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The Future Of The  
Atlantic Alliance In  
American Foreign Policy

Herbert K. Tillema

## **The Future of the Atlantic Alliance in American Foreign Policy**

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## The Future of the Atlantic Alliance in American Foreign Policy

“It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.” —George Washington, *Farewell Address*, September 17, 1796

“Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none.”  
—Thomas Jefferson, *First Inaugural Address*, March 4, 1801

The cold war has ended. Whither the Atlantic Alliance? Will the United States continue to support it? The Alliance has been the centerpiece of U.S. foreign security policy for nearly half a century. It anchored the Pax Americana-Sovieticus, precarious armed peace among the world's great powers, popularly known as the “cold war.” It epitomized the strategy of “containment” which proclaimed intention to encircle and ultimately enfeeble the Soviet Union. It encompassed key constituents of the putative “Free World” which were ideologically opposed to radical socialism and its champion, the Soviet Union. The Atlantic Alliance has also been the United States' most expensive foreign commitment. The cost of American military assurances to Europe, including ground forces stationed in Europe and other units maintained for use in Europe, associated air and naval support, and strategic nuclear forces committed to European deterrence and defense, are estimated at more than \$125 billion per year during the 1980s, or forty percent of the U.S. defense budget (Ravenal 1984:16.).

Two generations of pundits and statesmen have celebrated the Atlantic Alliance as symbol of America's belated rejection of traditional isolationist impulses. Recent developments have transformed and dismembered the Alliance's most obvious enemies. In the words of William Hyland (1990:3): “The cold war is over. The United States and its allies have won.” Some worry that the United States will now revert to old habits, terminate the Alliance, and go home.

The Soviet conventional military threat to Western Europe and the threat of Eastern European-sponsored subversion have evaporated. Eastern European communist regimes collapsed during domestic political upheavals in 1989 and 1990. The former German Democratic Republic acceded to the western Federal Republic in October 1990 and, with Soviet acquiescence, unified Germany acceded to the North Atlantic Treaty. The Soviet Union promised to substantially reduce her Eastern European military garrisons upon signing the Conventional Forces in Europe agreement in November 1990. Subsequently she withdrew most troops from the region. The Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), counterpoise to NATO, dissolved in July 1991. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union lost its domestic political monopoly in 1990. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics itself expired in December 1991 and was succeeded by an inharmonious, mostly anti-socialist Commonwealth of Independent States.

The United States reduced military garrisons and stocks in Western Europe in 1990-1991, in part in order to prosecute military operations in the Persian Gulf. The NATO ministerial conference of May 1991 and the following November summit conference sanctioned reduced military presence in Europe. It also forecast reorganization of forces within multinational corps. Alliance members including the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, announced plans to substantially reduce overseas forces and to close bases in Germany. In December 1991, after protracted negotiations, twelve members of the European Community (EC) signed the Treaty of Maastricht. One part of that agreement provides for European Monetary Union (EMU) and for a common currency beginning in 1999; the second part reconstitutes a nine-member Western European Union (WEU) responsible for coordinating Community defense policies.

Nuclear confrontation has also diminished. The Soviet Union and the United States agreed to remove intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Europe under the Intermediate Nuclear

Forces agreement of 1987. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of July 1991 promised to dismantle significant numbers of long-range delivery vehicles and nuclear warheads. In September 1991 American strategic bomber forces ceased round-the-clock alert maintained since the 1950s, plans were announced to remove tactical nuclear weapons from American ships and foreign bases, and President George Bush proposed further joint reductions in strategic nuclear weapons. The President's January 1992 State of the Union address proposed yet additional nuclear arms reductions; Boris Yeltsin, president of the newly independent Russian Republic, responded favorably and proposed even deeper cuts in nuclear arsenals.

Seen superficially, the Atlantic Alliance appears to have outlived its purpose. The introverted mood of contemporary American opinion encourages would-be spokesmen for both the political left and right to talk about abandoning it. Vice President Dan Quayle, speaking at a conference in Munich February 9, 1992, allegedly suggested that continued U.S. commitment to NATO might depend upon European concessions within General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations (New York Times, February 12, 1992 A4:1).

Despite such indications, most American and European statesmen profess continued commitment to the Alliance and appear to mean what they say. Present circumstances actually encourage continuance, although they also invite significant modifications. The Atlantic Alliance is unlikely to be truly permanent. Few alliances are, with the possible exception of the Anglo-Portuguese declaration of "perpetual friendship" and mutual assistance of 1373 which has been periodically invoked as recently as World War II. Nevertheless, the Atlantic Alliance is more likely to persist than suddenly to die despite traditional American preference to avoid entangling alliances. The nature of international alliances and the peculiarities of the Atlantic Alliance contribute to its likely survival, even if in reduced form.

## The Nature of Alliance

Alliance is a notably elastic instrument of foreign policy. It encompasses a variety of seemingly disparate political phenomena (Dingman 1979; Fedder 1968; Friedman 1970; Modelski 1963). Alliance is most often conceived in terms of three basic images: alignment of foreign policies; formal security commitments; and international security institutions.

Alliance, broadly construed, represents alignment of foreign policies. Walt (1987:1n) defines it as "a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states." Riker (1962:211-243) employs the term interchangeably with the general notion of political coalition. Fedder (1973) defines alliance similarly as "an exclusive set of states acting in concert at a given time for the purpose of enhancing the military security of its members vis-à-vis a specified or specifiable external enemy." The practice of alliance in this broad sense is apparently as old as security collaboration among the earliest states of Mesopotamia and the Indus River Valley 4000 or more years ago.

Diplomats frequently restrict the term "alliance" to formal security commitments. Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan (1973:4) define alliance as "a formal agreement between two or more nations to collaborate on national security issues." As Liska (1968:3) suggests, alliances in this sense "formalize alignments." The practice of formal alliance is at least as ancient as the thirteenth century B.C. tablet unearthed at Bogazkoy and currently displayed at United Nations headquarters in New York which purportedly represents the text of a security agreement between Hittite and Egyptian kings. Most enduring modern alliances rely upon written treaties. Since 1920, when member states agreed to deposit major treaties with the League of Nations, most formal alliances are publicized. Recent systematic studies of international affairs generally follow Singer and Small (1968) in identifying alliances exclusively with publicized treaties.

Formal alliances are not necessarily equal. They differ in form of commitment, in *casus foederis*, and in specified duration according to distinctions in treaty language. The form of commitment may be a merely a generalized declaration of friendship and cooperation, such as contained in several post-World War II Chinese and Soviet agreements with both socialist and non-socialist states. Commitment may be limited to mutual pledges of non-aggression, such as in the German-Soviet accord of 1939. Other treaties of alliance pledge joint action in security affairs with varying degrees of specificity: from the Australia-New Zealand-United States alliance of 1950, forerunner of the Southeast Asia Treaty, which promises "consultation," to the promise of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty to regard armed attack upon one as an armed attack upon all. The *casus foederis*, or condition for invocation, also varies. The 1950 Sino-Soviet treaty included what amounted to an automatic, unlimited joint defense clause. The North Atlantic Treaty, on the other hand, restricts mutual commitment to circumstances of "armed attack in Europe or North America." Most modern treaties of alliance also specify expiration dates. The 1939 non-aggression agreement signed by Germany's "Thousand-Year Reich" with the Soviet Union, for example, was set to expire after ten years. Other treaties have shorter or longer specified lives. Most recent Soviet security agreements have been set to expire after twenty years, although some provided for temporary extensions. "Permanent" alliances lacking specified termination date are rarely crafted in the 20th Century; one of the few exceptions is the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty.

A third image associates alliance with international security institutions. The Atlantic Alliance is popularly identified with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Many casual observers used to assume that the system of alliances among the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist states was fully represented by the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Security

institutions represent a comparatively recent form of alliance and are few in number. Early progenitors include joint security arrangements between Rome and some client states of Anatolia and the Levant in the First Century a.d. (See Luttwak 1976:20-40). The first well-known security institution formally established among recognized sovereign states is the Supreme War Council formed by Great Britain, France and Italy (later joined by the United States) during World War I. The United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and China formed the United Nations in 1943 to help coordinate World War II military strategy and post-war planning. Subsequently the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established in 1951, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in 1954, the Warsaw Treaty Organization in 1955 and the short-lived Central Treaty Organization also in 1955.

International security institutions are not identical. Some develop more fully than do others. The Central Treaty Organization lacked effective coordinating mechanisms. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization built merely a central planning staff. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Treaty Organization developed unified military commands and assumed responsibility for foreign military garrisons.

Alliances, seen as a whole, are dynamic phenomena. Seemingly competitive images of alliance—foreign policy alignments, formal alliances, and security institutions—each represent particular stages in the growth of individual alliances. Generally speaking, international security institutions rest upon the foundation of formal alliances and formal alliances systematize foreign policy alignments. The Warsaw Treaty Organization, established in 1955, expanded upon bi-lateral security agreements obtained between the Soviet Union and Eastern European states during the late 1940s, which in turn rested upon the alignment of policies obtained among these states at end and shortly after World War II. Alliances grow selectively: some alignments

acquire formal alliances; even fewer alliances develop security institutions.

Alliances change in part due to external developments. Outside events may stimulate growth. States frequently justify new security treaties or security institutions as response to new or heightened foreign threats. The Warsaw Pact apparently formed in response to the accession of the Federal Republic of Germany to the North Atlantic Treaty in 1955. On the other hand, external events by themselves seldom cause the demise or decay of an alliance. States may allow a formal alliance to lapse at its designated expiration date, but they seldom abrogate treaties merely because threats disappear. The act of abrogation is often thought to send too clear a message of overt hostility. Even Castro's Cuba, target of hostile U.S. rhetoric and covert military operations during the 1960s, refrained from abrogating the Rio Treaty alliance of 1947. The Sandinista-led government of Nicaragua, similarly assaulted during the 1980s, also chose not to abrogate formal alliance with the United States.

Alliances sometimes appear to be self-perpetuating if treaties include no termination date. The Soviet Union and Persia signed non-aggression treaties in the 1920s that granted mutual rights of intervention at a time when each contended with the United Kingdom. These treaties remained technically in force long after the collapse of British power in Southwest Asia until belatedly denounced by Iran in 1958. Alliances sometimes persist because they invent new rationales. The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) of 1947 was originally conceived as a collective security arrangement for the Western Hemisphere. The Rio Pact became moribund after U.S. interest shifted toward Europe and Asia in the 1950s. It revived in the 1960s when the United States attempted to convert it to an anti-communist alliance (see Slater 1967).

Alliances usually fail or disappear for internal reasons, particularly divergence of foreign

policy orientations. The collapse of socialist power in Eastern Europe in 1989 doomed the Warsaw Treaty Organization when allies failed to find strong new bases upon which to align foreign policies. The Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance of 1950 became obsolete during the 1960s when the partners became ideological rivals although the treaty was not formally abrogated prior to its expiration in 1980.

Enduring formal alliances and security institutions depend upon foreign policy alignments that give them birth and sustain them. Coordination of foreign policies beyond what is formally required by treaty or institution often remains a vital part of an alliance as a whole. Indeed, a vibrant alliance may sometimes circumvent its own institutions. Five members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization invaded allied Czechoslovakia in 1968 despite failure of the WTO council to approve such an undertaking (Remington 1971:94-112). The operation was publicly justified by reference to the general body of allied socialist agreements and was undertaken by those members of the Warsaw Pact most closely aligned with Soviet policy.

Alliances also tend to die slowly. Sudden collapse is usually associated with major war or social revolution which destroys essential understandings. Kassem's coup in Iraq in 1958, for example, immediately rendered the Baghdad Pact (Central Treaty Organization) irrelevant. Otherwise, alliances usually decline piecemeal. A multilateral alliance may survive the defection of one of its parties as did the Allied Powers of World War I with the withdrawal of Russia at Brest-Litovsk and the Axis with the capitulation of Italy in World War II. An alliance can diminish in form and yet persist. The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty remained in force after the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization disbanded in 1977. The Soviet Union retained bilateral security agreements with many Eastern European states after end of the Warsaw Pact until its own dismemberment in December 1991. Allies may even continue to coordinate foreign

policies after a formal alliance expires. The elements of an alliances usually unravel inversely to the order in which they accumulated: security institutions are usually abolished before treaties of alliance are terminated; formal alliances usually expire, are abrogated or are generally acknowledged to be obsolete before foreign policy alignments utterly disappear.

Alliances are first and foremost political symbols. They represent predictions that states will resort to force or take other meaningful security actions on others' behalves. They concern expectations about such behavior: expectations among allies; expectations among prospective enemies; and expectations of self. The function of declared alliances is to influence future decisions. They represent promises to partners, threats to others, and commitments to self. Symbolism may contribute to the longevity of an alliance. A state may continue an alliance due in part to a sense of obligation or concern for its own reputation; it may be reluctant to break with an alliance for fear of political consequences among third parties. States hesitate to abrogate formal alliances, for example. The United States delayed terminating its 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China until 1978, long after it had become suspect, until the People's Republic of China insisted upon abrogation as a condition for establishing normal diplomatic relations.

The rhetorical dimension of an alliance—what member states say publicly about it—may be important to its durability and effectiveness. Nevertheless, as with all political symbols, the rhetoric surrounding an alliance is not necessarily equivalent to the future conduct of allies. High-minded language sometimes masks low-minded intentions and/or may function independently of actual allied behavior.

Many security institutions, some formal alliances and a few durable alignments (e.g., the "special relationship" between the United States and the United Kingdom) propound official

doctrines or ritual expressions which purport to represent single-minded aims and visions. Such liturgical formula, if repeated often enough, sometimes limit the adaptability of an alliance. They do not necessarily forecast actual policies. Their primary functions are symbolic: to present the appearance of unity for benefit of external audiences; and to reinforce the sense of shared commitment among allies.

States may ally for many reasons. Ideological considerations are not necessarily paramount. States fundamentally opposed to one another's domestic policies and institutions sometimes find it in their interest to ally, as did national socialist Germany and communist Soviet Union in 1939. States normally justify alliances primarily for reasons of state independent of domestic policy. Normal uncertainties within anarchic international society imply that one ought not to trust exclusively in presumed true friends nor fear only supposed permanent enemies. Few wise statesmen indulge the luxury of basing alliances solely upon ideological grounds. Bi-polar concentrations of politico-military power such as existed on a global scale following World War II and which encourage ideological appeals to cement alliances are historically uncommon and rarely long-lasting. The most durable alliances usually rest upon more than mere ideological affinity.

The dynamic nature of alliance implies that collaboration does not necessarily serve a single purpose. An alliance may be founded for one ostensible purpose but grow or persist for other reasons. States need not necessarily share identical objectives in order to ally; mere complementary goals often suffice. A state may ally for any of several purposes, including to enhance capabilities for defense, to enhance apparent capabilities for purposes of deterrence, to legitimize or enhance influence over allies' foreign and domestic policies, or to pre-empt alliance with another competing party. The benefits of alliance are often asymmetrical, especially

between large and small powers. (See Rothstein 1968) The Rio Treaty signed by the United States and other American republics in 1947 enhances the apparent military capabilities of small Latin republics due to the United States' pledge to support them; the reciprocal pledge by Latin republics adds little to U.S. national deterrence. At the same time, the Rio alliance helps to legitimate U.S. intervention in Latin American affairs while few Latin republics are able to affect the United States to the same extent.

The character of an alliance is represented by the full array of alignments, treaties, and institutions that it comprises. No single part is equivalent to the whole. Its purposes are seldom so simple as political slogans that may be used publicly to describe it and are rarely singular. The predictive value of an alliance and expectations among allies, prospective enemies and self are bound up with its history, not merely its momentary aspect. Moreover, the process by which elements of an alliance accumulate suggests their likely durability and the future of an alliance as a whole.

### **The Atlantic Alliance**

The Atlantic Alliance, unlike the Greek warrior goddess Pallas Athena, did not emerge fully grown and fully armored from the brow of Zeus. It grew piecemeal beginning during World War II. Elements of World War II collaborations survived the peace. A succession of formal alliances followed, culminating in the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) built upon the foundation of Treaty. NATO subsequently established a unified military command, absorbed U.S. forces stationed in Germany, rearmed the Federal Republic of Germany and accepted it into the Alliance.

As Bernard Grosser (1980:3) observes, the Atlantic Alliance has "no year zero," not

1949, the celebrated official birth date, not even 1945. Some alignments that seeded the Alliance were sown by Allied collaboration during World War II. The United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed at the Moscow Three Power Conference in September–October 1941 to coordinate war supplies. In December 1941 Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt agreed at the First Washington Conference to form a Combined Chiefs of Staff and to accept joint strategic concepts. They also drafted a Declaration of the United Nations setting forth combined war aims. The Declaration released January 1, 1942, was signed by representatives of twenty-five recognized Allied states. These included such later signatories to the North Atlantic Treaty as the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway in addition to the Soviet Union, China, and others.

Allied collaboration during World War II bequeathed two legacies. The global alliance led directly to the United Nations Organization (Claude 1964:52–54). Pursuant to the United Nations Declaration the allies established the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and convened the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture in early 1943. At the Second Moscow Conference in October 1943 the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States pledged to cooperate in assuring international security following the war. The Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 conceived the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. A succession of Allied conferences beginning at Dunbarton Oaks in August 1944 crafted a world-wide collective security organization. The Charter of the United Nations was finally signed at San Francisco in July 1945.

The second consequence of Allied collaboration was enduring alignment of Atlantic policies. The evolution of a “special relationship” between the United States and the United

Kingdom was central to this development. In August 1940, shortly after the fall of Paris, Franco-German armistice, and the onset of air warfare against Britain, Prime Minister Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt agreed to exchange over-age American naval destroyers for rights to British bases in the Western Hemisphere. The Lend-Lease program enacted in March 1941 initiated direct American military supplies to the Allies. Aid to the United Kingdom during the war amounted to several times the value of that provided the Soviet Union. Immediately following the collapse of France in June 1940 the United Kingdom also revealed important technical secrets, including radar, to the United States. Subsequently, she shared scientific findings which aided the United States to construct the first atomic bomb (Bundy 1988:23-53). In August 1941 President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill promulgated the Atlantic Charter which enunciated eight principles which later served as the basis for the Declaration of the United Nations. The BRUSA Agreement signed in May 1943 established British and U.S. collaboration in cryptanalysis and other signals intelligence activities (Bamford 1982:314-315).

Anglo-American collaboration encompassed joint military operations under unified command. Operation Torch began in North Africa in November 1942. British, Canadian and American forces invaded southern Italy in 1943 and, in company with Free French forces commanded by Charles de Gaulle, attacked occupied France in 1944. Combined operations extended into Western Germany before the Soviet Union conquered Berlin in May 1945 bringing the European war to an end.

Anglo-American security collaboration continued after the war. The UKUSA agreement of 1947 expanded BRUSA to include Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Under the Spaatz-Tedder agreement of 1946 some British military airfields were modified to support American B-29 long-range bombers capable of reaching the Soviet Union (Warner 1990). The

United States deployed B-29s to airfields in East Anglia at the height of the Berlin Crisis in 1948.

The Allied powers occupied Germany upon surrender in May 1945. In accordance with the Yalta Agreement of February, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and the United States assumed administrative responsibilities within separate zones of Berlin and of Germany as a whole. The United Kingdom and the United States agreed in January 1947 to merge their zones. France subsequently acceded to this arrangement and a provisional Federal German Republic was established at Bonn in May 1949.

Postwar economic arrangements helped further to align Atlantic foreign policies. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund, conceived at Bretton Woods in 1944, evolved as market-oriented institutions that excluded the Soviet Union and most other state-trading societies of Eastern Europe. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade signed in October 1947 served similarly. The United States provided more than \$8 billion dollars in aid to Western Europe states in 1946 and 1947, mostly loans to the United Kingdom and France (U.S. International Cooperation Administration 1960). At the same time the United States spent more than \$1 billion on relief and reconstruction in occupied Germany. Military supplies and advisors were dispatched to Greece, which contended with domestic socialist insurgency, and to Turkey, which faced Soviet territorial demands, in Spring 1947. President Truman's far-reaching March 1947 message to Congress justifying the Greek-Turkish aid bill came to be known as the Truman Doctrine.

Truman's speech represented the Greek and Turkish crises in the context of an asserted global struggle between "alternative ways of life" and urged the United States to "support free peoples resisting subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures" (Jones 1955:272).

Thereafter, such hyperbolic rhetoric became customary means to elicit public support for costly foreign commitments during the cold war, including generally the Atlantic Alliance (Crabb 1982:107-152). Within the halls of government, however, policy-makers tended to advocate aid to Greece and Turkey and other elements of the emerging strategy of containment aimed at the Soviet Union primarily in terms of traditional balance-of-power considerations rather than as part of an ideological crusade (Gaddis 1987: 48-71).

In June 1947 Secretary of State George C. Marshall publicly proposed a general program for European economic recovery. Marshall's initial proposal left open the possibility of Soviet participation but required explicit cooperation among beneficiary states. The Soviet Union and socialist states of Eastern Europe abjured. Sixteen European nations meeting in Paris in July 1947 crafted the Committee on European Economic Cooperation (CEEC), including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom (Hogan 1987:61). The CEEC led to formation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation which coordinated the distribution of Marshall Plan aid from the United States.

Formal alliances arose upon basis of these alignments during 1947-1949. Treaty-building began in Europe. In March 1947 the United Kingdom and France signed a 50-year Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance at Dunkirk. A year later, in March 1948, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom signed a Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defense at Brussels (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 1959:7-9). The Brussels Pact founded the Western Union Consultative Committee. The Consultative Committee subsequently established planning groups to help coordinate strategic materials supply and other defense matters. Such coordination contributed to eventual

formation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 and ultimately to establishment of the European Community. The Brussels Pact also became the core of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Secret negotiations began in Washington in late-March 1948 among representatives of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom concerning possible U.S. and Canadian association with the Brussels Treaty (Henderson 1982:14-20). These negotiations continued openly after the U.S. Senate passed a resolution sponsored by one-time isolationist Senator Arthur Vandenberg in June 1948. The Vandenberg Resolution recommended participation in regional collective security arrangements consistent with the purposes of the United Nations (Ireland 1981:80-100).

The Brussels group, Canada, and the United States developed a draft North Atlantic collective security treaty by December 1948. They agreed to invite other states to join, including some such as Norway being pressured by the Soviet Union to sign bi-lateral security agreements at that time. Proposals to include Greece and Turkey were temporarily put aside. Invitations were extended to Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, and Portugal. Only Ireland demurred. On April 4, 1949, representatives of twelve nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The final text differed from the December 1948 draft in two important regards: the *casus foederis* was strictly limited to direct armed attacks in Europe or North America and entirely excluding events within overseas colonial territories; and an expiration date was omitted (Henderson 1982:115-122).

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization emerged later. "Putting the 'O' in NATO"

(Ireland 1982:152) depended upon several subsequent steps. Article 9 of the North Atlantic Treaty provided for a Council to help implement the alliance. The Council first met in September 1949. It spawned numerous planning groups and coordinating committees during the next two years that eventually constituted a full-fledged bureaucracy. The United States enacted the Mutual Defense Assistance Program in October 1949 which authorized continuing military aid commitments abroad. The United States signed bi-lateral agreements with all North Atlantic allies to implement the program in January 1950. As late as June 1950, however, prior to North Korea's attack upon South Korea, military collaboration under the North Atlantic Treaty fell substantially short of integrated defense (Osgood 1962:47).

The onset of the Korean War stimulated American rearmament and also invigorated joint allied defense planning. Small defense budgets during the late 1940s severely constrained U.S. military options in Europe and elsewhere. NSC-68, a draft plan for general rearmament developed pursuant to U.S. National Security Memorandum Number 68, circulated among State and Defense Department staffs during Winter 1949-1950 (Hammond 1962). No formal action was taken on it until July 1950, after the North Korean invasion, when the Truman Administration decided to request special appropriations for general defense purposes as well as for operations in Korea. At the same time the United States pressured North Atlantic allies to increase national defense efforts. In December 1950 the North Atlantic Council approved formation of the Supreme Headquarters Atlantic Powers in Europe (SHAPE) to be commanded by an American officer. General Dwight D. Eisenhower became supreme commander and brought U.S. forces in Europe under integrated NATO command. SHAPE also absorbed the coordinating functions heretofore performed among Brussels Pact members by instrumentalities of the Western Union. The status of allied forces in Europe was formalized under the London

treaty of June 1951 and the status of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formalized under the Ottawa treaty of September 1951 (U.S. Department of State 1988:333).

NATO expanded gradually during the next few years. It acquired additional allies when Greece and Turkey signed the North Atlantic Treaty in October 1951. The newly independent Federal Republic of Germany signed in October 1954 and officially joined the alliance in May 1955. The Western European Union, reconstituted from the Western Union, oversaw details of German accession after Italy and West Germany signed the Brussels Treaty in 1954. Among other matters, the Union set national force level and armaments limits among Brussels Pact members, including Germany.

The size of NATO military forces increased during the early and mid-1950s. The United States substantially increased troop strength in Europe in 1951 and also encouraged plans for a European Defense Community (EDC) to incorporate German military contingents (Kaplan 1984:154–171). The EDC proposal collapsed in 1954 when France withdrew support. The NATO Council meeting at Lisbon in February 1952 announced goals to match much greater Soviet and East European military manpower. The Lisbon goals were never realized. Partly as substitute for EDC and Lisbon, the Federal Republic of Germany began to rearm in 1955 with American aid and eventually built a half-million-man military establishment.

The structure of the Atlantic Alliance changed little from the late-1950s until the 1990s. France withdrew military forces from NATO command in 1967 but continued to adhere to the North Atlantic Treaty and continued to cooperate generally with NATO military planning (Melandri 1990). Spain's signature to the Treaty in December 1981 added little new to NATO's political and military posture. Her main contribution, strategic air and naval bases, had been available to NATO since the 1950s. United States military presence in Europe gradually declined

from its peak in the 1960s but remained at several hundred thousand troops into the 1990s.

NATO's armaments, avowed strategies and tactics were repeatedly revised after 1955 without altering the essential character of the Alliance. The deployment of new conventional and nuclear weapons systems in the 1960s, the 70s and the 80s largely reflected a self-contained dynamic: ongoing research programs repeatedly created new weapons possibilities for both NATO and the Warsaw Pact; NATO reacted repeatedly to incentives to maintain technological advantage over Warsaw Pact forces in order to compensate for persistent numerical inferiority. Frequent modifications of NATO's strategic doctrines reflected in part the effects of new technologies and also unsolved issues of the Alliance. Persistent unresolved issues included: competing arguments for forward-defense strategy versus defense-in-depth on the Central European front; differing inclinations among allies to expend for common defense; and uncertainties about the proper role for tactical and intermediate-range nuclear weapons. A succession of proclaimed NATO strategic doctrines proved unstable in part because allies' interests differed regarding these important issues. Nevertheless, the framework of the Alliance proved durable in part because allies' individual interests and objectives remained comparatively constant.

### **Future of the Atlantic Alliance**

The United States will presumably support the Atlantic Alliance so long as she sees benefit in it. While members of the Alliance share some common purposes, American objectives have never been identical to those of most of its partners. All the allies have wanted to deter Soviet-Warsaw Pact invasion of Western Europe although they disagreed at times about the best means to do so. The allies have differed significantly about the defense functions of the Alliance

should deterrence fail. The United States has generally been less frightened by the prospect of conventional war in Europe than are many of its continental allies upon whose territory such a war would be fought. The allies have also differed about internal controls within the alliance: most Europeans have been primarily concerned to bind Germany to the West and the United States to Europe; the United States has hoped to harness Europe as a whole to its global foreign policy.

The Alliance also serves or has served multiple purposes for the United States. It used to help deter Soviet-Warsaw Pact aggression against Western Europe. This is no longer a matter of immediate concern. It helped prepare Western Europe defenses in the event of war. Western European defenses were primarily designed to resist Soviet-Warsaw Pact invasion of Western Europe; but the Iraq-Kuwait War of 1990–1991 demonstrated that these units and equipment may be usefully applied to operations in some other regions. The Alliance has helped the United States to influence security policies within Western Europe. It has reduced the chance of renewed Franco-German military rivalry, prevented unilateral German military forays to the East, helped bind the United Kingdom to the continent, and minimized incidence of European military initiatives in the Third World inconsistent with U.S. foreign policy. The Alliance was partially pre-emptive in its early stages during and immediately after World War II. It conferred little pre-emptive benefit from the 1950s through the 1980s because few Western European states could conceive allying with the socialist bloc. In the 1990s, however, after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, the Alliance may again serve the purpose of discouraging disagreeable or divisive European and Euro-Asian groupings such as competitive alliances with Russia or other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States that has succeeded the Soviet Union.

The United States has many reasons to wish the Atlantic Alliance to continue. This is not

to say that the United States will or should attempt to perpetuate NATO's present form. If the Alliance diminishes, as well it may, the most costly, most elaborate, and last-added elements are likely to be discarded first.

Some changes are definite. The United States has announced intention to remove tactical nuclear weapons from European soil. Doing so will not conspicuously alter the character of the Alliance. The U.S. has deployed short-range nuclear devices in Europe since the 1950s. They have played an important, albeit varying role in declared NATO military doctrine. Such weapons have been consistently controversial within the Alliance, however, and whether and how they would actually be used has been uncertain for many years.

American military presence is scheduled to decline. The Defense Department has forecast that nearly half of the 320,000 military personnel deployed in Europe prior to the Iraq-Kuwait War of 1990-1991 will withdraw by 1995. Whether the United States will seek to reduce this number further will depend partly upon burden-sharing within NATO and future division of labor for purposes of international peace-keeping among the reconstituted WEU, NATO, and the United Nations. Future U.S. military presence in Europe will also depend upon American domestic politics. Many Americans appear to wish the benefits of inherently costly policies without wanting to pay their costs. Maintaining and supporting overseas garrisons constitute the most expensive part of the United States' specific commitments to the Alliance. Some 1992 Congressional and Presidential candidates propose to significantly reduce defense spending in order to help deal with American domestic economic problems. If the White House changes hands in 1992, defense budget requests are likely to decline; even if President Bush returns to office, future defense appropriations are uncertain. Large cuts in overall U.S. defense budgets will encourage further reductions in costly European deployments. Reductions below some

unspecified level, however, may undermine NATO's integrated military command.

SHAPE, the integrated military command, is central to U.S. leadership within NATO. The tradition of appointing an American commander has assured the United States some direct role within the defense policies of all allied states except France, and especially influence within Germany. That tradition has been justified in great part by the magnitude of the American military presence. It is unlikely that the United States or most other allies would look favorably upon a French-led or German-led NATO command and British leadership is improbable. The abolition of SHAPE and its associated coordinating mechanisms would likely shift the burden of European defense cooperation to the European Community's Western European Union. Such an arrangement would exclude some EC members such as Ireland that do not subscribe to WEU and also members of NATO such as Norway, Turkey, the United States and Canada outside the European Community. At the least, abolition of the integrated military command would reduce NATO to the status of a consultative organization such as the Organization of American States or a defense planning institution such as was the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.

The North Atlantic Council is essential to the formal Alliance because its existence, although not its precise function, is specified within the North Atlantic Treaty. The Council's elaboration of collaborative institutions built NATO as such. It could continue on its own, as it did at first, to perform many of the defense coordinating and planning functions presently assigned to SHAPE. Alternatively, the Council could be reduced to a mere consultative body. The latter would, in essence, abandon NATO. The United States is likely to prefer continuance of NATO in order to retain some degree of direct U.S. influence over European defense policies.

It is possible to abolish NATO as we know it while preserving the Atlantic Alliance

indefinitely in reduced form, although such a step is not immediately attractive to the United States. The North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 is fundamentally a regional collective security agreement. It identifies no enemy, enunciates no strategic doctrine, and specifies no military preparations. NATO represents a later addition to the Alliance. Paradoxically, the more the European Community renders NATO irrelevant in the future by developing an independent defense institution, the more important becomes the North Atlantic Treaty as a symbol of America's ties to Europe. One peculiarity of the Treaty is the absence of an expiration date. In order to abolish the Treaty signatory states must take positive steps to abrogate it. Those that do not abrogate, and none have done so to date, remain recognized signatories. The United States is likely to assume that the mere act of abrogation would imply America's return to isolationism and so send the wrong signal not only to Europe but to the United Nations as a whole.

In the unlikely event that the United States abrogates the North Atlantic Treaty, or all European allies do, the Atlantic Alliance may still survive in primitive form. Many of the long-standing alignments among American and Western European security policies which pre-date the North Atlantic Treaty are rooted in durable geopolitical considerations, not merely in anti-Soviet fervor. The most fundamental of these, including the "special relationship" between the United States and the United Kingdom, are reinforced by shared sense of history and of democratic political values, cultural affinities, technical and intelligence collaboration between governments, and mutual financial and commercial interests. So long as the United Kingdom and the continent remain united through the European Community and associated institutions, the United States is unlikely to adopt unilateral security policies that ignore Europe or that directly oppose Europe. Even without formal alliance, the United States will presumably

be as likely to resort to force on behalf of Western Europe in the future as it was prior to World War I and World War II.

### Conclusion

The end of the cold war deprives the Atlantic Alliance of part but not all of its *raison d'etre*. Its main ideological foes are now dead, dismembered, and/or become seemingly friendly supplicants. Persistence of the Alliance and continuance of United States support for it must be for other reasons. Advocates of the Alliance need not seek a new common enemy, nor revive fears of the old, although one or the other would make continuance more certain.

The Atlantic Alliance serves several purposes for the United States beyond the dead issue of deterring aggression by the former Soviet Union and defunct Warsaw Pact. It provides mechanisms for Euro-American defense coordination generally. It justifies inter-allied involvement in one another's defense policy-making processes; particularly it legitimizes continued American influence within European security affairs. It also serves to pre-empt formation of competitive alliances involving European powers.

The Atlantic Alliance, as most alliances, comprises several layers of allied relationships accumulated over time. Old arrangements persist beneath the surface of the new, as demonstrated by the recent revival of the Western European Union originated in the Brussels Pact of 1948. At the most basic level the Atlantic Alliance represents the alignment of Euro-American security policies. It also includes a regional collective security commitment certified formally by the North Atlantic Treaty. It is partly a regional security institution, NATO. NATO presently involves an active North Atlantic Council, joint defense planning, and SHAPE, the integrated European defense command. Finally it sanctions a large U.S. military

presence in Europe. The end of the cold war will lead to changes in some parts of the Alliance. Despite its continuing benefits, the Alliance will in some respects decline.

How an alliance declines often mirrors how it grew. The last-built institutional arrangements often wither first; the original foundation of general security accords can be the most durable aspect of an alliance. The alignment of Euro-American security policies is the oldest and most stable part of the Atlantic Alliance. It largely predates the recognized onset of the cold war and is not directly brought in question by the decay of radical socialism, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, or the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The United States is unlikely soon to abrogate the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 which was originally crafted as a regional collective security agreement and can continue to serve in that capacity. The future of NATO institutions originated in the 1950s is more uncertain and depends in part upon the future direction of European integration, especially after European Monetary Union begins to take effect in 1999, as well as the mood of American domestic politics. There will be a North Atlantic Council so long as the North Atlantic Treaty remains in force; but the Council may not always be so significant as it is now. NATO may eventually abandon SHAPE and may even disappear as a recognizable institution, but the United States will presumably seek to prolong its life. The United States is likely to reduce military personnel stationed in Europe, probably even further than previously announced for 1995. Such troop reductions may help to unravel NATO more rapidly than the United States may wish.

One cannot know precisely how long the United States will help the Atlantic Alliance to survive. Few alliances are truly permanent. One may predict that the Alliance will diminish gradually; one cannot so easily predict how rapidly it may decline. There is also a chance that major international war or domestic revolution could destroy the Alliance suddenly.

Nevertheless, the United States is unlikely to return voluntarily to Washington's and Jefferson's traditional advice. America is so deeply entangled in the Atlantic Alliance that it cannot quickly or easily free itself entirely. It ought not, and probably will not attempt to do so. One may reasonably anticipate that the United States will help to perpetuate a meaningful form of the Atlantic Alliance into the 21st Century.

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