicated, but it is quite clear that the United States kept the initiative and brought others along. I am not here interested in resolving whether the Bush Administration, which interpreted Security Council action in the light of the U.N. Charter to authorize blockade enforcement, was correct or not, or whether General Schwartzkopf's every decision came within the strict meaning of the authorizing U.N. resolutions. My point is that when the United States proceeded to blockade it chose at first not to wait for further action from the Security Council, as several other governments had proposed, and that when General Schwartzkopf's command proceeded to plan and execute the campaign to liberate Kuwait it did so without looking over its shoulder at the U.N. General Schwartzkopf was much more interested in taking instruction from Washington than from the U.N., and the Bush administration kept the initiative largely in its own hands both at the U.N. and in the Middle East. One might label such behavior hegemonic assertiveness.

When the United States takes the lead as hegemonic leader in this way it confronts its NATO partners with the dilemma of going along with it or not, and both course of action have drawbacks. This is not a new situation. America's hegemonic assertiveness, as I suggested earlier, helped build and has helped maintain NATO. It even lies at the root of nuclear employment policy — of the refusal of successive American administrations to repudiate first use of nuclear weapons. The fact that Western Europeans have in the past also on American hegemonic leadership can be clearly seen in the position of knowledgeable Europeans about first use, which is demonstrated in the response of Karl Kaiser and his colleagues to the so-called gang of four's proposal in 1982 that the United States declare against first use.³

Accordingly, the central question regarding the American presence in Europe is usually regarded to be how the United States will adjust to a diminished role for NATO as the Economic Community gains strength and as CSCE and other forums become more prominent. But answering this question requires that we understand not only how the United States has benefited from its leadership role in NATO but how other members of NATO have relied upon and benefited from its hegemonic position in NATO.

Now that the United States is reducing its forces in Europe, and that the perceived threat has declined, will the relationship between America's hegemonic assertiveness and the hegemonic client cooperation of the other NATO members undergo — will it have to undergo — significant adjustment? This is

³ Bundy, et al, "Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance," Foreign Affairs, 60:4 (Spring 1982), 753-68; Karl Kaiser, et al, "Nuclear Weapons and the Preservation of Peace: A German Response," Foreign Affairs, 60:5 (Summer 1982), 1157-1170.

critical question.

The Hague Solution demonstrates a relationship of interest between hegemonic action by the United States, on the one hand, and whether its NATO allies will rely on NATO or on some alternative European structure as the preferred instrument for handling security cooperation to solve mutual problems. The United States usually prefers to employ NATO. NATO is a relatively hospitable forum for U.S. influence, and therefore a convenient instrument for working U.S. interests. The European Community and WEU are European organizations. They exclude the United States. CSCE, to which some Europeans look as a multi-purpose institution, accords the United States little special status among its thirty-five members.

But the Hague Solution indicates that an assertive U.S. government will not be able to employ NATO as a broad instrument of its interests because its allies will choose another forum by which to cooperate with it if that happens. The more assertive the United States is in its diplomacy the more careful its NATO partners will be in limiting NATO to its core function of defending them against a Soviet attack, a function which is diminishing in importance. The converse would seem to be the case, that the more the U.S. pursues consensual policies in NATO, the less its allies will be inclined to employ other supranational organizations in Europe where the U.S. role is less central.

As NATO's main function declines, its European members evidently are disposed to consider alternatives to it, although it is true that they continue to look to NATO as a means by which to maintain American military power in Europe. U.S. hegemonic assertiveness denies the United States the advantages that it would have if it could employ NATO more broadly. This is the case with out-of-area situations and it also seems to be the case within Western Europe, where two institutions have shown surprising strength, the European Community (EC) and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The more the United States seeks to impose its position on its NATO allies regarding European matters, the more they turn to other European institutions where they can escape U.S. domination.

But this is probably an over-simplification with respect to two related factors. First, it is now true and will probably remain true that Western Europe and Eastern Europe both want the United States to remain an important player in the security of Europe and NATO is unquestionably the main instrument for keeping the United States as a major security player in Europe. Hence, European interest in the EC and the ECSC depend to some extent on not weakening NATO too much. Second, Western Europeans not only have accepted the United States' practice of hegemonic assertiveness in NATO, but have relied upon it. These complicating factors point to the quite different conclusion mentioned earlier from the one stated above, i.e., that the more the United States presses its NATO allies the more they will turn away from NATO. They point to the fact that NATO members need NATO and have in the past benefited from U.S. hegemonic assertiveness. Should not the United States, then, continue to play an assertive role in NATO? Notice that this line of reflection takes the case for NATO beyond the observation that it is a forum favorable to the United States. It describes NATO as also needed by its other members and that they

also need and rely upon United States leadership.⁴

These reflections are not conclusive and, in any event, they apply to the past. The question for us is to what extent they apply to the present and the future, to the circumstances of the changed military threat in Europe and the changed political circumstances of Europe.

3. Who Needs NATO?

It should be clear that an important determinant of NATO's future utility will be whether there is an alternative to NATO as a way to provide for the U.S. military presence in Europe — quite apart from other aspects of the American presence. One answer is affirmative. NATO is not essential to the U.S. presence in Europe. NATO could be permitted to weaken and the United States could simply work its military functions through its national commands in the NATO theater, particularly EUCOM. A second answer is negative: It states that the U.S. military presence would shrink rapidly if NATO withered away or collapsed. It recognizes that NATO has played a critical role in providing the political basis for stabilizing the U.S. military deployments in Europe. The fact that General John R. Galvin is not only Commander in Chief of the American unified command in Europe (EUCOM), but also NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) gives him added stature when he speaks for the military value of American forces in Europe. In combination, his two-hatted position assures American officials of a strong American voice in Europe, which is also a source of confidence about the American military presence there. These two staff headquarters, one a NATO headquarters and the other a U.S. headquarters, together with other U.S.-NATO headquarters combinations, succeed in turning the American military presence in Europe into a routine activity of the American armed forces. These arrangements have been an important convenience for American military planners and for U.S. leaders, political as well as military. In this respect the United States "needs" NATO; yet Western Europe also continues to need it. Western Europeans need NATO to assure themselves that German military power will not become a problem for them and that the United States will maintain its military presence in Europe and its commitment to their military security. These "needs" survive into the post-Cold War era even if NATO's old function of deterring the Soviet Union has lost much of its importance. The question is, how strong are these needs relative to others that conflict with them and relative to the U.S. interest in remaining a European military power.

It is doubtful that there will ever be a showdown over whether, on balance, Western Europe needs NATO more than the United States does. If there were one, NATO would very likely collapse. This question of relative need is nevertheless important because it is an underlying determinant of how NATO works. It defines trans-Atlantic relationships that affect the shape and dimensions of the U.S. military presence in Europe now and of the future relationships that are likely to be tested as NATO's members on both sides of

⁴ The value to participants in a great power hegemonic order is summarized in Robert O. Keohane, After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

the Atlantic adjust to the implications of the ending of the Cold War and alter their assessments of NATO's utility to themselves.

NATO's European members have avoided its use to address common out-of-area problems, such as their interests in the Middle East — at least in Middle East oil. At the same time, in practice, the United States limits its own use of NATO with the same effect. Its critics in NATO charge that, too often, even when the United States seeks their approval and support, it acts unilaterally. Either it fails to consult them sufficiently in advance of taking action or it ignores their advice, or both. In addition to these charges, which are often true, the United States often relies on bilateral dealings with NATO members and on other procedures which bypass NATO forums. A particularly threatening procedure in the past has been to employ Soviet-American summits to deal with the American agenda for Europe. Sometimes United States looks to pan-European forums, the thirty-five member CSCE or the twenty-three member CFE, as do the Western Europeans themselves. Bypassing NATO in this way, compared with Soviet-American summits, carries quite different implications for the United States and for NATO because the CSCE and the CFE offer the United States less advantageous forums than does NATO in which to do NATO-related business.

4. Alternative Forms of Military Cooperation

In the military sphere, as I have indicated, an important alternative for the United States is to carry on its military work in Western Europe through a combination of unilateral and bilateral arrangements. This alternative often goes unnoticed because it is in fact so commonly used as a necessary component of the NATO alliance. Much of the business of NATO is in fact performed through bilateral understandings and agreements, even formal agreements. With two exceptions, the Americans assigned to the integrated NATO staffs and a small tactical air unit, American forces in Europe are there under their national status as U.S. forces — until, under alerting procedures, they will be "chopped" to NATO command. As national units, their arrangements with host governments are bilateral. Even after the "chop," American forces will rely upon bilateral arrangements with host and transit governments for handling reinforcement and resupply operations up to the point where forces are turned over to NATO command. Thus, these activities are usually regarded as necessary and unavoidable, and even as supportive of NATO. But they are alternatives to it in the strictest sense also, i.e., what might have been handled through NATO channels is not handled through them.

If other NATO members want to rely less on NATO than they have, if they are prepared to weaken it for whatever purpose short of driving the United States out of Europe, it is quite likely that the United States could reduce its involvement in NATO also, but maintain its European military presence by relying more heavily on its own military command structure in Europe, providing its forces are in fact still welcome there. In the past this command structure has served the cause of integrated NATO military planning through the two-hatted arrangement at the core of NATO military leadership: SACEUR, who heads SHAPE, also wears the American "hat" of CINCEUR, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. European Command. There is a good deal of leverage that works through this two-hatted arrangement. SACEUR has resources at his command by reason that, as CINCEUR he also commands the American unified European Command

(EUCOM). Through EUCOM, he has access to considerable U.S. resources and to a different channel into the U.S. government, including the President himself, than he would otherwise have.

SHAPE has been focussed mainly on the central war problem. It remains to be seen whether the current SACEUR, General Galvin, will be able to get it to deal with other kinds of operational planning, for the requirements for almost every other kind are quite different from central war planning. As one gets into lesser contingencies, national military staffs such as EUCOM, where General Galvin commands as an American Commander-in-Chief, with their greater flexibility, are in a better position to handle them. The U.S. government is not alone among NATO governments in its disinclination to leave all contingency planning to NATO planners. With the central war problem transformed into a two year road-to-war, the sorts of lesser contingencies that national staffs have previously been left to address (not always with much success) now assume greater importance. This change makes it easier, and quite possibly necessary, for EUCOM to deal with relatively more of the menu of military threats in Europe that are of interest to American policymakers. These developments suggest that NATO is losing some of its importance to the United States, specifically, that U.S. military forces in Europe could direct their attention more to the missions for which EUCOM plans at the expense of their attending to SHAPE military planning.

This interesting possibility is rarely even noticed. Yet it is not a new possibility. It is perhaps the most important implication in the proposal to Europeanize SACEUR, which has been around for several years. Were SACEUR not to wear the American CINCEUR hat, the former would lack the leverage of commanding large American forces and the latter (CINCEUR) would be able to devote much more of his attention to non-NATO options for the U.S. government.

Even though we have not come very far in this paper with exploring the non-NATO option for the U.S. military presence in Europe, it should be apparent that there are limits to the utility which the United States will find in NATO as opposed to the utility of other available forms of American military presence in Europe. It follows that, providing U.S. military forces are wanted in Western Europe, NATO need not be a bargaining chip which its Western European NATO members can play against the United States; quite the contrary. Should that happen, the United States should be able to shift to more national and bilateral military planning without giving up its European presence, and by doing so, dampen the inclination of its allies to take advantage of its interest in remaining a European military power through NATO.

It is likely, then, that the United States will continue to employ the hegemonic leadership style analyzed earlier in this paper both in NATO and in out-of-area settings, but constrained by its interest in NATO as a forum favorable to American interests. Also as noted earlier, when the United States employs hegemonic assertiveness, NATO members will protect themselves by holding NATO to narrow purposes. Yet they will not want to permit it to weaken beyond a point where it will lose its utility as an instrument for keeping the United States engaged militarily in Western Europe. If this line of reasoning is correct, the United States will expect its NATO allies to demonstrate their common interests with the U.S. by out-of-area cooperation and will seek to

counter these allies' efforts to limit NATO's function by taking or threatening to take its own military business through American national military channels at the expense of NATO channels.

These, in sum, are the dynamics that lie at the core of NATO's future. The way they actually are put to work by the NATO partners will determine how effectively it adapts to its future, however, in response to the opportunities that lie ahead. Whether NATO survives, whether it prospers, will depend not alone on how well it adapts to the future but also on how well its competitors do. This will be the subject of the last section of this paper.

5. General Deterrence and the Implication of a Long Warning Time

Before turning to these competitors, it will help us to understand how the complex relationships that link NATO to its members, and they to one another, actually work. A convenient way to do this is to look at these relationships in terms of three functions which NATO historically has performed: general deterrence; deterrence in special contingencies, or special deterrence; and the reassurance that the Western European allies draw concerning their security from the United States commitment to them, as they estimate it and observe its effects. This last function, it should be clear, is a confidence building measure in the most fundamental meaning of that term.

General deterrence has, it should be said, lost much of its urgency as a NATO function. But most serious observers of U.S. foreign policy acknowledge that there is still a deterrent function to be performed in Europe. The point is sometimes made literally and directly by referring to the residual and less probable contingency of the Soviet Union's employing its still considerable military power to shatter or shake the political order in Western Europe. If this prospect seems close to absurd at a time when it is generally acknowledged that the Cold War era is over, it is only more absurd now than it was throughout most of that era. Furthermore, a closely related phenomenon, how confident Western Europe is with respect to its own security, which is a different thing, has not been absurd or remote. Witness the debates over the use of nuclear weapons that have been a continuing feature of NATO's history and were active as recently as 1989. Until the close of the Cold War era, Western Europeans continued to recognize, in their reliance on the first use of nuclear weapons, that they had only limited confidence in their own security against the Soviet Union.

While it is true that the Soviet conventional military threat to Western Europe has greatly receded, and that the Soviet Union has less manifest interest in employing its nuclear capabilities to threaten Western Europe, Western military deterrence has not lost all its utility. One need only be concerned with the complexities of European politics, particularly as they are now emerging in Central and Eastern Europe, to have an interest in maintaining a capability of military deterrence, or more precisely, the military capabilities that have previously provided deterrence. For what provided deterrence then now serves a more enduring concern about political and military stability in Europe at a time of rapid change there.

With regard to general deterrence, the answers to the questions, what is

to be deterred, and how, have been vastly altered by what has happened to the Soviet Union. This is largely good news, of course, but there are drawbacks. The Cold War simplified things. Now, if the United States and its NATO allies are to make constructive use of the two year warning time that it is widely acknowledged they have, they will permit their forces to be reduced to a level that would not allow them to defend against a major Soviet attack — an attack, of course, that would take two-years' preparation to launch. This of course would be entirely justified by the new circumstances. It nonetheless imposes quite different requirements on the alliance. It will have to be able to take action to launch rearmament and mobilization programs on the basis of quite indeterminate warning factors. This will require NATO to meet a much higher or at least very different standard of threat diagnostics and response decisionmaking than was required by the warning and decision problem that prevailed from the onset to the end of the Cold War. Now, we must detect an approaching crisis much earlier and take preparatory action well before there is a sense of urgency. Perhaps the closest parallel is Europe in the late thirties.

Here we need to distinguish between danger and difficulty. Taking advantage of the two year warning time will make dealings less dangerous but assessment and decision considerably more difficult. It will require that we detect a drift into a potentially dangerous course at a much earlier stage, when most of the actions taken — most of the indicators which induce us to act — have only a remote connection with military danger. The two-year warning time, that is to say, introduces a qualitative change into what has previously been the realm of military deterrence. The warning task takes us away from military danger and deep into the political realm.

To detect and take action upon two years' warning, which is now the problem, should involve quite different warning indicators than have been the preoccupation of military intelligence and a great concern of national intelligence throughout the forty-five years of the Cold War: of political phenomena and of civil initiatives to build up the infrastructure for attack. Similarly, what is to be deterred is not primarily military action but civil and political action. More than before, General Deterrence becomes the deterrence of political actions.

6. Taking Advantage of the Reduced Threat

We should expect that NATO, in order to be able to take early decisions about remobilization, will work at altering its procedures for strategic assessment. Strategic assessment largely takes place still at the national level. NATO members have always relied first on their own military and political intelligence, but integrated NATO planning has depended on common assessments. We should expect some changes in these arrangement in an effort to achieve consensus earlier than has been the practice historically. The needed consensus will not be easy to achieve. It may appear to be a good idea for NATO members to concert their detection and assessment efforts. Alternatively, they may be better off hedging against error by depending on several national detection and assessment capabilities running in parallel, independently? Patently, if the complexity of the assessment task supports an intelligence strategy of parallel, competing assessment processes, the very

purpose of integrated staffs, and also integrated military plans, two concepts which lie at the heart of NATO as an organization, come under question.

NATO's survival will depend upon its adaptability to a reduced Soviet threat. Although in theory it would be wise to keep NATO forces at their full strength while waiting to see what the Soviets are doing and in order to use force reductions as bargaining chips, in fact, NATO members have announced unilateral cuts in their conventional forces. This development has forced open long-dormant issues about the structure and deployment of standing forces and about how they and their reinforcements would be employed in military action. These reductions are likely to expose NATO's military contradictions, as it were. NATO has for sound political reasons been saddled with several military irrationalities that have made it difficult to deal with these issues and there is now some hope that they can be eliminated. Two, in combination, have put military operations into an almost impossible situation. The first is the dilemma created by the requirement to defend forward yet not alarm the Eastern Bloc. The forward strategy, the requirement that what was West Germany be defended at what was its Eastern (inter-German) border, was intended to prevent Western Germany, or Germany, from becoming a battleground. It required NATO planners to give up defense in depth, which for modern conventional forces is a considerable advantage.

Following the same logic, NATO was not supposed to posture or plan or train in ways that would appear to be preparations for attack or create the capability for preemptive strike. (This last stricture was followed much less conscientiously than the others.) A second irrationality has been the five-layer "layer cake" — a term that has described the standing deployments and the order of battle on the NATO Central Front. "Layer" refers to the vulnerable seams between the national forces as they have been positioned on the Central Front. The layers of national forces have been a politically realistic concession to national sentiments which produced, as is well known, a mare's nest of military problems: of forces out of place and therefore tangled lines of communications and supply, of informal arrangements to compensate for weak and unreliable national layers, of limited mobility, of weak C³I — the list goes on.

Happily, in the Brave New World of hope that sprang up during 1990, it seemed that all NATO's problems could be left behind. With severe force downsizing inevitable, and with the risk of war receding, the long-standing political constraints that have produced this mare's nest are all but evaporating. It became the hope that NATO military forces could at last be rationalized to meet military objectives. By mid-1990 it became possible for NATO members to talk of integrated NATO combat forces that would eliminate the vulnerable seams between national forces and to imply that the tangled logistics tails had been troublesome drawbacks of the layer cake structure of the central front could also be dealt with somehow by integrating supporting services. This mood of hope — doubtless for some military technicians it was something else, a mood of desperation — generated a radical determination to rationalize forces in order to increase relative effectiveness in the face of radical force downsizing. This occurred before the expectation that U.S. forces would be downsized to as few as 100,000, although some expectations about reductions went even further.

There are important implications for the U.S. military presence in Western Europe and for the other aspects of the American presence in Europe in all of these changes — in the ones that have begun and the ones that seem inevitable.

7. Special Deterrence and the National Option

Special deterrence, as noted, refers to contingency planning that dealt with threats other than on the Central Front. NATO has not been very good at dealing with special contingencies. They require clear political guidance which the NATO Council rarely if ever generates. This is a problem which it shares with the U.S. government and other NATO governments when it comes to providing contingency planning guidance within national armed forces. With the main threat receded into a two year warning time, and with Central and Eastern Europe in turmoil, special deterrence may come forward as an important function for NATO, providing it can handle the policy guidance problem. If the United States wants to keep NATO viable, it will want NATO's special deterrence capability to be strengthened. Encouraging this development will mean that the American military establishment will have to work against its own inclinations, for it tends to let CINCEUR and its national command headquarters, EUCEM, deal with special deterrence problems instead of encouraging SHAPE to deal with them.

8. Reassurance and the American Military Presence in Europe

We return to the major function that NATO performs by keeping the United States present and committed — the function that provided NATO Europe reassurance, the third function mentioned. What will happen to the U.S. role in NATO as the size of the standing American forces there are reduced below 100,000 and the two year warning factor becomes a planning standard? To understand the implications of these changes it will be necessary to know how important it will be to reassure the European NATO partners of the United States' commitment to them and how this reassurance will occur while the United States adapts to its lesser role in NATO. This may be the most constraining dilemma of all to deal with in predicting the future shape of the U.S. military presence in Europe. If the European members of NATO continue to want reassurance about the United States' military commitment to them, they will very likely work to keep NATO strong enough to provide a hospitable locus for that presence. But the requirements for reassurance will be less onerous, as expectations about troop reductions indicate. If the requirement for American reassurance has seriously weakened, the United States will have to adapt to this fact.

As indicated earlier, it is possible for the United States to reduce its own reliance on NATO as the basis of its military presence in Europe. Instead of supporting a NATO that Europeans no longer want, it could rely more on its national military force headquarters commands. As for the political presence of the United States in Europe, doubtless that will suffer if Washington should lose its NATO voice; but that should be only a short-term setback. Other means will be found for the United States to play its role in Europe if it is to continue to have one there.

9. What About the European Community Agenda?

The European agenda seems to include grand alternatives, from the broad prospects of the CSCE, which seems to have much of the potential and most of the drawbacks of a regional UN General Assembly, to specific ideas about a (Western) European military pillar in the form of a strengthened Western European Union (WEU), possibly linked to the European Commission. It may well be that NATO will dissolve and that the so-called European architecture will be dominated by the CSCE. It is more likely, however, that some form of trans-Atlantic military alliance structure will survive because Western European interests will want it to perform two functions. Both of these functions may be regarded as variants of what we have called in this paper "reassurance". In place of (or supplementing) the need for reassurance that the United States stands ready to deal with a now much diminished Soviet threat is the need for reassurance that a united Germany will not become a political and economic threat to Europe. Since the rearmament of Germany began in 1952, one of NATO's fundamental political functions has been to reassure Western Europe about German military power. The German threat — or rather, the possibility of one — has grown. The unification of Germany strengthens the need for reassurance about German power even though it is German economic and therefore German political power rather than German military power that draws the greatest concern. An American military presence in Central Europe through NATO is not a direct answer to fears about Germany economic and political strength, but it means an American political presence as well, and that is reassuring to Europeans who fear or worry about a unified Germany.

The Gulf War brought another pertinent development. It left many Western European leaders dissatisfied with Western Europe's lack of a common foreign policy. The war has thus made a European pillar more attractive to them. Given this attraction, the fundamental question is whether a strong European pillar must become real at the expense of American interests and, specifically, at the expense of NATO as a forum where American interests are favored. The record of French policy is clear enough on this score. France is quite willing to put other interests ahead of NATO and let NATO and American interests pay the consequences. Other European NATO members are less concise or less obvious in the way they differentiate their national interests from their European and Atlantic interests, but NATO will not survive for very long if they do not consider it supportive of their national interests.

In Bonn, Rome, the Hague, even Copenhagen, and for quite different reasons, Whitehall, one could find after the Gulf War a new interest in concerting foreign policy. This interest has implications for NATO's future because it supports rival developments. The main alternative to NATO for its Europe members would seem to be an EC-related Europe pillar, whether it comes under the rubric of WEU or it takes some other form. A Europe pillar, by definition, excludes the United States (and Canada). A Western Europe speaking with a single voice in foreign relations would have to be reckoned with by Washington in a way that no voice from that region must now be reckoned with. But it would not necessarily rival American foreign policy interests. It should be possible to make of a concerted European foreign policy an American ally and partner. Partnership, however, is not a certain outcome of what is

happening.

The routine adaptive behavior of the U.S. government with respect to NATO is protecting a partnership of limited value. American officials tend to resist the emergence of a European pillar because it makes the handling of American foreign relations more difficult in the short term. A more effective form of adaptive American foreign policy behavior would enable Europeans to find out for themselves, without encountering conspicuous American resistance, that they need NATO, or some vehicle like it, to maintain an American military presence in Europe. According to this line of reasoning, the United States would reduce its own reliance on NATO by looking more to its own command apparatus in the European theater to plan for contingencies and by preparing more for unilateral and bilateral than collective action to meet its military objectives there. One could see this as a bargaining ploy, but it should be more than that.

In the long run, even in the medium term, the United States will not be able to pursue its own trans-Atlantic interests by means of a conspicuous military presence in Europe unless that presence is welcomed and supported by its Western European allies. This has in fact long been the case. Recent changes in Europe have not altered this situation unless they add an additional proviso that the utility of American military power in Europe also depends upon its being valued in Eastern (actually, Central) Europe.

There is considerable evidence that American military power in Europe is valued in both Western and Central Europe, and that in both regions it is recognized that NATO is the best means for maintaining it in Europe. With the political and economic troubles in the Soviet Union deepening, with the Warsaw Pact dissolved, NATO attracts former Warsaw Pact members. It is reported that Czechoslovakia and Hungary would like to join, evidently in hopes that NATO can help them avoid a return of Soviet troops. It is doubtful that NATO would inspire such a hope if the United States were not its principal member. Similarly, while France is a leading advocate of a European pillar, France wants to keep U.S. military power in Europe as a check on Germany. Other NATO members share this view. The Kohl government in Germany professes to want to strengthen the European Community and to sustain NATO because it wants to offset and regulate German nationalism.

If United States gets out in front of its allies, as it is want to do with respect to much that relates to NATO, if it chooses to act as the conspicuously leading advocate of NATO at the expense of a European military pillar or of other Europe forums, its efforts are likely to be counterproductive. For Europeans looking for a European foreign policy voice, saving NATO because the Americans want to save it would become the best reason to dismantle it. If, on the other hand, the American military posture in Europe demonstrates that the United States can pursue more of its military objectives than it has pursued through unilateral and bilateral means, and if the United States prepares for the possibility that its European allies do not need its military presence, they are more likely than by any other means to confront their own interest in keeping American military power in Europe.

One of the largest drawbacks of NATO has been its propensity to confuse

for its own members what their interests are as they relate to NATO. Nowhere is this propensity to generate confusion greater than with respect to trans-Atlantic interests. Theater, particularly tactical nuclear weapons are the most compelling case of confusion. The United States supplied these nuclear weapons for the protection of Western Europe. They have been a necessary element in providing NATO with a credible defense, and therefore, a credible deterrent against attack. These American weapons have not been placed in Europe to defend the United States. They have been assigned there to defend Western Europe. The United States would prefer to have Western Europe defended by conventional means, a burden that would of course fall mainly on Europeans. To the extent that the United States has looked to nuclear weapons to provide for its own security against attack, the weapons involved are not in Europe.

These are not abstract distinctions. The U.S. government has been much criticized in Western Europe — to be sure, particularly on the left — for its refusal to renounce in advance that it was willing to make first use of nuclear weapons. This refusal reflects mainly Western Europe's historic unwillingness to support a credible conventional defensive force. It does not reflect an American enthusiasm for going first. Yet the program for modernizing these weapons in the early eighties came to be seen in Europe as an American effort to foist nuclear weapons on America's Western European allies and for this reason drew large urban crowds into the streets in North Western Europe to demonstrate against the United States and its nuclear weapons. Even now, the opposition in Western Europe to the next generation of nuclear weapons modernization is often seen as opposition to American interests. There has been vast and persistent confusion over the fact that the United States owned the nuclear weapons but NATO Europe owned the problem they were deployed to solve.

NATO is no longer needed to maintain a military capability to withstand at any moment a major onslaught from Eastern Europe. It may continue to be useful as a framework for maintaining an American military presence in Europe and for regulating German military power. Indeed, some German leaders seem to be the main proponents of its continuing to play the latter role. Whether it will survive and adapt itself to vastly changed conditions in Europe while it continues to fulfill these two functions will depend on whether the United States behaves in such a way as to exaggerate its own interest in NATO. That is a possibility. NATO has long been a convenience for U.S. foreign policy and the middle managers of American foreign policy are prone to confuse convenience with necessity. But there is also another potential source of confusion.

The U.S. role in NATO continues to be one of active leadership. In performing that role, as indicated earlier in this paper, U.S. officials, are apt to take initiatives that go beyond the recognized boundaries of NATO consensus. Other NATO governments are inclined to grumble when this happens, but also to depend upon this out-in-front behavior as a necessary source of dynamism in the alliance. American out-in-front leadership will very likely be employed in the future, as it was in dealing with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, to handle time urgent contingencies. Out-of-area contingencies like Kuwait where Western Europeans are not likely to employ NATO machinery to respond are likely to encourage them to develop a European pillar that is independent of NATO. In-area contingencies are likely to strengthen NATO

provided they are handled with a concerted response. That is probably for contingencies like disorder in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, etc., particularly disorder with spillover effects like large-scale migrations into Western Europe. The more such contingencies occur, the more prominence we should expect NATO to have in the architecture of Europe because the U.S. leadership that can be supplied through it is needed.

10. **NATO and the European Pillar: A Summary**

So far, we have looked at the U.S. military presence in Western Europe in terms of U.S. options and NATO's functions. I have claimed that the United States could perform many of its military functions in Europe, particularly if those functions are no longer mainly to defend on the central front, largely without NATO. I have also claimed that Europeans want the United States to maintain a military presence in Europe and that, for them, NATO is the most convenient way for that to happen. The first statement serves to distance the United States from NATO, or at least to put some daylight between the two when necessary. It is important to note this possibility because on both sides of the Atlantic the most common view is that the United States needs NATO. The trouble with this view is that it misses how many of the military arrangements that the United States has in Europe are in fact bilateral. The second statement, that the Europeans need an American military presence in Europe through NATO, serves to reduce the distance between European interests and NATO. For Western Europeans, NATO's main function has been to commit U.S. military power to their defense.

With the changing strategic situation in Europe — specifically, with the Soviet Union posing no short-term military threat — NATO's central military role, to plan to cope with that threat, has diminished. Its diminishing sharpens the distinction between NATO's military function and the political function associated with reassurance and with what the latter requires, which is an American military presence in Europe. The new strategic situation may permit Europeans to support a U.S. military presence in Europe without supporting NATO, but that is unlikely except for France, whose relationship to NATO has been strongly qualified. Since Europeans need the United States, and NATO is the preferred way to have the United States, we should expect them to need NATO. The need Europeans have for an American presence in Europe through NATO, it should be clear, can be expected to constrain their search for Europe alternatives to NATO, their search for a Europe pillar. But that constraint will work best if the Americans expose Western Europeans' need for the American presence and for NATO to their own scrutiny.