

An Opportune Moment for a Shared Euro-Atlantic Security Strategy

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September 11 came late in Europe, but nearly eight years after 2001, it is there. 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 Guidelines of November 2007 and the European Council's *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* of December 2008.

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. 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 and 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 Defense and Security Policy (ESDP) that 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 only to the extent that it is framed as a cooperative Euro-Atlantic design, but 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. That at least is a view now widely 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.¹

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 would reassert the allies' unity of action on behalf of its basic values, principles, and purposes. This will not be the first time that the NATO members would 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

¹ John K. Glenn, *Will America's Image Recover in Europe?*, Brussels Forum Paper Series (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall Fund, 2008), 5.

that will populate the coming decade—including terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction 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, thereby making this an opportune moment to pursue, through different but converging national and institutional venues, the development of a shared Euro-Atlantic security strategy.

Learning to Say Yes

The French return to full participation in NATO's integrated command confirms the new political conditions that prevail within the alliance. Sarkozy's expectations in preparing for this step echo 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 have 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 only marginally to NATO's 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 the European Union.

For the United States to help reinforce these possible gains, this means to encourage Britain to say yes to France about ESDP (which is not mentioned in the 2008 British white paper); for France this means to recruit Germany for a more proactive security strategy than 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 along national and institutional lines drawn within a consultative forum that would meet with the active participation of the European Union (and with NATO as a proactive observer).² Lacking such an arrangement, how effectively can the 27 EU members discuss “grand strategy” or any specific high-profile security issues in the absence of European NATO members Turkey and Norway, and even Iceland, but with the potentially “decisive” inputs of its six more-or-less-neutral members (Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Finland, Malta, and Sweden)? Or, conversely, how effectively can the United States, together with Canada and its other 26 European allies (including Albania and Croatia), plan NATO's future in global expeditionary operations in the absence of a full EU commitment to decisions that would require the consent and contributions of most but not all EU members?

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.³ 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 June 2008 Irish referendum on the 2007 Lisbon Treaty). Thus, ESDP is first an intra-European debate that begins at two (between France and Britain) and is pursued at three with Germany before it is enlarged to six or seven (with Italy, Poland, Spain, and even Sweden) until it is extended to all EU members. Lacking a full consensus among its larger members and with the followership of its smaller members, other EU members should still move forward, pending a change of heart by the laggard states that would have chosen to be left behind (including a Euro-skeptic Britain or a timid Germany, though not both).⁴

Although the French are now better aware of their own limits, they remain torn between their traditional passion

² 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.

³ See, by this author, *Architects of Delusion: Europe, America, and the Iraq War* (Philadelphia, P.A.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

⁴ 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.” Jolyon Howorth et al., *The Case for an EU Grand Strategy*, Egmont Paper no. 27, (Brussels: Belgian Royal Institute for International Affairs, January 2009), 19.

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 30 to 20 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'ingérance sécuritaire*)—but to not do so alone, or with only a few EU partners that may be willing but might remain neither capable nor even relevant. The new tests are therefore tests of efficacy and synergy. With a shrunk army said to be the least well equipped in the Western world,⁵ 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.

Over the years, this is a view that the United States, too, has endorsed firmly and openly. Britain's 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: the United States should encourage Britain to join France and others in an attempt that is no longer designed to achieve separation from NATO but instead welcomes new capabilities for a Euro-Atlantic West that combines NATO and the EU. At the very least, and to facilitate the next steps of the European debate, a new EU mechanism could coordinate the work of the European Union's civilian staff with NATO's military personnel. After ratification of the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, hopefully no later than December 2009, such a mechanism might include a

⁵ Jean-Claude Thoman, "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.

European Council of defense ministers, or, pending agreement on such a council, the selection of a deputy for the high commissioner, who would have responsibility for defense issues. The proposal has been made before, but it need not be ignored much longer.

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 in 2004 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, and to 1.3 percent in 2006. Yet, the goals of the 2006 *weissbuch* are compatible with ESDP and NATO targets (Headline 2010 and Comprehensive Political Guidance), especially as they discuss threat assessment, force transformation, and Bundeswehr reform. 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 EU, and between the United States, the EU, and NATO within an expanding Euro-Atlantic community, a new Merkel-led governing coalition 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 contentious years of Gerhard Schroeder. But once deployed, these forces should also be allowed to fight as and where needed.

As noted by leading European expert Sven Biscop, whatever national temptations there are and will remain, "the EU has increasingly become the political center 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."⁶ If the states of Europe decide to act, it is through the European Union that they will be heard best by their partners, 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

⁶ 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.

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 can be sustained in and beyond 2009 is unlikely. Seemingly, the laws of institutional supply and demand work differently in Europe, and it is when the role of the European Union is most acknowledged that it seems least able to respond. For one, issues of leadership continue to prevail as the permissive consensus that conditioned the growth of European institutions is fragmenting, and new populist pressures challenge these institutions more sharply than ever before; with a spreading and deepening economic recession throughout Europe, and widening divisions among EU members over the most effective plan to counter it from within, but also with the many multilateral bodies where they cling to their national seats; and finally, with 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 or the alliance nor Germany can afford a marginalization of the one relative to the other: Europe, because lacking Germany's commitment it can be neither a counterweight nor a counterpart to the United States but risks instead to turn 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.⁷

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 this 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, now do or can 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 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) create an increasingly complex, 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. This is the case because few of these threats can be managed, let alone resolved, exclusively 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, defense policy, homeland security policy, foreign policy, and economic policy."

- Such multifaceted security concerns require a major overhaul of national and institutional capabilities for the

⁷ Simon Serfaty, "No Time for a Time Out," *Current History* 108, issue 716 (March 2009): 99–104.

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 as 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.⁸

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 states or regions because the process that gave birth to “Europe” is and shall remain fundamentally unrepeatable. Moreover, 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. 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 closed, and the availability of economic migration, which is no longer as readily open as a mere few years ago.

Still, relative to the availability of soft power, the countries of Europe and their union will find it especially difficult to increase their military power as budget pressures leave national governments only with cost-cutting options, though with different intensity (in France less than in Germany but more than in Britain) and for different reasons (with Britain not sensitive to the EU pressures exerted on euro-zone members). The resulting emphasis on “capability over quantity” sounds more like a political alibi than strategic thinking, but 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 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”—which is 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 eager 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 quickly (carriers), strike visibly (Rafales), and stay late (gendarmierie, 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 durability 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 gendarmierie 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).

- Spurred by its members, the European Union has come to agree 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—whose global reach and potential access to weapons of mass destruction makes it fundamentally 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 non-state aggressors.

Yet, while every EU country has been making 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*, makes little room for the use of military instruments abroad, even in the areas of “pursuit” and “response,” and continues to show a deep national

⁸ François Heisbourg, “The European Security Strategy is not a Security Strategy,” in Steve Everts et al. eds., *A European Way of War* (London: Centre for European Reform, 2004), 34.

reluctance to share intelligence within the European Union (notwithstanding the high levels of bilateral exchanges between the leading EU countries and the United States). In each of these areas, much remains to be done by the EU members individually, and by the EU 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 and can demand the sort of collective response mandated by Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty but which now de facto extends beyond the confined geographic area envisioned in April 1949. More specifically, 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. This means that past its 2009 anniversary summit, NATO cannot close the door on further enlargement even in the absence of a date certain for the most difficult applicants (including Ukraine and Georgia). But 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 also the European Union, to engage, reform, and strengthen other institutions, including the G-8, UN Security Council, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank; a goal that 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 EU’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 32 European members of the European Union and NATO show converging views of their total security environment, among themselves and with their two 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 steadfastly 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 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 a 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—the 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.

The vague references to “preemptive engagement [that] can

avoid serious problems in the future” written into the first EU strategy paper endorsed at the Thessaloniki EU summit of June 2003 make little place for preemption in the national strategy of the leading European states and their union. In or a bit beyond 2010, that distinction between preemption and prevention will likely be tested: what is to be feared more, a nuclear Iran or a war with Iran? How and when to deter Iran best—with military threats before Iran achieves or approaches nuclear status or afterward with threats of instant “obliteration,” as then-President Jacques Chirac warned in 2007 and then-Senator Hillary Clinton pledged during her failed presidential campaign in 2008?

These, however, are questions that should be debated in Iran rather than in Europe and among the allies: to this day, who knows what John F. Kennedy would have done if the Soviet leadership had not blinked in the Caribbean in the fall of 1962—and who needs to know since the question was answered by his adversaries in Moscow? Similarly, an Iranian “blink” will be more likely if a credible military option remains on the table, even as negotiations open—and this is what was achieved by President Bush and maintained by his successor and the allies, though possibly with different measures of believability: Obama a bit less than Bush, Sarkozy more than Chirac, Gordon Brown less than Blair, and Merkel about the same as Schroeder.

Finally, 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 a different sense of urgency, and thus 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 the states of Europe on the other.

On these and many other issues, the imperative to 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 and its members have relative to NATO and to one another; what degree of autonomy can/should NATO and its members have relative to the European Union and to one another; 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 past EU strategy security paper, the 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 EU to update its collective security paper, prior to a similar exercise for NATO, and with the Obama administration also poised to review its own national security strategy, 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-U.S.), 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 elections in the United States. How the EU now proceeds to muster the will and gather the capabilities to attend to its role as a power in the world, though not a world power, is not an U.S. decision, but it is a decision to which the United States and about which it 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 EU 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.

Third, given such willingness on both sides of the Atlantic for enhanced security relations, this is an opportune moment for the European Union and NATO to close whatever vision gap still separates both institutions and their members. More specifically, a new EU strategy paper that builds on the convergence of the white papers released by Britain, Germany, and France over the past 30 months, and the new national security strategy paper expected from the new U.S. administration, should close further the “coherence deficit” that has often characterized strategic transatlantic thinking. Closing that deficit must also be the goal of the new NATO strategic concept that the European allies, speaking through their union, have an unusual opportunity to influence. 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 reported 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.

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 the European Union and between the European Union and the United States, does not presuppose consensus but is 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 the Europeans are prone to do, is not to propose. 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.

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The CSIS Brzezinski Chair is conducting a two-year Global Dialogue between the European Union and the United States based on five broad issues of stabilization and reconstruction, energy security, climate change, challenges in world economic governance, and concepts for converging security convergence. On each of these issues, our 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 an institutional and multilateral structure that better reflects the diffusion of interests in the international system. This is the initial working draft of the joint European-American report expected for this issue. The Brzezinski Chair and CSIS thank the European Commission for its support of this project.

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