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The Atlantic Alliance after Iraq

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Abstract

History suggests that once alliances have successfully accomplished their objectives, they quickly come to an end. The peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, did not lead in parallel fashion to the rapid demise of the anti-Soviet transatlantic alliance. The subject of this paper is whether the political institutions that once undergirded the anti-Soviet alliance—in particular, the institutions of the Atlantic community—can long endure after the demise of the common rival. Focusing on the effects of structural change on the grand strategy of the United States and especially on US relations with France and Germany, this paper reviews the implicit bargain upon which the post-World War Two Atlantic alliance rested and the transformation that both the Atlantic bargain and alliance have undergone since the end of the Cold War. Building upon this analysis, the article examines the effects of the terrorist attacks in the United States in September 2001 as well as the Iraq war on the transatlantic alliance. The paper concludes by assessing the prospects for a new transatlantic bargain upon which the alliance can endure.

Keywords

transatlantic relations, NATO, international relations theory
Introduction

History suggests that once alliances have successfully accomplished their objectives, they quickly come to an end. A prominent example is the great anti-Nazi coalition of the mid-twentieth century, which did not long survive the defeat of Hitler’s Germany. Within months of the end of World War Two, the alliance between the United States, the USSR, and the United Kingdom was under enormous strain; a few years later it collapsed altogether. The Cold War ensued, a great contest between rival blocs centred around Washington and Moscow that went on for some forty years. By the 1990s, however, the Soviet empire had dissolved and the former Soviet Union had disappeared. Whether the political institutions that once undergirded the anti-Soviet alliance—in particular, the institutions of the Atlantic community—can long endure after the demise of the common rival is the subject of this paper.

Of course the parallel with the Grand Alliance of the Second World War is fraught with difficulties. The collapse of the anti-Nazi pact was hardly surprising: only an unlikely series of remarkable events had brought Moscow and Washington into open alliance with each other and with London.1 It required the combination of Hitler’s betrayal of Stalin in June 1941, Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, and Nazi Germany’s declaration of war on the United States four days later to draw the two greatest powers outside of Germany into the war against Berlin. The resulting wartime pact was an alliance of convenience among partners with a mutual foe but without either mutual interests or shared values. Once the common enemy had been decisively defeated, it was only natural that rival interests and rival ideologies came to the fore.

Within the Grand Alliance there were from the very beginning substantial tensions between imperial Britain and the anti-imperialist administration of Franklin Roosevelt, in addition to the more obvious sources of contention between the capitalist United States and United Kingdom on the one hand and the communist USSR on the other. For these very reasons Roosevelt had been concerned that a wartime discussion of post-conflict aims might strain the anti-Nazi coalition and thereby weaken Allied military cooperation. In this he was no doubt correct; the flaw in his analysis is that while such matters could be postponed, they could not be avoided altogether.2 When finally addressed after the collapse of Germany, the terms of the resulting political and occasionally military conflict were initially quite unfavourable to the western partners. The context was one of massive withdrawal of US military forces while Russian forces continued to occupy much of central, eastern, and southern Europe. Such circumstances were hardly conducive to effective bargaining, and the Soviets were increasingly bold in both their demands and their actions. But the very fact of Russian military preponderance on the continent helped spur a balancing effort; thus at the same time that Russian military power was consolidating control over various puppet governments within the Kremlin’s new sphere of influence, an anti-Soviet alliance emerged, albeit in fits and starts, based on the principle of collective defence against any further geographical expansion of Moscow’s military presence.3

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This new alliance, though initially built on delicate foundations, eventually developed characteristics that allowed it to become remarkably enduring. Not only did the western allies share a common foe in the Soviet Union, to a very substantial extent they shared common values and common interests. The foundations of this community of interests can be traced back at least to World War Two. Then, despite the tensions between Washington and London previously mentioned, there were substantial efforts—beginning with the signing of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941 through the series of wartime conferences aimed at designing a framework for post-war political and economic relations systems—to develop a shared moral foundation to the anti-Nazi campaign.4 The Allies self-consciously engaged their Axis foes in a battle of rival ideologies, a battle that both reflected and reinforced the clash of arms.5

Likewise after the war, the great and remarkably successful experiments in converting Japan and western Germany into functioning democracies were fundamental to the construction of a politically durable anti-Soviet alliance. This was especially true in the case of the Federal Republic, since the recent victims of Nazi aggression across western Europe had to be persuaded to accept not only the political but eventually the partial military revival of a German state.6 The institutions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were a critical aspect of this transformation, and a key to the sometimes reluctant agreement of Bonn’s neighbours to countenance German rearmament.7 In addition to these shared political and security interests, the NATO partners and especially the members of the incipient European Community were coupled together by numerous economic ties, ties that were carefully nurtured and grew ever more dense with the passage of time.8

It should hardly be surprising, then, that this new alliance proved much more enduring than the old anti-Nazi pact. Especially within the Atlantic community, the geopolitical imperative of balancing Soviet power went largely hand in hand with the more liberal objectives of democracy promotion and the construction of international institutions aimed at facilitating cooperation and shared prosperity

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4 Indeed one of the motivations for the Bretton Woods conference was to counter Nazi propaganda concerning the new European order that the Third Reich would usher in. Consider for example this extract from the ‘Preliminary Draft Proposal for a United Nations Stabilization Fund and a Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the United and Associated Nations,’ or White Plan, written in April 1942: ‘…serious discussion of specific proposals […] will be a factor toward winning the war… The people of the anti-Axis powers […] must be assured that something will be done in the sphere of international economic relations that is new, that is powerful enough and comprehensive enough to give expectation of successfully filling a world need. Whether within the Axis countries the will to fight would be weakened by such arrangements is not certain, but assuredly it would not be strengthened […] if there is real promise that an orderly prosperous world will emerge from a United Nations victory.’ In J. Keith Horsefield (ed.) 1969. The International Monetary Fund, 1945-1965: Volume III: Documents. Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, pp. 38-39.

5 Roosevelt’s efforts to include Stalin as a partner in this shared moral crusade, as for example in his characterization of the Soviet leader as ‘Uncle Joe,’ were decidedly less successful. For a clear precedent, see Woodrow Wilson’s remarks about Russia in his War Message of 2 April 1917. Wilson, War Messages, 65th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Doc. No. 5, Serial No. 7264, Washington, D.C., 1917, pp. 3-8.


7 Trachtenberg 1999, supra note 3; Soutou 1996, supra note 3.

within the West. 9 Thus for half a century the realism of Theodore Roosevelt was married to the idealism of Woodrow Wilson, a union that survived (if only barely, on occasion) many a crisis. 10 But could it survive success?

During the early and middle 1980s, the mounting internal weakness of the Soviet state combined with the rise to power of a relatively young and daring Communist leader to produce a series of dramatic changes in both the Kremlin’s internal and external policies. 11 Perestroika and glasnost were followed by a remarkable loosening of Moscow’s grip over its satellite states in central and eastern Europe. On November 9, 1989, the chief symbol of the Cold War conflict in Europe, the Berlin Wall, was dismantled. Two years later, on December 25, 1991, the Soviet Union itself ceased to exist, heralding the end of the bipolar system of international relations that had characterized the preceding four decades. 12

Thus fifty years (almost to the day) after Hitler’s declaration of war on the United States removed the last impediment to the foundation of a global anti-Nazi coalition, the object of the succeeding anti-Soviet pact quietly self-destructed. But whereas the collapse of Hitler’s Germany led directly and almost immediately to the end of the anti-Nazi pact—an alliance that had never been more than a marriage of convenience, despite Roosevelt’s fervent wishes—the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union did not lead in parallel fashion to the rapid demise of the anti-Soviet alliance. This fact alone bears testimony to the much deeper ties binding the Cold War partners, allies that shared not only a common enemy but to a large degree a common purpose, than those binding together the members of the Grand Alliance.

Nevertheless, the disappearance of their mutual foe did eventually and inevitably loosen at least some of the many ties binding the post-war Atlantic partners. The international environment had become ‘permissive’ to a degree that was unknown during the Cold War, at least within the two rival blocs, and previous certainties now rested on much shakier foundations. At no point was this systemic change more evident than when the president of a post-Soviet Russian state and the chancellor of a reunified Germany, joined by the president of France, announced their common ambition to thwart a principal aim of American diplomacy. The context was the final preparations for a war to dislodge Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein from power, an action that Washington had described as of supreme importance. The joint statement of Vladimir Putin, Gerhard Schroeder, and Jacques Chirac on March 5, 2003, opposing this action 13 echoed back to much earlier periods in European politics, including the

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nineteenth century’s so-called ‘Holy Alliance’—a fact that was not lost on leaders in central and eastern Europe recently liberated from Soviet domination. But in the context of the ‘Long Peace’ of the Cold War, an anti-American coalition of Paris, Berlin and Moscow axis was not at all familiar; it was hardly even imaginable.

Was this development, so extraordinary in the context of the previous half century of transatlantic politics, an aberration or a harbinger? Had the collapse of the Soviet Union really been a death sentence for the Atlantic alliance as well—a death sentence that was merely delayed, not averted, by the West’s deep ties? This essay frames those questions and provides some initial responses, focusing on the effects of structural change on the grand strategy of the United States and especially on US relations with France and Germany.

That framing argument can be summarized briefly as follows. The transatlantic relationship in the wake of World War Two rested on an implicit bargain or exchange, and a complex intermeshing of interests that helped sustain that bargain. This bargain and its sustaining interests proved the vital core of the global struggle against the Soviet Union, a struggle that was ultimately successful; but the very success of these efforts altered the circumstances of the transatlantic bargain, and thereby undermined the strategic equilibrium that had previously sustained the Atlantic framework. For roughly a decade after the Cold War’s end, the confluence of several mitigating factors conspired to mask the magnitude of these changes; as a result, the full extent of this systemic shift is only now becoming clear. But even before the diplomatic crisis that preceded the 2003 war in Iraq, it was clear that the Atlantic bargain was under enormous stress.

The Post-War Atlantic Bargain

Given the preponderance of American power at the end of World War Two, it seems appropriate to begin a description of the post-war Atlantic bargain with a discussion of US policy objectives in the early post-war years. The newly sworn-in President Harry S. Truman inherited from his predecessor a pledge to prosecute the war against the Axis powers until their unconditional surrender, together with a series of commitments to form an interlocking set of broadly multilateral institutions aimed at the cooperative governance of post-war international political and economic affairs; these latter organizations included the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. Truman did not inherit, however, a framework for continued American involvement in European security arrangements, and he initially had no more intention of offering to participate in such than did FDR. Roosevelt’s Treasury Secretary had drawn up plans for the permanent deindustrialization of Germany, the state that was still officially regarded as the most likely source of threat to post-war security, and the Truman administration showed every indication that it would pursue this option. Only the deteriorating relationship with the Soviets, highlighted by challenges to pro-western governments in south-eastern Europe, the brutal installation of communist governments in

(Contd.)

There was a follow-up trilateral memorandum on 24 February and a joint statement by the three countries’ foreign ministers on 5 March 2003; these documents are available at the same site.

14 Of course the Holy Alliance did not include France, composed instead of tsarist Russia, autocratic Prussia and imperial Austria, but among its characteristics was the joint management of smaller European states’ affairs. Central and eastern European fears that the emerging Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis would echo certain features of this earlier system were catalyzed by French President Jacques Chirac’s 17 February 2003 outburst directed at the candidates for European Union membership that had publicly rejected the Franco-German position on Iraq (Chirac’s comments are not reported on the Iraq conflict web page of the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères but were widely reported in the press). For a thoughtful expression of these concerns, see Andrzej Kapiszewski 2003. In Europe, With America: Poland 2003. Krakow: Jagiellonian University School of Polish Language and Culture, especially pp. 17-22; see also Ryszard Stepiowski 2003. ‘Towards the EU-US Hegemonic Tandem?’, in: The EU-US Cooperation. Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Affairs, pp. 97-104, especially p. 99.

central and eastern Europe, and the increasingly strained four-power arrangements in occupied Germany sufficed to change this plan.16

While it took a while for the Truman administration to agree on a grand strategy, when it eventually did so it was with gusto. Containment of Soviet expansionism became the principal objective, and multiple methods were employed to that end. Understood in the broadest sense, containment had both a military component and an economic component; in Europe, the military component was NATO and the economic component was the Marshall Plan. This combination was intended to deter the Soviets from military adventurism (because of collective self defence) while denying victory at the ballot box to Moscow’s sympathizers (because of the success of western European economic recovery). Future US administrations pursued policies that were largely consistent with these general principles, even if they involved occasional reconfigurations of the framework that informed alliance management.

What was the substance of that framework? At the most general level, the Cold War Atlantic partnership always involved an implicit exchange: Europe extended legitimacy to US foreign policy activism (what is now called unilaterism) around the world, and in return the US offered its support, or at least its acceptance, of various arrangements guaranteeing European regional security and prosperity, even if these arrangements disproportionately benefited its allies. These arrangements were not limited to NATO but extended instead to trade arrangements under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), international monetary and financial arrangements through the IMF and auxiliary groupings, and support for European integration. While the details of these arrangements varied, the underlying agreement proved robust and remained in place throughout the Cold War.

The earliest scholarly articulation of this overarching bargain was made by Benjamin Cohen in 1974. Cohen argued that:

_The Europeans acquiesced in a system which accorded the United States special privileges to act abroad unilaterally to promote US interests. The United States, in turn, condoned Europe’s use of the system to promote its own regional prosperity, even if this happened to come largely at the expense of the United States._17

In other words, Europe might disagree with American foreign policy but it would not seek to undermine it; and in return the United States maintained its support for security and economic arrangements that resulted in disproportionate benefits for its Atlantic partners.18 It bears noting that Cohen formulated this analysis in the wake of the unilateral transformation of international economic and monetary relations announced by the Nixon administration in August 1971, a transformation he

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16 For an overview of FDR’s postwar European strategy and the evolution of American policy under Harry Truman, see Kissinger 1994, supra note 2, at pp. 369-445, and Trachtenberg 1999, supra note 3, at pp. 3-145.


18 Thus for example the United States, though continuously pressuring the member states of the European Community to liberalize their agricultural policies throughout the Cold War, never withdrew its fundamental support for European economic integration despite the fact that a core element of the Community’s economic policies (the Common Agricultural Policy) was both illiberal and protectionist. On the continuity of American support for European integration, see again Lundestad 1998; for an analysis rich in archival sources of the difficulties the US government encountered in negotiating agricultural reform with the incipient European Economic Community, see Lucia Coppolaro (forthcoming 2004) The United States of America and the European Community in the GATT Negotiations of the Kennedy Round, 1964-67. Thesis (PhD), European University Institute.
described as ‘revolutionary.’ But the aim of Nixon and Kissinger was to rebalance the costs and benefits of these overall arrangements, not to overturn their fundamental premises, and the Alliance managed to weather this storm (and others) without coming apart.

The reasons for European interest in American security guarantees were more or less self-evident (although I will spell out certain particulars below); after all, the Soviet colossus was at western Europe’s doorstep, not America’s. But why the equally intense American interest in European legitimization of US foreign policy? Doubtless there are multiple reasons, including the simple desire for the approval of one’s peers. But there was a more instrumental reason as well that bears exploration in some detail.

The Alliance’s Sustaining Equilibrium

Central to the overall political bargain described above was the military dimension of the Atlantic alliance, and here the strategic calculations were quite complex. Simply put, the stability of the Atlantic partnership during the Cold War rested upon an unusual balance between the interests of three of its four most significant members: the US, Germany, and France. To better understand this, we have to re-examine the characteristics of the Cold War Alliance more closely, and here we can do little better than to begin with Lord Ismay’s famous dictum about the purpose of NATO. The Alliance’s first Secretary General reportedly said that the organization’s function was ‘to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.’

Ismay’s formulation is not only succinct and insightful; it is increasingly borne out by the archival evidence. The first element of Ismay’s triad, keeping the Russians out, is of course the most obvious: NATO was an anti-Soviet alliance. But the second and third elements—keeping the Americans in and the Germans down—were of central importance as well. In the most comprehensive study of the official documents of the period, Marc Trachtenberg concludes that the division of Europe after World War Two, painful as it was for the peoples of central and eastern Europe within the Soviet sphere of influence, was nevertheless broadly stable. The western powers and the USSR were, again broadly speaking, prepared to allow each other a free hand to act on their respective sides of the line of demarcation. But there was one major exception to this rule: the Soviets were not prepared to let West Germany become too strong or too independent. Such an outcome—especially a politically independent and nuclear-armed West Germany—would have been sufficiently provocative to prompt an armed response from Moscow.

The principal task of the early Cold War years, therefore, was to enmesh the Federal Republic squarely into western security and economic systems in a manner that satisfied not only the United States and its western European allies (meaning in this case especially France) but that was furthermore acceptable to the Soviet Union. Keeping ‘the Americans in’ and ‘the Germans down’ was therefore not secondary to keeping ‘the Russians out’: it was the central means by which the Russians were persuaded to stay out.

Once this central task had been accomplished—and it was not fully accomplished until the mid-1960s—a second abiding political problem of the transatlantic relationship emerged: Franco-American

19 Cohen, 1974/1990, supra note 17, (title and pp. 94 and 100).
20 For a discussion of why similar considerations failed to obtain, at least to the same degree, in Asia, see Peter Katzenstein 1996. (ed.) The Culture of National Security. New York: Columbia University Press.
21 The other essential partner was of course the United Kingdom, but especially after 1956 successive British governments defined their interests in close parallel to those of the United States; more on this below.
22 Scholars have not been able to verify whether Ismay actually made this statement, but whether he did so or not the astute analysis is widely attributed to him.
23 Trachtenberg 1999, supra note 3.
rivalry. France emerged from the Second World War as a much reduced political power, but retained global aspirations in a way that the nascent Federal Republic of Germany could not, and that the United Kingdom did not. French leaders conceived of France as not merely a rival power but a rival civilization, in sharp contrast to the Anglo-Saxon civilization aligning London and Washington. Little wonder, then, that—especially after Suez—a recurrent tendency of French foreign policy was to aim at balancing, rather than complementing, the influence of the United States. And while this competitive impulse was most pronounced in the policies of de Gaulle, it has been evident in every French president since the founding of the Fifth Republic. Pompidou was bitterly frustrated that his efforts to restore Franco-American cordiality after de Gaulle’s resignation were met not with enhanced status for Paris in Washington, but instead by the Nixon administration’s policy of promoting a tight bipolar framework. Giscard was put off both by Carter’s moralizing tone and his apparent strategic indecision. Mitterrand would have been only too happy to retire NATO to the ash heap of history following the end of the Cold War.24

In short, former French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine’s desire to balance the American ‘hyperpower’ has a long pedigree.25 Despite these recurrent tensions, however, three factors tended to mitigate Franco-American rivalry during the Cold War. The first was self-restraint on the part of France, which profited handsomely from the American security guarantee (against both the Soviets and the Germans). The second was self-restraint on the part of successive US governments, who regarded NATO as the leading security arrangement, and Europe as the most important theatre of operations, of the Cold War conflict with the Soviet Union. It bears reiterating why they formed this judgment. The simultaneous rearmament and pacification of Germany—its continued entrenchment within western military structures, including the absence of a genuinely independent German foreign policy—was a key to avoiding armed conflict with the Soviet Union. And continued German pacification depended in large measure on Franco-German reconciliation, undertaken partly within the context of NATO and partly within the context of European integration. Thus while French withdrawal from NATO’s integrated military command had no apparent impact on the overall balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union,26 it was nevertheless considered a political crisis of the highest order. And while American administrations were periodically exercised by French policy, given the centrality of the Atlantic alliance it was normally accommodation, not confrontation, that was the order of the day.

This brings us to the third and final mitigating factor on Franco-American rivalry: the restraining influence exercised by the Federal Republic of Germany on French policy. The global aspirations of successive French governments depended on French leadership of a European community of nation-states—leadership that officials in Bonn were, for the most part, prepared to cede. Such a concession was, after all, a centrepiece of the original Community bargain, and part of Adenauer’s vision of long-term rehabilitation of Germany into the international community.27 But Bonn was far more constrained by the Cold War than was Paris, and realization of the Federal Republic’s dual objectives of security (in the present) and unification (in the future) depended on a careful balancing of political relations with Paris and with Washington. German reliance on the US security guarantee, and equally importantly the promise of American support for eventual reunification with the GDR, constituted an

24 For an account exploiting extensive access to French primary sources to discuss both this general tendency and these particular developments, see Soutou 1996, supra note 3.
important buffer on the sometimes latent, sometimes active French tendency to conceive of geopolitics in anti-American terms.

The result of these interlocking interests was a stable if continuously tense constellation of relationships among the western allies. Keeping the Russians out necessitated keeping the Germans down by keeping the Americans in—and this despite the desire of significant political factions in the United States, Germany and France to repatriate American military forces. Successive German governments came to accept this policy, even if they did not always warmly embrace it (and sometimes tested it at the margins). But during the Cold War no German government ever rejected this policy outright, and even passive acceptance of the American presence meant resisting, and thereby restraining, the most virulently anti-American strains of French strategic thought.

In short, a complex equilibrium of interests between Paris, Bonn and Washington helped preserve the Atlantic alliance, even when aspects of its underlying framework were questioned in each of these capitals. And inasmuch as the British government chose to throw in its lot with the United States following Suez, London likewise had a very strong vested interest in the success of this transatlantic ménage-à-trois, often playing a crucial role in facilitating the resolution of disputes among the Atlantic partners. The resulting balance, though crisis prone, nevertheless proved enduring.

But a further point bears underlining as well, especially in light of recent tensions, and that was the role of alliance management in American grand strategy during this period. Once the United States become committed to a long-term policy of deterrence and containment, Washington’s grand strategy necessitated active attention to alliance management within NATO. Deterring the Soviets was not only a contest of rival wills and capabilities: it also required close attention to the special role of Germany, and because of that to the rest of Europe. Alliance management was not a secondary concern of US grand strategy during the Cold War, it was part and parcel of that strategy.

The End of the Cold War: muted effects

Of course if the complex series of relationships described above was driven primarily by the geopolitical logic of balancing Soviet power, then the end of the Cold War should have changed everything. For with the Cold War’s end, and especially following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the chief reason for the Atlantic alliance—to provide security against a hostile superpower actively bent on expansion—no longer existed. As a consequence, the strategic rationale that underpinned the Atlantic bargain was no longer operative. From Washington’s perspective, Europe would no longer be the geographical focus of US geopolitical concerns nor would NATO likely become the primary vehicle for achieving American political and military objectives elsewhere. In Berlin, the previously tight constraints on German foreign policy should have been relaxed; and in Paris the buffers on Franco-American rivalry should have been removed. In short, the whole strategic basis of the transatlantic relationship should have come undone.

Theorists of international relations from the ‘realist’ school therefore predicted, and awaited, the Alliance’s imminent collapse. Their reasoning was simple: no common threat, no common purpose—such was the lesson of history, repeated again and again. For a variety of reasons, however,
the anticipated collapse of the alliance did not take place (at least not at that point). Why not? Perhaps because prior strategic alliances had not shared the democratic affinities of the NATO partners, which doubtless also tended to mitigate any rivalry among them following the demise of the Soviet Union.\(^{31}\) Perhaps because NATO’s continued existence constituted a sort of tacit insurance against the possibility of a revival of Russian militarism, a factor weighed especially heavily in official thinking in the states that were soon to become candidates for NATO entry.\(^{32}\) And perhaps simply because of inertia: institutions such as NATO exhibit a substantial tendency towards continuity, even when their founding purpose evaporates.\(^{33}\) More generally, it often takes time to make sense of important changes. Thus French policy at the end of World War Two was initially to strike anti-German alliances, and only later to recognize the Soviet threat; likewise it was not until 1947-48 that American policy became firmly oriented towards containment of communist expansion, as discussed previously.

But NATO’s durability was not only the result of institutional robustness and attitudinal inertia. In addition, the favourable confluence of a number of temporary conditions combined to mitigate, at least temporarily, the effects on the Alliance of the Cold War’s successful termination. Not least amongst these mitigating factors was the election of a US president in 1992 who was supremely able to persuade his European interlocutors that he understood and agreed with them, even while pursuing policies that were extremely difficult for the America’s partners to accept. These policies included plans to dramatically enlarge NATO membership, an aim pursued vigorously by the Clinton administration.\(^{34}\)

In addition, the military conflicts that arose during the 1990s—the campaign against Saddam Hussein in 1991 and later the Balkans wars—tended to distract attention from the underlying changes in the Atlantic partnership. Consider policy towards the Middle East, normally a ‘focus of discord’ between the United States and its European partners.\(^{35}\) But Saddam’s inept diplomacy, followed by George Bush Sr.’s extraordinary efforts to marshal international opinion against Baghdad, resulted in an unprecedented display of not only western but global solidarity against a regional villain.\(^{36}\)

Likewise the Balkans wars, ugly as they were, were extremely convenient for NATO’s post-Soviet evolution.\(^{37}\) The purpose of NATO intervention was not collective self defence, and hence participation in these campaigns was traumatic for some member states—especially Germany. On the other hand, the geographical focus (not to mention the historical parallel to Nazi atrocities) was

\(^{31}\) Michael W. Doyle is most responsible for the revival of the democratic peace thesis, see for example Doyle 1986. ‘Kant: Liberalism and World Politics’, American Political Science Review, 80(4), pp. 1151-1169.

\(^{32}\) For example, Kapiszewski 2003, supra note 14.


sufficiently close to ease these Alliance members’ lingering concerns, and in a remarkably short period the Federal Republic shifted from a purely defensive military posture to becoming one of the world’s chief suppliers of troops for foreign combat duty. 38 At the same time, the temporary absence of rival hotspots elsewhere in the globe allowed the United States to focus on NATO enlargement and transformation, changes aimed at adapting the alliance to what appeared to be the major security challenge of the post-Cold War era: containing ethnic rivalries, especially in the former Soviet sphere of influence.

In relatively short order NATO was converted, in the words of Barry Posen, from a unidirectional defensive force into an omnidirectional offensive force, a force capable of projection either to deter or to decisively resist ethnic warfare. This radical transformation should have been enormously difficult, but permissive circumstances made it possible. Indeed, in retrospect these permissive circumstances—the geographical proximity of the first tests of the new doctrine to NATO’s homeland, the relative absence of rival hot spots to preoccupy American leadership, and the general preoccupation with ethnic conflict—rendered NATO expansion and transformation relatively easy, even if it did not seem so at the time.

Finally, one additional factor helped mask the inherent strains within the Alliance: the slow evolution of US grand strategy. Despite American leadership on NATO’s transformation, no clear formulation of a new general philosophy towards global security was evident during the Clinton years. 39 This subdued pace of change further reduced pressure on the Alliance. Nevertheless, there was evidence that already afoot, well before 9-11, that American understanding of the strategic relationship with the Europeans had changed, even among Atlanticists, and that this changed conception boded ill for a stable relationship.

The evolution of US grand strategy in the 1990s can be characterized in terms of two parallel discussions regarding security policy that took place more or less simultaneously in the academy and in leading American think tanks. The first debate concerned the bases and implications of US power preponderance after the Cold War. The second was more narrowly focused on the military lessons of the 1991 Gulf war, Somalia, and the Balkans conflicts; hence the questions were more technically defined, for example in terms of the relative significance of air power versus land power. While obviously interrelated, these two conversations took place largely independently of one another; my remarks here will be largely confined to the first of these two debates. 40

America’s sudden power preponderance—the shift from a bipolar to a unipolar distribution of military power, with only one superpower surviving the Cold War—gave rise to two questions: whether American military dominance was likely to prove enduring or ephemeral, and—closely related—where the major threats to American security lay. On the first question, analysts varied between arguing that American primacy was likely to prove both enduring and beneficial; 41 that primacy was threatened but beneficial, and therefore worth preserving; 42 that eventual American

38 On this remarkable transformation, see the discussion by Hubert Zimmermann in this volume.
40 I will, however, note that American analysts involved in this second, more technical debate were deeply concerned about the difficulties of conducting an effective military operation without clear lines of command. The sustained discussion on this topic helps explain the resonance of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s later dictum that the mission should determine the coalition, not the reverse, despite the fact that this formulation elevated a tactical principle to the level of strategy.
42 There were two predominant variants of this argument, quite at odds with one another in terms of their policy prescriptions. The first such variant, championed by many American neoconservatives, held that potential rivals to American pre-eminence needed to be intimidated; the second variant, advocated both by traditional realists and some liberal internationalist theorists, held that potential rivals needed to have their fears of American pre-eminence assuaged. The Draft Policy Guidance produced by the first Bush administration’s Defense Department in March 1992 is an example
The Atlantic Alliance after Iraq
decline was inevitable, and therefore we should be preparing for a stable transition to a multipolar world; and that withdrawal from an active role in international affairs was in order. The answers to the second question (regarding the nature of future security threats) also varied sharply, with some analysts pointing to threats from a resurgent Russia; others to emerging powers (typically China); some to America’s former allies (including the European Union); still others to rogue states, especially those armed with weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and finally those who pointed to non-state terrorist networks, fuelled by anti-Western ideologies and rendered increasingly capable of inflicting harm by the global diffusion of technology.

Limitations of space do not permit a thorough examination of how this debate evolved. Suffice it to say that by the end of the 1990s, most analysts were persuaded that threats to American primacy, if any, were at best distant; on the other hand, debates about the nature of those threats continued to rage unabated. Despite these differences, what was increasingly plain was that alliance management and, in closely related fashion, America’s involvement in international organizations would play different roles in future US foreign policy than they had in the past. No longer was there the sharp disciplining effect associated with a rival super power threatening nuclear war if America’s alliance management proved unsatisfactory. As a consequence, even the strongest advocates of preserving and further developing America’s commitment to international institutions were obliged to argue that the function of these commitments was to augment American power and influence rather than to avert nuclear war.

In short, the passing of the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union meant that the United States had greater liberty with respect to its foreign commitments than at any time in the preceding half century. Attention to alliance management could be justified on a number of strategic grounds, but it was no longer a geopolitical imperative in the same sense that it had been during the Cold War. It was in this context that the second Bush administration assumed office in January 2001.

(Contd.)

46 This was certainly one of the leitmotifs of foreign policy discussion within the administration of George W. Bush prior to 9-11. For example, shortly prior to the election of 2000 the future National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, wrote that ‘For America and our allies, the most daunting task is to find the right balance in our policy toward Russia and China.’ The next seven paragraphs dealt exclusively with China. Rice 2000. ‘Promoting the National Interest’, Foreign Affairs, 79(1), pp. 45-62. For an earlier formulation of this concern, see Zalmay Khalidzad 1995. From Containment to Global Leadership? American and the World After the Cold War. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, especially p. 30.
47 This was originally an outlier position; see for example Jeffrey T. Bergner 1991. The New Superpowers: Germany, Japan, the U.S. and the New World Order. New York: St. Martin’s Press. It has since become more respectable; see Charles A. Kupchan 2002. ‘The End of the West’, The Atlantic Monthly, 290(4), pp. 42-44.
48 The 2002 publication by Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlworth of ‘American Primacy in Perspective’ in Foreign Affairs, 81(4), pp. 20-33, summarizing and popularizing their own earlier work on the subject, was a bellwether.
The Alliance under Stress

To summarize the preceding section, for roughly a decade the happy conjuncture of a number of essentially random events helped mitigate the effects of the Cold War’s end. These temporary factors, together with more enduring institutional characteristics that likewise contributed to NATO’s durability, for a time trumped the effects of underlying structural divergence. But this simply meant that the effects of structural divergence were delayed, not averted altogether. Furthermore, the situation was later reversed, especially following the terrorist attacks of September 2001 on New York and Washington: temporary conditions now drew attention to the changed structure of Atlantic interests rather than away from them. Among these conditions was George W. Bush’s election in 2000 and Saddam’s far more successful diplomatic gambits of the late 1990s and early 21st century, as opposed to his adventures of the early 1990s.

Of course strains within the Alliance were evident prior to 9-11, and even prior to the second Bush presidency. The Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, and other initiatives—many of them emanating in large part from Europe—were bound to test the Atlantic framework, regardless of the American administration of the day. True, the Bush team’s handling of these issues, even when justifiable in substantive terms, was unnecessarily clumsy and thus contributed to an environment where ‘payback’ was on the minds of normally friendly governments around the world.50 These, however, were exacerbating circumstances, not the source of the transatlantic bargain’s eventual demise.

For the events of 2002-3 plainly testified that the old bargain had come to an end. Recall the core terms of that bargain: European governments agreed to legitimize American foreign policy in exchange for the United States underwriting European prosperity and security. By the time that the United States, joined by the United Kingdom and with the diplomatic support of a handful of other states, decided to invade Iraq in March of 2003, this longstanding agreement was in tatters. In the preceding weeks the governments of France and Germany had decisively rejected its core terms; indeed, they threatened to undermine public support for US policy within their own polities unless the United States changed its behaviour. The Bush administration angrily responded that it had no intention of changing its stance, and that it did not require the support of either European publics or their governments in either the formulation or execution of its policies.51

Why had support for the old arrangement collapsed? During the weeks and months following the short military campaign in the Middle East, governments that both supported and opposed the war had ample opportunity to reflect on this question. To begin with, Paris and Berlin realized (much to their dismay) that threats to undermine European public support for American policy had lost much of their previous traction. Absent the interlocking concerns that united Washington and Moscow in supporting a substantial armed American presence in Germany, Europe is no longer the centrepiece of American grand strategy; thus even the active opposition of some leading European states to the Iraq war, though damaging, was not fatal. Indeed, neither the threat to oppose the war nor the execution of that threat was serious enough to deter American action.

But a learning process was likewise underway in the United States. There, at least among the chattering classes, lingering triumphalism regarding the Soviet Union’s demise was slowly replaced with the realization that in the post-Cold War environment, European support for US foreign policy was likely to be much more contingent than had previously been the case. While difficult relations

50 For example, the US decision to opt out of the Kyoto Protocol was announced at a coffee break; and the decision to rescind the Clinton administration’s agreement to the treaty forming the International Criminal Court, rather than simply failing to send it to the Senate (or indeed to send it on, since it stood no chance of ratification), had little legal or diplomatic precedent.

51 ‘All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attacks. And we're asking them to join us, and many are doing so. Yet the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others. Whatever action is required, whenever action is necessary, I will defend the freedom and security of the American people.’ President Bush, ‘State of the Union’ address, 28 January 2003; full text available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html.
with France had come to be expected (and largely accepted), it was a new experience to have American policy forcefully rejected by a German government. But the unusually severe constraints that once bounded the Federal Republic’s foreign policy have been permanently loosened: having achieved reunification, and facing fewer threats to its external security than at any point in German history, Berlin now has a wider range of policy options open to it than at any past moment. And while it is unclear whether future governments of the Federal Republic will follow the lead of Gerhard Schroeder in actually courting confrontation with Washington, it is evident that future German governments are capable of doing so. This newfound capacity, paralleling the increased room for manoeuvre in American policy, represents a second fundamental change in the transatlantic relationship.

Meanwhile, tensions within Europe during the run-up to the Iraq war—especially those between Britain and France—made a mess of the European Union’s pretensions to act as a coherent actor on the world stage. But it bears underlining that the foreign policies of Paris and London did not fundamentally change with the passing of the bipolar system. Quite the opposite, in fact: French and British policies have been reasonably harmonious with their Cold War precedents, far more so than policy in either Washington or Bonn and now Berlin. During the whole of the Iraq crisis, Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac adopted policies fully consistent with historic national preferences: that is to say, British affinity for, and French scepticism of, close partnership with Washington. Certainly the crisis exposed the underlying divisions between the UK and France—divisions, by the way, that Charles de Gaulle understood only too well. But the heightened tensions between these traditional rivals were primarily the result of changes of policy in America and Germany, not London or Paris.

Prospects for a New Bargain

If the old Atlantic bargain lost much of its mutual appeal in the Cold War’s wake, and has subsequently lost a great deal of its credibility, is a new bargain possible, and can a new strategic equilibrium be developed to sustain it? Given the end of the bipolar international system, the disappearance (or at least abeyance) of a security threat emanating from Moscow, and the recent but substantial deterioration of relations between the United States and several of its key NATO partners, the task will not be easy. Given these challenges, success will depend in the first instance upon fashioning a new political grand bargain that corresponds more closely to current strategic realities.

Recall that the old bargain relied on trading American support for European security and prosperity in exchange for European support for (or at least acquiescence in the face of) US policy activism on a global basis. But plainly neither side values this exchange at present as much as they did in the past. To begin with, the continental powers have substantially discounted the value of America’s security guarantees following the end of the Cold War. This development is fully understandable, even if assessments of the continuing value of American guarantees vary across European capitals (largely corresponding to their distance from Moscow) and even if that discounting has perhaps been unreasonably steep by some. For their part American authorities have likewise discounted, at least in

52 Commentators have therefore struggled to explain why the American public was so much more exercised by French rather than German opposition to US policy towards Iraq, and have supplied a variety of arguments (typically cultural and often patronizing) to account for this. I submit that the explanation is more straightforward: first, Americans for the most part accepted, and indeed had some sympathy for, an essentially pacifist policy emanating from Berlin, given Germany’s difficult history, but found the articulation of similar arguments by French authorities opportunistic at best. Second, most Americans correctly recognized that Paris, not Berlin, was playing the leading role in organizing opposition to Washington’s policies in the Security Council. Whether that role entitled Paris to praise or opprobrium depended largely on how individual citizens felt about the war; most Americans enthusiastically supported the conflict, at least at the time it was undertaken, and popular attitudes towards France reflected that stance; likewise retrospective uncertainty about the war has tended to erode, at least to a small degree, anti-French sentiment.
part, the value of European political support for US policies. This too is understandable, even if
Washington is now having to reassess just how costly the Iraq intervention has been (and will continue
to be) in the absence of genuine multilateral support—an assessment that will cast a long shadow over
future calculations regarding similar engagements.

If the old bargain is no longer viable, what might replace it? Some argue that ‘Washington must
shift course and accept multilateral conditions for intervention’ while Europeans must ‘be prepared to
pick up much of the burden of conflict prevention and post conflict engagement.’ 53 While such an
approach is superficially rational, it is unlikely to have sufficient attractive power to influence policy
consistently on either side of the Atlantic. Especially after the Iraq crisis, the implementation of such
an exchange would normally entail substantial domestic costs in both the United States and in Europe;
and the analyses of national politics (especially in France and the United States) in this volume suggest
that governments will frequently be unwilling to bear those costs. 54

Put differently, a moderately revamped version of the old Atlantic bargain is unlikely to prove
stable. The old bargain was at perennial risk even in the context of the Cold War struggle: that is to say,
even when there was a clearly recognized mutual foe, a commonly agreed strategy to engage that foe,
and a credible threat by that foe to punish instances of alliance failure. Absent these enabling
conditions, the domestic costs of compliance with the terms of such a revamped agreement are likely
to swamp the perceived strategic benefits. This is the sort of arithmetic elected governments understand.

Leaving aside for the moment the exact content of a new Atlantic bargain, what are the chances of
developing a new political equilibrium that could sustain the Alliance? First recall the complex
calculations of the Cold War partnership. The Alliance successfully deterred Soviet adventurism in
western Europe in part by allaying the Kremlin’s concerns about an overly independent and powerful
West German state. This formula also addressed French security concerns about Germany, even
though these largely went unvoiced. And successive governments of the FRG were prepared to accept
the ensuing arrangement, even when it did not please them. Meanwhile, a combination of factors
moderated Franco-American antagonisms; primary among these was self-restraint in Washington and
Paris, in the latter case reinforced by Bonn’s unwillingness to support a genuinely anti-American
stance within the European Community.

None of these sustaining elements remain in place. Let us begin with the American case. While the
jury is still out on the eventual shape of America’s post-9/11 grand strategy, 55 self-restraint has not
been a defining characteristic of foreign policy during the Bush administration. 56 And while the threat
assessment continues to vary, with leading American analysts disputing the nature of the most

53 Andrew Moravcsik 2003. ‘Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain’, Foreign Affairs, 82(4), pp. 74-89, quote from p. 75. For
a trenchant warning about forthcoming problems offering a similarly pragmatic prescription, see Malcom Chalmers 2001.

54 On the difficulties of swapping American moderation for European aid in reconstruction, Ronald Asmus concludes that
‘no American leader of any political persuasion will accept the proposition that the basis for a U.S.-European partnership
should be containment of U.S. ability to act,’ while Douglas Hurd notes that ‘out of Kosovo came the bitter saying that
the Americans fight the wars while Europe does the dishes. That is not a sound basis for an alliance.’ Asmus 2003.
‘Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance’, Foreign Affairs, pp. 20-31, at p. 29; Hurd, 2001. ‘Europe Must Respond to the Arc of

55 The National Security Strategy of the United States, a policy statement published a year after the attacks on the World
Trade Center and Pentagon, contains diverse elements, some of them suggesting a hegemonic realism (à la Theodore
Roosevelt) but others pointing towards Wilsonian idealism. See the full text at http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/mss.html.

56 On the foreign policy peregrinations of the Bush administration, compare National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice’s
article in the January-February 2000 edition of Foreign Affairs cited supra note 46, in which she argued that the new
administration would distinguish itself from its predecessor by focusing on America’s strategic relations with the other
great powers (primarily Russia and China), with her remarks in the summer of 2003, when she argued that bringing
freedom and democracy to the Middle East was ‘the security challenge and the moral mission of our time.’ ‘U.S.
Promises Democracy in Middle East; Rice Calls for “Generational Commitment”’, Washington Post, 8 August 2003.
significant threats to US security and hence the most appropriate template for grand strategy, it is far from clear that this uncertainty bodes well for the Alliance. What is plain is that a security environment characterized by rogue states with WMD, non-state terrorist groups, and continuing great power rivalry is enormously complex. This suggests that the administration will continue to hedge its bets, unless an even more devastating terrorist incident affirms that 9-11 really did ‘change everything.’

Such a slow transition to a new security doctrine on the part of the world’s leading power is of course fairly natural. It takes time to adjust to new challenges, and the combination of stateless terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and the widespread availability of biological weapons raises difficult intellectual conundrums. Some fifty years ago, the development of an intellectual consensus among elites about the appropriate response to the nuclear revolution took well over a decade; the current security environment, with its multiplicity of both weapons and actors, is at least as complex.57 This suggests that we are entering a new era in which not only US foreign policy but the policies of both its allies and adversaries, current and potential, will be characterized by the probing of alternative approaches unless and until a new strategic consensus emerges.

But it also means, as suggested earlier, that alliance management—though important and perhaps even critical to international policing efforts in the fight against terrorism—does not and likely will not occupy the central space on the American strategic agenda that it once did, and that it had to, during the Cold War. This is indeed one of the logical consequences of the passing of the Soviet threat. And absent a geopolitical imperative to devote substantial resources (including the time and attention of senior officials) to resolving transatlantic crises as they arise, there is greater scope for small problems to fester and for larger problems occasionally to explode, as they did during spring 2003. This suggests that the United States, at least intermittently and probably on average, will be a more difficult partner than in times past, regardless of the administration of the day.

Let us turn now to France. French political elite, including the most senior officials of the French government, have explicitly framed discussions of foreign policy in terms of balancing American power, as the chapter in this volume by Georges-Henri Soutou describes. Of course it may seem odd that an alliance would be aimed at containing the power of one of its members, as opposed to an external foe. But there is an important precedent in the complex machinations of the Cold War Atlantic partnership: one of the principal aims of NATO, after all, was to contain West German political and military independence. Even so, this objective always remained implicit: it is difficult to imagine even an Adenauer persuading his countrymen to accept engagement in an institution whose publicly stated purpose was to limit German sovereignty. The French foreign policy establishment therefore wisely exercised sustained discretion throughout the Cold War in pursuing one agenda while proclaiming another.

But in the longstanding French debate about global politics that preceded the Iraq crisis (and indeed has characterized Chirac’s statements about the international political system since the mid-1990s), no such discretion was apparent. Quite the opposite, in fact: the establishment of a multipolar world system in which American political and military pre-eminence could be effectively challenged has now been an avowed objective of French foreign policy for at least eight years. Since it is not hard to imagine how the public articulation of such a vision would be received by American citizens and their elected representatives, this suggests either that the French stance is not serious—that is, that the senior officials who engage in this rhetoric either do not really desire this outcome, except in a wistful

sort of way—or else that the government intends to pursue this policy outside of the Alliance. Neither conclusion bodes well for NATO.

If indeed the long-term logic of international politics is to balance against preponderant power, then the eventual formation of anti-American alliance is inevitable. But other formulations of realist theory maintain that states balance against rival threats, not power per se, in which case such an outcome is far from assured.\footnote{See for example Stephen M. Walt 1987. \textit{The Origins of Alliances}. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.} In any event, episodic but substantial crises can be expected as long as the principal interlocutors of the Atlantic relationship remain Paris and Washington, since in neither of these capitals does the political establishment believe any longer that accommodation with the other should be a guiding principle of foreign policy. While such accommodation was never popular, during the Cold War at least a critical mass of elites held that it was essential, and their will generally prevailed; that outcome is considerably less likely to obtain in the future.

What, then, about the possibility that the Federal Republic might one day reassume its traditional mediating role between the United States and France? The chapter by Hubert Zimmermann in this volume is relatively optimistic about the prospects for institutionalized collaboration between Germany (and with it the rest of the European Union) and the United States over the medium term. I am not so sanguine; now that the genie of anti-Americanism has been let out of the bottle of German domestic politics by a sitting German government, it is not clear that it can be locked up once more. Future debates within the Federal Republic will take place within a much more elastic international policy environment, as discussed earlier, but also against the historical backdrop of Schroeder’s precedent; thus not only have structural circumstances changed, the German electorate’s awareness of those circumstances has changed as well. Cooperation across a wide range of measures should nonetheless be expected, given the deep and ever-growing economic ties that reach across the Atlantic. But the prospects for periodic clashes of the Schroeder-Bush variety cannot be dismissed, and will therefore colour calculations on both sides.

Nevertheless, there are clear signs that both the German government and the Federal Republic’s political establishment more generally have had second thoughts about realigning Berlin decisively away from Washington and towards Paris. These second thoughts could in due course assume any of several different forms. Indeed, the trauma of breaking with the Americans on such a critical issue as Iraq may make it easier for the Federal Republic to assert its eventual independence from France as well. By this I do not mean a breakdown in the close collaboration that has been the hallmark of European integration; rather, I mean that Germans may some day feel able to publicly assert, within the context of continued European integration, a national position that is diametrically at odds with central French aspirations (just as Berlin asserted publicly, within the context of continued NATO cooperation, its opposition to American policy in Iraq).

In other words, the Federal Republic managed to break with the Americans on a key issue without endangering European security; a future German government may likewise one day decide that they are able to break with the French without threatening the project of European integration. This would represent a revolution in European relations whose repercussions would be felt across the Atlantic. Another possibility, perhaps more likely, is that instead of visible confrontation, behind-the-scenes consultations between Germany and France will once again exert a moderating effect on French policy. While London and, more recently, Warsaw have hoped to exert that sort of influence, neither of these capitals plays the central role in French global calculations that Berlin does. This position provides the Federal Republic with pivotal influence. More so than in any other European state, a future German government could become the mediator of a new Atlantic dialogue and a revitalized Atlantic alliance.

The irony of this is unmistakable. Germany was the target of the Grand Alliance of the mid-twentieth century, and containing Germany was a principal task of the anti-Soviet coalition that
formed in the wake of the anti-Nazi war. Now the foreign policy decisions of a democratic and reunified Germany, decisions that will be made in the context of unprecedented room for domestic and international manoeuvre, will be a central factor in determining the shape of international politics in the 21st century. But while Germany is destined to play a decisive role in the future of the Atlantic alliance, it is not yet clear what that role will be, nor is it evident that the present German government knows what it wants to accomplish in its international policy. Under such circumstances, even inaction becomes a policy choice; it may turn out that the ‘decisive’ German role will simply be to permit relations between France and the United States to deteriorate further, in a predictable series of future clashes between Paris and Washington. If so, the existing institutions of the Atlantic community, already deeply strained, will erode further and may eventually break.

The dispute over the Bush administration’s plans to unseat Saddam laid bare these tensions among the Atlantic allies, but it did not create them; indeed the roots of the current problems have been evident and growing for over a decade. But whereas a favourable confluence of temporary circumstances once mitigated an Atlantic crisis, many of those same circumstances have since come to exacerbate it. A skilled and attractive US president has been replaced by one who is, at least in European eyes, profoundly unsympathetic, and a series of military conflicts meeting with Europe’s general approval have been followed by a contest that was deeply unpopular. As a result, the deep rifts at the heart of the Atlantic community, rifts that were previously latent, have been laid bare.

The result is an international system in flux, with no new Atlantic equilibrium yet evident—that is, no new and mutually beneficial meshing of national strategies among the Atlantic partners around a framework for political, security and economic relations that, like its counterpart from the Cold War era, is likely to prove sustainable over at least the medium term. Such an equilibrium might well be established once more, but restoration of a strategic balance built around the previous Atlantic framework is unlikely. The strategic basis of that framework is now dead; constructing a new and vital alliance from its ashes will require both concerted effort and creative thinking. This volume is a first step in the process of that rethinking, a stock-taking exercise characterized by a combination of historical and political analysis.

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