NATO Defense College
Collège de Défense de l'OTAN

How and why did NATO survive the Bush doctrine?

Report

by Stanley R. Sloan

Research Division
October 2008

How and why did NATO survive the Bush doctrine?

Stanley R. Sloan[1]

The crisis in the transatlantic relationship that began with the advent of the George W. Bush administration in 2000 and then receded during President Bush's second term in office was perhaps the most severe in the history of the alliance. NATO has experienced a succession of "crises" throughout its 60-year history. Differences among allies and with their publics leading to crisis environments in transatlantic relations have included the 1956 U.S. decision not to support the British/French/Israeli military attempt to reverse Egypt's nationalization of the Suez canal, European opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam, French President Charles de Gaulle's withdrawal of France from NATO's integrated military command in 1967, divergent views on how to deal with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, European public opposition to the decision to deploy intermediate range nuclear missiles in Europe in the early 1980s, and disarray over how to deal with turmoil in the Balkans in the early 1990s.

However, the new century crisis in the early 2000s was made more difficult by the fact that it was largely instigated by the policies and personalities of the U.S. government that were seen in Europe as unilateralist and anti-NATO. Most importantly, the administration produced statements and actions following the 9/11 attacks suggesting that the alliance leader no longer found this alliance worth the effort of leading, and followed them up with a controversial and divisive decision to go to war against Iraq.

This essay discusses the factors that led to this most recent transatlantic crisis, its key components, and the way that all parties to the event moved toward and then away from the brink. It then addresses the question of how and why the alliance appears, at least until now, to have survived the crisis. The analysis concludes by deriving some lessons from this experience that might lead to a better understanding of NATO's potential and future and, more importantly, that might help NATO governments avoid or, if necessary, deal with future crisis environments.

I. The New Century Crisis in Transatlantic Relations

The new century crisis in the transatlantic alliance may or may not be seen by future historians as the "Bush" crisis. The roots of the crisis, of course, go deeper than the policies and personalities of the first George W. Bush administration. This administration may in the future be seen either as the main cause of the crisis or simply as the igniter of a fire that had been waiting to happen, as allies on both sides of the Atlantic tried to adjust their perceptions and priorities to new strategic realities that emerged following the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union.

---

[1] Stanley R. Sloan is a visiting scholar at Middlebury College's Rohatyn Center for International Affairs, Director of the Atlantic Community Initiative, and an Honorary *Ancien* of the NATO Defense College.
The views expressed in this paper are the responsibility of the author and should not be attributed to the NATO Defense College or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

At the end of the Cold War, U.S. President George H.W. Bush clearly believed that the United States was required to play a strong international leadership role. Some of his advisers thought the United States should use its position as the sole superpower to discourage challenges to that position, even among current allies. President Bush nonetheless accepted the importance of building consensus in the United Nations and constructing coalitions to deal with international challenges (illustrated by his orchestration of the response to Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait).

In the first year of his presidency, Bill Clinton and his foreign policy advisers experimented with a number of different approaches to U.S. foreign policy. As Clinton moved toward the end of his first term, he appeared to have decided that an assertive U.S. international leadership role could be more of an advantage than a burden and in 1996 began arguing that the United States was the world's "indispensable power."
The Clinton administration mostly attempted to avoid policies that were, or could be perceived as, isolationist or unilateralist. But, on occasion, self-confident U.S. behaviour rubbed some Europeans the wrong way. When the Clinton administration decided that only Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary should participate in the first wave of NATO enlargement, many allies privately applauded. But the fact that the United States appeared to have abandoned the process of NATO consultations and then said its decision was non-negotiable troubled even America's closest allies.

With the advent of the George W. Bush administration in 2000, European concerns had shifted toward the expectation that the United States would pull its troops out of the Balkans to leave the remaining tasks to the Europeans, as candidate Bush had recommended. However, the early policies of the Bush administration raised other concerns, most particularly about the unilateralism demonstrated by U.S. decisions to abandon the nuclear test ban treaty and oppose participation in the Kyoto Protocol on global warming.
Administration policies after 9/11 began to bring the transatlantic crisis to a head. On the one hand, Bush's strategy was based on building a broad international coalition against terrorism. On the other hand, the United States conducted the campaign with little reference to offers of assistance from the allies and without making much institutional use of the NATO framework.
Interpreting the events that led to the new century crisis, some observers focused on a "structural gap" in the alliance that was seen as increasingly separating the United States from Europe. Such differences created the potential for U.S.-European divisions even before 9/11 and the Iraq War dramatically brought such differences to the surface. From this perspective, the stimulus for the crisis was provided by failure of European states to build sufficient military capabilities to make significant contributions to post-Cold War security problems and the resulting loss of U.S. confidence in the extent to which it could count on its European allies.

Robert Kagan argued famously that Americans and Europeans were on two different planets, writing that "Americans are from Mars, Europeans from Venus." Kagan judged that success of the European integration process, which created a zone of peace and cooperation among countries that had warred for centuries, had also given birth to a "non-use of force ideology."[2] He

[2] Robert Kagan, Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2003.

concluded, therefore, that the United States and Europe were destined to disagree more and more in the future.[3]

At the time, the projection of further Euro-Atlantic division seemed compelling to many. The Dutch analyst, Peter van Ham, said that Kagan is "absolutely right" in judging that "Americans and Europeans no longer share a common 'strategic culture'." Van Ham wrote: "...for non-Americans, this is gradually becoming a world where the U.S. acts as legislator, policeman, judge and executioner." Ham's answer was that Europe needed to unite more strongly against American power.[4]

A number of scholars and commentators believed that the end of the Cold War left NATO without a purpose and exposed an unnatural relationship between the United States and its security-dependent European allies.[5] David Calleo has argued for many years that the "American protectorate" for Europe is both unnatural and unlikely to be sustained successfully indefinitely.[6] Calleo, and others, suggest that Europe eventually must take responsibility for itself, and that failure to do so will ultimately undo the transatlantic relationship.

Against this backdrop, all the extreme caricatures of U.S. and European behavior came to life early in the 21st century. In its early months, the George W. Bush administration applied shock and awe unilateralism to U.S.-European relations. After 9/11, the United States virtually ignored initial allied and NATO offers of assistance. Administration officials publicly disparaged NATO and allied militaries. The United States made it clear it was going to war against Iraq come hell or high water. Moreover, the Bush administration's 2002 "New National Security Strategy" raised profound questions about international conventions on use of force, asserting the U.S. right to use pre-emptive, or even preventive, force to keep an enemy from attacking the United States.

The response from Europe also damaged the Euro-Atlantic relationship. Germany declared it would not participate in an attack on Iraq even if the United States and Great Britain managed to get a UN Security Council mandate. Early in 2003, Germany joined France and Belgium in questioning whether they would support Turkey if it were attacked in the context of the looming conflict with Iraq, raising fundamental uncertainties about the NATO security commitment. Europeans left themselves exposed to the American observation that Europe now follows the dictum: "Speak softly and carry a big carrot."[7]

---

[3] The fact that Americans and Europeans have somewhat different approaches to the use of force was not a particularly new revelation. In 1984, for example, this author asked: "To what extent do U.S. global military capabilities permit the West European allies to concentrate on nonmilitary approaches? Does military strength generate an inclination to use force to further national objectives?" Stanley R. Sloan, NATO's Future: Toward a New Transatlantic Bargain (Washington, D.C., National Defense University Press, 1985).

[4] See Stanley R. Sloan and Peter van Ham, "What Future for NATO?" Centre for European Reform, October 2002.

[5] For example, in 2002, Charles Kupchan predicted that "History is coming full circle….. It is now Europe's turn to ascend and break away from an America that refuses to surrender its privileges of primacy." Charles A. Kupchan, "End of the West," *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 2002. http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200211/kupchan

[6] See, for example, David P. Calleo, *Rethinking Europe's Future*, New York, Century Foundation, (2001), and David P. Calleo, *The Atlantic Fantasy: The U.S., NATO, and Europe*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Washington, D.C. (1970).

[7] This is not the combination the 26th President of the United States Theodore ("Teddy") Roosevelt recommended when he adopted the adage "Speak softly and carry a big stick. You will go far" as the best way to deal with other nations.

French President Chirac did his part, insulting new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe who had supported U.S. policy in Iraq, advising them that they should know when to "shut up." The Iraq war created huge political divisions in NATO and the EU and, according to a senior European diplomat, in every capitol and ministry in Europe.[8] Even though many European allies acted unilaterally during the crisis and with little regard to alliance commitments and principles, the actions of the alliance leader, the United States, take the lead responsibility for the crisis.

In sum, the first few years of the Bush administration raised existential questions about NATO's future. Even if the "junior partners" in the alliance wanted to continue security cooperation with the United States, would this be possible if the United States no longer found the alliance relevant to its interests? Or, if the United States wanted to continue the alliance but mainly as an extension of controversial U.S. foreign and security policies, would this be in the interests of European states? These were fundamental questions that were asked in many quarters around Europe in 2002-2003.

II. Why and How Did NATO Survive?

The case could be made that NATO will, in fact, not survive for long and that the issues that came to a head in the new century crisis will return to undermine the alliance down the road. If, however, "survival" is defined by the will of the member states to sustain the alliance relationship, the alliance appears to be recovering from this most recent in a long line of crises in the relationship.

The fact that NATO moved past this confluence of events cannot be explained in terms of the need for a response to an existential threat. Such a threat from the Soviet Union had been history for a decade before George W. Bush came to office, and had not been reconstituted. It also cannot be explained by the Bush administration's post-9/11 argument – an argument not accepted by most Europeans – that the United States and its allies were at war with radical Islamic extremism.

Even though the Bush administration carried unilateralism to new levels, the European allies had already experienced a taste of it in the alliance-friendly Clinton administration. The Bush administration's actions, however, on top of the Clinton experiences, convinced many Europeans that U.S. unilateralism and hegemonic behaviour were becoming the norm in transatlantic relations. The suggestion by some that Bush administration behaviour was an American anomaly, was undermined by the fact that the American people re-elected George Bush for a second term. These European perceptions increased support for building up the European Union (EU) as a counterbalance to U.S. power. They fed support for the European Constitution agreed by EU governments in 2003. Such attitudes toward U.S. behaviour also led to a "rump" meeting of France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg in April 2003 that produced agreement on establishing a separate EU military planning cell independent of NATO, which U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns subsequently called "the most significant threat to NATO's future."

[8] The diplomat in question frequently makes this observation in lectures at the NATO Defense College.

In sum, what could have been seen as a reason for European states to get used to America's hegemonic behaviour, started to turn into a dynamic that could have led to the end of alliance. Why did it not? The paragraphs that follow discuss some of the possible explanations.

1) The Bush administration in its second term recognized the need for allies and the importance of NATO in mustering allied contributions to security and made serious efforts to show that the United States remained committed to the alliance.

The Bush administration in its second term mounted a campaign to win back the trust and cooperation of European governments. Early in 2005, both Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and President Bush visited European capitals explicitly seeking to repair some of the damage done by the administration in its first term, and most particularly by the decision to go to war against Iraq. The administration made few formal changes in its policies toward the alliance, and many of the same officials whose statements had seriously damaged relations with the allies remained in place. But there was a change toward more conciliatory and less confrontational approaches to the allies. For instance, the new U.S. attitude notably included support for NATO taking over command of the International Security Assistance force in Afghanistan.

Following a NATO summit meeting in February 2005, President Bush praised the alliance saying "NATO is the most successful alliance in the history of the world…. Because of NATO, Europe is whole and united and at peace…..NATO is an important organization, and the United States of America strongly supports it."[9]

During the question and answer period, one reporter suggested that Europeans remained skeptical about administration intentions, particularly as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was still suggesting "the mission should determine the coalition." The reporter asked what the United States would do to improve transatlantic relations. The President's answer was relatively straight-forward: we had a major difference with some allies over Iraq and now we need to put that issue behind us.

For the most part, European governments did appear to put the issue behind them, by agreeing to disagree about the wisdom of invading Iraq, but accepting the new more NATO-friendly U.S. attitude as reaffirmation of U.S. support for the alliance. Few Europeans were convinced that the administration's words and actions could be undone simply by a "charm offensive" by the President and his Secretary of State, but the more productive Euro-Atlantic relationship suggested that attitudes do matter.

2) Failure of the EU constitution to win popular acceptance implied that arguments being made for the EU to become a "balancer" of U.S. power internationally could not be sustained by reality, at least not in the near term.

The European Union constitution failed to win approval, being turned down in 2005 referenda in France and the Netherlands. The failure of the constitutional treaty did not signify popular rejection of the "balancer" argument. Decisions in France and the Netherlands were based far more on the desire to preserve national identities and cultures and on concerns about economic consequences than on any grand strategic arguments.

[9] President and Secretary General Hoop de Scheffer Discuss NATO meeting, White House Press Release, February 22, 2005, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050222-3.html.

But this failure did squelch talk about the EU as a "balancer", and led to serious introspection among EU governments. How could one imagine the EU counterbalancing the United States if even the most "Gaullist" of European countries, whose government had argued the case, could not win popular approval for a document that would establish the platform for such a role?

3) New European democracies in Eastern and Central Europe were strongly committed to NATO's continuation, particularly because their historical and geographic proximity to Russian power and influence convinced them that NATO provided an essential link to U.S. power that was not provided by EU membership.

Former Soviet satellites in Central and Eastern Europe and three former Soviet Republics (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) had worked hard to adopt "western" political and economic systems. They wanted to align with the United States and to protect themselves against Russian influence. They wanted to be EU and NATO members to ensure that they are part of Europe with strong links to the United States.

Those who wanted the EU to become a "balancer" of American power were disappointed and even angered by the fact that the new democracies wanted a form of European unity that remained compatible with transatlantic alliance. The net impact, however, was to reaffirm the importance of the transatlantic link and NATO.

4) European governments simply had no alternative to remaining in alliance with the United States, and NATO was still the most important symbol and operational component of the relationship.

Even before the EU constitution went down in defeat, there were serious questions about the EU balancer concept. In a new balance of power system, the EU would have been required to align itself with Russia and China from time to time as required by disagreements with the United States. One presumes this also could mean that the United States would be free to align with other countries, let's say India and Japan, or even Russia or China, against the European Union. It doesn't take much imagination to envision how unstable international relations could become in such an environment.

Moreover, how comfortable would Europeans feel about aligning themselves with autocratic or even authoritarian states against the American democracy? Somehow this model of international relations never made much sense.

One answer, of course, is that the EU could be a "soft" balancer, simply opposing U.S. policies as necessary and acting as a friendly critic of the United States and not formally aligning itself with any other power. This, however, is not much different from the current state of transatlantic relations. A healthy dialogue over differing points of view is in the interests of democracies on both sides of the Atlantic.

5) West European governments remained split concerning the future construction of Europe, and the default position (of European integration within the broader context of transatlantic cooperation) was sufficiently compelling to discourage other options.

The debate in Europe over the U.S. invasion of Iraq reflected the fact that there were very different attitudes and assumptions concerning the relationship with the United States. While some European states opposed the U.S. action based on their judgment that the case for war had not been made, others lined up in support. Among some traditional NATO allies, the United States was supported by several governments led by conservative parties. In the United Kingdom, the

powerful influence of the "special relationship" in the hands of Prime Minister Tony Blair aligned the United Kingdom with its American ally.
The divisions among allies and even within allied governments were based not just on the merits of the case for war but also on differing images of Europe's future. When the model of the EU as a balancer fell apart, the idea of a uniting Europe with the framework of continued transatlantic cooperation reasserted itself.

In addition, the change of leaders in two key countries – France and Germany – substantially improved the dynamics of their bilateral and alliance relations with the United States. When Christian Democrat Angela Merkel assumed the chancellorship in Germany in 2005 she consciously sought to repair some of the damage to Germany's relations with the United States, and to make NATO a high priority for German foreign policy.
Similarly, when Nicolas Sarkozy won the French presidency in 2007 he brought with him a fundamentally changed attitude toward NATO and relations with the United States. Sarkozy's intent to return France to NATO's integrated military command and to develop the European Union's Security and Defense Policy in NATO-friendly directions was welcomed by the Bush administration.[10]

6) The fact is that, in spite of differences over Iraq and international relations generally, the United States and its European allies still share an impressive collection of values and interests.
For those who argued in the 1990s and into the 2000s that Europe and the United States were inevitably drifting apart, the standard assertion of common Euro-Atlantic values appeared undermined by the many issues on which there seemed to be serious differences: the death penalty, global warming, abortion, gun control, when to use military force, among others.
However, in spite of these differences, what made the transatlantic alliance special was the fact that it still stood in defense of core values such as individual liberty, democracy, and the rule of law. The validity of this value foundation found reaffirmation among the former members of the Warsaw Pact and former Soviet Republics that used these values as the keystones of their new democratic systems.

7) The financial and economic fortunes of the United States and Europe had become so mutually interdependent that a political/security break with the United States could put vital European and American interests at risk.
In addition to shared political values, the United States and EU member states have market-based economic systems in which competition drives the market but is governed by democratically approved rules and regulations. European and American market economies are the essential core of the global economic system.[11] The European Union is the largest U.S. partner in the trade of goods and services. The members of the EU have over $860 billion of direct investment in the United States. The United States has some $700 billion invested in EU states.
The EU and the United States together account for more than 40 percent of world trade and represent almost 60 percent of the industrialized world's gross domestic product. Joseph P.

[10] See, for example, Leo Michel, "Getting to Oui," *Internationale Politik*, German Council on Foreign Relations, Berlin, Summer 2008, http://www.ip-global.org/archiv/2008/summer2008/getting-to-oui.html.
[11] See Joseph P. Quinlin, "Drifting Apart or Growing Together? The Primacy of the Transatlantic Economy," Center for Transatlantic Relations [Washington] March 2003.

Quinlin concluded in his excellent 2003 study of U.S.-European mutual economic interdependence that: "In sum, the years since the fall of the Berlin Wall have witnessed one of the greatest periods of transatlantic economic integration in history. Our mutual stake in each other's prosperity has grown dramatically since the end of the Cold War. We ignore these realities at our peril."[12]

8) Finally, in 2008, developments in Russian policy starkly highlighted what could return as another reason why NATO will survive the new century crisis.

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO's members have attempted to develop cooperative political, economic and security relations with Russia. This has not stopped the allies from taking steps that they saw as warranted by their own values and interests, such as admitting former Warsaw Pact allies and Soviet republics to alliance membership. However, other dynamics have been working on Russian policies.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a chance that Russia itself would fall apart, as the Chechen separatist movement seemed to suggest. It was therefore not a surprise that Russia is experiencing a new, perhaps prolonged, period of authoritarian tendencies designed to keep the country from disintegrating. Moreover, after 2000, Russian economic fortunes brightened considerably with its international sales of oil and gas, apparently encouraging Russian leaders to flex their muscles once again.

When new fighting broke out in South Ossetia, Russia took the opportunity not only to "punish" Georgian forces involved but also to push into Georgia, destroy Georgian military and civilian infrastructure, and seal off Georgia from its two break-away republics, Russian officials saying they would never again be part of Georgia.

The last thing the NATO nations wanted was a new cold war with Russia, but Russian actions in Georgia have certainly chilled the atmosphere across Europe as well as between Russia and the United States. As one expert has observed, NATO and the European Union need to work together on this difficult relationship and "Russia must be reminded that cooperation with NATO, as an alliance of democratic states, requires compliance with democratic rules."[13]

The longer-term consequences of this affair remain to be seen, but, at the very least, many European states will see Russia's actions as a sign that they will be safer in the future with a NATO security blanket than without. The events, as well as raising questions about NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine, could even move EU members Finland and Sweden to consider much more seriously joining the alliance.

III. Lessons that should be learned

The United States with which European leaders and states will have to deal in the foreseeable future will remain a de facto hegemon with the capacity to do much good or much harm in terms of their interests and international stability. "Europe" will remain a work in progress, acting united in many areas but with EU members acting very much like nation states particularly in

[12] Ibid., p. xi.

[13] Karl-Heinz Kamp, "Frozen Conflict," *Internationale Politik*, German Council on Foreign Relations, Berlin, Summer 2008, http://www.ip-global.org/archiv/2008/summer2008/frozen-conflict.html.

the areas of foreign and defense policy. This will be a "uniting Europe of states" more than a "United States of Europe."

At the end of the day, the new century crisis in alliance relations seems to have demonstrated that the United States, Canada and the European states cannot afford to go it alone internationally, even if future differences might tempt them to do so again. If the allies wish to avoid or mitigate similar crises in the future, what lessons need to be learned?

Lesson: As long as the United States retains such a strong international presence, it must learn how to be a hegemonic power without acting like one. In spite of its overwhelming military power, it nonetheless needs cooperation with allies and international institutions to legitimize use of force, win the peace.

The United States will have to "speak more softly," as U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt famously recommended. Everyone knows that the United States already carries the "biggest stick." And, future U.S. administrations will be required to be more constructive and creative in the use of international institutions and multilateral cooperation.

United States needs NATO. Ad hoc coalitions sometimes are necessary, but they can't replace NATO cooperation. Even when the NATO integrated command structure is not directly in play, the day-to-day political/military cooperation among allies and partners provides the experience and habits of cooperation necessary to make ad hoc coalitions viable.

Particularly in conflicts like the current one with al Qaeda leaders who use terrorist tactics on behalf of their radical ideology, the United States cannot "win" simply by the use of military force. It desperately needs the political legitimacy and assistance that is provided by allies and partners who share in the risks and take on military and non-military responsibilities.

The bottom line is that the United States should not give the impression through its words or actions that it does not value the contribution the NATO alliance makes to its interests.

Lesson: If European states do not develop more substantial international military capabilities, familiar burden-sharing tensions with the United States and among European countries will resurface as possible sources of new crises.

As we have seen, the strongly-held view in the first Bush administration that the European allies and NATO had little to contribute to America's security interests was a key factor behind events leading to the new century alliance crisis. The fact that Europe was perceived as having little to offer also suggested that the United States did not need to pay attention to European views or preferences. If this circumstance is not altered, the same sort of crisis could re-occur in the future.

Lesson: Europeans need NATO as a source of involvement in international security and influence on U.S. decisions affecting European interests.

A bigger European stick, with longer reach, will produce a more effective European voice in the alliance. Europeans will have to bring more resources and capabilities to the transatlantic security table. Europe's speaking softly while carrying a big carrot simply won't cut it. The U.S.–European relationship needs a better balance in terms of both authority and capability. However, it is not up to the United States to "give" Europe more authority. European nations and the European Union will wield greater influence in Washington and internationally based on their will and ability to contribute to solutions of international security problems.

Lesson: Dealing with terrorism and other challenges requires U.S.-European soft- as well as hard-power cooperation.

The experience in Afghanistan so far contains many potential lessons, but one of the key ones is that both the United States and Europe will need a variety of non-military capabilities and programs to deal with this and future security problems arising from failed states. More extensive and coordinated U.S. and European, NATO and EU, cooperation on the use of non-military instruments of security policy could help keep transatlantic perceptions of security requirements and required policies closer to consensus approaches.

A number of suggestions are already on the table for ways to improve transatlantic security cooperation without undermining the important roles of NATO and the European Union.[14] So far, such proposals have not been sufficiently compelling to override resistance to change, including bureaucratic preferences for muddling through rather than taking chances on new approaches and institutional insecurities leading to fears that new ways of doing business might undermine the EU, NATO or the United Nations.

Lesson: As much as the allies believe in democracy as the value foundation for their alliance, one of the lessons from Iraq should be that it is much easier to support democratic systems that have been freely chosen by other countries than to try to superimpose them on a base not yet fully prepared for them.

The fact that the United States seemed to many Europeans to be on a crusade to establish democratic political systems across the United States was one source of transatlantic differences over policies toward Iraq. Trying to impose democracy on populations that either do not want it or are not prepared to implement it is a costly enterprise that should be undertaken only if the entire community of democracies is prepared to support the process.

Lesson: Do not divide responsibilities between the United States and its allies, as this only deepens divergence in perceptions.

Given the current disparities between U.S. and European military capabilities, some have suggested dividing responsibilities in the alliance. It does make sense for individual nations, or groups of nations, to take on specific tasks within the overall framework of transatlantic cooperation. In fact, the special capacities that European allies have for managing stabilization and reconstruction activities could be usefully combined with the potent U.S. ability for war fighting to develop a full spectrum of pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict coalition activities. This would require closer political and strategic cooperation and better integrated planning, including the will to imagine and project reactions to a wide range of contingencies.

However, any formal division of responsibilities (hard power tasks for the United States, soft power jobs for the Europeans) would be a disaster for U.S.–European relations. In a world of divided Euro-Atlantic responsibilities, responses to every future security challenge would have to overcome growing divergences in appreciation of the problem before effective cooperation could even be imagined.

[14] The suggestions include this author's proposals in the past decade for an Atlantic Community Treaty Organization that would serve as a framework for coordination of NATO and European Union member state policies and efforts on the non-military aspects of security. Other advocacies for broader cooperation among democratic states have included proposals from Simon Serfaty and the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, the Princeton Project on National Security, Senator John McCain, and former French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

The bottom line is that there should be a practical division of tasks among the transatlantic partners, but not a formal division of labor across the Atlantic. Ideally, both American and European forces should be engaged in the high intensity and lower intensity ends of future conflicts, sharing responsibility for the strategies required for the entire continuum.

Lesson: In the near term, the allies need to prepare a new strategic concept that will take into account both these lessons and the experiences of the decade has passed since the last strategic concept was prepared.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de hoop Scheffer has for over two years called for preparation of a new Strategic Concept for the alliance. With the advent of a new administration in Washington, the time will have arrived for the task. Such concepts seldom break dramatic new ground, but they do consolidate realities in ways that provide guidance for future actions. This one, in particular, could effectively mark the end of the new century crisis and the opening of a new spirit of cooperation that is sorely needed to deal with the challenges now facing the alliance.

Lesson: Perceptions do matter.

The ways that the United States and the allies perceive each other's intentions and actions have an important impact on the functioning of the alliance. Moreover, because all the allies are democracies, the way that publics on both sides of the Atlantic perceive the value of allies and the alliance can profoundly affect its future.

NATO's public information services perform an important function in providing material about NATO that can then be used by commentators, teachers, and governments. Over the long run, the way that the alliance is portrayed on op ed pages and in classrooms will have an important effect on perceptions. This is even more important now that substantially fewer Americans serve in European countries on NATO duty resulting in substantially diminished person-to-person contacts that have in the past helped sustain transatlantic cooperation.

In the near term, European and American governments need to take care that the impressions they give to their publics about the value of these relationships are consistent with their interests. And, if they believe that NATO is important to their interests, they need to be pro-active in shaping public opinion in supportive ways.

IV. The Bottom Line

The transatlantic alliance faces a complex and demanding set of issues, including: what will be required to succeed in Afghanistan; how can international terrorism best be confronted and contained; how should the allies deal with a Russia that is reconsolidating and reasserting its power and influence; should NATO remain a regional alliance with global partnerships and missions, or should it become a global alliance; and how can the allies best accommodate internal political and economic dynamics among European countries and within the overall Atlantic community?

The allies cannot afford another crisis like the one the alliance has just survived. Perhaps this is the bottom line lesson: *preserving cooperation among democratic states, of which the transatlantic allies are the essential core, is essential for the future security and well-being of them all.* For that matter, such cooperation is essential to the effective functioning of the international system more broadly. Putting that cooperation at risk is unlikely to be the best answer to any imaginable future security issues.