

DOES THE TRANSATLANTIC ALLIANCE HAVE A FUTURE?

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Introduction

No doubt the early progress in European integration was supported by the *pax Americana*, the stability of the Bretton Woods system and the ideological front formed by the Western world against the Soviet Union (USSR). An increasingly united Europe was also seen as necessary to avoid yet another world war. Long considered America's most important alliance and a benchmark by which a president's foreign policy skill is measured, the US-European relationship has been shaken over a series of disputes that culminated during George W. Bush's presidency. While the years 2004 and 2005 witnessed a gradual recovery of transatlantic relations, the future remains uncertain. Have these problems arisen because of Bush's presidential style? Or are there other deeper factors underlying transatlantic tensions? What does the future hold for the political and military alliance that bonded Europe and America for over half a century?

In this article, I will endeavor to find answers to these questions. As it stands today, the transatlantic alliance rests on two pillars: strategic (i.e. political) and military (through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)). Hence my analysis will be divided into two parts, each focusing on one pillar. The first will focus on such issues as the inherent forces that might be driving both sides of the Atlantic apart, the proposed constitution for the European Union (EU), its significance and its prospects for eventual adoption. Attention will also be paid to global issues that merit joint collaboration on part of the US and the EU. The second part will be devoted to an analysis of the future of NATO. The factors that threaten the alliance's future existence, the regions where NATO may be deployed and some reform proposals will be examined.

1. GLOBAL POLITICS: RIVALRY OR COOPERATION?

1.1. Forces that might be driving Europe and America apart:

There are various issues on which both sides of the Atlantic disagree. In the 1990's, America's European allies openly rejected the policy of "dual containment" in the Persian Gulf and were increasingly unwilling to enforce the UNSCOM inspection regime against Iraq. They also held profoundly different views on the Middle East peace process and on the proper approach to Castro's Cuba. The United States stood alone at the Kyoto conference on the environment, broke ranks with its allies over a global ban on landmines, and is the only NATO member to vote against the creation of an International Criminal Court to try accused human rights violators⁶⁵.

Yet the worst point in transatlantic relations was reached during the days leading to the Iraq War in 2003. Some NATO countries blocked the supply of Patriot missiles to Turkey, a country whose contribution was judged to be crucial for America's war plans. Moreover, countries like France and Germany joined forces with Russia to denounce the armed attacks loudly. All these events left the Atlantic alliance badly divided. Examples like these can be multiplied. Drawing on growing European complaints about US unilateralism and American countercharges of European unreliability and weakness, Kagan struck a trans-Atlantic nerve with his assertion that 'on major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus'⁶⁶.

According to Henry Kissinger, the drift in transatlantic relations is not caused by specific policies of leaders; rather, these policies reflect reactions to four fundamental changes in the traditional relationship between Europe and the US:

- The disintegration of the USSR
- The unification of Germany
- The increasing tendency to treat foreign policy as a tool of domestic policy
- The burgeoning of a European identity⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Stephen Walt, "The Ties That Fray," *The National Interest*, 54 (Winter 1998–1999), at p.5

⁶⁶ Robert Kagan, *Power and Weakness*, Policy Review (June/July 2002), at p.3

⁶⁷ Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?*, Simon & Schuster; Touchstone edition (2002), at p.36

It is true that in the post-Cold War era, Washington views Europe as less central to its main interests and preoccupations than it was during the Cold War. For European countries, America's protective role has become essentially superfluous with the disappearance of the Soviet threat, while its pacifying presence is no longer warranted, given the advance of European integration⁶⁸. A weakening of economic ties as both the US and the EU have started pursuing the economic regionalization policies even more has arguably accompanied this phenomenon. Asia has also surpassed Europe as the main target of US trade⁶⁹. As a result, many Europeans have found greater courage to voice louder criticisms about American behavior on several occasions.

Especially during Republican presidencies, the US has displayed trend towards a more 'hegemonic' foreign policy. The premium hegemonists place on freedom of action leads them to view international institutions, regimes and treaties with considerable skepticism. This has been an important cause of friction between the US and the EU. Kagan argues that the difference in American and European behavior in the field of foreign policy is actually attributable to the so-called 'power gap' between both sides of the Atlantic. He states that when the US was weak, it practiced strategies of indirection, strategies of weakness; now that the US is powerful, it behaves as powerful nations do. In his view, when the European great powers were strong, they believed in strength and martial glory⁷⁰. He nevertheless admits that this might be only a part of the answer. Europe's unique historical experience of the past century may have also contributed to the existing ideological gap⁷¹.

Various explanations have been advanced to explain the present state of relations between Europe and America in the post- Cold War era. Whatever the true reason underlying the recent tensions, one thing is certain: All these tensions have negatively affected European public opinion in particular and the impact can also be observed in the foreign policies of some individual EU member states *vis-à-vis* the United States.

⁶⁸ Ivo H. Daalder, *The End of Atlanticism*, Survival, vol.45, no.2, (Summer 2003), at p.153.

⁶⁹ Walt, at p.4

⁷⁰ Kagan, at p. 6

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

1.2. The French and Dutch referenda: Non à l'intégration européenne?

1.2.1. What the constitutional draft itself might mean for European Foreign Policy in the future:

The referenda that took place in the summer of 2005 created a political crisis that affected the whole of Europe and the future of the EU project. Following the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the Union as a political entity took its first steps towards a common foreign and security policy but without its own defense capability. Many scholars considered the European Project to be an open and determined effort to create a new super-state capable of acting as a “counter-weight” to American power and influence in the world. In fact, some believe this already is the role the EU has established for itself. In his book Hubert Vedrine, a former Foreign Affairs Minister of France, frankly notes the French aversion to world-wide US hegemony⁷². His words can have the support of many more elites in other European countries.

In the past decade, there has been a gradual convergence of member-state perspectives on, for example, the Balkans and the Middle East peace process. On trade policy, the EU already speaks with one voice despite the clear existence of both free-traders and protectionists within the EU⁷³. However, important differences remain on several matters. With 25 members, the EU's diversity could make decision making even more difficult, especially to determine the Union's foreign policy strategy. The draft Constitution that was drafted in the last three years and signed in 2004 was arguably designed to make the EU's operation more effective and coherent, and to ensure that the smaller states could not impede the pursuit of this policy of making Europe a leading global actor⁷⁴. It was also another major step in the burgeoning of a European identity.

But to what extent can this constitutional draft really be considered a major step towards creating a counter-weight to America? Also, what impact can it have on the EU's foreign policy and transatlantic relations in general? To find answers to these questions, we need to analyze the key provisions of the draft further. The draft constitution can be said to

⁷² Hubert Vedrine with Dominique Moisi, *France in an Age of Globalization*, Brookings Institution Press (2001), at p. 46

⁷³ Everts & Keohane, at p.175

⁷⁴ Lee A. Casey, *The EU Constitution and Europe's Democratic Deficit*, at p.2. Available on: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/hl887.cfm>

represent a carefully crafted settlement between the positions of the ‘federalists’ and the ‘inter-governmentalists’ while also bridging the divide between the larger and smaller countries⁷⁵. According to Tiersky, the draft was an ambiguous compromise laid out in impenetrable Brussels-speak that all could accept precisely because divergent interpretations of the content were legitimate⁷⁶.

The document offers much to advance the EU’s core objectives. Member states have reached a sensible agreement about the division of powers between the union and themselves. The constitution incorporates the Charter of Human Rights, the most modern and ambitious document of its kind. The constitution also provides that “the Union shall have legal personality,” creating a new actor on the world stage, and that its actions “shall have primacy over the law of the Member States.” It envisages the appointment by the European Commission of a single minister for foreign affairs⁷⁷. The document also expands from 34 to 70 spheres in which the EU may legislate by “qualified majority” (QMV) (55 percent of member states representing at least 65 percent of total EU population) rather than unanimity⁷⁸. Decision-making will be simpler and more transparent. And Europeans will have a single statement on what their union is about⁷⁹.

Presently, the European Council brings together the heads of government and the president of the European Commission. It meets quarterly to set the Union’s broad strategy and priorities. But a real problem of the European Council is that its presidency shifts from one member ‘state’ to other every six months. This ‘rotating presidency’ is widely recognized as inordinately susceptible to national politicization. If ever implemented, the draft constitution will abolish this rotating presidency concept, proposing that instead of a country chairing the European Council a ‘person’ should do the job for at least two and a half years⁸⁰. This can provide greater coherence and continuity, and remind prime ministers of the promises they

⁷⁵ Everts & Keohane, at p.169

⁷⁶ Ronald Tiersky, *Clouds Over Europe*, American Foreign Policy Interests (October 2005), at p.387

⁷⁷ Jeffrey L. Cimbalo, *Saving NATO from Europe*, Foreign Affairs (November-December 2004), at p.111

⁷⁸ Cimbalo, at p. 112

⁷⁹ Kalypso Nicolaidis, *We, the Peoples of Europe*, Foreign Affairs (November-December 2004), at p.99

⁸⁰ Nicolaidis, at p.107.

make at summits. It can also let Europe as a whole have a greater voice and thus greater weight at various international platforms⁸¹.

The so-called 'loyalty clause' contained in the draft, which says that 'member-states shall support the Union's common foreign and security policy actively and unreservedly' will also strengthen the prospects of achieving greater unity. Even though the exercise of QMV has been given greater use under the draft, some commentators believe that on most issues over foreign policy veto power can still continue to exist. To the extent that the unanimity rule has been preserved in the field of foreign policy, it can at times continue to be a recipe for avoiding hard choices and, ultimately, EU inaction in some areas.

Despite some of its shortcomings, there is some merit in the arguments which state that the constitution can generate a new impetus towards a single, unified European view in world affairs that would give some support to the Franco-German ambition to rebalance global power away from the US- and it would also limit the ability of individual European nations to support America⁸². It could confirm and accelerate the central tendency of the EU over the last 50 years to send power to the center, to the European level, while eroding national sovereignty. It can also pave the way for the creation of a 'United States of Europe'. If this dynamic can continue, in time, multinational politics identity and citizenship may also emerge from the confrontation, accommodation, and inclusion of Europe's varied political cultures thus alleviating some of the potential future problems relating to the question of political unity⁸³.

The post-Communist states in Eastern Europe have occasionally been considered America's 'Trojan horses' and factors that may undermine Europe's political unity on issues concerning US interests. It is an undeniable fact that Eastern Europe owes its liberation from communist oppression to America. However, the passage of time and deepening of economic trade with the rest of Europe can gradually erode the current degree of gratitude felt towards America by these nations. So long as the EU integration process deepens or the

⁸¹ Everts & Keohane, at p.170

⁸² Gerard Baker, *Après 'Non', le Deluge?*, The Weekly Standard, 25 May 2005.

⁸³ Nicolaidis, pp.100-103

momentum for further deepening exists, the foreign and security policies of these states could gradually become more closely aligned with Brussels and their loyalty to the US could wither too⁸⁴.

Yet, achieving greater political unity, on its own, is not sufficient to increase Europe's weight on the international arena *vis-à-vis* the US or other emerging actors like China, India and Russia. The EU's tiny budget must be expanded and this must also be accompanied by increased economic productivity and lower unemployment in some key members like Germany, France and Italy. As these economic issues are not directly related to the subject-matter of this essay, they will be covered in future work.

1.2.2. May/June 2005 referenda and what their results might mean for Europe in the future:

The main international reaction to the results of the unsuccessful referenda that took place in the summer of 2005 has been that growing differences among the EU's increasingly numerous members have tarnished the dream of its political unity –and hence some European elites' ambitions to become a 'counter-weight' to the US⁸⁵. In his article, Laurent Cohen-Tanugi even predicted that the worst outcome of the EU's current crisis would be the gradual undoing of European unification, including in economic and trade matters, as a result of declining EU legitimacy and rising nationalism⁸⁶. Are these concerns somewhat exaggerated?

So far, expansion of the EU has made it more divided economically and politically between a free-market Atlanticist wing, led by the UK and augmented by the Scandinavian countries and the 'New Europe' countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and the protectionist anti-American wing led by France and augmented by countries such as Belgium and Greece. The derailment of the constitutional project has been viewed as the triumph of the Anglo-Saxon ambition for the EU: a vast free-trade area or, more plausibly, a loose confederation of nations cooperating on economic and certain political matters. Some scholars such as

⁸⁴ Janusz Bugajski and Ilona Teleki, *Washington's new European Allies: Durable or Conditional Partners?*, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.28, No.2, (Spring 2005), at p.96

⁸⁵ 'The Europe that Died', *The Economist*, 2 June 2005.

⁸⁶ Laurent Cohen-Tanugi, 'The End of Europe?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No.6, at p.65

Hulsman also argue that the British version of the European Union has triumphed⁸⁷. There is some merit in these analyses. Still, the prospects for recovery or non-recovery from this crisis and the future direction of the EU are not clear as these views may suggest.

Ultimately, either the French *or* the British visions may triumph. Alternatively, a two-tier Europe may emerge, whereby some of the original founders of what used to be the EEC may deepen political and military integration among themselves while the rest devote their focus to economic matters. The legal framework laid down by the Nice Treaty of 2000 arguably leaves open the door for such developments. In any event, given the depth of current economic integration between the 25 Member States, the ‘undoing’ of European unification is out of the question. In one form or another, the European project *will* survive.

So far, the most obvious consequence of the constitution’s rejection has been the Union’s plunge into a protracted period of institutional and political introspection. This, coupled with the subsequent budget crisis may for a long-time affect Europe’s external policy and global standing as well. As Francois Heisbourg predicted, some controversial issues such as the lifting of the EU arms embargo on China that may cause friction with the US have presumably been put on the back burner⁸⁸. It must be remembered that so long as the current division persists, the EU might not be used as an anti-American force or, just as critical, as a major benefit to the transatlantic alliance.

Contrary to all political belief, it might not be appropriate to call the European Constitutional Treaty politically dead following the ‘No’ votes on referenda. Features such as the simplified double-majority voting system and the improved foreign policy arrangements are especially important and should be salvaged somehow. In the second half of 2005, Luxembourg and Cyprus went ahead with the ratification process. Belgium and Estonia are expected to follow suit by January 2006. Within the next few months, we might have a picture that shows ratification by 15 Member states and two prospective members (17 countries in total). Some countries such as Finland and Ireland may also continue with the

⁸⁷ John C. Hulsman, *Cataclysm: The Rejection of the European Constitution and What It Means for Transatlantic Relations*, at p. 7. Available on: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/bg1862.cfm>

⁸⁸ *The EU Constitution: Apres ‘non’, le deluge-* International Herald Tribune, 26 May 2005.

parliamentary ratification process or referenda⁸⁹. In France, a primary cause of the ‘Non’ vote was lack confidence in the political elite. The presidential election in 2007 and some economic developments that might take place before then may help improve the political climate there, thus increasing the prospect of the referendum being repeated there in the medium term. Overall, if four-fifths of EU members ratify the draft, outsider states could face serious peer pressure to do the same.

Another possible scenario might involve the re-writing of the constitutional draft and pursuing a ratification campaign based on the new version. The non-controversial parts of the former draft might be retained and the controversial Part 3 might be omitted in the new version. The current draft has 448 articles to America’s 7. Further simplification might improve prospects for final approval. For the reasons explained above, the future of the constitutional draft will have an impact on transatlantic relations. What the future will bring in this respect is uncertain.

The EU’s eastward expansion, which brought union membership to 25 in 2004, was carried out without institutional reform, sufficient financial commitment, or popular consultation and support. In some sense, the expansion process was rushed by the ruling elite in the then 15 Member States. Pre-mature expansion, the financial and structural problems that it brought, lack of popular consultation and certain economic and domestic problems in France and the Netherlands brought about the current crisis. If the EU is serious about political unity, all future expansion must be stopped and the process must not be revived before the causes of the current problems are overcome and integration is further deepened among the already existing members. It is only then that further expansion attempts will be able to produce healthy results for the Union. The degree of unity or disunity within the EU structures will effect Europe’s relations with America.

⁸⁹ *EU constitution: Where member states stand*, BBC NEWS EUROPE, 24 November 2005. Available on: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3954327.stm>

1.3. Reasons for greater Transatlantic coherence and forthcoming challenges:

1.3.1. Reasons for optimism:

Shared values such as democracy, human rights, open markets, and a measure of social justice have so far provided a strong foundation on which the Western relationship rests. Asmus comments that no two parts of the world have more in common or are more integrated than the US and Europe⁹⁰. The 2003 Iraq War and the poor pursuit of American diplomacy did a lot of damage to the Transatlantic relations. However, steps are being taken to get past the bitter memories of what happened two years ago. Current developments on both sides of the Atlantic indicate that Europe and America will continue needing each other's cooperation in the future. Given these, let us comment on the areas where Europe and America may continue cooperating together.

If the United States is the indispensable nation in terms of its military power, then surely the Europeans are indispensable allies in most of the other categories of power upon which statecraft depends. By the end of the Cold War, they had assumed a heavier burden than the United States in providing aid to developing countries, assuming international policing and peacekeeping responsibilities, and supporting international organizations⁹¹. As the initial haphazard efforts at Iraqi reconstruction demonstrate, the US lacks both the will and the institutional capacity to follow up its military triumphs properly. In the future, complementarity is likely to form the key to transatlantic reconciliation.

1.3.2. The future of the Middle East:

Whereas most of the world is now proceeding into the twenty-first century, too many countries in the greater Middle East are moving backward. And their failures are helping to breed extremist ideologies, movements, and regimes that now potentially pose a major threat to the West. This is brewing amid a context of political oppression, economic stagnation and population booms, and pervasive inequality and injustice. Washington and Brussels are presently finding it useful to join forces in a partnership with reformers in the region to promote democratic transformation and human development as an antidote to those radical

⁹⁰ Ronald D Asmus, *Rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance*, Foreign Affairs (September 2003).

⁹¹ Henry A. Kissinger and Lawrence H. Summers, *Renewing the Atlantic Partnership- Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations*, March 2004, at p.11.

ideologies and terrorist groups that seek to destroy Western society and values. Because of its very proximity to Europe, reliance on Middle Eastern energy supplies and resources, and deeply intertwined history, Europe's future is embedded in the Middle East, much more so than that of the US⁹².

Europe is showing inclinations of banking on good examples set elsewhere, best practices and dialogue rather than on threats of regime change. A transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in the region may be based on three pillars⁹³. First, it may aim to help strengthen the forces for democratic change and stable liberal democratic policies within these societies. Second, such a strategy may also work to create a more secure regional foreign policy context that can facilitate democratic transformation. Third, the US and Europe may need to organize themselves across the Atlantic and with partners in the region to sustain these policies effectively for a generation or more.

There are three other issues that may be paid attention to while pursuing a joint transatlantic strategy on the Middle East. In order of urgency and crisis potential, these may be listed as follows:

- Iraq: a new bargain for international involvement;
- Iran: avoiding the next transatlantic breakdown;
- Israel-Palestine: a new bargain for international involvement.

If Iraq is eventually turned from a rogue state into a failed state, this will be equal to the failure of the US efforts to promote stability and democratization in the region. America's failure in Iraq will not only have a de-stabilizing effect on other regional powers, but will also increase international terrorism. Being aware of this, in its second term the Bush administration appears to be giving more importance to cooperation with the other Western allies over the future of Iraq. Iran's potential development of nuclear weapons is equally threatening for the Western world. Europe arguably has more influence over Iran, Syria and

⁹² Geoffrey Kemp, *Europe's Middle East Challenges*, The Washington Quarterly, (Winter 2003-2004), at p.163.

⁹³ Ronald D. Asmus, Larry Diamond, Mark Leonard and Michael McFaul, *A Transatlantic Strategy to Promote Democratic Development in the Broader Middle East*, The Washington Quarterly, (Spring 2005), at p.7

Lebanon than America does. The US is using the EU as a bridge to establish dialogue with the Iranian regime over their nuclear program. So far, both sides of the Atlantic appear to be in a consensus that use of force against Iran should be an option of last resort.

The conflict in Palestine has been another area where Europe and America often disagreed with each other. While the US has –especially since 1967- been a staunch ally of Israel, in the past few decades, the EU countries have generally adopted a pro-Arab stance. In order to reach a proper settlement of the dispute, the United States will need to define more precisely its concept of a Palestinian state; Europe must take more seriously Israel’s concern for security⁹⁴. The EU will have to pressure the Palestinians, the US will have to pressure Israel, and both Europe and America will have to provide a lot of money to seal the deal. Even though this seems to be a distant possibility at present, a final peace agreement would be an achievement worthy of the alliance and in the strategic interests of Europe and America alike⁹⁵.

1.3.3. The rise of China:

The so-called ‘rise of China’ phenomenon may also have an impact on the political relations between Europe and America in the future. The People's Republic of China is often considered a rising major power due to its large and stable population, its rapidly growing economy, and its rapidly growing military spending and capabilities. There are many scholars who predict that in the second quarter of this century, it will be accepted as a ‘superpower’. These factors are worth noting⁹⁶:

- China's population is the world's largest, with about 1.3 billion citizens. With the global human population currently estimated at about 6.4 billion, China is home to approximately 20%.
- China's GDP has grown at a rate of about 9 percent per annum for more than 25 years (although recently the government has sought to slow this growth to prevent a

⁹⁴ Kissinger & Summers, at p.23

⁹⁵ Stephen M. Walt, *The Imbalance of Power*, Harvard Magazine, (March-April 2004), at p. 35
Available on: <http://www.harvard-magazine.com/on-line/030406.html>

⁹⁶ See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superpower#Russia>

crash), the fastest growth rate for a major economy in recorded history. The economy of China is now the second largest in the world when measured by purchasing power parity, with a GDP (PPP) of US \$7.124 trillion in 2004. In the same period of time, it has moved 300 million people out of poverty and quadrupled the average Chinese person's income.

- Militarily, China also has a significant nuclear deterrent and the largest army worldwide, and its military expenditure doubled between 1997 and 2003, and is still increasing at a fast rate. Each year, the country also educates about four times as many scientists as the US does.
- China was also the third country (after Russia and the USA) to send humans into space. Another important factor is the strong and economically influential Chinese diaspora around the world, especially in South East Asian countries like Malaysia.

Kissinger believes that in the long run China can pose the greatest challenge to America's world-wide hegemony⁹⁷. Therefore, the rise of China and the European approach to it can also have implications for the future of the transatlantic relationship.

Although there are nuanced differences in approach, at the most basic level the United States and Europe have a shared desire to enhance China's place at the global table and to enlarge its stake in the global system. Both want China to be a status quo rather than a revisionist power and believe that enmeshing China in the widest possible range of international institutions might help ensure this outcome by socializing Beijing into international norms of behavior⁹⁸.

Nevertheless, the European elite also has a worldview, which is animated by the belief that predominant powers should be counterbalanced and that a multi-polar world is more stable than a hegemonic or anarchical order. In the light of this, future European foreign policy behavior may not fully respect potential American sensitivities to China's rise. This is re-enforced by the fact that European strategic interests or military forces are largely absent in Asia. Also, Europe has no responsibility for the defense of Taiwan and there is not an active

⁹⁷ At p.147

⁹⁸ David Shambaugh, *The New Strategic Triangle: US and European Reactions to China's Rise*, The Washington Quarterly, (Summer 2005), at p.8

pro-Taiwan lobby in Europe⁹⁹. In the medium term, the potential for European arms sales to China can attract massive American opposition. As stated above, given Europe's current crises this issue is likely to remain dormant in the short-term.

2. HAS NATO OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS?

2.1. NATO's Mission:

The first of this essay was devoted to the political pillar of the strategic relationship between Europe and America. As our analysis on that issue is complete now, let us move to the military matters. The proposition that a "transfer by the Alliance of its functionality in Europe to the security configuration emerging within the EU if NATO does not undergo a fundamental transformation" may have crystallized a bit more after a statement by the former German Prime Minister, Gerhard Schroeder in February 2005 that "NATO is not the primary platform for considering the security issues of Europe." I would like to make some observations about the NATO alliance to begin with:

After the failure of the European Defense Community in the early 1950's, the 'defense' option disappeared from the menu of the European integration for a long time¹⁰⁰. At the beginning of the Cold War, NATO was a "defense organization" established in direct response to the dynamics of the era. It was established by taking advantage of these two contingencies: the "collective self-defense" provided for by article 51 of the United Nations Charter and the "existence of regional arrangements" provided for in article 52. After all, frequent reference is made to the mechanism provided for in article 51 in relation to U.N. purposes and principles both in the introduction and in the articles of the North Atlantic Treaty (also referred to as the Washington Treaty), which established NATO¹⁰¹.

Though it is not clearly stated anywhere in the North Atlantic Treaty, the joint security structure provided for by NATO was tailored to eliminate any attack that might originate

⁹⁹ Shambaugh, at p.20

¹⁰⁰ Antonio Missiroli, *ESDP- How it works*, in Nicole Gnesotto, ed. "EU security and defense policy - the first five years (1999-2004), Institute for Security Studies, Paris 2004, ch.2

¹⁰¹ Cagri Erhan, *NATO Miadini Dolduruyor mu?* Panorama Dergisi, Number 11 (April 2005), at p.1. Available on: http://www.panoramadergisi.com/nisan2005/index.php?dosya=cagri_erhan

from the USSR. When the USSR dissolved itself in 1991 and it became obvious that the Cold War was over, NATO lost its fundamental reason for existing. Having accomplished its mission and since the enemy no longer exists, should NATO now bow out proudly and take its place in the pages of history books thus ending the military pillar of the Transatlantic Alliance?

Without giving the allies a chance to waver, America, the “locomotive” of the Alliance, ensured that a document entitled “New Strategic Concept” was ratified in 1991¹⁰². This was followed by the acceptance of a second “New Strategic Concept” again in 1999. To summarize, both of these documents emphasize the fact that the “free world” had won the victory against communism but they also called attention to the fact that new threats had emerged with the end of the polarized world order and emphasized the need for NATO to play a key role in the struggle against these new and various threats.

Putting the diplomatic jargon aside for a moment, let us evaluate what the Western politicians really had in mind when they referred to the ‘new threats’ back in 1991. Kissinger asserts that chaos could beckon in the successor states of the Soviet Union unless Europe and the United States define a common task and cooperate within the auspices of NATO¹⁰³. On the other hand, as Stephen Walt argues, keeping NATO together made good sense in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, if only because it was unclear how events in the former USSR were going to unfold. Nobody could be certain that Russia would not get back on its feet and once again pose a direct threat to Europe¹⁰⁴.

Besides, keeping NATO alive and also expanding it served to eliminate once and for all the strategic vacuum in Central Europe that in the twentieth century tempted both German and Russia expansionism.¹⁰⁵ Without the United States, Germany could lack an anchor to restrain its national impulses (even as a member of the EU); and both Germany and Russia could also be tempted to view each other as their best foreign policy option¹⁰⁶. Remembering Lord

¹⁰² Available on: <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911107a.htm>

¹⁰³ Kissinger, at p. 53.

¹⁰⁴ Walt, at p.6.

¹⁰⁵ Kissinger, at p.42

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, at p.52.

Ismay's famous formulation, that NATO was in Europe 'to keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down', there were still valid reasons for keeping the Alliance alive- at least from the *American* point of view.

NATO's military operations against Yugoslavia in 1999 (Kosovo Operation), in spite of the fact that it lay outside of its theater of action and in the absence of any resolution by the U.N. Security Council, were strongly criticized by experts in international law but numerous people claimed that this was "a human responsibility". When the Treaty's famous article 5 was invoked for the first time to help America after September 11 and in the Afghanistan operation in particular, this was considered an indication of cooperation at the highest levels that could be expected against new threats. Many commented that NATO's new mission might primarily be combating 'international terrorism'.

2.2. Future efficiency of NATO: Some reasons for concern

2.2.1. Over-expansion and losing sense of purpose?

Whether NATO leaders claim to have "discharged their duty in the name of humanity" or say that "they have taken upon themselves the role of global policeman protecting Western interests", one of the points on which there is consensus regarding NATO is the fact that it has exceeded its geographical mandate and taken upon itself duties that were not outlined in the charter documents, and the price has been occasional violation of international law. It has gotten to the point where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is defending even the mountains of Afghanistan! Therefore, our first comment is this: NATO has spread out over an area that is larger than it can cope with, given its current structure. Over-expansion is always dangerous as it can dilute the efficiency, meaning, and the objective of an organization. This may be another factor that may impact on the future of the Transatlantic Alliance's military pillar.

As Frederic Bozo argues, the war against terror is not a functional equivalent of the Cold War. It cannot in itself provide the cement holding the Western Alliance together because Americans and Europeans do not necessarily agree on the nature of the danger and on the ways and means to tackle it. Indeed, they often disagree. Most Europeans do not share the concerns of Kissinger and Walt mentioned above. This is what the crisis of the Alliance has

largely been since about 2001¹⁰⁷. More and more Europeans have doubted whether the *status quo* justifies keeping the alliance alive and the US troops on European soil.

Second, when NATO was established, there were 12 members on both sides of the Atlantic. While over time the number of members on the Western shores of the Atlantic have remained constant (but then there are no more countries on that side of the Northern Atlantic anyway), the number of members has risen to 26, with 14 countries, all from Europe, joining the organization. Turkey and Greece were added to strengthen security in the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (as well as to spy more closely on and have military bases closer to the USSR) and the addition of Federal Germany strengthened the Alliance in Central Europe. Spain filled the remaining gap in Southern Europe. After the Cold War, former enemies that belonged to the Warsaw Pact before 1991 got their turn. Three countries joined in 1999, followed by 7 more in 2004, and Macedonia, Albania and Croatia are waiting in the wings.

The Alliance undoubtedly benefits from the fact that NATO has increased its membership two-fold. However, there are daunting problems related to at least two issues. The first concerns NATO's decision-making mechanism. NATO does not make its decisions by putting issues to a vote; instead a consensus is required. In other words, if even one country is opposed, NATO will not pursue a matter. Under the conditions created by the Cold War, in an environment where the majority of the members (with the exception of France) looked to the U.S. for direction, it was not difficult for the 16 members of NATO to make decisions and implement them. With the “defined rules” of the Cold War in stasis, it was not necessary to make frequent adjustments to policy and approach. When there was a change of this nature, as in 1967 when there was a transition from a mass retaliation strategy to a flexible response strategy, Washington gave the signal and the allies complied with it. This phenomenon, however, is no longer true.

As the threats have become more varied, what a certain country views as a threat and its understanding of how to fight it have also become more diverse. Furthermore, the fact that

¹⁰⁷ Debate: Should NATO play a more political role? Available on: www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/debate.html

all of the new members are, without exception, members of the EU has heightened the European nature of the Alliance. The difference in perspective between Europeans and those on the other side of the Atlantic was confined to a mostly academic level until the developments of 1999 and 2003, after which it began to be voiced in political platforms and to be reflected in more practical areas as we saw in the Iraq campaign.

As the membership of the Alliance has increased, the declarations of the NATO Summit have become increasingly filled with diplomatic gibberish because any wording which 26 members can all agree on turns out to be so flexible that it can be stretched and interpreted however you want. A potential result of all these factors is that it may plant the seeds of future disputes that may hinder the efficiency, if not the coherence, of the alliance¹⁰⁸.

2.3. EU Constitution and its potential implications in the future: Last nail in NATO's coffin?

Thirdly, the Western European Union (WEU), established in 1948 and made obsolete with the founding of NATO one year later (its official dissolution would be affected by decisions made in Paris in 1954), was resurrected at the conclusion of the Cold War. Founded for the purpose of providing for European security without reliance on America and Canada, the WEU was later imported directly into the EU, assimilated by the European Security and Defense Policy system.

The EU in the course of time made quite considerable inroads into the sovereignty of the member states, particularly after the Signing of the Single Act in 1986. Since the Balkan crises of 1999, Europe has faced more powerful external motives for greater integration in the military field as well¹⁰⁹. This prompted the launch of the so-called European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Following the bilateral declaration of French President Jacques Chirac and the British Prime Minister Tony Blair in St. Malô, where they stated that "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to

¹⁰⁸ Erhan, at p.2

¹⁰⁹ Jean-Yves Haine, *ESDP and NATO*, in Nicole Gnesotto, ed. "EU security and defense policy - the first five years (1999-2004), Institute for Security Studies, Paris 2004, ch.6

international crises”, the very idea of a specifically European concept of security became a reality¹¹⁰.

In the last few years, steps to strengthen military and industrial capabilities have been taken by the setting up of an operational armaments agency. The 22 November 2004 Agreement formally founded the European Union Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF), which is a transnational military force, managed by the European Union itself rather than any of its member states. Its aim is to have 60,000 soldiers available, deployable for at least a year.¹¹¹ The ERRF is not a standing army (units will remain with their national armies when not deployed or on exercise), and national governments will retain the power to decide if their forces will take part in any particular operation. Additionally, the compromise reached on 13 December 2002 bars the prospect of the ERRF being used against a fellow NATO member who is not a member of the EU.

Despite the shortcomings with respect to the size of the force and the procedural formalities that need to be satisfied before it can be deployed, all these developments –none of which was predictable a decade or two ago- suggest that the future may witness a further deepening of European integration in the military field so long as the political climate continues to remain favorable for this.

Now, let us return to the draft constitution issue again. In "Saving NATO from Europe," Jeffrey L. Cimbalo warned that a dagger is pointed at the heart of the Atlantic alliance, and the murder weapon is the European Union's draft constitution. Ratification of that document, Cimbalo asserts, would have "profound and troubling implications for the transatlantic alliance and for future U.S. influence in Europe." Washington, he believes, should "end its uncritical support for European integration" and work with its friends in Europe to halt the EU process and save NATO from an untimely death.¹¹² In a similar fashion Vaclav Klaus, the Euro-sceptic president of the Czech Republic, noted that "This was crossing the Rubicon". To what extent are commentators like Cimbalo and Klaus justified? To determine this, I want to return to some of the key provisions of the draft

¹¹⁰ Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Security_and_Defense_Policy

¹¹¹ Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Rapid_Reaction_Force

¹¹² Cimbalo, at p.111

whose eventual implementation looks dubious in the light of the referenda results in France and the Netherlands last summer.

As stated above, the constitution comes up with such innovations as the creation of a “legal personality,” and the appointment by the European Commission of a single minister for foreign affairs with a view to achieving the “progressive framing of a common Union defense policy”. Nevertheless, the legislative rule of unanimity appears to have been retained in the matter of a common defense force as well. The extent to which broadly worded carve-outs may allow certain decisions on military issues to be made by a qualified majority is uncertain. This may be a major handicap in future efforts to successfully frame a common defense policy independent of US involvement.

The Convention draft proposes that an avant-garde group of states with higher-level capabilities and a willingness to carry out the most demanding tasks should be able to collaborate more closely using the EU institutions. There are no details in the text, but closer cooperation would presumably involve harmonizing military planning and pooling existing capabilities. Member-states could also choose (but would not be obliged) to sign a mutual defense clause, which would allow an EU country that comes under external attack to ask for military help from other members. In essence, this pledge is similar to NATO’s Article 5 Commitment. The articles embodying the pledge are controversial because they could allow Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg to go ahead with their ‘European defense union’ proposals.¹¹³

The Convention introduced another clause, whereby the EU and its member states would ‘act jointly in the spirit of solidarity’ in the event of a member state being ‘the victim of a terrorist attack or natural or man-made disaster’. Accordingly, the Union would ‘mobilize all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources available by the member states’ to prevent the terrorist threat and assist a member state ‘in its territory’.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Everts & Keohane, at p.173.

¹¹⁴ Missiroli, ch.7

It seems that the American diplomats to large extent agree with Cimbalo's concerns and for this reason they privately welcomed what they perceived as the 'collapse of Europe's political unification' at the hands of the French and Dutch voters¹¹⁵. Regardless of the fact that today some authors say that "the EU is an economic giant but a military dwarf and cannot in its present form take NATO's place," if the EU Constitution is ratified without difficulty, then there is no doubt that the biggest focus of the EU is likely to concern the joint defense of its outer boundary. As mentioned above, the rules in the draft will lead to greater convergence among the member states and this may in turn pave the way for even greater political and military integration in the *long* run. Any fundamental change in the *short* term is unlikely given some uncertainties surrounding the scope of various Clauses and the preservation –albeit in a diluted manner- of the unanimity rule in foreign policy and military matters. This may lead to the maintenance of the *status quo* in the nature of the transatlantic relations.

Even now, EU forces are gradually beginning to assume significant missions in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, fulfilling their mission of protecting peace and stability and have not experienced any significant difficulty doing so. If certain economic, technical and political obstacles are overcome, there is also the 'potential' for Europe to have greater military weight than now in the so-called 'near abroad': the former USSR, the Balkans, the greater Middle East and North Africa.

The EU can only be a powerful global player if it has its own defense organization. Presently, it can be said to be at a crossroads. Will the EU also manage to evolve into a political superpower independent of –or even rivaling the US-? Or will we reach a point where most of the actors within it eventually accept the idea of the EU being nothing more than a free-trade zone somewhat analogous to NAFTA? Above all, this result is what some countries- notably the UK- are hoping for. Also, is there a risk of the Union disintegrating as a result of collapsing on its own weight due to overexpansion? The political chaos in the EU may –to some extent- trigger the "re-nationalization" of the foreign policies of individual member states¹¹⁶. To put it differently, concepts such as "common interest", "community interest" may be given less and less attention day by day. Such a consequence may greatly weaken a (European) supranational identity and behavior on the international plane.

¹¹⁵ Tiersky, at p.391

¹¹⁶ Cohen-Tanugi, at p.62

As stated above, the rejection of the draft Constitution has created many uncertainties regarding the EU's future direction and its future relations with the US. The answers to these questions are essential for making future predictions about America's military ties with Europe and the future of NATO. If the EU manages to overcome its political crisis and also strengthens its military power, then in the *long-term*, the U.S. military will probably be asked to leave Western and Central Europe. The already weakened military ties will be weakened even more. This may be the fatal blow to the military alliance. However, even in the most optimistic scenario for Europe's future, there are some challenges that may preclude an 'automatic' death of the NATO contrary to the common perception implied in the introductory part of Part B. As will be discussed below, there are many reasons to maintain the *status quo* (i.e. the Transatlantic Alliance in the military field) in the *short/medium* term.

2.4. Reasons to retain NATO and some challenges lying ahead

Now, we will ask two questions based on the above observations:

- 1- Is the abolition of NATO inevitable in the short/medium term?
- 2- Is the U.S. policy strengthening NATO?

The answer to both of these questions is "no." In spite of successful missions performed in Bosnia and some other parts of the world, Europe's military is not strong enough to assume a more significant role on a global scale. As the Balkan conflicts in the 1990's demonstrated, Europe does not have enough political will/resources to effectively respond even to some 'regional' conflicts. While the ERRF mentioned above is a very significant development, Europe can *still* not afford to declare its independence -militarily- from the US.

The spending on military hardware in the EU is equal to only one-third of the Pentagon's equipment budget, with EU research spending amounting to only 20 percent of the American figure. At present, France and the U.K. are two of only four European countries that spend around 2 percent of their GDPs on defense. The U.S. spends more than 3 percent¹¹⁷. Even if Europeans could agree on the funding and the mission for such a unified

¹¹⁷ Hulsman, at p.8

force, moreover, new transport aircraft, satellites, and soldiers would be needed to add up to a viable alternative to compensate for the loss of American support in maintaining regional/global security in a way that may also serve European interests. Given these facts, it is unlikely that Europe will have the self-confidence to stand on its own feet and attempt to sever the links with the US in the military field. NATO is bound to continue in one form or another for some more time. This is regardless of the ultimate fate of the draft constitution. On the other hand, if the ruling elite change their current attitude to military spending and begin strengthening Europe's military muscles, the current trend whereby Europe is gradually developing its military autonomy from America can continue.

For a long time now, the U.S. has been accused of using NATO as a tool for achieving its own purposes. However, the degree to which this criticism is justified has increased, especially since the mid-90s. As a global power, the U.S. has preferred to use NATO for its own national interests more frequently. This, coupled with Europe's new politico-strategic assertiveness, has indubitably weakened the transatlantic bond and, with the exception of the islanders (Britain), has occasionally turned European allies against both the organization and the U.S.

2.5. Need for Reform?

Even if Europe's political divisions continue and even if some circumstances dictate the continuation of the NATO alliance in the future, it must not be forgotten that there are various steps that need to be taken to ensure that it remains stable and healthy. The US must increase the volume of dialogue with the European powers. It must also seek to clarify when it may use force. It will be helpful if a consensus of some sort may be reached with Europe on this point as well as the real mission of NATO. While its results are not clear, the Istanbul Summit that took place in the summer of 2004 was a positive step in this respect. Later on, politicians on both sides of the Atlantic may seek to 'repoliticize NATO' and think of whether NATO forces may be deployed in areas whose future interest both Europe and the US.

Steven Everts has some suggestions regarding this last point¹¹⁸. In his words, ‘one big idea the US and EU must consider is moving a NATO –led security force first into Gaza and later on the West Bank’. The same can be proposed for Iraq. In both cases, a broader international force would have more legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinians and Iraqis. The idea of an OSCE for the Middle East also has some merits. Key Middle Eastern countries as well as the smaller Gulf States may become full members. NATO and Russia can join as associate members. A Gulf Security forum could help policy-makers find creative solutions for the three countries that top the international agenda: Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia¹¹⁹. Such joint projects may also help in the re-politization of the transatlantic relationship. In the absence of a re-politization, the military ties between Europe and America may potentially appear more meaningless in the eyes of politicians and the public opinion.¹²⁰

Provided it undergoes a radical transformation, NATO may perhaps continue functioning in the *long run* also. The transformation I am referring to here is not the formation of new rapid reaction units to fight the war on terror and weapons of mass destruction or the reform of the command structure in the "struggle against new threats." It is not conjectural transformation but structural transformation that is required and it must be radical. The first step could be changing the North Atlantic Treaty, which is incapable of reflecting today’s circumstances. Then, NATO could be transformed into a security force that operates on a global scale as part of the U.N. in parallel with the reconfiguration of the security system that the U.N. envisaged in 1945 but never had the chance to put into practice due to certain political frictions during the Cold War. A close connection between NATO and the UN when it comes to the deployment of NATO troops may also help reinforce the Alliance’s transformation with greater political consensus¹²¹. Nevertheless, the US may fear that such proposals can further dilute its influence within NATO and may oppose them.

In this part of the essay, I endeavored to identify the current problems underlying the military aspects of the Transatlantic Alliance. I also tried to discuss how the negative impact

¹¹⁸ *Why NATO must keep the Mid East peace*, Financial Times, 29 July 2003.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ See Espen Eide’s views available on: www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/debate.html

¹²¹ Henning Riecke, *The Need for Change*, NATO Review, Spring 2005.
Available on: www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/art2.html

of these problems may be minimized. Often, members of the US Foreign Service and soldiers cannot stand it when anyone says that NATO's purpose or indeed its future is uncertain. They seem to think that if you say "there is no disease; it is as strong as iron", the Transatlantic Alliance is rescued from its structural problems. Denying the existence of problems and failing to take necessary measures in time may lead to damage on a larger scale in the future.

3. Conclusion

I have endeavored to analyze the nature of the political and military relationship that currently exists between the two major pillars of the Western world: the US and the EU. I have also endeavored to make certain predictions regarding the future. In the post-Cold War era, Washington views Europe as less central to its main interests and preoccupations than it was during the Cold War. For European countries, America's protective role has become essentially superfluous with the disappearance of the Soviet threat. Economic ties have also weakened. Yet, the rise of the US-European corporation formed out of mergers like Daimler and Chrysler is only one sign of how integrated the two business communities still are.

The political and military alliance is not as strong as it used to be during the hottest days of the Cold War. However, there are lots of reasons to believe that strategic relations will remain active. While the Iraq campaign witnessed the transatlantic alliance reaching its lowest point in the last fifty years, things have been improving since then. There are lots of economic and political factors that dictate the continuance of strategic relations between the US and the Europe.

A lot of things will depend on the future shape which Europe's integration in the political and military fields might take. One can say that the more political and military fragmentation is overcome in Europe, the more independently of American interests Europe will act. The ultimate fate of the draft European Constitution –or of its future alternatives- may be crucial in this respect. What the future will bring remains to be seen.

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