

European Common Foreign, Security, and Defense Policies: Implications for the United States and the Atlantic Alliance

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The War in Kosovo was about the unfinished business of Europe, namely: the many pre-Cold War legacies of ethnic and territorial conflicts, overridden after World War II by the competition between the two superpowers, but resurrected in parts of the Continent in the wake of the demise of one and the rise of the other; the inability of America's European allies to attend to these conflicts by themselves, for lack of military capabilities, institutional unity, and political will; and Europe's vulnerability to conditions outside Europe, especially south of the Mediterranean in the Greater Middle East. By drawing attention to what remains to be done fifty years after the North Atlantic Treaty was signed, the war in Kosovo raised starkly some broader questions of transatlantic security relations on the eve of a new century: what missions and what forces, who leads and who pays? To that extent, the war was a defining moment for Europe's own quandary over the most effective ways to reinforce and enlarge its security as its century of total wars mercifully ends; but it was also a significant moment in assessing the U.S. role in Europe and beyond under the changed conditions created by the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

American interests in Europe are considerable. They must serve as a constant reference for any discussion of the US commitment across the Atlantic and, by extension, of the US interest in any region of direct significance to Europe. That some would dispute that role without considering these interests is puzzling. No part of the world outside the Western Hemisphere can claim the complete relationship that have come to prevail between America and Europe. In short, the Cold War has done what neither world war could. With US interests in Europe now too significant to be left to others, a disengagement has become neither possible nor even meaningful. Differences across the Atlantic remain, to be sure. They stand in the way of a genuine transatlantic community of evenly shared interests and even commonly held values. But so do, too, differences among European states, which also remain in the way of a genuinely united and "finished" Europe. Yet, however dramatic U.S.-European and intra-European differences may look at time, they have become small compared to the commonality of interests that bridge the two sides of an increasingly common Euro-American economic, political, cultural, and security space.

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Discussions in Europe about the need to develop a common foreign policy (CFP), as well as the desirability of asserting a European security and defense identity (ESDI), are not new. Nor are questions in the United States about their implications for the Atlantic Alliance and US interests in and beyond Europe. These discussions, and the questions they raise, have been a recurring feature of intra-European and transatlantic relations since the 1948 Brussels Pact that established the Western European Union (WEU), the 1949 Washington Treaty that set the stage for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the French attempt to stall US calls for Germany's rearmament with the European Defense Community (EDC) proposed at the NATO Summit that was held in New York in September 1950. Although this extravagant French idea was quickly accepted by the Truman administration, the French National Assembly's predictable refusal to ratify it, four years later, prompted warnings of an "agonizing reappraisal" of America's ties with Europe. These warnings, in turn, helped to relaunch the Atlantic idea of an entangling alliance between the United States and Europe, including a second enlargement of NATO to the Federal Republic of Germany in May 1955. In turn, Germany's entry in the Western alliance gave a fresh start to the idea of Europe as an "ever more united" community of states, which relied on the June 1957 Rome Treaties to start a European Economic Community (EEC) that has now been widened and deepened into a European Union (EU).

Ever since, projects for common foreign, defense, and security policies in Europe have taken many forms, but however formulated they usually caused concern and outright skepticism in the United States. To dismiss current European efforts with the *déjà dit* of America's ambivalence over what Europeans say, and the *déjà vu* of Europe's failures as to what Europeans actually do, is, therefore, tempting. That temptation ought to be resisted, however. Prospects for a CFP and ESDI seem more serious today, and they may even succeed over the next decade. On the whole, these efforts deserve encouragement. Notwithstanding the adjustments that might be imposed on the exercise of US leadership, a more united and stronger Europe within a more coherent and powerful Atlantic Alliance will serve US interests well, and certainly much better than any plausible alternative.

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Europe's post-Cold War security issues were raised in the Maastricht Treaty in December 1991, which stipulated that "the common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defense policy, which might in turn lead to a common defense." Also as part of the euphoria that prevailed at the time, the then-12 EU states envisioned an Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) that would include a common currency after fulfillment of hastily drafted criteria of economic convergence. A mere 18 months after Maastricht, the EU Copenhagen summit also envisioned a quick enlargement, which then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl (and President Jacques Chirac) confidently anticipated for the year 2000 at the latest. This ambitious agenda was to mark Europe's return to pre-eminence. "This is the time of Europe," it was claimed. That was not to be, however. In Bosnia, the clock stopped at half before Europe, and the security debate switched from what the EU said (but failed to do) to what NATO did (but occasionally failed to tell): restoring peace in Bosnia and enlarge its security zone to many new partners and a few new members. As to EU enlargement, it was stalled, pending not only the launch of the euro, but also a review of the EU's rules of governance at an InterGovernmental Conference (IGC) that ended in relative failure at the Amsterdam Summit in July 1997.

In the summer of 1995 especially, the negotiations in Dayton had reasserted the centrality of US leadership and power, as well as the primacy of NATO as the institution of choice for security issues in post-Cold War Europe. In 1999, the war in Kosovo went beyond that: not only did it demonstrate America's and NATO's dominance and capacity for action, it also confirmed the institutional and military insufficiencies of the EU and its members. The issue was not only, and perhaps not even primarily, one of money. With defense expenditures amounting to more than half of US spending, the 15 EU states could only contribute a shockingly small fraction of the US

war effort. Admittedly, the Europeans supplied a larger and dominant percentage of the ground troops, as they had in Bosnia, too, before and after Dayton. Pointedly, however, 90 percent of the command, control, communication and intelligence resources, 80 percent of the aircraft, and even much of the ammunition came from the United States.

This simplistic division of labor kept the Americans high above the clouds while leaving the Europeans dug in the mud below, as had been momentarily envisioned after World War II. Europe's dependence on the effectiveness of US leadership and power was all the more troubling as NATO's air gamble in the Spring threatened to end into a nightmarish land war which most European governments did not want to wage but none dared denounce. To that extent, Kosovo was Europe's own Cuban missile crisis, that is, that nearly brought the devastation of total war back on the European continent. The deep discomfort caused by the nightly sights of a major European capital bombed reaffirmed another old transatlantic debate centered on the desirability of the US security commitment to the Old World: the debate, that is, over Europe's idea of "shared risks" -- which has to do mainly with the costs of waging war -- as opposed to America's idea of "burden sharing" which has to do mainly with the costs of deterring it. In June, the post-Kosovo EU Cologne Summit called on the EU states to build up a capacity for "autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces." Together with the nomination of NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to the newly-created position of "Mr. Europe," these calls reflected a renewed sense of benign urgency.

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Relative to other attempts to organize a common foreign policy and develop the military capabilities required to enforce it, Europe's current attempt is both less divisive within the EU and more supportive of NATO. The former has to do with the lead role played by Great Britain. As it is well known, London has traditionally been ambivalent, to say the least, toward the European construction generally, and its foreign and security dimensions especially. Reasons abound -- including historic and geographic, cultural and societal, and economic and political. In May 1997, however, a change of political majority in Britain, after 18 years of conservative dominance, also seemed to produce a change in London's attitude and policies toward the EU. The new prime minister, Tony Blair, and his government sought an end to Britain's relative marginalization in Europe, which was achieved during Britain's six-month presidency in the first half of 1998. A few months later, Blair's ambition was enhanced when a newly-elected Gerhard Schroder spoke of adding Britain to the Franco-German special relationship. Given his country's continued opposition to the euro, however, defense was the only major European project left for Blair to make his bid for leadership. The meeting he held with Chirac in St. Malo in early December 1998 was the most serious bilateral discussion of such issues since President de Gaulle had hosted then-Prime Minister Harold MacMillan at Rambouillet in December 1962.

Disagreements within Europe about improving Europe's military and diplomatic capacity were narrowed, too, by the evolution of French policies toward NATO. For many years, and especially since 1995, the French had progressively muted the anti-Atlantic impulse that had made them difficult allies during the Cold War. Now at last, they, too, seemed willing to recognize the primacy of NATO as the security institution of choice in Europe, with the United States playing the leading role as a matter of fact within the alliance, but also as a matter of perception outside the alliance. While French recognition still came reluctantly, and even though it hardly prevented periodic outbursts of Gallic pique, it unfolded steadily in the 1990s, from the Gulf War through the conflict in Bosnia and until the Kosovo war. After World War II, "Europe" had been the French idea that could compensate for the limits of its national power relative to that of Germany, but NATO had also been the Atlantic idea that would compensate for the limits of Europe's power relative to that of Russia.

Accordingly, after the Soviet collapse ensured Germany's reunification, a "softer and gentler" France turned westward: to add Britain's weight within an EU that might be otherwise too small for a Germany that had become too big, and to reassert the US presence as a guarantor of last resort vis-à-vis a Russia that was itself too close, too unpredictable, and too nuclear to be left to itself or to Europe only. Indeed, notwithstanding the ill-timed conflict over the allocation of the southern NATO command, Chirac expected to return into NATO in full when he was surprisingly defeated in the legislative elections of June 1, 1997.

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On the whole, most would agree that a more united and stronger Europe is good for the states of Europe and also for the United States. Any other conclusion would suggest a fundamental change in what has been the most consistent goal of US policies toward Europe for the past 50 years. Even as the United States reaffirms its commitment to the security of Europe, and its credentials as a major power in Europe (though not a European power), Europeans should be able to take on some small security tasks on their own. The resources they commit to the development of their capabilities are grossly in excess of the results they are able to achieve -- even relative to the so-called Petersberg tasks envisioned for incorporation in the EU plans by the end of 2000 (humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and some peacemaking).

The content of Europe, though, deserves some refinement, both for what Europeans attempt to achieve (meaning, the AE" in ESDI, though less the "I" of identity) and how much of the continent it encompasses (meaning the AC" in CFP more than the "P" of policy). Thus, as in the early 1950s over the EDC (which was to consist of six countries plus Britain), or the early 1960s over the Fouchet Plan (which was to include the same six countries but without Britain), or the early 1970s over the Davignon Plan that inaugurated the process of European Political Cooperation (with a European Community that was about to grow beyond its initial six members), Europe's security agenda should be examined in the context of a broader institutional agenda that may threaten the Union and its members with a potentially disastrous case of agenda overload.

As suggested before, little that Europe does or intends to do is truly novel: the reform of its institutions, the restructuring of its economies, the construction of a single currency in a genuinely single market, the development of a common foreign and defense policy, enlargement, transparency, and much more. What makes this agenda unprecedented is that all questions are faced simultaneously, notwithstanding the enormity of the task. What makes of the coming years, when this agenda must be addressed, a defining moment is the implicit (and valid) assumption that failure to move effectively in any one area might compromise the others: deepen in order to widen, widen in order to deepen, and reform in order to do both. Finally, this defining moment is made somewhat unique by the relative predictability of its calendar, as if, this time at least, history could be written in the future tense: one and probably two IGCs to reform the institutions with new treaties, in December 2000 and again in 2004-2005; a single European currency for all 15 EU states, including Britain (as well as Denmark, Sweden, and even Greece) by 2002-2003, to complete the single market and face a broad range of more or less unintended fiscal consequences; many new members, as of 2005 and for the balance of the decade, however membership has been redefined through the earlier IGCs; and much more.

The purpose of these Hearings is not to review the immensity and the complexity of the EU agenda over the next five to ten years. But one purpose of this testimony is to warn against allowing the analysis be hijacked by one issue at the expense of the others, or allowing that our conclusions be hijacked, too, by one set of interests at the expense of the others. These issues, as well as these interests, are intimately linked. How the EU deals with the coming IGC, how the euro performs, and how enlargement unfolds are all issues, among many others, that influence decisively the search for a CFP and the ESDI because each of them might reinforce or weaken Britain's European identity or France's renewed Atlantic affinity or Germany's postwar passivity;

because each decision might help restructure the EU in ways that would reassure or worry its larger members; and because each outcome can help create or reduce the resources needed to face the higher levels of defense spending that will be eventually required if Europe is going to have defense capabilities it can call its own.

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The EU agenda points to an extended time line for CFP and ESDI. Taking either seriously is not tantamount, therefore, to suggesting that "it", however defined, is about to occur. The history of European integration is a history of setbacks out of which small advances are made for lack of an alternative to the "ever more united" Europe contemplated in the Rome Treaties. Indeed, at any one point in time, that history appears to be hopelessly stalled, and Europe's progress can only be judged retroactively: However weak, unstable, and divided Europe may seem in 1999, it certainly stands as stronger, more stable, and much more united than in 1989, or 1949, or 1939, or 1919, or even 1899. The end game for the EU is tantamount to a recycling of the traditional nation-states into odd political units known as member states: the rise, that is, of states that allow their national identity to become the captive of a discipline imposed by the institution to which they belong.

Questions raised about an autonomous European security and defense "identity" are valid, and the more skeptical answers may ultimately be justified. These questions raise concerns which our friends in Europe should not take lightly: over the EU's potentially wasteful duplication of NATO resources and capabilities; over a self-defeating decline of EU states' commitment to NATO as the primary institution for the transatlantic allies and their partners; over an ambiguous distribution of authority between well-tested NATO mechanisms and a newly-created EU bureaucracy of standing committees and competing military staffs; over a troubling discrimination toward NATO states that do not belong to the EU; and over a dangerous backdoor diversion of NATO security commitments toward non-NATO states that do belong to the EU. Most of these concerns, however, remain premature, and they remain exaggerated when they appear timely. Little of what seemed to be envisioned in St. Malo, and was confirmed in Cologne, goes much beyond what was decided at the Atlantic Council meeting in Berlin in June 1996 -- even though, admittedly, the French, British, and Germans hope to find a formula that would enable the Europeans to escape an American veto over the use of NATO assets for strictly European operations. (The issue of veto, too, is hardly new. It emerged in the context of the Kennedy Administration's imaginative Multilateral Force [MLF] for which the Germans especially wanted to be ultimately rid of the US veto.)

Still, what are the Europeans most likely to do next with regard to the defense and security components of their agenda for the years 2000-2007? To begin with a double negative, while the Europeans are not likely to increase their military expenditures during the era of euro-construction, at least over the next three years, they cannot reduce these expenditures either, at least not during an era of reconstruction in the East. More modestly, therefore, the first goal, and our first expectation, should be that, at the very least, defense expenditures not be reduced. The defense cuts contemplated by the coalition government of Chancellor Schroder, relative to his predecessor's earlier plans, would restructure the German Bundeswehr at a lower level than a pre-cut level which Schroder's own defense ministry had already deemed to be too low to correct "deficiencies" in the army, manage "structural distortions" and "outdated equipment" in the air force, and adjust "deviations in the career structure" in the navy. The \$10 billion cut sought by the German government for the next four years (-3.7 per cent in 2000, -1.2 percent in 2001, -0.7 percent in 2002, and -1.8 percent in 2003) is not serious, irrespective of the admittedly difficult conditions faced by the Schroder coalition.

Defense expenditures by the 15 EU states amount to about two-thirds of defense spending in the United States, but European forces capable of operating outside NATO territory amount to less

than one-fifth of the US forces. Even more than a matter of budget allocations, the defense insufficiencies of Europe have to do with a lack of will and efficiency: the will, that is, to spend that money more efficiently than has been the case to-date, on systems that can be used rather than on systems whose principal functions appear to be to preserve jobs and duplicate American systems rather than to add to the military capabilities and cohesion of the West.

What is striking, too, is the uneven distribution of the defense burden within the EU. Whereas Britain and France spend more than 2.5 percent of their gross domestic products (GDP) on defense, other EU members like Germany and Spain (as well as smaller members like Finland and Belgium) spend barely 1.5 percent. Even at current levels, and notwithstanding the reality of unevenly shared interests, defense spending can be made to converge toward commonly shared priorities. For example, Britain spends 40 percent of its defense budget on procurement and research and development, as compared to 12 percent for Belgium. French defense spending per capita stands at a reasonable \$708 (in 1997), compared to a weak \$196 for Spain (whose prime minister's determination during the Kosovo War was second to none, including Tony Blair). Britain has nearly completed the reorganization of its armed forces, and France is half way toward switching to a fully professional army, but Germany has not started yet. Germany, on the other hand has removed the state from its defense industry, but France still persists in delaying the final steps toward privatization -- at least until the next presidential elections, in 2002.

For the coming years, the EU should adopt criteria of defense convergence for its members, in the name of a Common European Defense Initiative (CEDI) that would resemble the approach adopted and enforced for the adoption of criteria of economic convergence prior to launching the euro in January 1999. The first of these criteria could identify a minimum level of defense spending, relative to the size of the budget, but no attempt should be made to impose unrealistic rates of increase, as NATO attempted to do periodically during the Cold War. Some small and symbolic percentage of the EU budget might even be devoted to the foreign, defense, and security functions after the EU's absorption of the WEU, which is anticipated for December 2000. Most of all, these criteria would emphasize spending priorities designed to provide Europe with added value at no additional cost: for R&D and for procurement, for example. Also desirable, would be some benchmarks that would help measure progress regarding the privatization of the defense sector, as well as the professionalization of the European armies that still rely mainly on conscripts. Fulfillment of these criteria would be targeted for the year 2007, which will mark the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaties.

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The goal is not for Europe to achieve military parity with the United States any time soon, or even ever, but to come to enough sufficiency to permit a mutually agreed devolution of responsibility and, accordingly, authority. Thus, in Africa, except its northeast corner, Europe's ability to lead should come together with an ability to provide the bulk of any military forces, whether for peacemaking or peacekeeping. In the Middle East, the power requirements, expectations, and perceptions are such as to give the United States a convincing claim for leadership, even though some parties in the region may often attempt to manipulate transatlantic differences to their advantage. In parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, Britain and France have the historical connections and some power projection capability to play a significant political role with and perhaps at least a marginal dimension. Finally, in the Persian Gulf, where the political differences between Europe and the United States may be diminishing, an ad hoc coalition with a clear US lead is appropriate, as it was in fact before and during the Gulf War.

The movement toward a more equal distribution of both military capability and political authority between the United States and the other NATO allies is a fundamental element of the broad prescriptions suggested here. The two elements go together, and until the European members can muster a convincing autonomous force projection capability, they will not be able to operate autonomously of the United States in situations where US and European political interests either

diverge or, more likely, are so very different in magnitude as to justify one side of the Atlantic to act without the other. And where transatlantic political interests coincide but the views on supporting military strategy or tactics differ, a substantial European force projection capability will add weight to European views.

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By extending the boundaries of the EU area, and, by implication those of the NATO area too, enlargement stands at the center of the EU's emerging common foreign policy. In other words, enlargement defines the "C" of CFP. Ever since the 1993, Copenhagen Summit, there have been repeated delays and related explanations for the postponement of the EU's calendar for enlargement -- from 2000 to 2003 to 2005 to ever later; after IGC1996, after NATO, after the euro, after IGC2000. Still, Europe's commitment to an expeditious and efficient enlargement should not be in doubt. If anything, the war in Kosovo reinforced this commitment: the European Commission's second report, released in October 1999, recommended that the Council begin accession negotiations with the six states that had been left out in 1997 (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Slovakia) and, at long last, elevate Turkey's status to that of a formal candidate (with consequences for Cyprus). Still, with the EU as with NATO, there should be a credible and robust plan that would provide applicant countries with a reliable sense of the time frame they face. Otherwise, the pain that must be endured in order to meet the externally-induced criteria for membership might become a cause for internal disorders and even separation from the West, rather than an incentive for domestic reform and integration in the West.

Enlargement complicates decision-making within the EU. As has been seen, a security agreement à deux (Anglo-French) or à trois (with Germany) can be reached readily before it is approved without much delay by the other EU states, or without much involvement by the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Disagreements are likely to rise as and when the number of EU members involved with the decisions grows. The next IGC, or, as hinted, the one after that, will have to clarify procedures for handling such disagreements. With regard to the European Central Bank (ECB), for example, EU states agreed to relinquish their intrinsic "right" to a seat on the small policy board, even though one non-euro state (Britain) found a way to be included. Institutional reforms at IGC2000 and IGC2005 may attempt to repeat a procedure that tends to simplify decision making within the EU. To this day, the EU remains a 15-1 institution whereby veto by one member, however small, may deny the will of all its partners on most significant issues. NATO, on the other hand, remains a 1+15 (now 18) organization whereby the will of the one defines the followership of the other members.

A parallel convergence of membership between the EU/WEU and NATO will be needed if these institutions are going to remain complementary. So it was for the European Community (EC) and NATO between 1949 and 1985: after NATO had grown from 12 to 16 members (including Greece, Turkey, Germany, and Spain), the EC added six new members to its initial roster of 6: all new EC members, except Ireland, were members of NATO, and all new NATO members (except Turkey) eventually became members of the EC. The waves of EU and NATO enlargement in 1995 and 1999 have widened these divergences in membership: European members that belong to all three, members that belong to none, and members that belong to only one: Turkey and Norway in NATO but not the EU (as well as the three new NATO states from Central Europe) or the four neutral states (plus Ireland) in the EU but not NATO. As to the United States (and Canada) it still lacks an institutional relationship with the EU, with which there remain ad hoc arrangements that suffer from the EU's insufficient decision-making arrangements (like a troika that makes US consultations with the EU dependent on the whims of the alphabet rather than on the imperatives of the issues at hand). After the next EU Summit in Paris in December 2000, and on the way to the next NATO Summit in Europe a year later, there should be a credible and transparent understanding that EU and NATO memberships are complementary, so that NATO states that are not EU members can expect to join it at the earliest possible time (including

Norway, midway through the decade, but also Turkey later), and EU states that are not NATO members can also join it soon (starting with, but not limited to Austria). Such a principle would also help determine the directions and pace of the next round of NATO enlargement that should hold center stage at the next NATO Summit in mid-to late 2001. Indeed, with the 1999 NATO Summit hijacked by the war in Kosovo, the 2001 Summit looks as a major event for the post-Cold War review of NATO in the context of what will have been decided at the December 2000 EU Summit, and with the arrival of a new US administration that will inherit many of the issues likely to be left pending in 2000, including trade and nuclear defense.

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Now as always, security threats remain difficult to anticipate as to their nature, scope, timing, and location. Nonetheless, some principles of action can be laid down on the basis of known experiences lived in the 1990s (from the Persian Gulf through Bosnia and up to Kosovo) rather than on the unknowns of Europe's expectations for the 2000s.*

First, an explicit political endorsement by NATO is valuable and even necessary, whether the members act as an alliance or as an ad hoc coalition of the willing. Cold War, and post-Cold War notions of a dissolution of NATO are gone. Europe may well be the most stable it has been in history, but, as argued, it is still a "work in progress" as there remain numerous areas of concern. The United States may well be a "peerless power," but even powers without peers need allies: public support for a military intervention that cannot point to allied contributions will not be sustained for long. Second, although future combat operations will continue to be governed by political constraints, they cannot be managed -- either in military strategy or in choice of bombing targets -- by a committee of 19 member states and, over time, more. This is a challenge to common sense. The decision to use force, and the enforcement of that decision after it has been made, should bear some resemblance to the contributions that are made toward the enforcement of that decision. This is a matter of common sense. Third, European military capabilities without US participation, either within or outside of the NATO umbrella, are extremely limited when needed for high-intensity operations against a substantial opponent -- and, indeed, unlikely to proceed if it is known that the United States does neither wishes nor intends to become militarily engaged.

Thus, with conditions in Kosovo unlikely to be repeatable elsewhere, or with the political-military conditions that prevailed during the war unlikely to be deemed desirable in a future conflict, the war in Kosovo may prove to be both the first and the last truly NATO war. Instead, coalitions of the willing endorsed by the NATO political structure, using NATO-committed military assets (which means principally US assets for any significant effort), and employing some, but not all, elements of NATO military structure are likely to remain the option of choice in the future. In most cases predictable at this time, these coalitions -- U.S.-led "posses"-- would involve forces from members with significant force projection capability (Britain and France, aside from the United States), token forces from some of the other larger powers (including Germany for some years to come, but also Italy and, perhaps, Spain and Poland), and base access and support from those whose geographical or other conditions relative to the conflict might dictate (including the new NATO members). The other NATO countries might bless the decision, but they would not participate in the execution of the operation and, therefore, in approving its detailed enforcement. A UN or OSCE endorsement of the Article 4 security goal of the operation (depending on its geography) could be invoked where feasible, but the active role of either institution would begin essentially after the end of combat -- in political stabilization (peacekeeping, elections) and economic reconstruction.

During the next five to seven years at least, the United States will provide in many (or most) cases the airlift, the command, control and communications systems, the satellite and airborne sources of surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence, and the system that ties them all

together, even where the strike forces are principally or solely European. (There is just no escape for either side of the Atlantic from this dependence, and rather than fighting it here or in Europe, all countries should strive to accommodate it more credibly, pending changes in both intra-European and transatlantic defense cooperation.) As a result, for major efforts especially, the United States would need to be a central part of any coalition of the willing even if it fails to contribute any strike forces. This can create political tensions, especially in cases where European combat forces are involved and incurring losses while US ground combat forces are not. Yet, even when Americans are not actively involved, they would remain the guarantor of last resort for any such coalition. As has been shown too many times in the twentieth century (and not just for both World Wars) an America that is not present early in a war can still, and will, join in later, if and as needed.

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As the century ends in Europe, there is cause for much satisfaction. Admittedly, war still remains an intrinsic feature of life on the continent, but it can no longer erupt as readily and even spontaneously as used to be the case. Two central ideas contributed to the success of US policies in and for Europe. One, the Atlantic idea, created the conditions for America's return to the Old World. Whether on economic, security, or even cultural grounds, this return has produced innumerable benefits. America's commitment to Europe is shaped by these interests within a Euro-Atlantic space that has become increasingly common. The other idea, the idea of Europe, created the conditions for the construction of a civil, democratic, and affluent space in the continent. This construction is proceeding well. For at least 15 countries in Europe, and many more to come during the next several years, war has simply ceased to be the option it used to be. This is just an extraordinary achievement: in that part of the continent, history has changed its ways.

The debate over the boundaries of permissible differences between Europe and the United States, meaning Europe's autonomy relative to America's leadership, should begin, therefore, with a recognition of the common intra-European and transatlantic areas built over the past 10, 50, and 80 years. For such a debate to unfold, the most compelling vision statement is an appeal to stay the course. Since the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, and the Rome Treaties in 1957, US policies in Europe and the integration of Europe have served US (and European) interests well. More European integration in the context of such continued US involvement will continue to serve US (and European) interests well too. The central lesson of the twentieth century is that America's problems in Europe result from Europe's failures: a war "they" start which they cannot end, a revolution they launch which they cannot control, or, closer to us, a currency they launch which they would not be able to stabilize and sustain. Entering a new century, our main fear about Europe should be that of a Europe that is weak and divided, and our main hope should be for a Europe that does become stronger and more united.