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Political Unity of the West?
Four Scenarios of North Atlantic Futures

Ulrich Krotz

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE

ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

TRANSATLANTIC PROGRAMME

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For further information:
Transatlantic Programme
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
European University Institute
Via delle Fontanelle, 19
50016 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), Italy

Fax: + 39 055 4685 770
E-mail: atlantic@eui.eu

http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Research/transatlantic/Index.shtml

Abstract

Will future historians write about the last half-decade of the twentieth and the first half-decade of the twenty-first century as the beginning of the end of political unity of the West? If it will not be a more or less politically unified West, what will it be like? The breaking up of the North Atlantic world, "the West," into two or more parts could constitute an international structural transformation of the magnitude of the end of the Cold War. This paper explores the main forces shaping the North Atlantic order at the beginning of the new millennium. Thereby the paper develops four scenarios of North Atlantic futures and assesses the likelihood of each to become reality: continued (or regained) political unity of the West; Europe as a unitary and autonomous actor in world politics; North Atlantic politics as dominated by various bi- and minilateral groupings; and renationalization. The paper finds that the loosening and weakening of pan-Western cohesion is likely to last. The emergence of a full international actor Europe is plausible longer-term, but not yet likely in the quarter century ahead. Bilateral configurations will play significant roles in the area's future, but are not able to supply a full-blown institutional future all by themselves. A more strongly re-nationalized regional system remains possible if pan-Western cohesion further wanes, and if the drive toward a high politics actor Europe stalls or falters. The North Atlantic world has entered a messy transition period leading toward reconfigurations of basic regional institutional practices.

Keywords

Introduction[*]

Will future historians, when looking back at the last half-decade of the twentieth and the first few years of the twenty-first century, write about these years as the time when the North Atlantic world, "the West," began to disintegrate? Are we living through the beginning of the end of the political unity of the West? If there is no longer *one* West, what will be the future defining features of North Atlantic politics?

These questions are significant for both political and theoretical reasons. The breaking up of the West into two or more pieces, or the enduring loosening of Western coherence in foreign and security affairs, could constitute an international political structural transformation of the magnitude of the collapse of the Cold War's strategic bipolarity. Such a break, evidently, will be the result of the political processes that brought it about. Simultaneously and in turn, however, such a break will have important structuring effects in itself. The fate of the North Atlantic community, "the West," is likely to be one of the key factors shaping world politics in the twenty-first century.

However, "renationalization" is not the only possible alternative to a more or less politically unified West. The history of the future harbors other possibilities with different historical foundations that may be more likely than either Western unity or renationalization. But scrutinizing the plausibility of different futures does not necessarily mean pitting political realism against constructivism or liberalism, or specific versions of each against another. For example, factors pushing for future scenarios other than One West or renationalization may very well be realist, although not necessarily structural realist. Alternatively, the basic shape and likelihood of distinct future scenarios may best be captured by variable degrees of analytic eclecticism.[1]

Investigating the forces that affect North Atlantic international affairs also means studying what makes some parts of the world hang together or fall apart (Ruggie 1998b). France, GATT-WTO, and the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom have hung together. They did not fall apart. The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, the Warsaw Pact, and Czechoslovakia did not hang together. They did fall apart. What will happen to the North Atlantic West?

In probably the most cited and most hotly debated political paper of the 1990s, Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations?" took for granted that the future would bring one West, and in subsequent writings its author advocated intra-Western cohesion policies (Huntington 1993, 1996, 1999). Interestingly enough, among the views that Huntington apparently shared with his many and very diverse "Civilizations" critics was the assumption that "one West" would persist in the future.[2] The second most debated paper of the time shared the premise. Holding that history had ended

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1 For different brands of realism, see Kapstein and Mastanduno (1999); Mearsheimer (2001:chapters 1 and 2); Rose (1998). For diverse liberal currents in international affairs and foreign policy, see Doyle (1997:Part Two); Moravcsik (1997); Zacher and Matthew (1995). On variants of social constructivism and its diverse uses in international relations, see Ruggie (1998a); Wendt (1999); Finnemore and Sikkink (2001). On "analytic eclecticism," see Katzenstein and Sil (2004).

2 Compare, for example, the various contributions in *Foreign Affairs* 72(4), September/October 1993.

because democracy and capitalism were left without serious competitors, Francis Fukuyama, fearing end-historical boredom, seemingly assumed that the West would go global (Fukuyama 1989).

As an organizing concept, "the West," along with the "North Atlantic area," the "Euro-Atlantic world," or "Atlanticism," is a rather recent invention. As a political marker of an entity or community of sorts, it emerged fully during the 1940s, yet quickly gained currency and cardinal prominence (Bailyn 2005; Jackson 2006; Katzenstein 2005; Kupchan 2002a: chapters 2 and 4; O'Hagan 2002).[3] Conceptually, it became central with the incipient and evolving Cold War, denoting the ensemble of those free and democratic states in the North Atlantic area broadly, who, under the leadership of the United States, opposed "the East" or the Warsaw Pact under the tutelage of the Soviet Union. Indeed, as an institutional sketch, "the West" became so robust that, by the time the Cold War receded into history along with the imploding Soviet Union and the collapsing bloc of socialist bureaucratism, many scholars, observers, and practitioners took it almost for granted that it would provide the organizational outline of the area's future and a pillar of international politics at large.[4]

And yet, what for many went almost without saying only some decade ago, no longer does. The unity of the North Atlantic world is no longer a future to be taken for granted, and the "One West" assumption might not hold. Over the course of some ten years, the One West blueprint has come under such pressure that more than one thoughtful observer of North Atlantic affairs has not only begun to question its viability, but has declared it superseded altogether (Andrews 2005b; Daalder 2003; Fukuyama 2004; Kagan 2002; Kagan 2004; Kupchan 2002b). What has happened?

Much has happened, particularly between the United States and "Europe"—between the United States and one or more European states; between the U.S. in coalition with some European states and groups of others; or between the U.S. and the EU or other European organizations. In retrospect, future historians might identify the first signs of drift crystallizing around the mid-1990s over finding common Atlanticist positions toward the escalating crises and piecemeal break-up of the former Yugoslavia, with its various political, military, and legal issues, its mass slaughterings, rapes, and humanitarian disasters (Ramet 2005; Ullman 1996).

Transatlantic quarrels, irritations, tensions, and open disagreements multiplied and aggravated during the second half of the 1990s and the turn of the century. They included differences over the role of the United Nations and of international law in world politics; the meaning and exercise of power; the use and role of force; the authority of the International Criminal Court; the Kyoto protocol on curbing greenhouse gases and other issues of environmental degradation; genetically modified food; the role and the meaning of NATO; the development of tactical nuclear weapons; various strategic and tactical reflexes on a whole range of important questions or developments; differences on a series of arms treaties on land mines, nuclear test bans, and the enforcement of bans on chemical and biological nuclear weapons; and the treatment of the captives at Guantanamo Bay. The list is anything but complete (compare Lundestad 2005; Lundestad 2003:chapters 9 and 10; Pond 2003).

Transatlantic divergence and estrangement ultimately escalated and culminated in very open and sordid disagreements on the matter of Iraq between 2002 and 2004 (Cohen-Tanugi 2003; Gordon and Shapiro 2004; Pond 2005; Trachtenberg 2005), including sharp intra-Western clashes in the UN Security Council. Euro-Atlantic irritation and alienation continued after the Iraq fallouts, with discussions among some Europeans of the possibility of lifting the EU arms embargo against China (Casarini 2006:section 3). Attempts to atone or mend transatlantic rifts have remained incomplete or only partially successful.

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3   I use the terms "the West," "North Atlantic West," "Euro-Atlantic region" or "Euro-Atlantic area," "North Atlantic community," and so on, interchangeably for what is commonly viewed as the North Atlantic area. In the present usage, membership roughly includes the current NATO- and EU-members. Inclusion or exclusion of disputable borderline cases in this North Atlantic West does not affect this paper's analyses or arguments.

4   Exceptions included Harries (1993); Mearsheimer (1990).

With a series of bitter disagreements on major policy issues and a range of apparently deeper, underlying developments nourishing centrifugal tendencies, the North Atlantic world has shown serious signs of fissure. As we enter the twenty-first century, the "unity of the West" is no longer a reliable fixpoint for thinking about world politics—nor is it the monopolizing conceptual blueprint of the area's institutional future. Today, it is only one scenario among others. How likely is the continued or regained political unity of the West as a future? If it is not more or less unified, what will it look like?

This paper takes stock of the main forces to shape the area's major political configurations. Thereby, attempting to sketch the universe of the conceivable and realistic, the paper develops four scenarios of North Atlantic futures: continued (or regained) political unity of the West; Europe as a unitary and autonomous actor in world politics; North Atlantic politics dominated by various bi- and minilateral groupings; and renationalization. The paper explores the factors, causes, and reasons that favor and undermine the emergence of these scenarios respectively, assessing the likelihood and plausibility of each. The paper's considerations operate with a time horizon of some two or three decades ahead.

The analysis of the main forces shaping the North Atlantic's institutional outline at the beginning of the new millennium suggests that the loosening and weakening of intra-Western unity is likely to last. The rise of a cohesive Europe, next to the U.S. generating a second largely autonomous international actor out of the Cold War's old West, would constitute a break with the former order and appears a plausible North Atlantic future some decades off. But the emergence of a full international actor Europe is not yet likely in the quarter century ahead. Sturdy and flexible bi- and minilateral configurations will play significant roles in the area's future. But by themselves they are not able to supply a full-blown institutional future. A more strongly re-nationalized regional system is not imminent, but remains possible if pan-Western cohesion further wanes, and if the drive toward a high politics actor Europe stalls or falters. The North Atlantic world has entered a messy transition period in which a multiplicity of forces propels the area toward reconfigurations of basic regional institutional practices.

The future always remains underdetermined. But that does not necessarily render reflection about things ahead mere speculation. The future is connected to the present, and possible futures cast their shadows on current affairs. Various futures imply different observable implications in the present. They provide varied indicators that argue for or against their ultimate arrival. Being empirically accessible, the present in some ways allows us to evaluate the probability and plausibility of different possible futures.

This paper bases its inquiries on two main empirical sources that offer indicators or evidence-of-sorts for its arguments and evaluations. First, the paper draws on the multitude of political experiences, events, developments, and tendencies in the North Atlantic area since the end of the Cold War as empirical support for or against the likelihood of possible futures. Second, it focuses on the presently identifiable factors and political forces that are likely to have causal impact on North Atlantic affairs in the time ahead, analyzing their probable effects on the shape of future politics in the area. Combining both sources of empirical indication and making use of any available evidence, the paper aspires to assess the likelihood that various North Atlantic future scenarios will become reality. Thereby the paper draws on quite diverse findings and arguments of a wide range of (frequently fairly specific) writings and inquiries.

Scenarios clarify what might be. They sharpen the features of possible realities that otherwise remain vague or unarticulated. Scenarios persuade us about the plausibility of more than one future and help us to suspend disbelief in what might be unfamiliar or perhaps uncomfortable. They are learning devices focusing our attention on the possible. Scenaric thinking also closely ties into policy-making. Scenarios are the bases for preparing the future. And they serve as guides for steering one's way and for formulating courses of action apt to promote the realization of some future or to prevent

the arrival of others. Scenaric thinking very much is the stuff of foreign ministries and policy planners proper.[5]

This paper generates empirically informed thinking about the institutional foundations of relations among the North Atlantic states, as critical features of North Atlantic politics in the time to come. It will not predict single events or specific occurrences. Based on what we can know today, the paper offers empirically rooted discussions of the credibility and contingencies of different possible futures, understood as historical conjunctures of certain predominant basic institutional practices and distinct institutional arrangements.[6]

Continued or Regained Political Unity of the West

The "unity of the West" scenario is based on the principle that the North Atlantic community remains the key referent of organizing political processes and actions in foreign policy, security, and defense for the states of the Euro-Atlantic region. The future edition of the broadly multilateral North Atlantic system that United States governments built in the aftermath of the Second World War, this scenario implies that the North Atlantic world holds together in times of crisis and in the face of major political challenge.[7] This regional order, no matter how renovated or updated, remains the baseline of this scenario's institutional makeup (Deudney and Ikenberry 1999; Lundestad 1998; Ruggie 1993; Trachtenberg 1999).

As the series of incidents, tensions, and outright differences indicates, Western political unity, as a functioning arrangement and credible institutional future, has come under increasing pressure over the past decade or so. However, what is *not* new are cross-Atlantic disagreements, either between the United States and the EU; the U.S. and one or more European states; or between the U.S. aligned with some European states and one or more others.[8] Such (occasionally fierce) disagreements have included the Suez crisis; France's departure from NATO's integrated NATO military command; issues of nuclear deterrence strategy; issues of conventional defense doctrine; NATO's 1979 "double track" decision and subsequent missile stationing; and others.[9]

However, two novelties seem to set the past years apart from the decades before. The first is the range of disagreements. In the past, there have frequently been one or a few issues of transatlantic contention at a time. But typically these were specific and delimited areas of disagreement. Recently, disagreements seem multiple and span a wide spectrum of political issues. There has not been one issue or cluster of issues, and there is not one theme subsuming the items of dissonance. The differences are comprehensive, intricate, and variegated. Many are of major importance and are unlikely to be transitory. And they seem to combine and exacerbate one another. The second novelty is the vitriol and acrimony, at times perhaps outright disdain on both sides of the Atlantic.[10] Somehow, the tone when talking about and to one another seems to have changed. At a certain point, style becomes substance.

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5 For a methodological outline informing the present study, see Weber (1996).

6 For related ways of thinking about history and the future as structural or institutional conjunctures, see Koselleck (2004). For similar exercises, compare Friedberg (1993/94); Gilpin (1975); Mearsheimer (1990); Van Evera (1990).

7 Rather than whether war might again be realistic or even thinkable within the North Atlantic area, the key issue is whether the West coheres – particularly in times of strain – or whether inter-state ties in the area weaken in ways that commonly it will not.

8 Note that all of these combinations are possible, and we have seen all of them over the past years and decades. "Europe" is not a political monolith and only sometimes acts as if it were. That is true also when it comes to transatlantic disagreements and squabbles.

9 Compare, for example, DePorte (1987); Kissinger (1966); Lundestad (2003); Lundestad (1998); Trachtenberg (2003); Trachtenberg (1999).

10 On both aspects, see especially Ash (2004b); Pond (2003).

Scholars have gone to great lengths in scrutinizing the factors, forces, and arguments that speak for or against continued or regained Western unity in high politics.[11] As of now, the record is multi-faceted and intricate. It does not offer a simple answer. While perhaps premature to fully declare the West historically obsolete or irreversibly moribund, intra-Western political ties have loosened and weakened. They are ridden with difficulties to the point that as an institutional future, Western unity has become progressively questionable.

Factors, Forces, Developments in Favor of Pan-Western Stability

There are still powerful forces working toward upholding or regaining Western political unity. Yet, each of the main factors in favor of this scenario now comes with at least some cause for caution or skepticism. *First*, functional pressures and instrumental necessities to cooperate and stick together on a dependable basis abound. They include such Herculean tasks as counteracting transnational terrorism; curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; dealing with failed states and nation-building; managing regional conflicts and regional stabilization; fighting organized cross-border crime; stabilizing and managing the world economy; curbing global environmental degradation; fighting poverty in less-developed countries; among others (Andreas and Nadelmann 2006; Brown, Coté, Lynn-Jones, and Miller 2004; Gordon 2003; Krasner and Pascual 2005; Ott 2001). There is little question that addressing these challenges with one Western voice would increase the chance of success. There also is little question that even partial success in any of these tasks would benefit all North Atlantic states and citizens.

Yet, there are reasons for skepticism regarding the unmediated impact of instrumental necessities on Western unity. Recent North Atlantic experiences strongly suggest that broad functional pressures have limitations in holding together the governments of the diverse North Atlantic states. In many instances, they have not proven effective. Moreover, there are significantly different views across states regarding exactly what the problems are and how best to approach them (compare, for example, Katzenstein 2003; Moravcsik 2003; Walt 1998/99).

Second, economic interdependence, economic interpenetration, and costs of protracted tensions or even rupture. In economic terms, protracted tensions will be costly, and the price of rift could be immense. The North Atlantic area is a deeply integrated economic space, and the area's national economies interpenetrate in manifold ways (Hamilton and Quinlan 2005; Kahler 2005; Quinlan 2003). Economically induced political interests, deriving from this "largely symmetric economic interdependence between Europe and the United States" (Kahler 2005:99), should lead North Atlantic states to hold together and to settle their differences and disputes. Perhaps, then, this is the time of economic interdependence and economic interpenetration. The opportunity costs of rupture hold cohesive effects.

However, again, it is not self-evident that this putative force will find its way in an unmitigated fashion. The relative impact of costs and opportunity costs under various conditions and contingencies remains an intricate issue. Norman Angell was right in his 1910 contention that war in Europe had become so costly that it would hardly pay; indeed, Europe's twentieth century wars did *not* pay (Angell 1910).[12] Recent events suggest that the North Atlantic dwellers seem willing to risk paying significant prices for political differences. Moreover, deep economic integration in the North Atlantic area may persist even in the absence of political unity or alongside increasing political splintering.

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11 Significant recent writings on transatlantic relations include Andrews (2005a); Ash (2004a); Cox (2005); Kagan (2004); Kagan (2002); Katzenstein (2005); Kupchan (2002a); Lindberg (2004a); Lundestad (2003); Moravcsik (2003); Risse (2003); Patten (2006); Walt (2004); Walt (1998/1999); Weidenfeld (2006). See these diverse works also for discussions of the multiplicity of forces and reasons speaking for or against continued or regained Western unity (or prospects for renewal) at breadth and depth greater than is possible within the confines of the present inquiry.

12 For a different view on the "spoils of conquest," however, see Liberman (1995).

And the economic costs of such political splintering may be dampened through careful separation of different spheres of life and policy.

Third, North Atlantic institutions and organizations. The North Atlantic area is densely institutionalized, covered with a set of interconnecting and partially overlapping international organizations that include NATO, the OSCE, and the various G-groups (G-5, G-7, etc.). Organizations are in place. They may be reanimated, restored, or adjusted in order to increase their functionality. In security and defense and arguably well beyond, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been by far the most important organizational frame for North Atlantic cooperation and cohesion.[13] It has been called the most successful military organization of all time. Holding political power in addition to its military and defense functions, NATO has been a centerpiece of Western institutional unity.

NATO's fate might be pivotal for the relevance of this first scenario, and NATO's future will be both a determinant and an indicator of this scenario's well being. In particular, NATO's state and standing over the past decade or so provides reason for caution regarding this third factor of cementing or restoring the political unity of the West. NATO today lacks a clear mission, a generally accepted vision, a sense of direction, and a patent purpose (compare Haglund 2003; Lepgold 2001). Whatever it might be at present, it is not the highly integrated defensive war machine that it was during the Cold War. Neither is it the military arm of a politically more or less unified West. With all of its internal workings, mechanisms, and purported elements of collective belonging, NATO does not play the central role in addressing the key security challenges of the early twenty-first century. It plays, for example, only a subsidiary role in America's war on terror, and an even more limited role in European efforts to fabricate a more robust and reliable European voice in international affairs. That "missions define coalitions" is only partially compatible with classic NATO spirit. And the NATO-as-toolbox approach bears dangers of marginalization and weakening through simple neglect.

Fourth, volume and density of interactions and transactions within the area. Next to inter-state contacts at the top governmental or diplomatic levels and economic interdependence narrowly, "the West" as it has evolved over the twentieth century's second half comprises a broad variety and different layers of connections and interactions. These include remarkable volumes of dense trans-polity interactions; social communication; parapublic processes; and transgovernmental contacts. They comprise stunning volumes of e-mails, phone calls, letters, and other more or less robust sets of communication and interchange; intra-regional travels and various other connections among peoples; student and other educational exchanges; town and regional twinnings; and numerous other components (compare Deutsch 1954; Deutsch et al. 1957; Krotz 2007; Schweigler 1997; Slaughter 2005). Whether formally organized or informal, such variegated sets of transactions can contribute to making some parts of the world hang together. As large-scale processes, they may give regions of dense interactions an organic element to support cohesion. Such various sets of connections may engender degrees of "responsiveness" among the states and peoples in the area, expressed, for example, in attention to the others' affairs and difficulties. They also may generate a sense of "we"-ness, even if tenuous (Deutsch et al. 1957; Krotz 2007; Lindberg 2004b; Schweigler 1997).

Such social, transgovernmental, or parapublic trans-polity interchanges and contacts are significant. Yet, whether they (alone) can decisively provide for Western political unity is questionable. They seem to take on particular causal importance in association with other factors. In addition, there is little indication that even dense interactions of great volume will significantly dampen or eradicate various sorts of national stereotypes or antipathies (transatlantic or intra-European); anti-Americanism in Europe; or anti-Europeanism in America.

Fifth, shared values. On a fundamental plane, the North Atlanticians share the same basic values. Europeans and Americans are democratic; they share a commitment to granting basic liberties, the rule

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13 The North Atlantic Treaty (1949). For diverse discussions of NATO's (potential) role and relevance, see Robertson (2003); Weber (1993); Wörner (1991).

of law, and the basics of human dignity (Gordon 2003; Kennedy and Bouton 2002; Moravcsik 2003; Solana 2003).

And yet, even here there is reason for caution. On a broad and general plane, safely to encompass the entire area, there seems nothing necessarily Atlanticist about values that Americans and European might have in common. "Stability, security, wealth" are values to which many states and people around the globe will subscribe. In reverse, the more concretely one tries to articulate value positions inclusive of such large groups, the messier the matter becomes. Specific entitlements of individual liberties; views of the welfare state or individual transfer entitlements; or attitudes toward capital punishment are surely value orientations. Yet they are hardly uniformly shared within the West. Political liberalism, for example, and the centrality of individual freedom never took root in many continental European countries in the same way that they remain deeply anchored in and central to American and British life. If the focus is specific, there are significant value differences (or at least deep contestations) within the North Atlantic West (Alesina, Di Tella, and MacCulloch 2004; Danchev 2005; Di Tella and Dubra 2006; Di Tella and MacCulloch 2006; Kennedy and Bouton 2002).[14]

Factors, Forces, Developments Against

Beyond the reasons for caution regarding the factors and forces working toward continued or regained political unity of the West, there are factors and developments that are likely to exert causal impact against the emergence of the One West scenario as the North Atlantic institutional future. *First*, the disappearance of the Soviet and Warsaw Pact threats. This factor might be an underlying, permissive cause rather than a substantive, efficient one. But as a permissive cause it entails considerable implications. It leaves divisive forces within the West (comprising very diverse factors) less checked and allows centrifugal tendencies to exert causal impact of greater vigor than they could have in the face of the common threat. Some forty thousand Soviet nuclear warheads and thirty-five thousand Warsaw Pact tanks furnished strong glue for Western cohesion. The disappearance of the threat removed that externally provided adhesive (Andrews 2005c; Harries 1993; Walt 1998/99).[15]

Second, different world views, outlooks, and basic attitudes. This is a collection of various factors and aspects that come in different shades. It connects to values, including significant differences on what is normal and what literally goes without saying. Differences among Americans and at least some Europeans, as well as among Europeans, seem to comprise the significance, nature, and implications of state sovereignty; the nature of international affairs; attitudes toward the exercise of power and the use of force; incongruent threat perceptions; world order issues; the role of international law and institutions; environmental issues; capital punishment; individual liberty entitlements; and political-economic organization.[16] Such different worldviews and perhaps value variances appear as the root of many more specific symptoms of North Atlantic drift, apparently generating more specific disagreements. Indeed, there is great confusion about what are symptoms of drift and what are their underlying deeper causes.

Third, demographic changes in the United States. This longer-term development has various aspects. For one, demographically, the United States is moving West and South. The proportions of

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14 Again, this is not necessarily to argue that "Europe" was one bloc and discernible differences existed only between the two sides of the Atlantic taken as wholes.

15 Note that for the point here it does not matter whether one prefers to consider the Cold War's strategic bipolarity a distribution of brute material capabilities, a bipolar structure or threat, or a social structure of systemic interaction that ceased to exist with the interactions that reproduced it over time. For representative formulations of each view, see Waltz (1979); Walt (1987); Wendt (1999).

16 Compare Di Tella and Dubra (2006); Di Tella and MacCulloch (2006); Fukuyama (2004); Kagan (2004); Kagan (2002); Keohane (2002); Kupchan (2002b); Lundestad (2003:chapter 10). Again, although there seem to be marked differences in basic attitudes cross-Atlantic, Europe itself is not a uniform bloc on any of these issues.

Americans living in states outside the Northeast or mid-Atlantic regions has risen steadily over the course of the second half of the twentieth century. (California, not New York, for example, has been the most populous state for decades now.) Numbers and proportions aside, Americans in the populous areas of the South and West are often less interested in or more unattached to Europe than is traditionally the case in the Northeast. Overall, the move to the South and West creates a different America from an East Coast-dominated United States oriented toward Europe. Moreover, U.S. elite composition is changing and diversifying. Leaders in the middle and higher foreign affairs echelons and other public or societal areas are increasingly individuals with origins or ties elsewhere than Europe. The share and overall influence of the traditional East Coast elites with connections to Europe, paying attention to European affairs and ways, is shrinking. These and related demographic changes are longer-term processes that are unlikely to leave intra-Western affairs unaffected.[17]

Fourth, overall, the attitudes and views of American political and cultural elites toward Europe appear to be changing. "[F]or most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries American suspicion of things European was mixed with admiration and fascination," and traces of a cultural inferiority complex. Both the admiration and the sense of inferiority have faded, if not ceased or reversed altogether.[18] America's declaration of cultural independence from Europe might fall somewhere in the years between the crumbling of Yugoslavia and the repercussions of Iraq II. American cultural prowess and self-confidence seems to be increasingly founded in opposition to Europe (Lepenies 2006)—or simply with utmost indifference to it.

Fifth, generational changes. Americans who fought in the war in Europe or who lived and worked in Cold War Europe during Western opposition to Sovietism have or will soon retire. The same holds for Europeans who have spent their professional lives working closely with Americans during the Cold War years of deep Western involvement. With them go the generations to whom the transatlantic connection was politically and personally central. In addition, some generations after emigration or immigration, cross-Atlantic family ties are waning. With them fades a sense of cross-Atlantic commonality and belonging. This applies to Americans with European roots, just as to Europeans with (distant) relatives in the United States. New generations with different formative experiences and backgrounds, for whom the Euro-Atlantic connection is not central to their personal or political lives, are successively entering public and private leadership positions.[19]

Sixth, anti-Americanism in Europe and anti-Europeanism in America. Recent degrees of admissible anti-Americanism in Europe and of respectable anti-Europeanism in America have been striking and puzzling (Ash 2004b; Ash 2004a:chapter 2; Hoffmann 2001; Katzenstein and Keohane 2007; Pond 2003). Furthermore, rather than being confined to isolated quarters on the left or right, anti-Americanism in Europe seems recently to have stretched much more broadly across the political spectrum. And both anti-Americanism in Europe and anti-Europeanism in America, although in different shades, have apparently involved elites and wider publics alike.

Seventh, absences, non-issues, non-projects. Non-issues and non-projects further indicate the weakening of the "unity of the West" precept. Three absences are particularly striking. First, there is little talk of Atlanticians as roughly the same people, of approximately the same stock, who share much history and common experience. Whether all accurate is beside the point; but one could put things that way. Second, references to common achievements—for example, having won the Cold War together—seem almost entirely absent from North Atlanticians' thinking. Third, there is bafflingly little discussion of major joint projects of the West as a whole. Rebuilding and finding a future for the Middle East could be such a major project. But it is not framed as a matter to challenge

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17 Compare Ash (2004a:chapter 3); Kahler (2005:96-97); Lundestad (2003:291-292); Walt (1998/99).

18 In particular, see Ash (2004b:quote from page 130). For similar impressions, compare Lepenies (2006).

19 On aspects of generational change, compare Rodman (1999); Walt (1998/99).

the potential of a single West. This is neither how the North Atlanticians frame things nor how they seem to think of them (Drozdiak et al. 2004; Kaye 2003/2004).

Eighth, recent experience on the range, depth, vigor, and bitterness of possible disagreement. The recently witnessed intensity and breadth of difference and discord, in spite of pertinent functional reasons to stick together; economic interdependence and high (opportunity) costs of rupture; well funded joint institutions; varied layers and sorts of high density interaction; and shared basic values, remains remarkable. Vigorous fallouts can be sanitizing and rejuvenating. Whether the recent transatlantic conflicts will prove so, remains questionable.

Overall Assessment of Likelihood

There are significant forces exerting causal impact toward regained political unity of the West. Pan-Western revitalization is not altogether inconceivable. Renewal or renovation remains possible.[20] But all of the reasons in favor, to different degrees, now come with grains of caution. And there are significant forces undermining the scenario's credibility as North Atlantic blueprint for the future. Major components of this future are highly likely to remain in place. But the One West outline as a central organizational frame for the states in the region, providing the defining features of the area's international relations, has come under increasing pressure. As an institutional design of a coherent future, the political unity of the West has become increasingly implausible.

Europe as Unitary Actor

The second future scenario sees Europe as a more or less unified actor in the domains of traditional high politics.[21] In this scenario, Europe acts on the international stage on a steady and dependable basis. The critical difference between this second scenario and "unity of the West" is that the central frame of reference in foreign affairs, security, and defense for the Europeans is not the Euro-Atlantic community, but "Europe." In this scenario, for the Europeans, the North Atlantic referent remains subordinate.

In some policy domains, such as trade and customs, European actorhood is firmly established. Occasional transatlantic trade disputes in agriculture, aircraft, services, or steel, among others, between the European Union and the United States illustrate the point (Meunier 2005; Henning and Meunier 2005). In competition policy and finance, the European Commission authoritatively acts for Europe in both internal and external policy aspects (Abdelal 2007:chapter 4; Majoras 2005). The Euro-zone states have transferred monetary policy to the European Central Bank, an autonomous supranational institution (McNamara and Meunier 2002; Savage 2005). In a formidable range of economic and other regulatory policy areas, pan-European actorhood is fully instituted or well advanced and presumably durable.

But scenario two also requires robust European actorhood in the areas of traditional high politics, foreign policy, security, and defence. Policies in these domains did not necessarily have to be "single," but generally they had to be "common." Europe had to hold together in stormy political times and on matters of highest stakes.

There is increasing political and scholarly recognition that, in institutional terms, European actorhood in high politics differs from the American-made post-World War II One West design, with the United States simultaneously integrated in an Atlantic framework and final arbiter in decisive questions of security and defense. There also is growing comprehension that full or even increased

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20 Compare Asmus (2003); Lindberg (2004b); Moravcsik (2003); Walt (2004).

21 I further develop this scenario from a both historical and theoretical perspective on European integration in the areas of foreign, security, and defense policy in Krotz (forthcoming).

European actorhood and One West will not necessarily offer entirely compatible modes of ordering high politics—autonomous European actorhood, for example, is likely to generate tensions with the NATO model of organizing security and defense in the North Atlantic area (Cimbalo 2004; Cox 2005; Kupchan 2002a:chapter 4; Ojanen 2006).

However, this scenario does not imply statements about levels of discord or cooperation between a single-Europe-as-actor and the United States. There might or might not be high levels of collaboration between the two. But either way, Europe would act as a cohesive unit in world affairs, and it would do so autonomously from the United States. In terms of basic institutional practices, this is a world different from that of scenario one.

Powerful forces work toward the emergence of this scenario, and powerful forces undermine its arrival. The advent of a full-grown international actor Europe is plausible longer-term. But in the quarter century ahead, Europe only will emerge as an actor-of-sorts in select foreign policy matters of delimited range.

Factors, Forces, Developments in Favor

Four main factors hold causal impact favorable to this scenario's emergence. *First*, many Europeans like it. When asked whether in favor of Europe playing a more prominent or visible role in international politics, strikingly large numbers of Europeans tend to respond affirmatively.[22] Their reasons might be diverse and not fully compatible or entirely free of contradictions, and they may include differing kinds and degrees of concrete or diffuse sorts of anti-Americanism. Foreign policy leanings among larger publics might also be subject to fair degrees of volatility. However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, many Europeans favor a more pronounced European stance in international affairs, security, and defense.

Beyond public opinion polling, both among European administrative elites and within Europe's wider publics, "more Europe" in foreign policy, security, and defense is generally considered something valuable and desirable (compare Vennesson et al. 2006). As one kind of reality construction, indeed, Europe as a more unitary actor in high politics is generally seen as something "good," including by many who do not consider it very likely. In fact, the reality construction of this "good" seems literally to almost go without saying. Such concepts that are understood, and that are largely taken for granted, are among the most powerful. In reverse, Europe's incapacity to speak with one voice or to act in concert is generally considered "bad," a problem to be addressed and a deficiency to be eliminated (compare, for example, K. Smith 2003; M. Smith 2003).

Second, the administrative elites and functionaries of the various EU organs clearly work toward increasing EU actorhood in high politics and aim at establishing the EU as an independent and autonomous force in that sphere. Recently, the European Union has formulated general strategic objectives and called for a "more active," "more capable," and "more coherent" EU foreign and security policy (European Security Strategy 2003); a "world player" (European Commission 2004) aiming at greater "coherence, effectiveness, and visibility" as well as "leverage in support of external goals" in foreign policy and security and defense matters (Commission of the European Communities 2006).

Third, piecemeal progression toward increased European actorhood seems to have remarkable long-term evolutionary tenacity. From the European Political Cooperation (EPC) of the 1970s, via the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU) establishing a "Common Foreign and Security Policy" (CFSP) (even if only on paper), and the incipient European Security Defense Policy (ESDP) of the Amsterdam Treaty, European political actorhood has progressed unsteadily (Hill and Smith 2000;

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22 See, for example, Eurobarometer 66 (December 2006: 22-27); Eurobarometer 64 (June 2006:103-107); Eurobarometer 59 (July 2003:1-4).

Howorth 2005; M. Smith 2003; W. Wallace 2005; see further Cremona 2004). It has remained fragmentary and incomplete, often proving barely viable in practice. But whereas it has never fully taken off, as a process and project it has also never disappeared and in fact seems to have consolidated bit by bit. From a larger historical perspective, piecemeal evolution toward more European political actorhood appears a fragmented yet tenacious slow-moving process.[23]

Fourth, recent practices indicate an apparent gradual phasing into actorhood in small steps, through one mission and undertaking after another. Such phasing-into-actorhood-by-doing, even if of still delimited scale, has clearly gained momentum. After completed EU operations in Macedonia, Congo, and Georgia, and with a number of current operations especially in the Balkans, the signs at the beginning of the twenty-first century suggest more, rather than less "actor Europe" in international affairs.[24]

Factors, Forces, Developments Against

However, there are also significant grounds for skepticism, casting doubt on the rapid arrival of this scenario. Factors hampering the emergence of this scenario are located at the European level, at the national level, and related to various transatlantic connections.

First, the structural complexity of the EU-rooted European foreign policy apparatus will constitute an impediment to general and effective European foreign policy actorhood for an indefinite time to come. Depending on the specific matter, EU foreign policy-making may somehow involve (among others) the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; the President of the European Commission; the External Relations Commissioner; several Directorate-Generals; the Special Representatives of the EU in various countries or regions; members of the European Parliament; the Council of Ministers; the European Council; the Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs at the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union; and various representatives of the member states and national governments. Procedures and proceedings are frequently intricate and complex (de Neuilly 2005; Nuttall 2005; Vanhoonacker 2005).

Second, insufficient funding and financial overburdening will further obstruct Europe's rapid conversion into a major foreign policy and security actor (compare K. Smith 2003; M. Smith 2003; W. Wallace 2005). Decisions on spending and resource allocation are matters of political priority and will, and they may be adjusted or reversed. But changing Europe into a real security and defense actor would require very significant defense budget increases. Such European spending upsurges of the scale required are not likely in the next three decades.

Third, the European Union has to digest the shift from fifteen to twenty-seven members (compare, for example, Albi 2005; Caporaso 2000). It is not the case, as some claimed prior to the latest accessions, that nothing has changed but the number of representatives around the table. With augmented complexity, new internal challenges, and yet greater multiplicity of interests, the EU will have to enter a phase of inner consolidation. Further enlargement might not necessarily rule out increased European foreign policy actorhood; but it will surely not facilitate or accelerate it.

Fourth, notwithstanding polling results favoring more Europe in select policy areas, recent years saw a tremendous rise in anti-Brussels sentiment along with a certain Euro-fatigue. Both of these have included (not fully compatible) views that the EU-scheme had become too economically liberal (from the left); too centralizing and too bureaucratic (center-right); too aggressively undermining to national sovereignty and responsibility (right); and generally too intrusive, expansionist, and fraught with serious democratic legitimacy deficits (across the spectrum). The electoral results of the French and

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23 On slow-moving process, compare Pierson (2004).

24 Perhaps the broader and more inclusive the conception of security affairs we adopt, the more European actorhood we will witness. Compare Diez, Stetter and Albert (2006); Nicolaïdis (2004).

Dutch referenda on the constitutional treaty illustrate the waning of the European publics' "permissive consensus" to let European elites and functionaries move ahead.

For this scenario to emerge, critically, Europe has to hold together in times of crises and tensions. Much argues against such cohesion under duress as the standard procedure of the next few decades—including recent experience and a number of general considerations. *Fifth*, recent history and events indicate (EU-)Europe's difficulty, if not frequent incapacity, to hold together and to speak with one voice in major crises and policy challenges in international affairs. Since the beginning of the 1990s with the escalating crises in former Yugoslavia, through the mid-1990s with the wars and killings in Bosnia, followed by Kosovo, then Afghanistan, and Iraq, Europeans almost consistently failed to find common positions and to cohere. CFSP was Iraq's first victim. Iraq, after all, just as other crises and wars, not only tore apart Europe and America, but the Europeans themselves. There might be a European coordination reflex. But there are other reflexes, too. And the strength of the European glue remains bounded.[25]

Further than recent experiences, there are deeper forces at work, underlying factors that cast doubt on European coherence in the face of major political challenges. *Sixth*, the viability of this scenario also (especially?) requires European foreign policy unity in times of disagreement and tension between at least parts of Europe and the United States. There are reasons to expect that Europe will not hold together in such cases, at least not as a general rule. To begin with, there is the particularly close, "special" relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. Traditionally, if confronted with difficult security and defense choices between one or more of the continental Europeans on the one hand, and the United States or the open sea on the other, Britain has tended to display general inclinations toward the latter. At the very least, there is reason to doubt that Britain will choose on a regular basis in accordance with the requirements of the full European actorhood scenario (Bennett 2004; Drumbel 2003; Harris 2002).

But the point is not specifically tied to Britain. Many of the central and eastern European states, especially in security and defense, have proven staunchly Atlanticist. For historical or other reasons, when all is said and done, they prefer doses of American reassurance regarding decisive aspects of their security over exclusive European reliance. Neither necessarily anti-European nor Euro-skeptic, they enjoy some room of maneuver and the transatlantic link (compare Pehe 2003; Valášek 2005). Finally, most European states other than Britain or the central Europeans have also frequently sided with either other Europeans or with the United States over divisive transatlantic issues (Levy, Pensky, Torpey 2005; Nuti 2005).

European high politics cohesion remains fragile, and the potential for European collective identity to fuse together in security and defense remains incomplete and cumbersome, perhaps especially in times of transatlantic complications. In times of transatlantic harmony or quietude, this might not matter much. But it will make a difference in times of discord and tension, when having it both ways—the American one and some kind of European one—will not prove viable. The future is likely to hold such tests.

Seventh, there persist significantly varying national foreign policy traditions among diverse European states (compare, for example, Andreatta 2001; Krotz 2002a; Sauder 1995; Wallace 1991). And the national grip on the final say in foreign policy and security matters remains little contested. Differing national historical experiences and dominant interpretations of their meanings trigger different reflexes and inform different longer-term goals. They affect divergent sensibilities, perceptions or definitions of problems, and formulations of adequate responses to them. The same raw event does not necessarily mean the same to all Europeans or entail the same implications. The meaning of historical experiences and divergent national foreign policy proclivities are unlikely to

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25 On the wars in former Yugoslavia, see especially Hoffmann (1996). More generally, compare Gordon (1997/98); Stemplowski and Whitehead (2002).

converge or fuse very quickly. The Europeans' rules of engagement, for example, or their attitudes toward the use of force, are anything but identical and only mirror such differences. Whether such discrepancies among Europeans are really so much smaller than between the United States and "Europe," in fact, is anything but self-evident. The Europeans are not all from the same planet either (on planets, see Kagan 2004; Kagan 2002; Solana 2003.

Overall Assessment of Likelihood

Perhaps the advent of a full-grown actor "Europe" in foreign policy, security, and defense is plausible some decades off. But that this scenario will constitute the North Atlantic future in the quarter century ahead, supplying the area's defining institutional features in the near future, is not very probable. Too much still speaks and works against it. There will be rudiments of this scenario, with Europe taking on high politics actorhood-of-sorts in select instances of delimited scope. But there is not enough evidence to compellingly indicate the start of an era of a routinely and effectively coordinated *common* European foreign, security, and defense policy. There is significantly less to suggest the imminence of forged *single* European policies instituting Europe as a full-grown standard actor in these policy domains. And there is hardly anything to imply that the European states are about to relinquish the final national say in the core areas of sovereignty at the high end of traditional high politics. A unified Europe resembling anything like the actorhood of the *United* States of America remains distinctly unlikely.

Bilateral Groupings and Minilateral Configurations

In the third future scenario, smaller clusters of states that hang together and act together—or at least coordinate in meaningful ways even if under duress—constitute central North Atlantic institutional features. In this scenario, particularly stable or durable bilateral and "mini-lateral" connections among states play major roles as structural components of the North Atlantic order.[26] Such smaller configurations include phenomena as the "special relationships" between the United States and the United Kingdom or between France and Germany, as well as other bilateral affiliations. "Minilateral" connections include small yet steady groupings such as the Scandinavian states of the Nordic Council; the Baltic group; or Benelux (Ingebritsen 2006; Jones 2005).

More broadly and generally in this scenario, bi- and minilateralism characterizes, as structuring principles or as institutional practices among state-actors, some parts of the social world hanging together in a certain way, no matter whether in a friendly and cooperative or enduringly strained or antagonistic fashion (Goertz and Diehl 1993; Hirschman 1980 [1945]; Katzenstein 1976; Krotz 2007; von Bredow 1996). This scenario also brings into sharper relief frequently problematic yet enduring bilateral relationships such as those between the United States and Israel, Germany and Israel, and France and Algeria; or even outright strained or antagonistic dyads such as Greece-Turkey or Hungary-Romania (for example, Bass 2003; Ben-Zvi 1993; Rumelili 2003; Constas 1991; Lavy 1996; Linden 2000; Nouschi 1995; Pallade 2005).

Much speaks for the enhanced relevance of bi- and minilateral grouping in the North Atlantic politics in the time ahead. Yet, bi- and minilateralism alone cannot deliver a full-blown institutional future for the region.

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26 On bilateralism generally, compare Hirschman (1980 [1945]); von Bredow (1996); Wallace (1986). "Minilateral" refers to small groups of more than two states.

Developments and Forces in Favor

Five developments and factors point toward this scenario. *First*, merely judging by recent experience, bilateral dealings have increasingly gained political salience. Whether particularly tight and workable (France-Germany; U.S.-U.K.), problematic (Germany-Poland; France-U.S.), or nearly outright antagonistic (Spain-Morocco; Greece-Turkey), dyadic dealings have played major parts in the limelight of North Atlantic affairs (compare, for example, Harris 2002; Soutou 2005; Szabo 2004).

Second, in sheer quantitative terms, the importance of bilateralism has generally risen dramatically over the past decade. In the form of bilateral trade agreements, for example, or through other intergovernmental arrangements, as a way of doing things bilateralism has considerably expanded (Aggarwal and Urata 2006; Hilaire and Yang 2003.

Third, as institutional constituents, some such bilateral connections are strikingly sturdy and amazingly durable, demonstrating remarkable longevity. The historically close connection of the "special" relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom presumably originates in the early twentieth century with the "weary titan's" demise and the United States' succession as the largest power. The relationship blossomed and consolidated during World War II. In spite of crises and phases of strain, it remained a particularly sturdy element within the Western alliance during the Cold War. And it persisted after its end (Dumbrel 2003; Louis and Bull 1986; Russett 1963). The tight Franco-German relationship, to pick another example, was born in the early 1960s and evolved in the shadow of the Cold War. In spite of crises and frequent malfunctioning, it has proven amazingly durable, surviving the Cold War and appearing as a strong structuring factor for North Atlantic international politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century (compare, for example, Delors 1998; Leblond 1997; Simonian 1985).

Considering bilateralism as a tenacious structuring principle more broadly further highlights the endurance of relationships with particularly difficult interaction patterns. With both states NATO members since 1952, the protracted conflicts within Greek-Turkish relations, for example, ran counter to the logic of the Cold War. (Hungary-Romania is perhaps the analogous Warsaw Pact example.) These conflicts, manifestations of particular bilateral relationships, also survived the Cold War instead of disappearing along with it (Constas 1991; Goertz and Diehl 1993; Linden 2000; Rumelili 2003; Thompson 2001). Such tenacious bilateral configurations, specific types of international structure, are part of an evolving North Atlantic post-Cold War order that helps shape international affairs at the beginning of a new century.

Fourth, historical experiences, including the series of North Atlantic crises since the 1990s, suggest that bilateral and minilateral connections remain workable even under great duress and in times of high political stakes as well as in particularly sensitive areas. When North Atlantic or European mechanisms faltered or broke down, many of the bi- and minilateral configurations proved functional. The U.S.-Britain, France-Germany, and Scandinavian connections as well as a number of other smaller associations are just cases in point (compare, for example, Aggarwal and Urata 2006; Dumbrell 2004; Krotz 2002b). From a longer view, perhaps intelligence sharing between states, both as a factor and an expression of durable proximity and intimacy, testifies to the vigor of such smaller configurations. More than broadly a (NATO-)North Atlantic phenomenon or a (EU-)Europe-wide practice, intelligence sharing seems predominantly bi- and minilateral, particularly regarding more sensitive matters (compare Grant 2000).

Fifth, bilateral groupings and minilateral configurations seem remarkably flexible in adapting to diverse and changing external political environments, while simultaneously preserving their own internal institutional autonomy. The U.S.-British special relationship, for example, functioned during the Second World War; through the Cold War's strategic bipolarity and America's dominance within the Western alliance; and during enhanced American unilateralism in the 1990s and the early twenty-first century. Similarly, Franco-German bilateralism undergirded European integration multilateralism and proved viable within Cold War North Atlantic multilateralism as well as increased U.S.

unilateralism. Relationships such as Germany-Israel or U.S.-Israel have adapted to volatile or changing regional or global environments. At the same time, as international political structures, these bilateral configurations display high (yet varying) degrees of inherent robustness. As sets of institutional practices, they also maintain independence from outside intrusion. Externally adaptive and flexible, they seem internally robust and sustain their own lives and own dynamics.

Forces Working Against this Scenario

However, there are important reasons that significantly undermine the plausibility of this scenario as a full-fledged North Atlantic future. *First*, the main factor against its emergence is that as a basic institutional form and fundamental structuring element of conduct, bi- and minilateralism appears insufficiently generalized to fully provide the defining institutional principle of North Atlantic affairs in the two or so decades ahead. Specific bi- and minilateral manifestations are highly developed, sturdy, and durable. Yet, as universal and inclusive ordering principles generating a full-blown North Atlantic future, bilateralism and minilateralism alone appear too limited and incomplete (compare, for example, Coutain 2005; Ikenberry 2003; Malone and Khong 2003).

Second, and in addition, in many instances much of the recent bilateralism has been confined to one or a few particular policy areas, often in very specific political economy domains. Bi- and minilateralism have not permeated foreign policy, security, and defense in ways necessary to constitute the basic and pivotal institutional feature in this world region (see, for example, Coutain 2005; Dolzer 1995; Yarbrough and Yarbrough 1992).

Third, some elements of multilateral practices will remain efficacious in the time to come. Furthermore, unilateralism often remains decisively robust and commonly accepted. Both multilateral fragments and unilateral strongholds are likely to circumscribe the full generalization of bi- and minilateral institutional practices.

Overall Assessment of Likelihood

Bilateral groupings and minilateral configurations have been much more part of the North Atlantic past than international relations scholarship commonly recognizes. And they will be an important part of the area's future. Durable, workable, and adaptable they are likely to come to the fore as structuring principles of conducting inter-state relations in the North Atlantic area yet more prominently particularly if the multilateral arrangements of the Cold War West further wane or linger without renovation, and if European actorhood in high politics continues to remain incomplete. Yet, even with pan-Western rejuvenation or increased European actorhood, bi- and minilateral elements could be partially compatible with fragments of either of the first two scenarios, while preserving their autonomous logics and institutional independence. However, they will not be the complete North Atlantic future exclusively supplying the region's defining institutional features. They will not fully replace North Atlantic multilateralism or European Union arrangements in foreign and security affairs.

Renationalization

The fourth possible North Atlantic future is renationalization. In this scenario, the defining principle constituting the central institutional feature is that the political processes of interest formation and policy formulation in foreign affairs, security, and defense are overwhelmingly or predominantly located at the level of the individual state and in the national arena. The key national venue in this scenario is little intertwined or accompanied by robustly institutionalized inter-state arrangements to significantly affect or channel dependable institutional procedures. Enduring or comprehensive organizational inter-state structures, in this future, play subordinate roles. Multilateralism as an organizing principle matters significantly less than in the American-made or American-backed

institutional practices in post-World War II regionalism, both North Atlantic-wide or on a more confined European basis. There will be less NATO in this scenario; Europe will not evolve into a serious international actor in foreign and security affairs; and irrespective of treaty letters, there will be little or no common, let alone single, foreign and security policy in important matters. Lasting workable bi- and minilateral arrangements will be of lesser relevance. This one, presumably, is the fallback or default future at base: if for whatever reason none of the other scenarios emerges, this one will.

The renationalization scenario does not necessarily imply the absence of inter-state cooperation in the North Atlantic area. There might even be high levels of such cooperation, but mostly on a case by case basis. Missions define coalitions. Specified tasks trigger cooperation of commonly limited time horizons. Interstate connections would not last much beyond the confines of specific particularized projects, and there would be nothing organic about them. Alliances shift according to specific necessities and a variety of circumstantial external and domestic stimuli (compare Lake and Powell 1999; Walt 1997). This scenario may or may not include elements of balancing (whether "hard," "soft," "classic," or otherwise) among states in the North Atlantic West, either on an intra-regional level or involving states from outside the region (Art et al. 2005).

This future will deliver more of the classic version of international politics, in which national governments of atomized states in a formally anarchic self-help system carry out decentralized decision-making based on short-term calculus. This scenario resembles what (particularly: structural) realist conventionalism sees as the natural course of things: Other historical conjunctures are possible; yet they tend to be transient temporal aberrations (Mearsheimer 1990; Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 1993; Waltz 1979).

A range of very different factors and reasons, located at all levels of international political analysis, might contribute to this scenario's emergence. But there are also strong reasons acting against its rapid appearance. Overall, this fourth future is not imminent. But it remains a possibility in the longer term.

Factors, Forces, Developments, Reasons in Favor

Significant developments and reasons speak in favor of this scenario. *First*, unilateralism has apparently been on the rise, gaining in both importance and salience in the North Atlantic region over the past decade. Unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy has received particular scholarly and journalistic attention (Malone and Khong 2003; Van Oudenaren 2004; Walt 2005). However, tendencies toward unilateralism seem a perhaps still tenuous yet broader trend in the region (compare Gordon 2005; Lindstrom 2003). They are not necessarily or exclusively tied to American conduct. It is perhaps telling that in a comprehensive recent review of North Atlantic affairs and NATO, most of the empirical chapters focus on "national policies within the Alliance" and on the security policies of single states (Andrews 2005a:chapters 4-8, quote from v.).

Second, North Atlantic experiences of the past decade or so further suggest that in the most important and most pressing international questions of high politics, broadly unilateral reflexes and mostly national answers prevail. The more important the matter, the more national the will-building, policy-formation, and decision-making. Perhaps Germany's unilateral recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 was as much harbinger as irregularity. National venues of subsequent will-building and decision-making in the North Atlantic region predominated on many very significant questions, including participation in various campaigns, coalitions, stabilization forces, or nation-building measures (on recognizing Croatia, compare Crawford 1996; on matters former Yugoslavia, see, for example, Hoffmann 1996; Posen 2000). Concurrently, on issues of highest importance, the multilateral North Atlantic or European mechanisms have taken comparatively lesser roles.

Third, more fundamentally than mere recent experience, the high end of high politics—everything related to the use of force, the preparation for the use of force, the threat of the use of force, or the preparation for the threat of the use of force—in the North Atlantic world, too, continues to fall

principally under national affairs. Defining state interests and acting upon what they define, especially in security and defense, and most notably in deciding about the organized use of force or the threat of its use, under what circumstances, in what intensity, and to what ends, has predominantly remained within the realm of national governments (Caporaso 2000:chapter 4). It remains questionable whether this will alter fundamentally in the two or three decades ahead, or whether robust inter-state procedures will transform the formal final national say into a matter of secondary importance.

Fourth, manifold realizability as a default future. Since this is the outcome to emerge if the others do not, the factors working against the other scenarios indirectly work in favor of this one. It does not matter which exact factors or forces or reasons (or specific combinations thereof) might prevent the other three scenarios from materializing: if they do not, renationalization will fill the gap. This scenario, presumably the most of the four, is realizable through multiple causal pathways or very different specific historical or political conjunctures.[27]

Factors, Forces, Reasons Against

Yet, there also are powerful factors and important reasons that speak against the emergence of the renationalization scenario, at least in the short- or medium term. *First*, institutional elements, fragments, and effects of the other scenarios. Most of all, what works against this scenario's rapid arrival is the lasting presence or incipient reality of elements of the other scenarios, as well as their impact on structuring conduct in the North Atlantic area. These institutional remnants or beginnings may be rudimentary or embryonic, and they may wax or wane; but they are real and demonstrate tenacity, albeit to varying degrees. However grave the current identity crisis, NATO's funeral has not yet been scheduled. The EU-coordination reflex seems strong; and the Europe-as-actor in foreign affairs project has recently gained momentum. Bi- and minilateral groupings have proven tenacious and workable even in times of severe international crises.

Second, and perhaps particular fragments of the other three scenarios: there are zones of interactions and transactions, as well as parapublic cross-border processes of remarkable volume, density, and robustness in the North Atlantic area. Frequently, these imply perhaps tenuous, yet tenacious pockets of collective identity at the international level. Examples abound, including the relationship between the U.S. and the U.K.; the partially organic connection between France and Germany; the deep integration of Benelux; the multifaceted interconnections among the Scandinavian countries; as well as aspects of the EU-centered integration processes.[28] Again, even remarkable volumes of interactions, transactions, and parapublic underpinnings of international relations alone might not suffice in making some parts of the world hang together. But within the North Atlantic region, these processes are real and significant.

Third, many Europeans, among the political classes as much as within wider publics, deem nationalizing tendencies, unilateralism, and renationalization "bad." Of very different social backgrounds, personal origins, and political orientations, they find this fourth scenario particularly unattractive. They do not want it. If it appears within range of becoming a full-fledged institutional set-up, many will be determined to actively work against it—and for any other arrangement. They associate renationalization and unilateralism with unsettling historical memories. Especially for many continentals, renationalization and unilateralism represent all the evils of the disagreeable ways of a murderous yet gone-by past. For some Europeans, perhaps, the renationalization blueprint is so unappealing that, for normative reasons, they hardly can think of it. (Which, in turn and ironically, might be a factor in making the scenario more possible.)

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27 On "multiple conjunctural causation" and "equifinality," see George and Bennett (2005:chapter 8); Ragin (1987:chapter 2).

28 For diverse manifestations of such processes and connections, compare, for example, Adler and Barnett (1998); Krotz (2007).

Overall Assessment of Likelihood as Future

This fourth future is not imminent. Yet, there is also no reason to prematurely dismiss it as manifestly unrealistic. It remains a possible North Atlantic future in the longer run. Particularly with institutional elements of the other scenarios still present and efficacious, even if fragmentary, the renationalization scenario is bound to remain incomplete, at least in the next decade. However, notwithstanding economic globalization and regional integration of whatever kind there is little to suggest that in the time ahead states will not remain the most important actors in international affairs, defending their final say in matters of high politics. Intensified renationalization and unilateralism remain in the reservoir of North Atlantic institutional practices.

Conclusions

After the Cold War's end and into the 1990s there was a future, continued political unity of the West, that many largely took for granted and that for many went without saying. As we slide into the twenty-first century, there no longer is. The foregoing considerations suggest at least five lessons for thinking about the future of the North Atlantic West and world politics more broadly in the years and decades ahead.

First, the loosening and weakening of intra-Western cohesion that gradually crystallized during the second half of the 1990s and during first half-decade of the new century is likely to last. Between the run-up to the mid-1990s NATO bombings in Bosnia, 9/11 and its manifold repercussions, and the aftermath of Iraq II, the North Atlantic West has gone through a phase of intense internal strains. Together with deeper causes and underlying developments of tension and drift, this string of troublesome instances and divisive issues has weakened its internal cohesion to a degree that has rendered a future of a politically unified West in times of crisis in high politics increasingly implausible. During the same period, Europe has not emerged as a fully developed actor in the domains of traditional high politics. A cohesive and largely autonomous full international actor Europe would succeed the former regional order. As an institutional outline, Europe's rise out of the old West's historical heritage is quite plausible some decades off. But it is not yet likely to appear in the quarter century ahead. Bilateral groupings and minilateral configurations have proven robust and workable. But all by themselves they will not be able to supply a full-blown institutional future for the North Atlantic area. Renationalization has gained and unilateralism has risen. But in the short and medium run a fully renationalized regional system is improbable in light of the remnants of Western unity, European integration organization and reflexes, and amazingly sturdy bilateral configurations. The North Atlantic world has entered a period of transition. It will lead toward major reconfigurations of basic international institutional practices in the area.

Second, among the multiplicity of factors and causes characterizing the post-Cold War world in the North Atlantic area, no one historical force or small set of factors has yet emerged clearly to dominate the others, thus unambiguously hinting at the defining shape of North Atlantic international affairs in the decades to come. There is no single quaint linear historical process toward a clearly circumscribed world of new dominant institutional practices in the Euro-Atlantic world, but rather a multitude of conflicting forces and processes pulling and pushing in manifold directions. However, political unity of the West and renationalization do not exhaust the range of credible futures of North Atlantic affairs and transatlantic relations. The history of the future holds other possibilities with other historical foundations. Europe's rise seems the most credible one. But not in the near future.

Third, the scenarios sketched above are unlikely to emerge in pure form anytime soon. We might think of them as ideal types. The North Atlantic real type future will incorporate elements from more than one of them, mixing ingredients of the four scenarios to define the area's future. However, this particular mix will matter very much. It will make the North Atlantic future roughly resemble one or more of these ideal-typical future scenarios. What kind of mix, which scenario's features will

dominate, and of which scenarios' ingredients we will find only traces will be decisive for the shape that North Atlantic politics will take.

Fourth, at least shortly, a clash between "the West and the rest" is unlikely to materialize—simply because the West will be occupied with itself, with internal squabbles, for some time. To date there is no single West to act as a unit and thus to clash with the rest or parts of the rest. There will be none, for quite some time to come.

Fifth, the future will be interesting—and it will be highly political. End-historical boredom of capitalism and democracy will hardly be the defining feature of the years and decades ahead. Rather, core political questions are back at center stage yet again: With whom do we belong and with whom not? In what ways do we belong with others and in what ways not? For what reasons? If we do not properly belong with some others, how should we relate to them?

The spies have come in from the cold—to paraphrase John le Carré's (1963) masterful Cold War novel—and history has returned from its strange Cold War freeze. With more time yet lapsing since that Berlin night of splendor when the Wall crumbled and the Yalta Order collapsed, the four Cold War decades of deep freeze will look increasingly un-normal in a new century with a new set of political and conceptual questions, momentous and vexing, even within the West itself.

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Author Contact

Ulrich Krotz
Department of Political Science
Brown University
36 Prospect Street, Box 1844
Providence, RI 02912 USA
ulrich_krotz@brown.edu

(during 2008-09):
Visiting Research Scholar
Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS)
329 Aaron Burr Hall
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08540 USA
ukrotz@princeton.edu