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The Transatlantic Alliance in a Multipolar World

By Thomas Wright and Richard Weitz



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The Transatlantic Alliance in a Multipolar World

About the Project¹

This report is a product of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs' project on "The Future of the Transatlantic Alliance in a Changing Strategic Environment." The project seeks to identify ways in which the United States and Europe can deepen cooperation and maintain collective influence as the geopolitical center of gravity moves toward Asia and the Middle East. In addition to the report, the project produced a *Transatlantic Paper Series* that was released in October 2010 and included four expert papers:

- *Counterinsurgency and the Future of NATO* by John Nagl and Richard Weitz
- *U.S.-EU Partnership and the Muslim World: How Transatlantic Cooperation Will Enhance Engagement* by Emile Nakhleh

- *A Common Future? NATO and the Protection of the Commons* by Michael Horowitz
- *NATO's Nonproliferation Challenges in the Obama Era* by Richard Weitz

Over the past year, project activities have included workshops, conferences in the United States and Europe, and research trips to Asia and Europe. The project was made possible by generous funding from the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the McCormick Foundation, and the Adenauer Funds at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

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Executive Summary

For the past decade and a half, many in the United States have measured the value of the transatlantic alliance by the degree to which it could contribute to U.S. military operations overseas. The alliance's failure to meet U.S. expectations, most recently in Afghanistan, is causing senior American policymakers to question its relevance as the world's geopolitical center of gravity moves toward the Pacific and Indian oceans. This report argues that, paradoxically, the transatlantic alliance is likely to become more relevant as new powers rise. The report has three sections. The first analyzes four strategic trends that shape the environment in which the alliance operates: 1) an unprecedented global financial crisis, 2) multipolarity without multilateralism, 3) a rapidly emerging technological threat to the global commons, and 4) a new consensus on the rules governing the use of force. The sec-

ond section shows how these strategic trends will affect the role of the alliance. Tensions over burden sharing may continue but new challenges relating to multipolarity are emerging that are better suited to Europe's capabilities and interests. As they face these challenges, the United States and European nations have more shared interests now than at any time since 1989. Third, the report makes nine recommendations to reposition the alliance for the new multipolarity, including a better appreciation for domestic constraints, a focus on the preventive aspects of counterinsurgency, a new partnership to engage the Muslim world, a commitment to protecting the global commons, the formation of a caucus of like-minded nations organized around the transatlantic alliance, and revitalizing U.S.-European high-level exchange programs.

Introduction

NATO's failure to meet U.S. expectations in the war in Afghanistan has caused many U.S. policymakers to despair about the future of the transatlantic alliance. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates was perhaps the most blunt when he remarked in February 2010,

The demilitarization of Europe—where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it—has gone from a blessing in the 20th century to an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st...Not only can real or perceived weakness be a temptation to miscalculation and aggression, but, on a more basic level, the resulting funding and capability shortfalls make it difficult to operate and fight together to confront shared threats.²

This concern is not just the result of Afghanistan but is rooted in a perception that European nations have not carried an appropriate share of the burden in upholding international peace and security since the Cold War. When combined with the American belief that the global geopolitical center of gravity is shifting toward the Pacific as the world trends toward multipolarity, the result has been the marginalization of the transatlantic alliance in U.S. strategic thinking—a trend that is evident in think

tanks, policy journals, and also the statements and time investments of senior policymakers. NATO's future existence is assured, but the relevance of the U.S.–European bond is now regularly questioned.

This report, accompanying four specially commissioned papers, makes two overarching arguments. First, unrealistic expectations hobble U.S. strategy toward Europe. For almost two decades, the United States has asked European nations to radically improve their capacity to jointly undertake out-of-area military operations. The request is understandable, but the response should no longer be surprising. Decades of demands, no matter how impassioned or threatening, have failed to induce European leaders to overcome severe domestic constraints—whether fiscal, strategic, or political—to transform their capacity to assist the United States in foreign military interventions. These constraints are tightening as a result of the great recession triggered by the global financial crisis, which has led European governments to focus on domestic issues and cut their defense budgets. Rather than denouncing these constraints, U.S. policymakers must accommodate them as they seek to influence European policy. Continuing to define the health of the alliance through the prism of overseas military interventions will only result in further frustration.

The second argument is that U.S. expectations of Europe no longer line up with what the United States needs from the alliance, as the trend of the

global strategic landscape shifts away from a permissive unipolar environment that defined U.S. national security interests and toward multipolarity. Some of these challenges will remain and new missions may emerge, but expeditionary missions are likely to be accompanied—and may even be surpassed—by new military and political challenges. U.S. leadership will be confronted with or diluted by other centers of influence around the world and the United States will be hard pressed to protect the global commons, preserve the openness and influence of the U.S.-led international order, restore and sustain a robust global economy, and build bridges between Western and Muslim communities, to name but a few key challenges. U.S. strategic thinking, as reflected in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review and the 2010 National Security Strategy, has begun to grapple with some of these issues but planning and policy that reflects how best to use alliances and partnerships has yet to adjust accordingly.

U.S. strategic challenges are in fact evolving in a way that is better suited to Europe's capabilities and to the original purpose of the transatlantic alliance. For the most part, Europeans never saw their fate at risk in the battlefields of Afghanistan, but they can readily see value in strengthening multilateral economic and political institutions, improving relations with Muslim communities, and defending against novel cyber attacks and other threats. The robustness of the European economy and integration project depends on strong international institutions and a healthy U.S. economy.

Events of 2009 and 2010 remind Americans of the value of traditional alliances. Upon taking office, the Obama administration sought to convert a "multipolar world" into a "multipartner world" by building new relationships with emerging powers. Some believed that these new partnerships could eclipse old arrangements like the U.S.–Japan alliance and the transatlantic relationship. The administration, however, has come to recognize that major emerging powers like Brazil and China often have interests that diverge significantly from those of the United States, reminding U.S. policymakers of the value of a robust transatlantic relationship—

a relationship, by contrast, often defined by differences over means not ends.

To even describe this transatlantic agenda as new is in many ways a misnomer. The U.S.–European alliance was not created only to contain the Soviet Union. Its other fundamental purpose was to nurture and sustain an open and liberal international order. Many of the new global challenges—such as protecting the global commons and integrating emerging powers in ways that strengthen rather than weaken the international order—coincide with this original mission. Although the expeditionary military phase of the alliance will likely continue as the United States and Europe are dragged into future conflicts, often against their will, good reasons exist for why the frequency and size of such operations might decrease. On the other hand, strategic challenges facing the United States and its allies will continue to multiply and diversify. If the transatlantic alliance is reconceived, individual European states and the broader alliance may be of considerable value in these other areas. There may even be ways for European nations to build counterinsurgency capacity in certain niche areas, especially those contributing to avert insurgencies in the first place.

This report is divided into three parts. The first outlines four ongoing strategic developments that will directly impact the alliance: an unprecedented global financial crisis, multipolarity without multilateralism, a rapidly emerging technological threat to the global commons, and a new consensus on the rules governing the use of force. The second part analyzes the implications of these developments for the alliance. The final component outlines a new strategic agenda for the transatlantic alliance, along with a series of specific recommendations. These recommendations draw upon the four expert papers on the potential for transatlantic cooperation in counterinsurgency, engaging Muslim communities abroad, protecting the global commons, and furthering nonproliferation.

Four Developments Shaping a New Strategic Landscape

The purpose and character of the transatlantic alliance is, in large measure, a function of its strategic environment. Its strategic utility cannot be understood without first understanding the nature of the challenges confronting its member states. During the Cold War, the alliance created and sustained a liberal and democratic order in Western Europe while it contained the Soviet Union. For the past two decades, the alliance has become increasingly involved in tackling out-of-area security crises. When analysts criticize the alliance, they are criticizing its shortcomings in adapting to its environment. But the environment is not static; it constantly evolves. Failures of the past may be less important in the future, not because they have been corrected but because the environment changes.

The past two years have seen four major developments in the strategic environment in which the transatlantic alliance is situated: 1) an unprecedented global financial crisis, 2) multipolarity without multilateralism, 3) rapidly increasing technological threats to the international order, and 4) evolving rules governing the use of force. All four have dramatic implications for U.S.–European relations.

An Unprecedented Global Financial Crisis

The financial crisis, which began in 2008, has ushered in a period of great economic and political uncertainty. On numerous occasions over the past two years, U.S. and European policymakers have overlooked the significance of the crisis or its capacity to shape events, whether it be the former German finance minister Peer Steinbrueck's view that the crisis was primarily an "American problem" that could strengthen the role of the Euro or the Obama administration's decision, weeks before the emergence of the Euro crisis, to cancel the May of 2010 U.S.–EU summit. As the crisis persists, it is one of the most significant drivers of international politics and shapers of the nature of the transatlantic alliance.

In the first instance, the crisis is weakening the relative strength and influence of the transatlantic alliance in the international system. China's quick rebound and the continuing Western recession appear to have accelerated the emergence of a multipolar world. The increasing willingness of middle-tier powers, such as Brazil and Turkey, to pursue an independent foreign policy has contributed to the perception of declining Western influence. As a result of these changes, the old Western order can no longer function in isolation, or autonomously, from other economic centers of power. The crisis also severely weakened the project of European integration. The Euro crisis of 2010, which occurred when peripheral economies struggled to borrow money in the international bond markets, exposed structural weaknesses in EU governance structures and raised real questions about the capacity of the union to adjust and adapt to dynamic market pressures. Although the decision in the spring of 2010 to create a trillion-dollar EU loan fund temporarily quelled the Greek crisis, severe doubts linger over the capacity of Ireland, Portugal, and Spain to manage their high levels of debt. Even if the peripheral economies survive short-term challenges, there is a longer-term danger. Most experts and informed observers agree that the Eurozone will have to deepen its level of political and fiscal integration if the Euro is to work for all of its member states, but popular support for such measures has plummeted as a result of the crisis.³ Even if the EU succeeds in muddling through, there is widespread concern that the unevenness of a European recovery may facilitate the emergence of rejectionist and nationalist political parties.

Recent surveys show that the economic recession means that the American people are looking for ways to cut back on America's overseas commitments and may be less willing for the United States to play such a great role in maintaining international security as it has done in the past.⁴ For instance, popular support for free trade and overseas basing has fallen significantly. However, this has not yet translated into support for defense cuts. This is not the case in Europe—France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom are all

reducing their military expenditures. A study of European defense spending recently released by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) found two divergent trends that both result from declines in the size of European armed forces occurring more rapidly than cuts in European defense spending. From 2001 to 2009, aggregate European defense spending fell from €251 billion to €218 billion (a negative compound decline of 1.8 percent annually, measured in constant euros). Over the same period, aggregate spending per soldier increased in constant terms, from €73,000 to €91,000 (a compound yearly growth rate of 2.8 percent). These same broad trends can be found in the narrower defense spending categories. For example, European military research and development (R&D) spending in Europe fell from 12.3 billion euros in 2001 to 10.3 billion euros in 2008, but R&D per active duty member rose somewhat from 6,700 euros in 2001 to 7,200 euros in 2008. Operations and maintenance fell the least during the 2001-2009 period, largely because of the need to sustain the missions in Afghanistan, the Balkans, and elsewhere during this decade.⁵

Economic issues have also divided Americans and Europeans since Obama's election. Influential EU leaders have differed with the Obama administration regarding how to end the worst crisis afflicting the world economy in decades. On one hand, West European governments advocated for more austerity measures, having recently pledged \$240 billion in budget savings to deflate their debts, as well as a \$950 billion safety blanket for the euro. On the other hand, President Barack Obama warned that too much emphasis on saving could prevent growth and lead to a 1930s style depression. The United States thus joined with other less developed G-20 members in advocating continuing fiscal stimulus to revive the economy.⁶ Moreover, U.S. prodding of Europeans to reduce their export surplus and instead consume more, letting in more U.S. exports in the process, has met with little enthusiasm and a great deal of resentment in European capitals.

Multipolarity without Traditional Multilateralism

During the Cold War, the United States and its European allies had a bifurcated foreign policy. The first part involved containment of the Soviet Union. The second part entailed building a multilateral order in the West. At the highest levels of government, these two enterprises were linked, but for the most part, they were pursued as separate tracks. At the Cold War's end, the multilateral order went global, as members of the old Soviet bloc and non-aligned nations became more fully integrated into the global economy. At the same time, some of these states—particularly China but also Brazil and India—enjoyed an increase in their overall power and influence. The United States and Europe hoped that these states would become responsible stakeholders within the political order in exchange for a greater voice in it.

Very recently, however, it has become apparent that the United States and Europe cannot count on emerging powers to bolster the multilateral order. Instead, they often go their own way in pursuit of interests and priorities that are not always in line with what members of the old Western order would like. Brazil, China, Russia, and others may share many of the transnational foreign policy challenges facing the United States, but they do not necessarily share the same priorities or policy prescriptions. They differ in opinion over the likelihood that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons, the extent to which developing countries have a responsibility to cut carbon emissions, how financial imbalances in the global economy should be addressed, and whether or how cybersecurity should be addressed or advanced. Furthermore, the trend is not confined to countries outside of the western order. Turkey, which is a member of NATO and has long sought membership of the EU, has ruffled feathers in the United States with its independent foreign policy, serving as a reminder that Ankara's support should not be taken for granted.

Of all of the emerging powers, China is by far the most important, complex, and challenging. U.S. and European economic interests with China

include trade but also extend far beyond it.⁷ As has been well documented, the Chinese government has purchased large amounts of American and European debt. The country also consumes large quantities of natural commodities like iron ore and copper, as well as wheat and oil, sometimes driving up U.S. and EU import bills for these commodities. Both American and European corporations have displayed proclivities to enter into joint investment, technology transfer, and coproduction with Chinese counterparts. Airbus has a final assembly plant for A320 airliners in Tianjin,⁸ while Intel is constructing a \$2.5 billion semiconductor fabrication plant in Dalian.⁹ Despite this positive agenda, the rise of China is seen as a potential disruptor of certain Western economic and strategic objectives. China's behavior in 2009 and 2010 was particularly revealing in this respect and signalled to many analysts that Beijing is willing to pursue a more assertive foreign policy.¹⁰ For instance, China expanded its claims in the South China Sea, engaged in a major spat with Google over Internet freedom, played an obstructionist role at the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen, regularly openly criticized U.S. leadership, and refused to condemn North Korea when it sank a South Korean naval vessel.

Despite U.S. hopes, some of the newer global powers continue to see themselves in geopolitical competition with the United States—China in Southeast Asia is a case in point—while other powers, such as Brazil, perceive little reason to bolster an international order created by the United States. Thus, the obstacles to a new, more inclusive international order are not just due to perceptions of freeriding, barriers to coordination, misunderstandings, or relatively minor differences—all of which can eventually be overcome in pursuit of the common good. There also appear to be growing divergences in preferences and perceived interests. In the Western order of the Cold War, the United States' economic partners were also its political allies. They not only shared the same problems but also broadly supported the same solutions, and differed mostly over tactics rather than values or strategy. In today's global order, however, the

United States needs the support of countries that not only disagree with Washington's perspective but also sometimes view international politics as a competitive struggle for geopolitical influence. For their part, influential voices in Europe recognize that they will need to play a more active and unified role in world affairs if they are to continue to shape its direction. As the former UK foreign secretary David Miliband remarked, "The choice for Europe is simple - get our act together and make the European Union a leader on the world stage or become spectators in a G2 world shaped by the U.S. and China."¹¹

The United States and Europe are therefore confronted with a conundrum: in order to tackle many of today's transnational challenges they must secure the support of other major states, but some of these states are less inclined to help them than members of the old Western order.

Increasing Technological Threats to an Open International Order

Reliable access to the global commons is the foundation of international political and economic order. The global commons belong to no individual or state, but they are the connective tissue of economic interaction. Without them, the free flow of ideas, goods, and services would be impossible. The commons have evolved to include not only the sea and air, but space and cyberspace as well. Nearly everything we do today is dependent on one or more of these four avenues. In fact, 90 percent of global trade is transported by sea.¹² Global navigation and communications are supported by satellite systems. Essential services, such as water and power provision, emergency response, as well as financial transactions are all remotely coordinated via the Internet. In short, the freedom to access and exchange over these media undergirds prosperity—in the United States and worldwide.¹³

Command of the commons is a potent tactical force enabler and a necessary component of strategic power projection. The U.S. way of war for the past half-century has depended on air superiority for strategic bombing and tactical air support as

well as open seas over which troops and materiel travel to the battle space. Thus, command of the commons not only serves basic economic interests, it is integral to military strategy as well. The U.S. military guarantees the freedom of the commons for trade and commerce in peacetime so that they may be readily utilized in times of war.

Recent technological innovations, however, have enabled much broader access to potent disruptive weaponry by state and nonstate actors alike. In some cases, the existence of civilian dual-use technologies has redefined common perception of what constitutes a weapon. This diffusion of power potential has made it increasingly difficult to secure the commons. The U.S. position as its sole guarantor appears increasingly untenable. Examples of these asymmetric threats abound. The digital infrastructure of the financial world is vulnerable to crippling cyber attacks. Satellites are threatened by everything from kinetic missile strikes and focused energy attacks to electronic jamming and space debris. The proliferation of effective surface-to-surface anti-ship cruise missiles as well as ballistic missiles with maneuverable reentry vehicles constitutes a significant threat to commercial and military maritime traffic. Foreign surface-to-air missiles and air-to-air combat capabilities have grown similarly formidable—even against the most advanced aircraft currently in service by Western militaries.

The technological threat to open access has emerged only recently but it is likely to accelerate in the years to come. This gathering danger has been widely recognized by U.S. defense planners, who gave it considerable attention in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review and related U.S. strategic reviews of cybersecurity and space policy.¹⁴ An adequate response, however, must encompass the role of civilian actors and international allies and partners. Unfortunately, progress has been slow on both counts.

U.S. policymakers have been particularly worried about Europe's transfers of space technology to the China because of China's military potential.¹⁵ By subjecting satellite technology to International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR) in the late 1990s,

the United States effectively limited China's access to U.S. military space technologies. With the construction of European "ITAR free" satellites (satellites constructed without U.S. components), China gained access to technology that could have helped it to conduct its anti-satellite (ASAT) test in 2007.¹⁶ American observers have warned that continued use of European technologies in the Chinese military space program could force U.S. policymakers to impose further restrictions on transatlantic space collaboration.¹⁷ Supporters of European engagement with China in "space diplomacy" maintain that it has the potential to minimize the militarization of Chinese space endeavors. (Both U.S. and European onlookers agreed that China's ASAT test was inconsistent with the country's advocacy of a Treaty on the Prevention of Weapons in Outer Space and the Threat of Force Against Outer Space Objects.) The challenge for the United States and Europe is to identify how they might coordinate international policies and alliance assets to keep space and cyberspace free from disruption.

Evolution of Rules Governing the Use of Force

During the 2000s, the transatlantic alliance was rocked by disagreement over when using military force was permissible and advisable. The debate broke into the open with the Bush administration's 2002 National Security Strategy and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.¹⁸ The *preemptive* use of force--resorting to war to avert an imminent if not certain danger-- has long been widely accepted as legitimate and appropriate on both sides of the Atlantic. The most prominent example of preemption is Israel's strike against Arab armies in 1967. After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the U.S. government endorsed the *preventive* use of force, meaning that it reserved the right to attack a hostile state or nonstate actor before a threat fully materialized. European nations believed that the preventive use of force would likely worsen the threats to the West in the longer term. They were very reluctant to accept the right of any one state to unilaterally use force preventively against another state, although they were open to doing so in a multilat-

eral context. For instance, the UN High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change acknowledged that new types of threats had emerged since the adoption of the UN Charter and that certain security and humanitarian circumstances could justify the preventive use of force.¹⁹

In the case of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the allies split over the preventive use of force regarding a presumed but not conclusive threat. This was a defining moment for the alliance. According to survey data from The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Americans and Europeans began to diverge sharply on core foreign policy issues as early as 2002.²⁰ As Robert Kagan famously put it,

It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and American share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world. On the all-important question of power—the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power—American and European perspectives are diverging....That is why on major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus. They agree on little and understand one another less and less.²¹

The rift, however, narrowed in the years following the invasion of Iraq with Americans chastened by the difficulty of the enterprise and Europeans anxious to mend fences with their key ally. This was evident in how transatlantic solidarity against Iran's nuclear potential developed and deepened over time. The election of Barack Obama, an early opponent of the Iraq war, further relaxed tensions. In his first national security strategy, President Obama avoided doctrinal debates about the use of preventive force.

Meanwhile, Obama has played a crucial role in ushering in new norms when it comes to the use of force. The United States and Europe agree that the preventive use of force is a necessary tool in fighting global terrorist networks. The Obama administration has actually increased the extrajudicial use of special operations forces, predator drones,

and other indirect and covert measures, which European governments have supported, either explicitly or tacitly. But Obama, like President George W. Bush in his second term, has pursued a tempered approach toward the threats from Iran and North Korea, which is also in line with European strategic thinking. Iran is a potential flashpoint that could easily reignite debate regarding the rules governing the use of force. But even here it is unlikely that the United States, if it were to support a military strike against Iranian facilities, would use such an incident to justify a broader doctrinal shift. The transatlantic debate about the use of force appears to have reached equilibrium: Western powers can use force against global terrorist networks, but the right to employ preventive force against a state is recognized as a special and problematic case.

Implications for the Transatlantic Alliance

The four drivers described above emerged recently and are ongoing. They exist alongside more established trends that have received considerable attention over the past decade, including the rise of international terrorism, the dangers posed by failing states, transnational health and environmental threats, and globalization. The transatlantic alliance has been struggling for some time to cope with the more established trends. The question this section poses is what do the newer developments mean for the alliance? The short answer is that the capacity of the alliance to conduct major military interventions will weaken but new missions are emerging that are better suited to Europe's capabilities. In essence, the alliance is transitioning from a period when it sought to extend its reach to one where it must endeavor to preserve its influence and maintain an international order that embodies and supports its values as the world leans toward multipolarity.

A Break from Post-1991 Transatlantic Strategy

For the past two decades, the transatlantic alliance has sought to expand and protect the open and democratic U.S.-led international order that traces its roots back to the end of World War II. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, this meant engaging and integrating the former members of the communist bloc in a highly successful strategy that resulted in the enlargement of NATO and the EU. Subsequently, in the Balkans, it led to a series of military interventions to end conflicts and pacify regions that were believed to threaten European stability and values. Although the terrorist attacks of September 11 prompted NATO to invoke Article V for the first time in its history, this momentary solidarity was short-lived. NATO did not assume command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul until August 2003, and NATO forces did not assume a nation-wide mission profile until 2007. The transatlantic divide widened further with the U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

For NATO, and for the transatlantic alliance more generally, the period from 1991 to the present day has been defined by military interventions at ever greater distances from the presumed battlefields of the Cold War. Some, like Afghanistan, serve a collective defense function. Most have fallen under collective security, as NATO sought to address the threats from failing states, humanitarian crises, and terrorism. As Gulner Aybet put it:

The first grand strategy of the post-Cold War era was the extension of the western security community's liberal norms to the post communist space in Central and Eastern Europe. The second grand strategy was the western security community's leadership in championing an international system of collective security.²²

To this list of grand strategies, one can add that the attacks of September 11 caused a reversion to collective defense on a global basis against a shadowy enemy that appeared to lack a center of gravity.

In essence, since the early to mid-1990s, the transatlantic alliance has been defined by expansion of the Western order. Differences between the United States and Europe have remained relatively constant. For some observers, the lightning-quick ouster of Taliban control in Afghanistan by U.S. special operations forces working with local allies in 2001–2002, as well as continental Europe's subsequent refusal to endorse and support an invasion of Iraq in 2003, signaled the obsolescence of NATO.²³ Simply put, overwhelming U.S. military capabilities no longer required European assent. And the differences ran much deeper for some and represented a philosophical difference about the use of force in contemporary international politics.

In practice, however, several practical themes are recurring in transatlantic disputes. The United States has pressed Europe to improve its expeditionary capabilities—both by building capacity and improving how operations are conducted—while Europe has not met U.S. expectations and frequently has a different perception about the necessity and effectiveness of the mission. The result has been an unhappy marriage. The United States frequently feels constrained and tied down by the requirements of the alliance whereas European nations worry about getting dragged into conflicts that are not perceived by their publics as critical to their security.

Frustrations over Traditional Burden Sharing Will Worsen

Successive U.S. administrations have hoped to change the European mindset on national security, and the Obama administration is no exception. It took office prepared to meet many of Europe's concerns about its predecessor—on climate change, human rights, and multilateralism—but wanted a greater European commitment to the war in Afghanistan in return. As Vice President Joe Biden put it at the Munich Security Conference in 2009, "America will do more...that's the good news. The bad news is America will ask for more from our partners, as well."²⁴ The administration has been disappointed by the European response and like its

predecessors is prepared to transform the war into a primarily U.S.-led effort.²⁵ European nations, on the other hand, have been frustrated by what they perceive as the Obama administration's relatively transactional view of the alliance.

The harsh economic environment means that European nations are likely to become less, not more, capable of supporting U.S. military interventions overseas over the course of the next decade. The defense cuts described in section one will reduce Europe's military capabilities at a time when U.S. analysts are asking for an improvement. Some analysts have argued that defense budget cuts may actually increase capabilities by serving as a catalyst for long needed reforms. They point out, for example, that German defense cuts may result in the elimination of the conscript army and a new focus on improving the expeditionary capacity of the Bundeswehr.²⁶ A substantial cut throughout European militaries, however, no matter how skillfully planned and managed, cannot be confined to eliminating waste; it will also reduce capabilities. Indeed, senior European policymakers have acknowledged as much. In an extraordinary private letter to the prime minister of the United Kingdom in September 2010, which was leaked to the press, UK Minister of Defense Liam Fox wrote that the "draconian" cuts in the military budget "will limit the options available to this and all future governments severely. The range of operations that we can do today we will simply not be able to do in the future."²⁷

Current trends mean that Europe will have fewer troops—total active duty military personnel in the thirty seven countries studies fell from 3.5 million in 2001 to about 2.3 million in 2009—and other aggregate military capabilities. But the remaining military personnel are on average probably becoming more effective. Although risks arise from having smaller numbers of troops and less equipment, these trends do create opportunities—further facilitated by favorable changes in EU defense procurement regulations—for greater defense specialization on select military acquisitions by country, as well as enhanced collective capability if countries focus their remaining

resources on developing smaller, more expeditionary-capable forces.²⁸

Optimists hope that the downward pressure on military spending will force European governments to take long-needed measures to reduce procurement duplication and pursue greater military specialization and interoperability. NATO says it will manage further defense spending cuts "through continuing transformation, comprehensive reforms, setting clear priorities, identifying savings where possible, strengthening and modernizing financial governance, and providing the necessary resources." EU and NATO leaders have cited the cost pressure as giving them an opportunity as well as an imperative to secure more military value for defense spending through such measures as reducing unwanted defense duplication, reallocating resources based on collective rather than national priorities, encouraging more national military specialization on niche capabilities, as well as pursuing more collaborative research, development and procurement based on common funding mechanisms.

Even while cutting overall defense spending, most European governments have sought to sustain their combat presence in Afghanistan to address the Obama administration's evident priority concern. For example, French Defense Minister Herve Morin said that, while his ministry would cut spending by some €3 billion through 2013, France would maintain its Afghan operation at current levels. Similarly, the Italian government has announced plans to cut back on military hardware, such as by buying fewer Eurofighters, but to conduct its own surge in Afghanistan, to 4,000 soldiers by the end of this year. Most prominently, the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review will still allow Britain to participate in future missions like Iraq or Afghanistan, though with a reduced contribution of about one-third fewer forces.

In addition to budgetary concerns, European political willingness to engage in new overseas military interventions has been fundamentally depleted by the protracted war in Afghanistan as well as the demanding war in Iraq, the aftermath of which Europe's publics see as vindicating their initial skepticism about the use of force. Moreover,

Europe's leading advocate of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, is widely perceived to have been ostracized within his own country and party because of this position. The lesson that many European political elites have taken from the Iraq War is that the political costs of controversial future military interventions may be prohibitively high unless they enjoy the imprimatur of UN backing. Even then, European support cannot be taken for granted, as evidenced by attitudes toward the UN-approved NATO mission in Afghanistan. According to the 2010 German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends Survey, the percentage of the public that is optimistic about NATO stabilizing Afghanistan is only 10 percent in Germany, 18 percent in France, and 34 percent in the United Kingdom. By contrast, 51 percent of Americans are optimistic that Afghanistan can be stabilized.²⁹

The conclusion is inescapable: U.S. policymakers will likely find it more difficult to persuade European nations to undertake new military interventions than was the case in the 1990s and the 2000s. This is not to say that such persuasion will be impossible, but the bar is clearly higher now.

Risk Posed by Failing States Will Persist As Challenges Emerge

Europe and the United States will continue to face threats that necessitate a military presence overseas for some time to come. NATO will remain engaged in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. It is also possible that new crises will emerge that require Western intervention to stave off political or humanitarian disasters. Foremost among these is the risk of the collapse of a nuclear weapons state, such as North Korea or Pakistan. The United States and its European allies must therefore absorb the lessons of their counterinsurgency operations and build additional capacity to undertake difficult peacemaking and nation building missions. Even so, new military interventions of the sort undertaken in the 1990s and 2000s are unlikely to play as central a role in the transatlantic alliance in the future as in the past. In the wake of the Iraq war,

Americans are less inclined to support optional nation-building or counterinsurgency missions overseas. Many of the leading theorists and practitioners of counterinsurgency opposed the invasion of Iraq and stress that the United States should not use its newfound capabilities to initiate future missions. Consequently, NATO is only likely to embark upon counterinsurgency and nation-building missions when all other options have been exhausted.

Meanwhile new challenges are visible on the horizon. An understanding of the shift toward multipolarity does not fully capture the scope and scale of this change. Rather the phenomenon under consideration is a significant dispersal of influence and capabilities in world affairs—the spread of nuclear weapons, emerging economic powers employing their newfound influence in ways that cut against U.S. and European interests, and the growing technological threat to the global commons. There are also trends that can be both positive and negative, including the empowerment of religious communities that can then shape the behavior of states and nonstate actors.³⁰ The general dispersal of power is likely to increase, not decrease, the demands on the United States and Europe. It will probably create a more competitive international environment in which the stakes of policy debates will be higher, the costs of mistakes greater, and the demands upon policymakers more daunting. The rise of new powers is likely to result in the tabling of issues—such as the future of the post-World War II order in Asia—that have long been considered settled. Allies in the areas hardest hit by this dispersal are increasingly likely to call upon the United States for assistance and support as they warily eye ascendant neighbors and gathering risks. This is the world that the alliance is entering.

U.S. and European Interests are Shared More Now Than at Any Time Since 1989

As power and influence disperses towards emerging powers and nonstate actors, European and American interests have increasingly converged. While not perfectly aligned, their basic strategic preferences—both in terms of how they diagnose

threats and challenges and how they believe they should be addressed—are much closer to each other than either is to Brazil, China, or most other emerging powers. In essence, Europe and the United States are like-minded about international politics. They are joined in this like-mindedness by a handful of other states, including Australia, Japan, and South Korea.

The debate over Iran's nuclear program—perhaps the most disturbing security issue facing the Obama administration — demonstrates this like-mindedness. The EU has been steadfast in its support of U.S. policy toward Iran. The transatlantic alliance has been the indispensable locomotive for the toughening of sanctions on the Iranian regime and its nuclear program. This solidarity helped persuade China and Russia of the merits of stronger UN sanctions, reflected in UN Security Council resolution 1929 passed on June 9, 2010. The EU and the United States, along with Australia and Canada, subsequently adopted additional sanctions designed to achieve the goals of existing Security Council resolutions, but with enforcement measures well beyond their formal obligations under the resolutions. In crafting their latest round of sanctions, EU governments worked closely with Washington to develop measures that most strongly leverage their unique economic strengths vis-à-vis Iran. Unlike the United States, several EU members have considerable economic ties with Iran—collectively, the EU traded almost \$30 billion worth of goods with Iran last year. Europeans purchase primarily energy resources from Iran, while Iranians depend heavily on imported European industrial equipment and technology.

American and European agreement extends beyond Iran. Both actors have a shared interest in securing access to the global commons, although Europe's strategic thinking on this issue is less developed than Washington's. The U.S. and European economies are highly interdependent. Both parties now share a similar assessment of the fight against international terrorism, although the threat to their countries differs in some key respects. And both share a commitment attachment to the concept of universal human rights and a values-based international order.

Admittedly, important differences exist between Americans and Europeans. They generally disagree on whether Turkey should be admitted as a member to the EU. On economics, Europe favors austerity while the Obama administration is an advocate of stimulus. The United States is unable to secure sufficient domestic support to cut carbon emissions as Europeans would like. As noted above, Europeans continue to have a very different opinion about the necessity of the war effort in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, these divergences are relatively minor when compared to the differences between the United States and a country like China. On the issues of the next decade, it is harder to think of major powers that have more in common than the United States and Europe. The question is whether they can translate this commonality of interest into shared action given significant constraints.

Positioning the Alliance for a Multipolar World

In an insightful essay on how the United States can restore strategic competence, the defense analyst Andrew Krepenovich defined strategy as identifying or creating asymmetric advantages that can be exploited to help achieve one's ultimate objectives despite resource and other constraints.³¹ Europe and the United States will continue to face difficult and protracted problems that require urgent attention—including counterinsurgency, stabilization missions, and engaging with Russia—but this should not preclude thinking about ways in which the alliance can build and exploit asymmetric advantages to deal with the challenges of tomorrow. The transatlantic alliance is a valuable but underappreciated strategic asset for European nations and the United States. As power and influence are dispersed to other actors around the world, the alliance has the potential to play a decisive role in shaping the choices that these emerging powers are presented with. Handled well, Europe and the United States can provide them with a pathway to achieve their legitimate ambitions in a way that strengthens the international order instead of

diluting it. To play this role, however, policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic will need to broaden their understanding of the alliance's role in the world and revise their strategic vision to take into account the emerging realities described earlier in this report.

A comprehensive strategy for the transatlantic alliance is outside of the remit of this report but offered here are nine recommendations for how policymakers should begin thinking about positioning the alliance for a multipolar world. Several of the recommendations draw upon the expert papers commissioned for this project.

Strengthening the Foundations of the Alliance

Recommendation #1: Operate within Domestic Constraints

U.S. and European policymakers tend to see domestic constraints on the other side of the Atlantic as inconvenient barriers to be overcome, whether it is Europe's popular opposition to increased military spending or the role of the U.S. Congress in shaping global commons (reducing carbon emissions, law of the sea, etc.) or arms control policy. Likewise, American policymakers frequently express puzzlement and frustration that Europeans do not build a genuinely common foreign and security policy, underestimating or misunderstanding the fact that the process of policy integration is extremely difficult and has always encountered the greatest resistance in the realm of foreign policy. Asking allies to overcome domestic constraints is understandable but calling upon another government to pursue policies that lack a significant constituency of support is unsustainable. Effective strategy must understand and appreciate the constraints upon allies. Expectations for the alliance should fit within these constraints instead of fruitlessly fighting them. In the long run, appreciation of domestic constraints will strengthen the foundations of the alliance even if it causes some short run inconvenience.

Recommendation #2: Revive High Level Exchange Programs to Foster an Appreciation of the Interests of Allies

High level political exchanges between Washington and major European nations are increasingly rare and undersubscribed. U.S. think tanks have divested themselves of expertise on Western European allies while European interest in strategic studies continues, with some notable exceptions, to occur on the margins of the policymaking process. This has contributed to unrealistic expectations and ignorance of the interests and perspectives of key allies. Fortunately, the trend can be reversed with a decision to invest time and resources into the alliance. Younger generations of parliamentarians should be encouraged to participate in exchange visits, think tanks and policy institutes should rebuild their Europe programs, and European and American experts should consult one another on matters of global concern, including the rise of China. The focus of these conversations must be on the national interests of European nations and the United States instead of on architectural reform, whether it be the EU, NATO, or other proposals. There is no institutional fix to the transatlantic divide. A fuller understanding of interests and strategic objectives will create the conditions in which a productive study of architectural reform can occur.

Cooperation on Defense Policy

Recommendation #3: Retain and Improve NATO's Counterinsurgency Capacity³²

While the United States and European nations must broaden their focus beyond military interventions overseas, the alliance must not neglect these missions. NATO will remain engaged in Afghanistan for some time to come. Moreover, if Europe is perceived to decouple itself entirely from the United States in ongoing military conflicts, it may be difficult to build the support necessary to strengthen the alliance so it can achieve its future potential. It is undeniable that European

members of NATO have failed to meet U.S. expectations in Afghanistan and the fundamental structures of NATO have been ill-suited to the mission at hand. Yet, it is also noteworthy that they have accomplished so much despite considerable evidence that Europeans do not share the same threat assessment as Americans. It is also important to recognize that NATO had no experience preparing for or waging a counterinsurgency campaign prior to its involvement in Afghanistan—previous NATO combat missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo were initially conducted as conventional military operations that transitioned to peacekeeping missions dedicated to establishing a benign security environment in which other institutions could assume the lead role in promoting political and economic reconstruction.

Abandoning counterinsurgency post-Afghanistan may be tempting to some policymakers, but it is an unrealistic strategy. The alliance may need to undertake military interventions in the future even if it would prefer not to. For instance, the collapse of a nuclear weapons state or a major humanitarian catastrophe may compel intervention. Moreover, lacking such capacity could encourage extremists to wage an insurgency campaign against legitimate but weak governments. The experience of the past years makes clear that a major increase in the number of European combat forces assigned to Afghanistan is unlikely. A more plausible hope is for European governments to contribute greater civilian capacity for reconstruction and development. Unfortunately, Europe's civilian capacity, like that of the United States, has not been fully mobilized or effectively used in Afghanistan.

*Recommendation #4: Make Protection of the Global Commons a Core Mission of the Alliance*³³

Ensuring access to the global commons—air, sea, space, and cyberspace—is emerging as a major strategic priority for the United States. Access to the commons is increasingly held at risk by new technologies and the uncertain intentions of state and nonstate actors. Protection of the global commons cannot be accomplished unilaterally but U.S.

alliances and partnerships are not yet configured to deal with this challenge. NATO has a vital role to play. Investments to counter emerging threats, including cyber threats and protection of space assets, would fit the defense budget constraints facing many NATO members while simultaneously serving an important strategic purpose. The alliance is also well placed to provide assistance, including sharing of best practices, to any state that falls victim to a cyber attack.

This general strategic goal would require immediate practical reforms. For instance, the allies must cultivate common understanding about the importance of internet freedom and cyber security, raise awareness of cyber culture, and codify common rules of interaction. They also need to consolidate the several NATO organizations that address cyber issues into a single, unified command to facilitate the integration of cyberwarfare within NATO, and adopt an informal understanding about the role of Article IV and V in tackling cyber attacks. Cooperation cannot be confined to public institutions; NATO governments must collaborate more effectively with the private sector and build the foundations of effective cooperation. This is particularly important given that so much of the cyber infrastructure is privately owned. Likewise, for the space commons, the alliance should create a NATO Space Command within alliance headquarters to provide real-time information sharing, collectively manage space debris, and to complement the other NATO commands for the commons. NATO could also establish a “space liaison” or similar position to facilitate real-time sharing of intelligence collected from space assets by ISAF partners in Afghanistan.

*Recommendation #5: Working with Russia to Advance Nonproliferation*³⁴

The Obama administration will need to walk a narrow path to achieve its nonproliferation objectives in Europe and beyond. U.S. policymakers must overcome divisions among the NATO members regarding tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) and ballistic missile defenses (BMD). In addition, U.S. policymakers will need to resolve tensions

with Moscow regarding TNW and especially BMD, while securing Russia's cooperation to constrain Iran's nuclear ambitions and to pursue other non-proliferation objectives. The administration must overcome divisions among the NATO members on TNW and BMD as well, while aligning all parties in pursuit of their common objective of constraining Iran's nuclear weapons aspirations and capabilities. Fortunately, the administration's BMD policies have created a framework that has overcome past NATO divisions over this issue. Properly sequenced and linked, they could win over Moscow as well.

To achieve these objectives, NATO should offer Russia a robust data sharing and verification regime for NATO BMD systems in exchange for Moscow's agreement to a comparable regime for Russian and U.S. TNW. Second, the allies will need to recognize that agreeing to a renewed Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) regime that limits the number and location of NATO's conventional forces would make Russian policymakers more open to accepting limitations on the number and location of their TNW. Third, Turkey's security concerns will need to be addressed through missile defenses and genuine participation in European (i.e., EU) security decision making to make Ankara comfortable about relinquishing its TNW. Finally, NATO must persuade Russia that the alliance's missile defenses sincerely aim to counter an emerging Iranian nuclear missile threat, and that any contribution Moscow makes to reducing this threat will decrease NATO's need for BMD in Europe.

Russia is a major player on almost all the issues that are on NATO's agenda—Afghanistan, Georgia, Kosovo, Ukraine, missile defense, the CFE Treaty, Muslim engagement, as well as arms control and disarmament. Russia especially has the potential to act as major impediment or enabler of NATO's non-proliferation agenda. In some cases, Russian policymakers have worked closely with western partners to address nuclear proliferation threats, as with North Korea and nuclear terrorism. In other cases, cooperation has proved harder to achieve, as in eliminating TNW, building a European BMD architecture, and coercing Iran to curb its nuclear programs. NATO members are divided between allies

that emphasize collective defense, especially in reference to Russia, and allies that emphasize pursuing engagement with Russia. NATO must strike a balance. Alliance policies must sufficiently assure countries that seek strategic reassurance that they too will be comfortable engaging with Russia.

Diplomacy in a Multipolar World

Recommendation #6: Build a Caucus to Preserve Multilateralism in a Multipolar World

The dispersal of power and influence to countries outside of the old Western order raises real questions about whether multilateralism is possible, given the divergent interests of the states involved and the fact that the governance structures of the old Western order are stacked in favor of Europe and the United States. Although the phenomenon extends to a number of states—Brazil, India, and even Turkey—in a geopolitical sense, the vast bulk of the challenge relates to China. As the fastest rising power in the international system, China cannot be ignored by either side of the Atlantic. Furthermore, both Europe and the United States are interested in making China's economic, political, and social transition as smooth as possible.

China's relationship with the West is complex and contradictory. It is an indispensable economic partner but increasingly a political rival whose leaders hold a different vision of international order than those of the United States, Europe, and Asian democracies. This divergence severely complicates prospects for increasing multilateralism in inclusive institutions like the UN. As the previous section suggested, the future appears likely to bring multipolarity without multilateralism. It will thus fall to the United States and Europe to act as a convenor of like-minded countries to ensure that the integrity and effectiveness of the international order is preserved while holding open the door for China and other emerging powers to participate as responsible stakeholders to the degree that they desire.

What does this mean in practice? Europe and the United States will need to caucus

together in more inclusive settings, whether it is the Copenhagen summit on climate change or meetings of the G-20. Such a caucus should be organized around the transatlantic alliance but not be confined to it. Additional like-minded states, such as Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and others should be invited to join. This caucus could then constructively engage China on controversial issues such as cyber security, freedom of the seas, or currency policy. A caucus would not be a so-called concert of democracies because membership would vary by issue and could include non-democracies if they were committed to the general principles of a liberal and open international order. For instance, Singapore and Vietnam are likely to be valuable partners in ensuring continued freedom of the seas. Indeed, China could be a part of the caucus on certain issues, such as trade and potentially sanctions on Iran..

The creation of a multilateralism caucus could act as a locomotive for international cooperation in a multipolar world. It would be a means of capitalizing on the shared core values and interests without rejecting more inclusive forums and the need to engage all major states to tackle global threats and challenges.

Recommendation #7: Take Advantage of the Fact that European and U.S. Interests Occasionally Diverge

While the United States and Europe share many interests, there are times when their perspectives will diverge. Once again, the greatest example is China, where U.S. and European assessments can differ dramatically at times. Because no EU member state has had major security concerns at stake in East Asia since the United Kingdom's 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China, the EU's China policy will remain economically focused to promote the growth of Chinese imports from the EU, attract Chinese investment, and protect the interests of European investors in China. In contrast, Washington's China policy is inevitably linked to Chinese political and military developments since Washington has pledged security commitments to Asian Pacific nations for over a century.

Although this division is often judged to be a barrier to transatlantic cooperation it also offers an opportunity. The United States is increasingly concerned by revisionist sentiment in the People's Liberation Army and is eager to restore military-to-military ties with China. Chinese leaders initially rebuffed these efforts in 2010 following the U.S. arms sale to Taiwan, although there are some recent signs of a thaw in tensions. The absence of major strategic problems between Europe and China means that security relations can continue relatively unimpeded, which would serve the United States' long-term interest in familiarizing the Chinese military with their Western counterparts. These relations mainly consists of "soft" cooperation, such as military-to-military diplomacy, port visits, educational exchanges, peacekeeping training, and basic joint military exercises.

Policymakers should also look for other areas where divergent perspectives allow one ally to pursue a policy that others may be unable to. European governments may be particularly useful in maintaining communication with political actors in the Middle East. The United States could deepen its relationship with Turkey to compensate for problems in the EU–Turkey relationship.

Recommendation #8: Engage Muslim Communities and Muslim Majority States³⁵

The abhorrent use of religion to justify acts of terrorism has affected many countries, both in the West and in the Muslim world. The United States and Europe have cooperated closely in confronting the radical minority of Muslims engaged in terrorism but they have done little together to engage the 1.4 billion Muslims living in nearly one hundred Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries who do not support terrorism. Time is propitious for such partnership because more and more Muslims are espousing ideas of tolerance, inclusion, and participation, and are rejecting al Qaeda's paradigm of wanton violence and killing in the name of Islam. Al Qaeda seems to be losing the moral argument among Muslims, and the emergence of a few franchise terrorist organizations—

including Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Al Shabab in Somalia, and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb—does not mask the waning influence of al Qaeda and its growing isolation. While al Qaeda continues to target Western countries and recruit potential “jihadists” from those countries, the most effective way to face down such a threat and ultimately defeat it is by reaching out to the vast majorities of Muslims across the globe.

The Obama administration, starting with the president’s speech in Cairo in June 2009, has made the engagement of Muslim communities abroad a central part of U.S. national security policy. In practice, this means that the United States is seeking to engage broader segments of Muslim societies in an effort to delegitimize the radical paradigm and undercut the extremist message of al Qaeda and its regional affiliates. Such engagement involves Muslim communities and centers in many areas that are not necessarily political—for example, energy, entrepreneurship, education, and health—and in the aggregate will contribute to the improvement of society as a whole. Since the challenge of empowering indigenous Muslim communities is global, it therefore must be addressed through global partnerships. Europe and the United States are both primary targets of al Qaeda. Europe has an interest in engaging Muslim communities and, even though it lacks military capabilities on a par with those of the United States, it has considerable civilian capacity that could be employed in this regard. Such cooperation would not have to exclusively focus on European governments. Because of their experience and expertise, European NGOs and civil society institutions can potentially be strong partners with their U.S. counterparts in engaging Muslim communities. European civil society is not viewed with the same suspicion in parts of the Muslim world as U.S. organizations. And European Muslims come from a wide variety of countries and traditions, meaning that they may have reach and influence beyond that of American Muslims.

Empowering communities from below is the first step in the process of building a communal culture conducive to economic progress, job creation at the local level, good governance, the rule of

law, and freedoms of expression, association, and religion. A transatlantic partnership on this issue has the potential to remake Western relations with the Muslim world over the long run, thus reducing the terrorist threat and creating the conditions for future international partnerships.

Recommendation #9: Strengthen and Consolidate Turkey’s Position in the Alliance

The fraying of relations between Turkey and the United States and Western Europe has been one of the major geopolitical developments of the past two years. Amid debates about whether Turkey is turning eastward or not, it is important to remember that neither the EU nor NATO will be able to realize important security goals without Turkey’s full support. Turkey’s potential contribution to European energy security and to Europe’s fight against radical Islamist movements is well known. Thanks to its large population and the geographically broad perspective of its national security community, Turkey has one of the largest and most readily deployable armies in Europe. Turkish troops and commanders have assumed important roles in Afghanistan, the Western Balkans, and other Western-backed peace missions. Turkey’s location is pivotal for sustaining any major NATO or EU military operation in the Eastern Mediterranean or northern Middle East. The December 2003 EU Strategy Document for European Security described instability in these regions as presenting serious potential security threats--especially in the forms of terrorism and immigration--to EU countries. Conversely, the difficult cases of Iraq and Iran shows how Turkish opposition can severely impede allied military options in nearby regions.

The United States, NATO, and the EU need to work together to strengthen and consolidate Turkey’s position within the alliance. A core part of this approach must involve a respect for diversity of interests. Turkey does not need to be a clone of the United States or Western Europe to be an integral part of the transatlantic alliance or a member in good standing of the international order. U.S.

and European interests are best served if Turkey pursues its own interests in a responsible and prudent way. There will be times when Turkey's interests conflict with those of Europe and the United States, but those instances should be resolved with diplomacy and compromise rather than definitive judgments about whether Turkey is inside or outside of the West.

Conclusion

The transatlantic alliance has been an anchor of U.S. foreign policy since its creation in the 1940s. An effective foreign policy needs to be dynamic and capable of adjusting to geopolitical change. It is therefore understandable that some analysts question the continued utility of the alliance as the Cold War becomes a distant memory and the geopolitical center of gravity shifts toward the Pacific. Such skepticism is all the more tempting as European governments slash their defense budgets. This approach, however, would be a strategic mistake. Ironically, the alliance is likely to become more important to the United States as Europe's relative power declines and new powers emerge. The reason is simple: U.S. and European interests are largely aligned in a multipolar world. Both want to engage emerging powers while also preserving the open and rules-based U.S.-led international order created after World War II. Both share similar threat assessments about the spread of nuclear weapons and international terrorism. As the world's two largest economies, the EU and the United States are integral to the restoration of a healthy global economy. They are also natural partners in ensuring continued access to the global commons. Their differences pale in comparison to their similarities. The convergence is particularly striking when measured relative to other partnerships. For the United States, only Australia, Japan, Israel, and South Korea come close.

Positioning the alliance for a multipolar world will not be easy. Perhaps the most difficult challenge will be the management of expectations. Each partner must appreciate and accept the domestic constraints and national interests of the other

instead of constantly trying to circumvent or overcome them. An instrumentalist approach whereby policymakers define the alliance in terms of how it responds to the problems of the day is tempting but unhelpful. Collectively, Europe and the United States must reinvest in the alliance to come to an understanding about the strategic role of the alliance over the next half century.

Notes

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32 This recommendation is drawn from John Nagl and Richard Weitz, *NATO and the Future of Counterinsurgency*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, October 2010.

33 This recommendation is drawn from Michael Horowitz, *A Common Future: NATO and Protection of the Global Commons*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, October 2010.

34 This recommendation is drawn from Richard Weitz, *NATO's Non-Proliferation Challenges in the Obama Era*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, October 2010.

35 This recommendation is drawn from Emile Nakhleh, *U.S.–EU Partnership and the Muslim World: How Transatlantic Cooperation Will Enhance Engagement*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, October 2010.

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