Transatlantic Relations in a Post-Bush Era—Cooperation or Conflict?

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Abstract: The transatlantic alliance was strengthened by the experiences from World War II and the Cold War. The fifty-year success story—triggered by the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the institutionalization of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—has, however, recently come under scrutiny through eight years of Bush-era politics. Europe and the U.S. have faced a difficult task in improving the transatlantic alliance, which has led to a weakened alliance in international politics. This article identifies five clearly defined contemporary challenges. The near future will show whether the blame for the perceived, eroding transatlantic alliance can be put squarely on the shoulders of the Bush administration, or if Europe and the U.S. have simply outgrown each other. While Obama's proclaimed faith in a restored transatlantic alliance and Europe's positive response to the new Presidency suggest that the Bush era was a temporary deviation from the historic path of mutually beneficial transatlantic relations, political scientists disagree on this point and President Obama's stance on foreign policy questions has yet to crystallize. Nonetheless, the future Europe-U.S. relations will likely be based on cooperation rather than on conflict.

Keywords: Transatlantic relations—President Obama—U.S. foreign policy—the European Union—security

Introduction

Barack Obama, the newly elected President of the United States, faces expectations of recreating the American Dream nationally and rebuilding America's reputation abroad. In the Presidential election of 2008, it became readily apparent that former President George Bush was unpopular, both

among Americans and Europeans. This was highlighted by domestic polls in the U.S. showing that Americans had limited faith in President Bush and his ability to lead the country in a positive direction.[1] The growing domestic concerns with the Bush administration's policies also manifested themselves in a European context, with growing tensions between major European leaders and President Bush as well as through demonstrations in major European cities against the implementation of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

It was equally apparent that President Obama would be greeted with expectations of restoring the transatlantic relations between the U.S. and Europe. Less obvious are the differing ways the U.S. and Europe define those relations—differences that will pose challenges to both sides. This article seeks to explore the ongoing debate on transatlantic relations, first by identifying two differing and sometimes conflicting perspectives—one based on transatlantic conflict, the other on cooperation—and then by outlining five larger challenges within these relations that are crucial to the future of the transatlantic relations. The fundamental question is whether those relations can realistically improve with the election of President Obama or whether the growing tensions under the Bush administration illustrated fundamental differences within the transatlantic relationship. Although political scientists disagree on this point and President Obama's stance in foreign policy questions has yet to crystallize, Obama's faith in a restored transatlantic alliance and Europe's response to the new Presidency suggest that the Bush era was a temporary distraction from the fostering of a long-standing and developing alliance.

Foreign Policy Determinants
The study of foreign policy, established in the World War II era, belongs in the larger area of international relations ("IR").[2] Foreign policy analysis has traditionally focused on governmental institutions' performances in formulating and implementing foreign policy issues. The assumption within IR theory has been that foreign policy analysis is more important than other policy areas. Foreign policy analysis concerns national interest rather than

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1 Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg Poll. December 6-8, 2008.
2 Carlsnaes, Walter 2005. "Foreign Policy." In Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse & Beth A. Simmons (eds.) *Handbook of International Relations*. London, Thousand Oaks & New Dehli: SAGE Publications.

special interest, and foreign policy making is about protecting fundamental values of each state. "This has given foreign policy a very powerful image in the study of International Relations."[3]

Foreign policies may be defined as "... those actions which, expressed in the form of explicitly stated goals, commitments and/or directives, and pursued by governmental representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are directed toward objectives, conditions and actors — both governmental and non-governmental — which they want to affect and which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy."[4] A core concern has been how to explain foreign policy making. The dominating approach to foreign policy analysis has focused on the nature of the international system and its impact on foreign policy making. Although the realists are not a homogenous group of researchers (read classical, neo-, structural, offensive, defensive realism), they have certain commonalities. First, it has been argued that foreign policy making appears in an anarchic setting, and, secondly, that each state strives for power (as capabilities) to pursue security. Third and finally, states are the core actors to analyze and should be treated as unitary actors that face international challenges.[5] However, research on foreign policy making has also encompassed the state level. This approach questions the assumption that international factors determine foreign policy making. The approach also stresses that the single state should not be treated as a 'black box.' Research on domestic factors has rather focused on political leaders and/or the agencies and branches that structure foreign policy making. Foreign policy making, it is argued, is a result of state leaders' and branches' interpretations of international relations.[6] The cognitive and psychological approaches have primarily analyzed the way individual decision-makers may process important information based on their underlying beliefs, per-

3   Webber, Mark & Michael Smith 2002: 11. *Foreign Policy in a Transformed World*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

4   Carlsnaes, Walter 2005: 335. "Foreign Policy." In Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse & Beth A. Simmons (eds.) *Handbook of International Relations*. London, Thousand Oaks & New Dehli: SAGE Publications.

5   For detailed comparison, see Morgenthau, Hans 1967. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf; Aron, Raymond 1966. *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*. Garden City: Doubleday; Gilpin, Robert 1981. *War and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

6   Smith, Steve, Amelia Hadfield & Tim Dunne 2008. *Foreign Policy — Theories, Actors and Cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

sonality traits, motivations, ideological belongings, and attitudes.[7] However, leaders and groups operate within a domestic, institutional setting that frames the decision-making process with constraints and opportunities. The foreign policy process may therefore be seen as a process influenced by individual and group interests within the state framework of political and bureaucratic branches and their standard operating procedures.[8]

A New U.S. Presidential Administration

The type of leader elected and his or her cabinet will have an impact on foreign policy making and international relations. The U.S. Presidential election of November, 2008, was therefore of great interest in foreign policy analysis. The Presidential campaign was greatly influenced by the notion of two different types of leaders, with different perceptions on the nature of international relations and approaches to U.S. foreign policy making.

A few weeks prior to the November 4 election, opinion polls consistently showed how Democratic candidate Obama was favored over Republican candidate John McCain. Obama was perceived as being able to deliver a clear plan to solve the nation's problems and to bring the kind of change the country needed.[9] There were several factors behind Obama's successful candidacy. First and foremost, Obama's call for change was perceived with more urgency against the backdrop of the nation's deepening financial crisis. Obama was the first candidate to present a financial plan to combat rising unemployment, loss of healthcare, and housing foreclosures.[10] McCain, never viewed as a skilled economist even among his own ranks, was portrayed as just another Republican who would lead the economy down the same path as his predecessor. President Bush's eight years in charge were marked by national debts and deficits, especially compared to the

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7   Axelrod, Robert (ed.) 1976. *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites.* Princeton: Princeton University Press; Jervis, Robert 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics.* Princeton: Princeton University Press; Larson, Deborah W. 1997. *Anatomy of Mistrust; U.S.-Soviet Relations during the Cold War.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

8   Hermann, Margaret G. 1993. "Leaders and Foreign Policy Decision-Making." In Dan Caldwell & Tomothy McKeown (eds.) *Diplomacy, Force, and Leadership: Essays in Honor of Alexander George.* Boulder: Westview; Janis, Irving J. 1982. *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

9   CNN/Opinion research Corporation poll. October 17-19, 2008.

10 See Newsweek Poll conducted by Princeton Survey research Associates International. October 22-23, 2008. Similar figures are presented by ABC News/Washington Post Poll. October 8-11, 2008.

healthy economy and budget surplus left by the nation's previous President, Democrat Bill Clinton.[11] The American voter, on its part, viewed a McCain administration as an extension of the Bush era.[12] Secondly, Obama argued that American society had become increasingly callous and cold under the previous administration. His proposed cure had two main prongs: All Americans should have the right to education and the right to free health-care. On the question of whether Obama or McCain would do a better job handling health care issues, 58% to 30% answered Obama.[13] A third factor in Obama's victory was his ability to dominate McCain in the media. The fierce and protracted Democratic primaries against then-Senator Clinton had forced Obama to fine-tune his arguments and analyze the mood of the electorate. The drawn-out process also gave Obama increased media expo-sure. Obama's message of change created a massive grassroots movement that reached new voters in new geographical areas. The presidential cam-paign transformed the Illinois Senator to a political super-star; crowds in excess of 100,000 often flocked to hear his campaign trail speeches.

Obama's Foreign Policy Promises

However, while the presidential campaign was defined by national issues such as the economy, Obama succeeded in presenting a foreign policy framework that appealed to many Americans. Obama's vocal opposition to the Iraq War and his promise to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq within sixteen months were popular among war-weary voters.[14] When debating the issue of the Iraq War, Obama repeatedly focused on the strategic mis-take and logical anomaly of conducting a war in Iraq when all evidence suggested that the roots of terrorism against the U.S. were dug into the hills of Afghanistan.[15] Obama's message was supported by the bipartisan report produced by The Iraq Study Group (ISG), which was organized on March 15, 2006, at Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. The group consisted

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11 USA Today/Gallup Poll. October 10-12, 2008; Newsweek Poll conducted by Princeton Survey Research
    Associates International. October 8-9, 2008.
12 USA Today/Gallup Poll. October 10-12, 2008.
13 Newsweek poll conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates international. October 22-23, 2008.
    See also CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll. October 17-19, 2008 or ABC News/Washington Post
    Poll. October 8-11, 2008.
14 CBS News/New York Times Poll. October 25-29, 2008.
15 CNN Presidential debate, September 26, 2008, University of Mississippi.

of members of the U.S. Congress and was created to assess the situation in Iraq since the summer of 2005; its final report was issued on December 6, 2006. The report stressed that "[o]ur most important recommendations call for new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region, and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq that will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly."[16]

A promise to end the unpopular Iraq War came as a relief to many Americans, who for five years had witnessed a steady rise in American casualties (more than 4,200 dead by the time of the election).[17] The national financial crisis also brought domestic social and economic issues to the forefront. Since its inception in 2003, the Iraq War has averaged $10 billion per month, resulting in a cumulatively mind-boggling expense to the same taxpayers who were now caught in the eye of the perfect financial storm.[18]

Obama also argued that the U.S. would treat future foreign crises with increased patience by not abandoning diplomacy until all peaceful measures had been explored and had failed. War would be the last solution, he and Secretary of State Clinton asserted—another lesson from Iraq. Obama, however, has stressed the potential need of using American troops for purposes of humanitarian intervention. Obama argued in favor of a continued strong commitment to freedom, democracy, and human rights as being part of a great American history. As stated in the acceptance speech in Grant Park, Chicago, on election eve:

> And to all those watching tonight from beyond our shores, from parliaments and palaces, to those who are huddled around radios in the forgotten corners of the world, our stories are singular, but our destiny is shared, and a new dawn of American leadership is at hand. To those—to those who would tear the world down: We will defeat you. To those who seek peace and security: We support you. And to all those who have wondered if America's beacon still burns as bright: Tonight we proved once more that the true strength of our nation comes not from the might of our arms or the scale of our wealth, but from the enduring power of our ideals: democracy, liberty, opportunity and unyielding hope.[19]

16 Baker, James A. & Lee H. Hamilton (co-chairs) 2006. The Iraq Study Group Report. See http://www.usip. org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html (April 27, 2009).

17 See http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_casualties.htm (April 27, 2009).

18 Barack Obama rally in Germantown, Philadelphia, October 2008.

19 See http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/11/04/obama.transcript/ (April 27, 2009).

Transatlantic Relations?

Obama's approach in foreign policies clearly marked an American ambition to promote American norms and values abroad. But to do so, Obama argued for improved relations with former allies in Europe. The importance of repairing America's reputation abroad and re-building coalitions with former allies were main themes in candidate Obama's presidential campaign. Obama's charisma also translated into Europe; his speech in Berlin in the summer of 2008, "A World That Stands as One," attracted over 200,000 people.[20] It raised the question of what challenges Obama's United States will face in its transatlantic relations with Europe. While the relationship has been debated, especially since the end of the Cold War, the debate intensified during the Bush Presidency from 2000 to 2008. Over those eight years, the U.S. and Europe have butted heads on security issues (regarding Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea), environmental issues including global warming (the Kyoto Treaty), international trade within the World Trade Organization (WTO), and human rights protection (Guantanamo Bay).[21] As a consequence, there has been a growing bulk of studies on transatlantic relations.[22] Although these studies have naturally different focuses based on addressing different aspects of security as well as different actors within the transatlantic relations, two broad perspectives on the transatlantic relationship on security emerge—one based on conflict, the other on cooperation. As studies on the transatlantic relationship more or less agree that the Bush era caused a deeper rift between the U.S. and Europe, the two perspectives represent scholarly views on how deep this rift may be. The cooperation perspective argues that the Bush factor temporarily challenged the alliance, which will gradually improve as the memory of the outgoing U.S. administration fades. The conflict perspective points out that the Bush factor was not the sole cause of frustrating transatlantic relations.

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20 http://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post/obamaroadblog/gGxyd4 (April 27, 2009).

21 Biscop, Sven & Johan Lembke (eds.). 2008. *EU Enlargement and the transatlantic alliance: a security relationship in flux*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.; Schmidt, Peter (ed.) 2008. *A hybrid relationship: transatlantic security cooperation beyond NATO*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

22 Dunn, David Hastings 2009. "Assessing the Debate, Assessing the Damage: Transatlantic Relations after Bush," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11, 4-24.

The Consensus Perspective

The solid historical alliance between Europe and the U.S. as a Western collective project constitutes the basis for the consensus perspective.[23] So far, the project has not been articulated or extensively coordinated, but it has contained certain implicit agreements on how to organize politics into a liberal order of democracy and market economy. From this perspective, the transatlantic alliance was envisioned in Wilson's 14 points and began with the collective security in the League of Nations. It was developed with the defeat of Nazism and Fascism in the 1940s and firmly institutionalized with the ideas of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill who in the Atlantic Charter (1941) advocated "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live."[24] The Truman Doctrine further presented democratic principles as a strategy against Communist expansion. These principles were institutionalized in the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with the U.S. and Western European states committing to "safeguard the freedom founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law."[25] The Marshall Plan provided U.S. economic aid to Western European states, which further tied those states to the transatlantic ally. The emerging threat of Communism in the Cold War added glue to the transatlantic alliance.

The end of the Cold War and the vanishing Communist threat initially posed a challenge to the necessity and survival of the alliance, but the allies gradually recognized that their belief in the superiority of the alliance's embedded norms and values would apply to future challenges in a globalized era. The new era gave rise to a more institutionalized and constructive discussion on how to utilize and spread Western norms and values, and led to the expansion of the EU and NATO. Both organizations saw not only a growing number of member-states, but also an expanded mandate to operate within and beyond European borders. Therefore, the post-Cold War era did not mean an end to the transat-

23 Smith, Karen Elisabeth 2003. *European Union Policy in a Changing World*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Jones, Erik. "Debating the transatlantic relationship: rhetoric and reality," *International Affairs*. 2004, 80: 4, 595-612.

24 Whitehead, Laurence 1986: 5. "International Aspects of Democratization," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter & Laurence Whitehead (eds.). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

25 Whitehead, Laurence 1986: 5. "International Aspects of Democratization," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter & Laurence Whitehead (eds.). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

lantic relationship, but forced it to redefine itself to face new challenges.[26] The post-Cold War order brought with it the break-up of states, the proliferation of arms, the reorganization of international criminality, and the escalation of religious and ethnic conflicts. These challenges required strengthened transatlantic political and economic ties,[27] as well as cultural ties.[28]

Despite major changes in the political landscape from the late 1980s, the transatlantic alliance has remained intact. In fact, the 1990s was a golden decade for the alliance—the transatlantic declaration of 1990 and the New Transatlantic Agenda of 1995 were two pivotal points to illustrate this. New policies on economic liberalization and democracy, and the annual U.S.-EU summit, were also showing the rest of the world that the transatlantic alliance remained active as more and more global issues surfaced on both sides of the Atlantic. Today, the two sides are working together in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Lebanon, and they agree on diplomatic talks with Iran and Syria as well as on the Palestine-Israeli conflict. The shared notion of growing independence between the two will most likely lead to a strengthened alliance in the 21st century.[29] Regarding the last years of tension in the transatlantic relationships, the opinions among most Europeans have been that the Bush administration is the one to be blamed and not the U.S. as a state.[30]

The Conflict Perspective

Conversely, the conflict perspective foresees a growing transatlantic rift.[31] This perspective maintains that there are deep differences between the U.S. and Europe which were previously concealed by the shadow of the Cold War and the Iron Curtain. The collapse of the common Communist enemy gave rise to disagreements—without a common enemy, there was no reason

26 Duke, Simon 2004. "Foreword: Time for a New Transatlantic Bargain?" in Charlotte Wallin & Daniel Silander (eds.). *Democracy and Culture in the Transatlantic World*. Växjö: Växjö University Press.

27 Fukuyama, Francis 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Penguin.

28 Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York, Simon & Schuster.

29 Peterson, John & Rebecca Steffenson 2008. "Transatlantic Institutions: Can Partnership be Engineered," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11: 25-45.

30 Pew Global Attitudes Project 2003. *Views of a Changing World June 2003*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.

31 Granieri, Ronald J. 2006. "Allies and Other Strangers: European Integration and the American 'Empire by Invitation'" in *Orbis* 50:4, 691-707; Danchev Alex 2005. "How Strong are Shared Values in the Transatlantic Relationship?" *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 7:3, 429-436.

left for cooperation until a new enemy could be identified.[32] The transatlantic alliance during the Cold War was an unhappy marriage, meaning that Europe and the U.S. were in a relationship, but without any deeper commitment or loyalty.[33] Before World War II, the U.S. and Europe had little in common. In fact, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, in the late 18th century, was the result of a struggle to get away from Europe and the European heritage. Politically and culturally the U.S. developed in reaction to the other side of the Atlantic and saw its freedom and prosperity challenged by European forces. World War II symbolized, from a U.S. perspective, the ongoing threats Europe imposed on the U.S., either directly or as a result of the U.S. having to strengthen its military to guard against foreign threats.[34] However, the U.S. needed Western Europe as a trading partner and as a buffet zone against Communism, while Europe was in need of U.S. protection and economic aid.[35] In a time of a rising Cold War, potential differences in economic, political, and cultural interests were set aside due to the geopolitical battle between the two superpowers.

The end of the Cold War changed the geopolitical situation at its core. It led to the collapse of the main enemy in the Soviet Union and paved way for the failed states syndrome in Eastern Europe, which included the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The Balkan crisis of the early 1990s showed the weaknesses of Europe in being unable to deal with European crises without U.S. involvement. This lack of capacity caused the U.S. administration, and foremost the Bush administration, to act unilaterally based on the perception of Europe as a weak partner and no longer an important geostrategic player.[36] The differences in power between Europe and the U.S. also led to differences in perceptions of security challenges. This dilemma was illustrated by the Iraq War. The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 was supported by only six out of the fifteen EU member-states then

32 Lundestad, Geir 2005. *East, West, North, South—Major Developments in International Relations Since 1945*. London, Thousand Oaks & New Dehli: SAGE Publications; Huntington, Samuel P. 1997. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster Ltd.

33 Howard, Michael. 1999. "NATO at fifty: An unhappy successful marriage: Security means knowing what to expect," *Foreign Affairs* 78:3, 151-160.

34 Kagan, Robert 2003. *Of Paradise and Power—America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Random House.

35 Murphy, Alexander B. 2006. "The Changing Face of US-Europe Relations: Geopolitical Causes and Possible Consequences," *GeoJournal* 66:285-293.

36 Murphy, Alexander B. 2006. "The Changing Face of US-Europe Relations: Geopolitical Causes and Possible Consequences," *GeoJournal* 66:285-293.

in existence, triggering a debate on the weakened transatlantic relationship. First, the invasion divided the EU, as major European powers such as France and Germany were against the war, while Poland, Italy, and Spain remained the closest U.S. allies (although Spain eventually withdrew their troops).[37] Second, the invasion also divided the international community within the United Nations, leaving the UN Security Council in internal conflict. Permanent members France, the U.S., and the United Kingdom had different stands on how to invade and why, which with France's ability to veto led to a paralyzed Security Council.[38] The reason for these diverging perceptions on Iraq has historical roots. The post-World War II era consisted of a European military dependency on the U.S. The Europeans learned to accept that their security was determined by the U.S. nuclear umbrella within NATO. This strategic dependency was so accepted that the U.S. military presence in European politics led to an unwillingness among Europeans to spend tax money on defence. The new vision among Europeans was to build a constitutional order of democracies and market economies in which military capability was not prioritized or even desired.[39] As argued by Kagan: "It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world. On all-important questions of power—the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power—American and European perspectives are diverging. … They agree on little and understand one another less and less. And this state of affairs is not transitory—the product of one American election or one catastrophic event. The reasons for the transatlantic divide are deep, long in development, and likely to endure."[40]

The two perspectives offer complementary understandings of the transatlantic relationships over time. The categorization of the transatlantic relations into two perspectives is a simplification of the many aspects of relations involved in the research on transatlantic relations and must be read as

37 Murphy, Alexander B. 2006. "The Changing Face of US-Europe Relations: Geopolitical Causes and Possible Consequences," *GeoJournal* 66:285-293.

38 Kavacs, Charles 2003. "US-European Relations from the Twentieth to the Twenty-first Century," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 8:4, 435-456; Nechold, Hansdspeter 2003. "Transatlantic Turbulences: Rift or Ripples?", *European Foreign Affairs Review* 8:4, 457-469.

39 Kagan, Robert 2003. *Of Paradise and Power—America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

40 Kagan, Robert 2003:3-4. *Of Paradise and Power—America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

explanatory generalizations. However, although the perspectives presented herein host a large number of scholars with different views, those views are similar when it comes to the nature of the transatlantic relations and provide the reader with a better understanding of the debate on transatlantic relations in a context of the new U.S. president. However, most scholars have come to adhere to the consensus perspective, acknowledging a long-term transatlantic alliance. It has been argued that the Bush administration became a major challenge to the alliance and that a new U.S. president will energize the alliance to meet new international challenges.

Contemporary Challenges

The 2008 presidential election was closely monitored by European leaders. There are today high hopes in Europe (and in the U.S.) that President Obama is the leader to improve the transatlantic alliance. However, there are obstacles to overcome—challenges that concern different aspects of security relations and that have to be taken into consideration by the Obama administration to further improve the transatlantic relations. This article identifies the five major challenges as European Leadership, the notion of Justified Intervention, the War on Terrorism, Democracy Promotion, and the use of Hard vs. Soft Power.

European Leadership

The first foreign policy challenge is caused by Europe's divided leadership, a fact that became uncomfortably obvious to all parties during the divisive build-up to the Iraq War. Over thirty years ago, then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger rhetorically asked for the phone number to Europe. Even today, when most European states are part of an EU with open borders and a partly centralized governance, Europe does not have a natural counterpart to an American President or Secretary of State. While the EU is a platform for a European voice, or at least for the Union's member-states, a proposal in the Lisbon Treaty to create an EU Secretary of State was never ratified. If President Obama wants direct discussions with the EU, he has several calls to make: to the twenty-seven secretaries of state of EU's member-states, the rotating chairman of the Council of Ministries, the Chairman of the Commission General Directorate of External Relations, and the EU High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Issues. For Europe

and the U.S. to succeed in overcoming differences and re-establishing a strong alliance, the means of direct communications must improve—within Europe as well as between the EU and the U.S.

Justified Intervention

A second foreign policy challenge is the differing views on what justifies, or even compels, intervention by international forces in an independent state. The issue has surfaced in the crises in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, Iraq, Rwanda, and Somalia. A nation's military intervention in another state is generally considered an act of war. But the intervention of a coalition of multilateral nations has at times been justified by the international community as a necessary and justifiable defense of higher, universal values. Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and the EU have grappled with the issue of whether and when to militarily intervene in a foreign conflict. Here, the U.S. and the EU differ dramatically. Many European states, including the Scandinavian states, have a strong faith in the role of the United Nations. This is because the UN is a substitute for the power that many of the European states lack, as small states with limited military budgets. This school of thought argues that only the UN Security Council can sanction intervention, an argument that is largely rejected in the U.S. The Europeans are more determined to find multilateral solutions to global challenges. They see the Americans as, at times, misusing their superior military power by acting unilaterally in global crises. The negative opinions within the U.S. Congress during the Bush administration to multilateral talks on the Kyoto Protocol, the Land Mines Treaty, the International Criminal Court, and the UN talks on Iraq, North Korea, and Iran made many European state leaders view U.S. unilateralism as arrogance.[41]

From an American foreign-policy perspective, intervention is primarily guided by national security interests. If American security interests are jeopardized, be it directly or indirectly, military intervention may be justified. A mandate from the UN Security Council would be helpful and appreciated, but intervention can also be based solely on alliances and the consent of other states than those represented by the Council. The U.S. argument has been that the Council is represented by undemocratic states—Russia and

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41 Nye, Joseph S. 2004: 64-67. *Soft Power—The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

China—that have a history of pursuing national security interests which often conflict with those of the U.S. Seeking a UN mandate is therefore not always strategically possible or desired.[42]

The War on Terrorism

A third challenge is the differing views on terrorism. Europeans were horrified by the attacks on September 11, 2001 against the U.S. and were quick to come to the Americans' defense. The headline of French daily Le Monde read: "We are all Americans now."[43] Gerhard Schroeder, then-Chancellor of Germany, expressed his unlimited solidarity with the U.S., at the same time that NATO declared that the terrorist attack was a violation of Article 5, which states that an attack against one NATO member is an attack on every member.[44] Eight years later, Europe is collectively relieved to see a change of U.S. administrations. President Bush's war on terrorism created tensions between the European states that supported the Iraq war and those who refused to send troops. The U.S. invasion of Iraq also raised concerns over America's judgment and/or true intentions. If the U.S., contrary to evidence, found a link between Iraq and the terror of September 11, Europeans feared that the war on terrorism could be used to justify just about any attack, thereby creating an endless string of unilateral interventions. The wars could be conducted against dissident states, political groups seeking recognition or self-governance, or even against American or European citizens with unusual religious beliefs or surnames. Many Europeans also questioned the wisdom of conducting a global war on terrorism. Europe has fought terrorism nationally for decades, without feeling a need to declare a global war. Terrorism must be combated, it was agreed, but many EU member-states could not envision that terrorism could threaten the Western world order and were therefore not willing to escalate the war globally.[45] As stated by Rees Wyn, "Differing transatlantic threat perceptions have been

42 Murphy, Alexander B. 2006. "The Changing Face of US-Europe Relations: Geopolitical Causes and Possible Consequences," *GeoJournal* 66:285-293.

43 In Colombani, J-M. (2001). "We Are all Americans." *Le Monde*, September 12, 2001.

44 Dunn, Hastings David 2009. "Assessing the Debate, Assessing the Damage: Transatlantic Relations after Bush," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 11: 4-24.

45 Wyn, Rees 2008. "Securing the Homelands: Transatlantic Co-operation after Bush," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11, 108-121; Shapiro J. & D. Byman 2006. "Bridging the transatlantic counterterrorism gap," *The Washington Quarterly*, 29:4, 33-50.

moulded by historical experiences. While European governments have experienced mainly nationalist terrorist movements, the US has suffered from terrorism as a foreign policy phenomenon."[46]

Democracy Promotion

A fourth foreign policy challenge is the differing views on how democracy should be promoted internationally. There is long-term transatlantic consensus on the many benefits that come with democratization. The transatlantic alliance grew out of the danger of nondemocratic regimes. The Western notion of democracy as a universal norm is based on the democratic peace theory which stresses that democracies are peace-prone in their relations toward other democracies. The primary benefit is the individual freedom that democracy provides. A second benefit concerns security. Some scholars argue that democratic governance provides states with domestic checks and balances that make war more difficult to launch.[47] The third benefit is economically motivated: by providing democracy abroad, one may get access to new markets and potential economic partners.[48]

The U.S. and Europe have been allies in promoting democracy. In 2005, President Bush argued for democracy promotion as a prioritized goal during his second term. The EU Commission president, Jose Manuel Barroso, welcomed this American priority by stressing, at his visit to the White House in October, 2005, that both sides "share the idea that our strategic partnership should serve to promote democracy ..."[49] However, questions remain on how to promote this norm.[50] After all, the post-Cold War order did not become an order of democratic peace. Although many old threats have disappeared, new perceived threats such as civil wars, secession, religious tensions, and terrorism pose new challenges to the Western liberal order, fuelling the transatlantic debate on democracy promotion. There are

46 Wyn, Rees 2008. "Securing the Homelands: Transatlantic Co-operation after Bush," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11, 108-121.

47 Diamond, Larry. "Promoting Democracy", *Foreign Policy* 92:87, 27-28.

48 Herring, Eric 1994. "International security and democratisation in Eastern Europe," in Geoffrey Pridham, Eric Herring & George Sanford (eds.), *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratization in Eastern Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

49 In Kopstein, Jeffrey 2006. "The Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion," *Washington Quarterly*, 29:2, 85-98.

50 McFaul, Michael 2004. "Democracy Promotion as a World Value," *Washington Quarterly*, 28:1, 147-148.

a few obvious differences between the two in their approach to democracy promotion. First, Europe has criticized the U.S. for using democracy-promotion as camouflage for the furtherance of unilateral security and economic interests. Other criticism targets the U.S. use of military force to liberate people, the criticism focusing on the dubious strategic effectiveness of forcing states into becoming democracies and the moral justification of using military or economic force to demand democratic compliance. Second, more specific disagreements have concerned what type of democracy should be promoted—presidential or parliamentary systems, federal or unitary states—and the duration of the external commitment. Traditionally, the U.S. has focused on strong, pro-Western leadership, while the EU has been concerned over the sustainability of democracy.[51] The two approaches could be complementary, but in practice have proved problematic when the U.S. and the EU have been simultaneously involved in, for example, Kosovo, Turkey, Serbia, and Ukraine. Third, there are also differences in how to channel democracy into a domestic context. The U.S. approach has been bottom-up, focusing on the civil society as the prodemocratic forces in authoritarian states. This strategy has been based on the U.S. notion that people long for freedom and if only international assistance to the civil society comes through, people on the streets will demand a new leadership based on free and fair elections. The European side, on the other hand, has other experiences from the rejection of Communism in Eastern Europe. The EU strategy in this region was democratic aid from top down, targeting the elites in the Communist systems to change the political views or to support the already existing pro-Western opposing elites to the Communist regimes.[52] Overall, there seems to be a long-term consensus over the importance of democracy promotion; the conflict concerns how to promote democracy and when.

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51 Kopstein, Jeffrey 2006. "The Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion," *Washington Quarterly* 29:2, 85-99; Pridham, Geoffrey 2007. "Change and Continuity in the European Union's Political Conditionality: Aims, Approach and Priorities," *Democratization* 14:3, 446-471; McFaul, Michael 2004. "Democracy Promotion as a World Value," *Washington Quarterly* 28.:1, 157-159.

52 Kopstein, Jeffrey 2006. "The Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion," *The Washington Quarterly*, 29:2, 85-98.

Hard vs. Soft Power

A fifth foreign policy challenge is the difference in how the U.S. and Europe view the current world order. Europe tends to view the world in a more positive and peaceful light than the U.S., which is partly based on Europe's successful quest to develop a union that has transformed traditional enemy states into staunch allies—a goal that took nearly half a century to fulfil. The creation of the borderless EU has fostered a faith in institutionalized coexistence and cooperation—a democratic and peaceful world order. From an American perspective, the European order is attractive but idealistic in a time of globalization and external threats to nation states from cross-border terrorism and financial criminality. The European order is viewed as the result of a supportive American hegemony that for decades protected Europe from external threats that otherwise would have destroyed the European paradise. American political scientist Robert Kagan has theorized that these differing perspectives concerning the world order are directly related to each actor's foreign relations capacity. A powerful nation, Kagan reasons, is more willing and able to use its power and more likely to legitimize the use of it. If you have military capabilities, you tend to develop threat images that make military use necessary.[53] As argued, "[w]hen you have a hammer, all problems start to look like nails. ...When you don't have a hammer, you don't want anything to look like a nail."[54]

The U.S. is a "hard and soft power."[55] However, from a European perspective, the U.S. has foremost played the role as the hard power in international relations. The declarations on "Rogue states" and "the Axis of Evils" under the Bush administration were perceived by Europeans as a symbol of more military power and less diplomacy. Many Europeans were convinced that ongoing negotiations with Iraq would have led to fruitful discussions. However, there are reasons for EU's stand on Iraq. Europe is comparatively speaking a military midget, with a military capacity stifled by two world wars. The resulting military dependence on the U.S. during the Cold War caused the European states to further limit their military spending. Having marginalized its military capacity, Europe developed into

53 Kagan, Robert 2003. *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Random House.

54 Kagan, Robert 2003:27-28. *Of Paradise and Power—America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

55 Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power—the Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

a soft power that utilized other methods (competitive or complementary) to assert their influence in world politics.[56] Today, the EU is a normative, civilian, soft power due to its constitutional nature of institutions, norms, and values.[57] As a soft power, the EU primarily conducts its foreign policy via trade, foreign aid, humanitarian efforts, and the promotion of democracy.[58] The development of the EU into a soft power, in contrast with the U.S. approach, has intensified the debate on transatlantic relations and on how the U.S. and Europe can shape their future in which both hard and soft power will be needed.

Conclusion

Europe and the U.S. face a difficult task in improving the transatlantic alliance. Five clearly defined challenges must be overcome. The fifty-year success story that was triggered by the Marshall plan, the Truman Doctrine, and the institutionalization of a military alliance has been put on hold by eight years of Bush-era politics. The near future will show whether the blame for the eroding transatlantic relations can be put squarely on the shoulders of the Bush administration, or if Europe and the U.S. have simply outgrown each other. Political scientists disagree on this point. President Obama's stance on foreign policy questions has yet to crystallize, but signs indicate that Obama himself has faith in a restored transatlantic alliance. During the presidential campaign, Obama repeatedly reminded the electorate that the Bush administration had misled the American people into an ill-conceived war in Iraq, by falsely claiming that Iraq was the root of international terrorism and nuclear proliferation. The Iraq War resulted in conflicts with several European states that voiced their dismay both on the political stage and through numerous demonstrations. The election of Obama was wanted among most Europeans.

It is therefore likely that the transatlantic relations will gradually improve as the memory of the outgoing administration fades and the new administration conducts its new foreign policies. The "Bush factor" was most likely the sole cause of frustrating transatlantic relations. This could be seen by the way Obama has come to approach many of the identified challenges

56 Nye, Joseph S. Jr. 2004: x. *Soft Power—The Means to Success in World Politics.* New York: Public Affairs.
57 Maull, Hanns W. 2005. "Europe and the new balance of global order," *International Affairs* 81:4, 775-799.
58 Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power—the Means to Success in World Politics.* New York: Public Affairs.

by reaching out to Europe. The new U.S. President has, in his first steps as president, showed a willingness to rebuild trust in the transatlantic alliance, based on the notion of mutual dependency and shared norms and values. As stated in Berlin in the summer of 2008, "Yes, there have been differences between America and Europe. No doubt, there will be differences in the future. But the burdens of global citizenship continue to bind us together. A change of leadership in Washington will not lift this burden. In this new century, Americans and Europeans alike will be required to do more — not less. Partnership and cooperation among nations is not a choice; it is the one way, the only way, to protect our common security and advance our common humanity. ... America has no better partner than Europe."[59]

It is still too early to tell if Obama will fulfill his promise of multilateral cooperation with Europe. However, his first few months in office have indicated that it is a new U.S. foreign policy under development — one that differs from the Bush administration. Obama has declared the intention to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq, vowed to close down the foreign combatant detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, promised to be a leader on global warming and sustainable development, and insisted to stick to diplomacy in international relations. This is what most European leaders have waited for. The extent to which the U.S. will co-operate with Europe is, however, likely to depend on how both sides of the Atlantic deal with the five identified challenges. It remains to be seen whether the U.S. under Obama's leadership succeeds in reaching out to Europe in a multilateral arrangement by treating Europe as equal in international relations, and if Europe has the willingness and ability to speak with one voice.

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59 See http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/07/24/obama.words/ (April 29, 2009).