

# A Shared Security Strategy for a Euro-Atlantic Partnership of Equals

A Report of the Global Dialogue between the  
European Union and the United States

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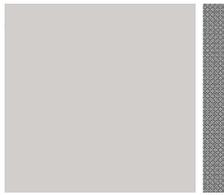
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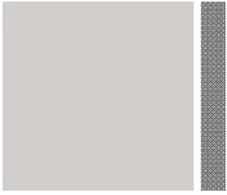
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# CONTENTS

Preface.....	v
Learning to Say Yes.....	3
Converging Visions.....	7
No Time for a Time-out.....	11
About the Authors and the Project.....	18





## PREFACE

We are in a decisive interval for the institutions of the Euro-Atlantic community and the 34 member states that belong to either the European Union or NATO or both—with more yet to come. Traditional concerns—security, economic, political, and societal—have become increasingly bundled into circumstances that cannot be addressed by any nation alone, however powerful, or any single institution, however influential. Under such circumstances, capabilities, too, need to be bundled for use through a comprehensive approach that combines hard and soft power into smart power, to be used by and with the states and institutions that can best provide, share, and even use them. Americans and Europeans must work together to develop these comprehensive approaches to today’s challenges and thus ensure that tomorrow’s solutions are effective for them and the rest of the world.

It is with this belief that in early 2008 the Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geopolitics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) launched a new project entitled a Global Dialogue between the European Union and the United States. The project is designed to examine five broad issues that represent serious challenges for the states of the Euro-Atlantic community but lend themselves especially well to ever-closer relations, consultation, and cooperation between the European Union and the United States:

1. Issues of stabilization and reconstruction and the problem of failing states;
2. The dilemmas of climate change, including mitigation of its causes and adaptation to its impacts;
3. The risks of energy scarcity and strategies for sustainable energy security;
4. Challenges in the world economy and the new modalities of global economic governance; and
5. The need for strategic convergence and the formation of a Euro-Atlantic security strategy.

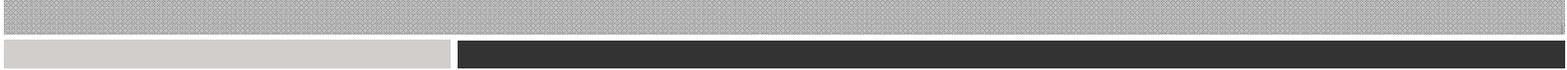
The paper that follows is the third in a series that began with *Enhancing Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, by Julian Lindley-French (and Robert E. Hunter), and next *Transatlantic Cooperation for Sustainable Energy Security*, by Frank Kramer and John Lyman (with Robin Niblett). Scheduled for release later this year are the two final reports, one coauthored by Hugo Paemen and Bruce Stokes providing an assessment of the U.S.-EU modalities for transatlantic and global economic governance, and a second by Christian Egenhofer and David Pumphrey on climate change issues.

I am grateful to Sven Biscop for his willingness to coauthor this paper with me, as well as to past and future authors, for investing so much of their time and experience in the development of this

dialogue. I am equally grateful to the many other leading experts on both sides of the Atlantic who have contributed their ideas and suggestions to our analysis and writing, either through meetings specifically arranged by us or their respective institutions or through conversations and on the basis of their writing.

As with two preceding projects on EU-U.S.-NATO relations completed by the Brzezinski Chair in the period 2004–2007, a Global Dialogue between the European Union and the United States is made possible by a grant from the European Commission. My CSIS colleagues and I are tremendously grateful for this continued support.

*Simon Serfaty*  
*Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security & Geostrategy*  
*Center for Strategic and International Studies*



# A SHARED SECURITY STRATEGY FOR A EURO-ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP OF EQUALS

*Simon Serfaty and Sven Biscop*

In each of Europe's main countries, as well as between them and the United States, the analysis of the changing security environment is converging. Germany's *weissbuch* (October 2006) and France's *livre blanc* (June 2008) overlapped with the most recent national strategy papers released by Britain (March 2008) and the United States (March 2006), which were all compatible, too, with the NATO Comprehensive Policy Guidance of November 2007 and the European Council's Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy of December 2008, which concluded a year-long debate about the 2003 European Security Strategy.

In a world that the *livre blanc* viewed as "neither better nor more dangerous" than two decades ago, but "more unpredictable" and "exposed to new vulnerabilities," all these documents have shown a newly felt sense of urgency in "providing security in a changing world." By calling for "more capable, more coherent and more active" EU contributions, the 2008 EU report, like the various national papers, suggests that the transatlantic partnership can no longer be divided along Robert Kagan's celestial lines of the planets Mars and Venus: now, a healthier understanding of Europe's potential and a sobering appreciation of America's limits define the transatlantic partnership as a more balanced relationship between power and weaknesses. The Georgia crisis of August 2008 has undoubtedly contributed to this more rational assessment of the reach of NATO and the need for the European Union to assume a greater share of the burden. In October 2008, the need for such a balance was written into another significant document, the Stability Operations Field Manual, prepared by the U.S. Army on behalf of a "comprehensive approach...that integrates the tools of statecraft with our military forces, international partners, humanitarian organizations, and the private sector."

After the sharp clashes over Iraq, which divided the Europeans and caused a severe rift with the United States, Europe's new political leaders are often pragmatists who can work together, as well as with their main partner across the Atlantic. French president Nicolas Sarkozy's embrace of the United States parallels his interest in closer relations with Britain on behalf of an enhanced European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) that, as was intended all along, complements rather than competes with NATO: "We need both," said Sarkozy in Athens on June 6, 2008, "a NATO and European defense that oppose each other make no sense." Indeed, this was so much the case that France's return into NATO in April 2009 caused little tumult within the organization or even at home, where the issue had been a rarely tested taboo since France's withdrawal in 1966.

An apparent willingness to end the so-called French exception is especially welcome in Britain, whose “most important bilateral relationship is [still] with the United States,” and Germany, traditionally torn between its two central but estranged partners and institutions of choice. As a result, the three main European powers and the United States can at last agree on the main precondition of transatlantic solidarity: there can be a distinctive “European” way without endangering the cooperative Euro-Atlantic design, and conversely, there cannot be a cohesive “Atlanticist” way unless it acknowledges specific European preferences and needs even when these seem distinct from U.S. preferences and needs. In other words, a revitalized transatlantic partnership must be a balanced one, between partners that accept each other as equals—and that are prepared to make the necessary effort to achieve equal status. That at least is a view now increasingly shared from the top down if not or not yet from the bottom up: in 2007, even as only 36 percent of the European publics believed that U.S. leadership was desirable, nearly three-fourths of the members of the European Parliament and 78 percent of EU officials held such a belief.<sup>1</sup> This does show that the United States has a lot to (re)gain in terms of soft power in Europe—a proposition that will be effectively tested during the term of the European Parliament elected in June 2009 and the new European Commission scheduled to take office in the fall.

In April 2009, the Declaration on Alliance Security issued at the NATO anniversary summit called for the development of a new NATO strategic concept that will reassert the allies’ unity of action on behalf of its basic values, principles, and purposes. This is not the first time that the NATO members undertake such a difficult and demanding task. But with NATO’s most recent strategic concept predating September 11, 2001, by nearly two years, and thus limited at best to oblique references to many of the most significant security issues that will populate the coming decade—including terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and long-range missiles, the integration of military-civil efforts to stabilize and reconstruct failed and failing states, and the threats to homeland security—NATO, like the European Union and its respective members, found it imperative to proceed with this effort.

This is an opportune moment therefore to pursue the development of a shared Euro-Atlantic security strategy for a rebalanced partnership, through different but converging national and institutional venues: NATO, which will establish a committee of “wise men” to draft a new strategic concept; the United States, which is expected to release a new National Security Strategy later in 2009; and the European Union, which should take its strategic thinking forward and regard the 2008 Implementation Report as the start rather than the end of a process.

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<sup>1</sup> John K. Glenn, *Will America’s Image Recover in Europe? Understanding Public Opinion since 9/11*, Brussels Forum Paper Series (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall Fund, 2008), 5.

## Learning to Say Yes

The French return to full participation in NATO's integrated command confirms the new political conditions that prevail within the transatlantic partnership. Throughout, Sarkozy's expectations in preparing for this step echoed those of then-President Jacques Chirac in December 1995—for the United States to share power (including high command assignments for Paris) and for Europe to build up its defense policy (with an indispensable assist from Britain). Yet changed political circumstances made it easier for both countries to voice, articulate, and manage each other's expectations (and apprehensions) more effectively in 2009 than a decade earlier, possibly because Sarkozy's expectations, including the command of the Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk and Joint Lisbon Command (which manages the NATO Response Force), seemed less ambitious and thus less controversial than Chirac's demand for the AFSOUTH command in Naples at a time when U.S. forces were heavily deployed in nearby Bosnia.

The normalization of France's NATO membership adds marginally to NATO's effective military capabilities and even to France's influence on NATO: over the past many years, France returned almost totally into the NATO military structures without much notice, just as there was, in fact, little notice militarily of its departure in 1966. More significantly, the French return adds measurably to the political cohesiveness of the alliance and the institutional efficiency of its organization. And most importantly, France's normalization of its status in the alliance permits a broader rethinking of U.S.-European and intra-European relations, including the European Union together with the United States and NATO together with ESDP.

For the United States to help reinforce these possible gains means to encourage Britain to say yes to France about ESDP (which is not mentioned in the 2008 British National Security Strategy); for France this means to recruit Germany for a more proactive implementation and revision of the European Security Strategy that was drafted by Javier Solana in 2003; and for the United States, Britain, France, and Germany this means saying yes to each other so that the 34 members of the European Union and NATO (including 21 common European members) can achieve a much-needed strategic unity. The precondition for a revitalization of the security architecture is, however, that the Europeans, through the European Union, finally speak with one voice.

For those who did not understand it yet, the post-Cold War years in the Balkans, and even more vividly, 9/11 and the years since, confirmed the obvious: that the states of Europe cannot play an effective role in the world, in analytical or in policy terms, one or two national capitals at a time. To be effectively cast in that role, Europe needs to act as a union.<sup>2</sup> But for that role to be credible to allies and adversaries alike, the European Union must end its internal divisions on the basis of which any of its 27 members can block the will of its 26 partners (as shown, once again, by the

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<sup>2</sup> Simon Serfaty, *Architects of Delusion: Europe, America and the Iraq War* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

June 2008 Irish referendum on the 2007 Lisbon Treaty). It must also end the current state of affairs in which EU member states that are more Atlantic-oriented block ESDP and those that are more EU-oriented block NATO, for the end result is that both organizations underperform at the expense of each other and all of their members. Thus, revitalizing the security architecture is first an intra-European debate that begins at two (between France and Britain) and is pursued at three with Germany before it is extended to all EU members.<sup>3</sup> The EU member states can best engage in a fruitful discussion with the United States when they have made up their minds collectively, starting with the “big three” as prerequisite for achieving a European consensus.

Although the French are now better aware of their own limits, they remain torn between their traditional passion for autonomy from anyone else and an inescapable need for interdependence with everyone else. Current military equipment and capabilities are the product of a Gaullist orthodoxy that prevailed 20 to 30 years ago on the assumption of a state-based, symmetric enemy effectively countered by the abundance of U.S. power. But the rise of asymmetrical threats and an expanding pattern of smaller operations compel changes that had not been accounted for when France’s previous *livre blanc* was released in 1994. The goal now is for France to be the first to enter a major theater of operations—a sort of security-driven right of interference (*droit d’ingérence sécuritaire*)—but to not do so alone, or with only a few EU partners that may be willing but will likely remain neither capable nor even relevant. The new tests are therefore tests of efficacy and synergy. With a shrunken army said to be in the midst of a “quiet revolution,”<sup>4</sup> meeting earlier targets for growth in personnel, reinvestment in capabilities and equipment, and funding for training, the need for France to do more with less can only be met at many: if not with the United States and thus NATO, with whom; if not with Britain (but also Germany) and through the European Union, how; if not with Sarkozy and now, when?

A shortage of resources also raises obstacles to Britain’s ability to satisfy its long-standing mission as America’s most willing and most capable partner—let alone Britain’s illusion over its ability to go it alone (meaning, away from its European partners). Yet, Sarkozy’s French logic is not convincing for Prime Minister Gordon Brown and in Britain, where France’s long-standing interest in a full EU operational military headquarters to plan and manage EU military operations remains contentious. Such an EU body is feared as a potential rival of NATO and a lesser alternative to NATO headquarters that can be borrowed by EU members to run missions overseas. It is clear however that ESDP can only be fully effective if endowed with its own command and control structures (just like the United Nations is in need of solid headquarters for

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<sup>3</sup> As recommended by Jolyon Howorth, “it would...seem appropriate...to organize...a trilateral summit between France, Germany, and the UK to thrash out precisely where the three now stand in relation to the emerging new world order, to ESDP, to NATO and to the relationship between them.” *The Case for an EU Grand Strategy*, Egmont Paper 27 (Brussels: Royal Institute for International Relations, January 2009), 19.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Claude Thomann, “Menace sur notre capacité militaire,” *Le Monde* (Paris), May 14, 2008. Also, Hervé Morin, “Prenons une défense d’avance,” *Le Monde* (Paris), June 17, 2008, and Interview by Laurent Valdigué, *Journal du Dimanche* (Paris), July 12, 2009.

that matter). And it would in all probability do no great harm to the alliance if some of the 12,000 staff currently working in NATO structures were shifted to an EU OHQ. NATO, ESDP, and the United Nations all need to be credible frameworks for operations, for depending on the political circumstances and on which states want to take part there will be cases in which deploying under the NATO flag will not be an option, as in Lebanon in 2006.

The United States, which over the years has firmly and openly resisted the idea of an EU OHQ, increasingly appears to come round to this view. Britain's continued opposition, however, is less a vote for NATO than it is a vote against the European Union, and France's new Atlantic mood is accordingly not sufficient to force London into the EU mold—or at least not on the eve of national elections scheduled to be held no later than May 2010. Still, the United States need not wait: given the noticeable U.S. shift in position, the Obama administration should encourage Britain to join France and others and make it clear that the aim is not to achieve separation from NATO but that instead Washington welcomes a strengthened ESDP that would make the European Union into a credible partner at last, even at the price of accepting a bigger European say in decisionmaking. At the very least, and to facilitate the next steps of the European debate, a new mechanism could coordinate the work of the European Union's civilian staff with NATO's military personnel: more specifically, in cases in which NATO leads a military operation and the European Union the civilian dimension, EU officials should be involved in the NATO planning process from the start.

Germany's resistance to hard power as a "smart" complement to the soft power it favors is hardly new. It is written into Germany's postwar history and cannot be expected to change dramatically. But so long as it is the case, Europe's ability to pull its weight will remain deficient. That a German commitment has been missing since the European Union set up its ambitious Headline Goals is clear. For the past two decades, defense expenditures have fallen steadily—from 2.8 percent in 1989 to 2.2 percent in 1991 to 1.5 percent in 2001 to 1.3 percent in 2006. Yet, the goals of the 2006 *weissbuch* are compatible with ESDP and NATO targets (Headline 2010 and Comprehensive Policy Guidance), especially as they discuss threat assessment, force transformation, and Bundeswehr reform. Arguably, Germany, with its large but not very deployable forces, has the most to gain from an ESDP that will increasingly focus on various forms of cooperation and pooling. That the conclusions of the German white paper were not brought to the Bundestag for debate was politically telling. But in the new political context created by closer bilateral relations between France and the United States within NATO, between Britain and France in the European Union, and among the United States, the European Union, and NATO within an expanding Euro-Atlantic community, a new German government after the September 2009 elections might provide in 2010 the leadership needed to resume an evolution that began in 1994 when a constitutional court ruling allowed the deployment of German troops abroad during the waning years of Helmut Kohl and the years of Gerhard Schroeder. But once deployed, these forces should also be allowed to fight as and where needed.

Whatever national temptations there are and will remain, notably among the big 3, already now "the EU has increasingly become the political centre and the primary decision-making level for

European States: if they want to concert, it is in the EU they decide whether or not to act in a given situation.”<sup>5</sup> If the states of Europe decide to act, it is through the European Union that they will be heard best by their partners across the Atlantic and elsewhere, and it is also with the European Union that they will be most effective. In late 2008, France’s hyperactive EU presidency unveiled Europe’s potential as a much-needed actor rather than a never-ending institutional project, peaking with the lead role of the European Union over the war in Georgia in late summer and during the global financial crisis unleashed early in the fall, before ending with credible EU decisions on climate change and energy, audacious proposals on EU security strategy and nuclear disarmament, and meritorious attempts to moderate a brutal Israeli offensive in Gaza by the close of 2008.

These were all areas of recognized primary interest to the incoming U.S. administration of Barack Obama; but noticeable too was the responsiveness of the outgoing Bush administration to the European lead, notwithstanding occasional but predictable U.S. (but also European) criticism of alleged French-EU appeasement (for giving too much recognition to Syrian president Assad in July or not achieving the withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgian territory in August), inflated expectations (for the initial meeting of G-20 in November 2008 and its follow-up in April 2009), or conversely, too much timidity for climate change (after the December 2008 EU summit made self-defeating concessions to Poland, Germany, and others) and self-deceptive goals (over the meager results of allegedly tepid attempts for a cease-fire in Gaza).

Whether Europe’s 2008 bid for global coleadership, dramatically muted in 2009, can be restored without the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty is unlikely. Seemingly, the laws of institutional supply and demand work differently in Europe, and it is often when the role of the European Union is most acknowledged that it seems least able to respond. Many European citizens would certainly have expected a much more forceful reaction to the current economic crisis, for example, and their neglect of the parliamentary elections in June 2009 betrayed an overall disdain for its role on their daily lives. Thus, at a time that might be potentially decisive, Europe’s institutional crisis appears to be especially severe. For one, issues of leadership continue to prevail as the permissive consensus that conditioned the growth of European institutions is fragmenting. Assuming ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, which the new conservative government likely to emerge out of the next national elections in Britain has pledged to challenge, the permanent president of the European Council and the strengthening of the position of the high representative provided by the treaty should help mend this, but then member states must select strong personalities to fill those posts as well as, arguably, that of president of the European Commission. The problems are manifold: new populist pressures that challenge the European institutions more sharply than ever before; a spreading and deepening economic recession that deepens divisions among EU members and erodes a solidarity that was traditionally conceived as the union’s central principle; the many

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<sup>5</sup> Sven Biscop, “The European Security Strategy: Now Do It,” in *Europe: A Time for Strategy*, Egmont Paper 27 (Brussels: Royal Institute for International Relations, January 2009), 8.

other multilateral bodies where member states cling to their national seats and related prerogatives; and finally, Germany's reluctance to follow an Anglo-French leadership to which it is not used and of which Angela Merkel is openly critical. Neither Europe nor the alliance nor Germany can afford a marginalization of one relative to the others: Europe, because lacking Germany's commitment, it can be neither a counterweight nor a counterpart to the United States but risks instead turning into a counterfeit; the alliance, because absent the Germans, Europe's intention to develop capabilities that would be commensurate with its influence and renewed ambitions fades for lack of credibility; and Germany, because without the security provided by the alliance and the legitimacy provided by Europe, it can no longer remain the reassuring country it belabored to become since the war.<sup>6</sup>

What is not open to question, however, is that Europe's ability to be heard depends on its ability to speak with one voice that is common to all members even when it is not a single voice. "Divide and rule" is not a U.S. strategy: now more than ever, the United States welcomes a gradually stronger and ever more united (and larger) Europe. Where there is a "divide and rule" strategy, it is inspired and implemented by the Europeans themselves. Each EU member involved in some sort of institutional sabotage may have reasons of its own, but the result is the same for all members: a collective self-denial as individually the states of Europe are too small and too weak to be of genuine consequence if and when they fail to act together.

## Converging Visions

Without a doubt, the states of Europe and the United States faced one of their most difficult crises ever over the use of force in Iraq in 2003. Before the war, a more cohesive alliance and a more united Europe might have influenced the Bush administration away from war, or at least it could have brought additional capabilities to a coalition of the willing that proved to be ill-prepared for the nonmilitary missions that followed the war. Future historians will debate the question for years to come. But whatever their answer, the United States and the states of Europe, as well as the institutions to which they belong, do or can now agree on many internal factors (political and economic interests, ambitions, values) and external realities (threats, risks, and partnerships that are all in turn nurtured by historic experiences and geographic location) that encourage them to act together in a dangerously complex security environment. Thus, it is mostly agreed that:

- A diverse and interconnected array of issues—military (like the proliferation of WMDs and long-range missiles), political (good governance), economic (access to, and manipulation of, vital resources), social (pandemics and even poverty), environmental (climate change), and human issues (demographic curves)—creates an increasingly demanding, unpredictable, inescapable, and new security normalcy. The members of the Euro-Atlantic community and their institutions are neither prepared nor equipped to address many of these issues alone, whether in terms of capabilities and know-how or on grounds of organization and policies.

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<sup>6</sup> Simon Serfaty, "No Time for a Time Out," *Current History* 108, issue 716 (March 2009): 99–104.

This is the case because few of these threats, if any, can be managed, let alone resolved, with a single set of capabilities and a single box of tools; rather, most threats require a mixture of military and civilian capabilities, as well as a combination of national and institutional tools. Thus, according to Britain’s white paper, the new test of vision is for a “more integrated” or “comprehensive” approach that can “bring together the objectives and plans of all departments, agencies, and forces involved in protecting our [Britain’s] national security”; a view also found in the French *livre blanc* designed to combine “without confusing them, defence policy, homeland security policy, foreign policy, and economic policy.” This holistic approach also forms the core of the European Security Strategy, while the “comprehensive approach” has become the buzzword in NATO.

- Such multifaceted security concerns require a major overhaul of national and institutional capabilities for the exercise of hard power, nonmilitary capabilities for the use of soft power, and shared capabilities for combined reliance on both hard and soft power. Admittedly, the United States (but also NATO) has pursued this path for some time, though not very effectively with regard to the nonmilitary dimensions of security policy: the year after 2001, the United States still spent a mere \$13 billion in external assistance, versus the European Union’s \$36 billion.<sup>7</sup>

The availability and range of EU soft power—and hence, its efficacy and usability—should not be overestimated, however. Its seductive appeal is tempered by its inability to be a genuine model for other regions because the process that gave birth to “Europe” as a supranational entity is and shall remain fundamentally unrepeatable. Soft power also rests on the attractiveness of Europe’s model of society, however, the most distinctive part of which is a combination of democracy, market economy, and strong state intervention, at member state and EU-level, to ensure regulation of the economy and social security: the pace and shape of Europe’s recovery from the current crisis may well test the resilience of this model as well. However, even if considered as an unfinished regional state, the European Union remains divided among member states that insist on using their resources for national gains or in the context of specific subregional priorities—a condition exacerbated by a growing opposition to further enlargement, previously a main source of EU influence—and especially enlargement to Turkey, a cause for tensions within Europe but also with the United States and within NATO. Finally, even when the European Union is prepared to act collectively, “positive conditionality” outside Europe is also weakened by the unavailability of two of its major assets: access to an open agricultural market, which remains instead stubbornly protected, and the availability of economic migration, which is no longer as readily open as a mere few years ago. Finally, an important part of a strategy to regain soft power should be to reemphasize

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<sup>7</sup> François Heisbourg, “The European Security Strategy Is Not a Security Strategy,” in *A European Way of War*, ed. Steve Everts et al. (London: Centre for European Reform, 2004), 34.

human rights: as these are at the core of the European project, human rights violations should have a visible impact on relations with every other actor.

Still, relative to their capacity to produce soft power, the countries of Europe and their union will find it especially difficult to increase their military power at a time when budget pressures leave national governments only with cost-cutting options, though with different intensity (in France less than in Germany but arguably more than in Britain) and for different reasons (with Britain not sensitive to the EU pressures exerted on euro-zone members but now more exposed to economic conditions that are more severe than in most other EU countries). The resulting emphasis on “capability over quantity” is justified, though, for with 1.8 million troops the EU member states are not lacking in numbers, but that should not be abused as a political alibi for strategic thinking that overlooks the need for effective capabilities: there are limits to one’s ability to do more with less. Even in Britain, where defense spending has had its longest period of sustained growth since the 1980s (with the 2010 budget projected to be 11 percent higher in real terms than in 1997), armed forces suffer from a lack of critical capabilities and are stretched to the point of exhaustion, and the defense industry is approaching panic levels over its order books.

- The notion of exclusive security “neighborhoods” for either side of the Atlantic is too limiting. In a globalized world, everywhere “over there” can intrude anywhere “over here”—a proposition reflected in the new French emphasis on the links between domestic security and external threats, the result of terrorism, which Sarkozy bluntly identifies as the “immediate threat” against France. Seemingly prepared to cure the European Union of its “parochial myopia,” the states of Europe strive for a strategy that goes global—along a “strategic arc” that stretches from the Atlantic via the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf and the Horn of Africa and on to South Asia. For the French, this is no longer only a vision thing whose execution can be left safely in U.S. hands (whatever might otherwise be said): now, this global vision demands to be executed, which means a commitment of scarce funds in areas that would enable the French government to know early (intelligence) and thus, like Britain, engage rapidly (carriers), strike visibly (Rafales), and stay late (gendarmerie, which represents a sizable share of the French defense budget). For Germany, this means to contribute quickly with smaller, more mobile crisis intervention forces for high-intensity, short-duration conflicts or longer-duration, low-intensity operations of post-conflict stabilization. But no strategic paper and no declaratory policy can make up for the limits of national capabilities: the French *livre blanc* anticipates 377 billion in military spending from 2009 to 2020, which, even at the favorable exchange rate that prevailed at the time (\$1.55 to the euro), barely exceeded (at \$581 billion) the annual U.S. defense budget. Hence an emphasis, again, on the virtues of efficacy: while French defense spending remains relatively high (2.5 percent of GNP, about the same as in 2001), it falls to 1.7 percent if pensions and gendarmerie are excluded; more tellingly, 40 percent of that budget is for combat personnel and operational duties, as opposed to about 60 percent for administration and supporting roles (the reverse of the British budget, which the French government aims to emulate). On the other hand, if not

spent in such a fragmented way by 27 national ministries of defense, the combined defense budget of EU member states of 204 billion would generate a lot more capabilities than it does. The priority is therefore to spend better, through rationalization and pooling, for pouring more money in an inefficient structure simply means wasting more precious funds.

- The European Union agrees that international terrorism is a significant threat—though not “the decisive ideological struggle of the twenty-first century” identified by the United States during the Bush years—a threat whose global reach and possible access to weapons of mass destruction makes it potentially different from previous bursts of local terrorism in postwar Europe. Even the *weissbuch* urges “to expand the constitutional framework for the deployment of armed forces,” including deployment on home soil as “a result of the growing threat that terrorist attacks pose to German territory” and, reflective of Germany’s rediscovery of the national interest, in order “to secure access to energy resources” as a primary security interest potentially threatened by nonstate aggressors.

Yet, while every EU country has been making significant efforts in all areas singled out in the union’s counterterrorism strategy—“prevention, protection, pursuit, and response”—Europe collectively offers nothing comparable to a homeland strategy à l’américaine. Naturally, the European Union makes little room for the use of military instruments abroad, even in the areas of “pursuit” and “response,” as it considers that the police and judiciary play the leading role in the fight against terrorism. But most member states continue to show a deep national reluctance to share intelligence within the union, notwithstanding the high levels of bilateral exchanges between the leading EU countries and the United States. In each of the areas that define the EU strategy, much remains to be done by the EU members individually, and by the union collectively—independently of, or with, the United States.

- Traditional threats in the form of massive territorial invasion by large military forces have receded, especially in Europe. Yet, traditional state-centered or state-inspired threats that aim at asserting commanding influence through the use of nonmilitary means remain; a debate must be had whether they can demand the sort of collective response mandated by Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (which now de facto extends beyond the confined geographic area envisioned in April 1949). At the same time, the military dimension of Article 5 also demands reexamination: what are the real requirements for territorial defense in the world of today? Early expectations by NATO and EU members that Russia might settle quickly as a strategic partner had dampened on both sides of the Atlantic much before the 2008 war in Georgia made matters worse. The question is what this means for NATO enlargement: while Russia should not be allowed a right of veto, enlargement is not an objective in its own right and should also bring added value to the alliance. With parallel expectations that emerging poles of power in Asia (especially China but also India) will be needed as “stakeholders” in a new multilateral order, this also means the need for NATO, but even more for the European Union (through its strategic partnerships with other global actors), to engage, reform, and strengthen other institutions, including the G-8, UN Security Council, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank. This goal is especially emphasized in the British paper.

In this context, then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's belated emphasis on "transformational diplomacy" as a display of "realistic idealism" restored the old-fashioned imperatives of stability and order to the satisfaction of Europe's predilection for a new multilateralism that insists on good governance, civil society, social and political reforms, rule of law, and so forth. As the administration of President Barack Obama reintroduces America to the world, there are echoes of the European Union's discourse on "human security" as well as everyone's rediscovery of the benefits of a "comprehensive strategy"—whether for NATO or the European Union. Achieving human security suggests a positive agenda of engagement that can only be met in a collective spirit of complementarity with all EU and NATO members and their institutions contributing to the extent of their respective capabilities to the fulfillment of the many goals that define such an agenda.

## No Time for a Time-out

After 1945, Secretary of State Dean Acheson believed that "only the United States had the power to grab hold of history and make it conform." For the next 45 years, that proved to be the case, as bold U.S. policies framed and won a Cold War that reversed the course of history in unsuspected ways: by helping build a united, democratic, affluent, and peaceful space not only within Europe but also between Europe and the United States. After September 2001, President George W. Bush's faith in the American hold on history and its supreme power "to make it conform" did not meet with comparable success. As the unipolar moment is over and unilateralism has lost whatever appeal it might have had earlier, multilateralism is no longer a dirty word and allies are in fashion again, not only the "willing" but also and especially the capable and relevant. Just as was the case after World War II, Americans and Europeans must once again learn to think and act together—think strategically and act comprehensively: if not with each other, with whom; if not now, when?

As the 34 European members of the European Union and NATO show converging views of their total security environment, among themselves and with their two North American partners across the Atlantic, the logic of unity prevails over that of cleavage. Yet in a reversal of Cold War conditions, even as Europeans and Americans are growing closer together theoretically, they remain distant in practice in the vital area of the use and usefulness of military force. This is especially significant for Iran, about which the percentage of Americans willing to use force is about two and a half times larger than for Europeans. But the gap is also large on the other wars and conflicts that shape the post-9/11 security environment in the greater Middle East, including the war in Afghanistan, postwar Iraq after the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition forces, and further developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Over the past few years, EU unity and U.S.-EU cooperation on Iran have been impressive but on the whole ineffective. While the United States consented to delaying the sort of military action it might otherwise have wished to consider sooner, many of its European allies agreed to adopt and enforce the harsher sanctions they might have otherwise chosen to ignore longer. Throughout,

consultation has been a prerequisite to consensus—by and for a few (U.S. and EU3) before it was extended to the European Union and even NATO. Yet there should be no illusion: however united the alliance may seem to be on goals—to deny Iran access to nuclear weapons—its members are still divided over related means—especially with regard to the hypothetical use of force, or even the response to an Israeli decision to use its forces, with or without U.S. consent. The same may be true in the United States too: however united on the issue Americans may be, with 69 percent of all Americans pointing to Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons as a primary threat for the next 10 years, there is little doubt that any decision President Obama might make on the question will prove highly controversial. To this extent, even in the United States the military option seems to be losing the credibility it might have had earlier: after several years of repeated warnings, this is no longer a slow-moving Cuban missile crisis, if that crisis is to be remembered in terms of the potential for an Armageddon-like collision during 13 fateful days in the fall of 1962. That new reality, too, blurs a serious difference between the United States and Europe over an issue of major significance.

Priorities in the broader Middle East do not always seem to be the same in the European strategy papers as in the U.S. national strategy papers. “Why are we in Afghanistan?” or “Why should we be in Pakistan?” are questions that are raised in Europe with different measures of urgency and thus often appear to elicit different answers than in the United States; nor is there much discussion yet of the “years after” in Iraq, when, that is, the withdrawal of most coalition forces will have been completed between the summer of 2010 and the fall of 2012; nor, finally, is there consensus on the terms of diplomatic engagement in the Middle East, meaning the limits of permissible differences among Europeans and between them and the United States with regard to, say, Syria, Hamas, or Hezbollah, or even between Israel on the one hand and the United States and Europe on the other.

On these and many other issues, the imperative to decide and act together remains often questioned. “*Qui fait quoi?*” The question, which presupposes the divisibility of Euro-Atlantic contributions to the execution of policies designed to cater to interests that would be shared even if they are not conducive to policies that are common, raises three types of distinctive but overlapping sets of national and institutional issues: what degree of autonomy can/should the European Union/ESDP have relative to NATO; what degree of autonomy can/should NATO have relative to the European Union/ESDP ; what degree of autonomy can/should the United States have relative to NATO? Admittedly, these questions cannot be answered convincingly on paper until they have been tested on the ground. Still, the appeal of Britain’s white paper, Germany’s *weissbuch*, and France’s *livre blanc*, as well as the European Security Strategy, the most recent White House national security paper, and even the NATO Comprehensive Political Guidance lies not only in what they and their state sponsors want to do about the world and its problems, but also in what they say, directly or by implication, about the alliance, or the union, and their members.

For Europe, through its union but also with the United States, and for the United States, in its own name but also with its allies through NATO, asserting a shared will to act together on the

basis of compatible values, overlapping interests, and common goals may go a long way toward recasting an alliance that had seemed to be astray in recent years. For the European Union to update its collective security paper, and with the Obama administration also engaged in a review of its own national security strategy, while the NATO members prepare for a similar transatlantic exercise aimed at the development of a new strategic concept, there is an unusual opportunity for the areas of convergence discussed here to define a compatible, if not fully shared, let alone single or even common, Euro-Atlantic strategic approach (EU-U.S., U.S.-NATO, and NATO-EU) to the daunting challenges of the post-Cold War, post-9/11, post-Iraq world ahead. This opportunity will be best met along the following five principles that are offered in lieu of a conclusion.

First, post-Cold War and post-9/11 events have created a new security normalcy that confirms the need for a more robust role of the European Union in the world. That need, which is recognized by the overwhelming majority of Europe's heads of state and government, is compatible with explicit public preferences as well—not as an alternative to or protection from the U.S. role but in addition to it. Europe's capacity to lead as a union was shown in late 2008 when EU initiatives filled the leadership vacuum created by the presidential election in the United States. How the European Union now proceeds to muster the will and gather the capabilities to attend to its role as a power in the world, is not a U.S. decision, but it is a decision about which the United States cannot be indifferent. Europe's post-constitutional moment of reflection must end because Europe's time for action is running short.

Second, in recent years, the need for a more active and forceful EU role has been embraced by the United States in the midst of the difficulties faced by U.S. power in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. receptiveness to a stronger and even more assertive Europe that can mitigate the burdens of preponderance is convincingly endorsed by the new U.S. administration and by the American public as well. In 2009 and beyond, there is no U.S. interest in shying away from leadership and its global responsibilities, but the commitment to assuming these burdens is not incompatible with the expectation that the allies' contributions can add to the efficiency of the needed actions. In this context, America's ambivalence about NATO as its security tool of choice—or, at least, the institution that is owed a right of first refusal in conjunction with U.S.-led interventions outside Europe—will deepen dramatically should NATO, but also the European Union and their respective members, fail to meet their tests of will and efficacy in Afghanistan (and Pakistan). Irrespective of the conditions that brought Americans and Europeans to this point, failure in Afghanistan would raise questions on both sides of the Atlantic about the reliability of their alliance and the security significance of the European Union—in the United States because of Europe's inability to do more and in Europe because of an alleged U.S. tendency to do too much. That said, no such European contribution can be expected unless there is an agreement about a clear strategy, notably about the desired end-state and the timeframe. Especially in view of Europe's limited military capabilities, indefinite commitments are impossible unless it is assumed that no other crisis will require European forces for as long as they are in Afghanistan.

Third, given such willingness on both sides of the Atlantic for enhanced security relations, this is a good moment for the European Union and NATO to close whatever vision gap still separates

both institutions and their members. First, a new EU strategy paper specifically focused on military security (and thus functioning as a sub-strategy to the European Security Strategy), that builds on the convergence of the white papers released by Britain, Germany, and France over the past 30 months, should finally define the EU member states' collective ambition in the military field. Elaborating such an ESDP strategy will require a thorough debate, but some outlines can already be discerned. The European Union is obviously very committed to the region that it dubs its "neighborhood," in which it seeks to promote political, economic, and social reform—and this neighborhood should be a priority for ESDP wherever its peace and security are threatened. That in the resolution of the Georgian crisis NATO is all but a sideshow demonstrates that certainly in the eastern neighborhood the European Union must assume leadership (as it might also in, say, Lebanon). The "broader neighborhood," including Central Asia and the Gulf, should be part of the reflection too. Sub-Saharan Africa has been an important area of focus for ESDP until now, though the strategy behind it is not always clear; for example, if the European Union twice intervened in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the request of the United Nations (in 2003 and 2006), why was the third request (in 2008) refused? Nonetheless, it should remain a priority, as other strategic players are becoming increasingly active but are mostly unwilling to contribute to crisis management on the African continent. Securing Europe's lines of communication with the world, of which the operation off the coast of Somalia is an example, is another priority. Importantly, the collective security system of the United Nations, and therefore the European Union itself, as its main supporter and with two permanent members of the Security Council in its ranks, can only be legitimate if it addresses the threats to everyone's security—too much selectivity undermines the system. Even though the European Union cannot always play a leading role, it must therefore shoulder its share of the responsibility for global peace and security by playing an active role in the Security Council and by contributing capabilities to UN (or UN-mandated) crisis-management and peacekeeping operations. Once defined, these priorities should guide a proactive engagement.

Where such an EU military strategy, elaborating on one dimension of the comprehensive European Security Strategy, and the new national security strategy paper expected from the new U.S. administration overlap, is where the new NATO strategic concept will come into being. This should close further the "coherence deficit" that has often characterized transatlantic strategic thinking. The European allies, speaking through their union, now have an unusual opportunity to influence the new NATO strategy. For the first time, it can be generated bottom-up: if each "pillar" within the alliance (the European Union and the United States) first defines its own priorities, where they meet a truly shared NATO strategy can emerge. This is a test of strategic vision and consistency that the European Union and NATO—and their members—cannot afford to ignore or fail.

Fourth, while thinking strategically can help avoid the risks of acting erratically, it is not enough to operate effectively. For the European Union to assume a credible role in the implementation of the Euro-Atlantic strategic vision of the future, additional capabilities are needed, including military capabilities. That is imperative. A division of labor designed along the lines of America's

alleged predilection for “hard” power and Europe’s exclusive interest in “soft” power will not form the “smart” power needed by America and Europe to attend to, and manage, the agendas of the coming years. It is predictably not possible for all allies to contribute equally in all security areas, but all security areas demand some contribution from each ally: making abstention a viable option for any ally would soon prove to be cause for resentment for all.

A primary cause of the problematic state of Europe’s military is the still almost exclusively national focus of defense planning, while capability gaps at the aggregate EU and NATO level are being ignored. Therefore, the only way to achieve the quantum leap that is necessary to realize defense transformation is through pooling, which, by reducing intra-European duplications, can produce much more deployable capabilities within the current combined defense budget. From that point of view, Permanent Structured Cooperation, the new mechanism to be established by the Lisbon Treaty for “those Member States whose military capabilities fulfill higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions,” has considerable potential.

Whether Permanent Structured Cooperation can be the platform that convinces the member states to implement such measures is still not clear. The appeal of this mechanism is its flexibility: it allows those member states that are willing to pool efforts within the framework of the treaty without obliging those that are more reticent to join in. The European Defence Agency can assess the opportunities for different forms of cooperation in function of member states’ declared intentions. Pooling of forces offers the biggest added value. Member states can contribute national squadrons or battalions to a multinational fighter force or army brigade, while everything above and below that (command and control, logistics, maintenance, training) could be fully integrated and located on a reduced number of bases, thus creating huge synergies and effects of scale. The composition and size of Europe’s capabilities should be decided not on the basis of a simple comparison with the United States, but in function of the ambitions and priorities outlined in an EU military strategy. In all probability though, if the United States can be a global military power with 1.3 million troops, Europe should be able to manage with less than its current 1.8 million.

Finally, for the United States to share effectively its leadership vocation with its allies of choice, a different attitude is also required. Bilateral consultations, and most importantly consultation within and between NATO and ESDP and between the European Union and the United States, do not presuppose consensus but are designed to shape the needed consensus and facilitate its execution. To assert, as Americans like to do, is not to convince, and to object, as Europeans are prone to do, is not to propose. For the Europeans, burden sharing does not imply automatic alignment with the United States on each and every issue, but sound decisionmaking in function of EU strategy. A revitalized alliance is a more flexible alliance that takes into account the evolution of the European Union and its relationship with the United States.

For some time now, NATO has ceased to be the only forum for political debate between Europe and North America, and on many issues direct dialogue between “EU-Brussels” and Washington is taking place with increasing frequency. Many of the priority issues on today’s agenda are only

indirectly related to security and defense. Not only does NATO have little or no expertise on the financial crisis, climate change, energy, and other key issues, but it would also send a strange signal if its members were to task a military alliance to address them. Furthermore, even with regard to security and defense issues, a comprehensive or holistic approach is required that also integrates the political, economic, and social dimensions of foreign policy. And in some cases, like relations with Russia, NATO appears part of the problem no less than of the solution. De facto, the alliance is evolving into a “two-pillar NATO” in which, next to the individual governments, the European Union and the United States constitute the primary level of decisionmaking. They can wage a holistic foreign policy, from aid and trade, democracy and human rights promotion, to diplomacy and defense. And the European Union, unlike NATO, is much more than a mere intergovernmental organization.

This evolution should be reflected in the way transatlantic relations are organized. In a multipolar world, the European Union must have the necessary margin of maneuver to interact flexibly with all global actors, even though the United States will remain its closest interlocutor. But for this condition to be reinforced, the EU-U.S. partnership must be deepened and become more comprehensive and more operational. This political partnership is much more than the banalities of summitry: rethinking the terms of U.S.-EU engagement, including the organization of permanent bodies, may now be in order; in any case Europeans must at the very least get used to speaking to the United States as the European Union, and conversely the United States must be prepared to hear and listen to its European allies as a union. In addition, and to manage the differences in EU and NATO membership, the EU-U.S. partnership can also be complemented by a consultative forum comprising all EU and NATO members that would meet with the active participation of the European Union as such (and with NATO as a proactive observer).<sup>8</sup>

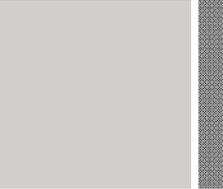
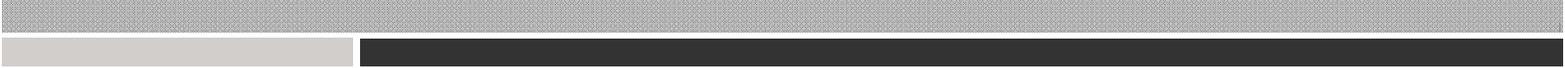
Within such an EU-U.S. partnership, NATO might become more of a technical, executive body: if the European Union and the United States decide to act together militarily, they will use NATO, with the European Union and the United States as primary levels of decisionmaking, including on security and defense. Increasingly, it is already in the European Union that Europeans take the primary political decision on whether to act in a given crisis. If military action is decided upon, the related decision is to choose the operational framework: NATO or ESDP, or sometimes the United Nations or even the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). That choice will be an ad hoc decision, depending on which partners want to go along and which organization is best suitable for the crisis at hand: reality is too complex for a fixed division of labor to work. The EU military strategy to be elaborated therefore blunts the eternal EU-NATO question: it is about the contribution that Europeans want to bring, regardless of whether in a specific case they operate through NATO or ESDP. It is in this changed and changing context,

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<sup>8</sup> See Frank Kramer and Simon Serfaty, “Recasting the Euro-Atlantic Partnership,” in *A Recast Partnership? Institutional Dimensions of Transatlantic Relations*, ed. Simon Serfaty (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 2008), 191–214.

where the European Security Strategy and its future military sub-strategy coincide with the U.S. National Security Strategy, that NATO's new strategic concept should be determined—not vice versa.

The ball is now in the European camp. Is the European Union ready to catch it? A de facto evolution toward a “two-pillar NATO” is taking place, but for the model to work effectively and a credible partnership of equals to emerge, Europe must speak, and act, as one. Yet, it should also be obvious that in an emerging multipolar environment that is making ample room for numerous poles of global power, regional influence, and local nuisance, even a stronger and ever-closer Euro-Atlantic community will not suffice to meet the new requirements of world order: the West is not about to be overcome by the rest, but the rest can no longer be ignored by the West either. That is not the least strategic challenge of the future, as America and Europe identify and cultivate new partners that complete their limited capabilities and legitimacy without eroding their shared interests and values.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND THE PROJECT

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### The Project

The **Brzezinski Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)** is conducting a two-year Global Dialogue between the European Union and the United States based on broad questions of stabilization and reconstruction, energy security, climate change, challenges in the world economy, and concepts for converging security strategies. In each case, the goal is to develop a shared European-American approach and identify the institutional and practical dimensions of a set of transatlantic best practices that will both support mutual interests and elaborate a governance structure that better reflects the diffusion of interests in the international system. The project is directed by Simon Serfaty, holder of the CSIS Brzezinski Chair, and is being carried out with the cooperation of the CSIS Europe Program. CSIS thanks the European Commission for its support of this project.