The United States and Western Europe

Essay by William David

1st March 2001
(Reviewed December 2016)

Topic:
The relationship of the United States and Western European in the new millennium.

Question:
Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, do the US and Western Europe still need a military alliance such as NATO?

Review December 2016 - Do we still need NATO?

Successive US administrations have justifiably complained that many European governments are failing to honour their commitments to NATO, structurally, politically and most importantly, financially. The current US President Elect, Donald Trump, has made it clear that the US will not continue to foot 70% of the cost of NATO. This once again raises the question of NATO’s future. In March 2001 I explored if there was a continuing need for NATO following the end of the Cold War and whether NATO could or had evolved beyond its original purpose. However, it would appear that despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Bear was only hibernating or maybe it was prodded back to life by the advance of NATO to its borders. Perhaps the new warmth erroneously radiating towards Russia from the US, combined with the new Russian détente, particularly in the Middle and Far East, will further subvert the need for the alliance. Or, are Russian military provocations and ambitions coalescing forces to make the World a very unstable and dangerous place and therefore the arguments for a sustained Northern military alliance are more valid today than they were in 2001?
Abstract – March 2001

In this thesis, we look at the complex security relationship between The United States and Western Europe and consider whether NATO still has a purpose and is likely to continue to exist in its current format, given the collapse of the Soviet Union. We consider whether the military threat has abated in Europe or is the Russian Bear simply hibernating. Or, is NATO more than a Northern Atlantic military alliance and is there the will for it to legitimately evolve beyond its current purpose and legal framework. The Gulf war and the appalling tragedy in the Balkans has shown that Western Europe does not have a cohesive security structure and may never be able to agree on a common foreign and security policy. Is this alone a reason for the continued existence of NATO? Or, does the United States also have a continued interest in a security relationship with Western Europe?
The Alliance

In considering the question of Western European and US relations it is important too first define the concept or content of this multi-faceted relationship. Probably the most difficult part is defining Western Europe itself, as a number of the areas of relations with the US overlap through a myriad of economic, security and cultural organisations, some regional, some global. It is easier therefore to consider this question on a more historical definition of Western Europe (WE) and to centre this loosely around the member states of the European Union and those of NATO during and after the Cold War. This relationship is not just one of international agreements, it is much deeper. Many of the people of the United States have their roots in Western Europe and there are many elements of a shared identity and values. When we accepted American hegemony after the war to protect ourselves from the perceived common enemy and to bring peace in Europe, we accepted far more than a military security. We accepted an economic and a cultural dominance that came as part of the package. In the main we have accepted this dominance and subtle changes of culture and identity as the price for peace, prosperity and security.

With consideration to the above it is possible to define the relationship primarily in two ways, economic and security. It is almost impossible to divorce these two issues from one another, but if we first consider the economic position we can conclude that although not fully equal to the US, the EU has achieved sufficient a degree of maturity over the last half century, that in the majority of arena’s it stands equally against the US. In fact, economically America no longer sees a partnership in the EU but a serious competitor, to which it needs to deploy militarily sophisticated espionage techniques, to gain commercial advantage. So now when we talk about the future relationship we are looking at the continuing need for security and whether an alliance is necessary post Cold War.

It is my view that since the end of the Cold War the world has become a more dangerous place. In a sense, the previous bipolar superpower struggle created a degree
of security. The absence of that security, technological change and increased global reach are creating new and different needs for western security. The question is, do we need a military alliance such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to meet this new threat? Do Western Europe and the US need to keep this relationship? Is the concept of NATO post Cold War now obsolete? My view is absolutely not. NATO represents far more than a military alliance. It represents an alliance of nations, with shared values, democratic principles and a common identity. The concept of NATO like the alliance is evolutionary. To support this view, we will look at NATO’s role during and after the Cold War, how its role evolved with the economic and democratic principles of its members, particularly in the Gulf and Balkans, and its passage to legitimacy through the UN. We will consider the continuing threats to security, military and economic and look at European defence capability and desirability and what sort of political commitment does Western Europe and the US still have if any towards the alliance. And finally, whether NATO is the right vehicle for delivering Atlantic and European security in the New World order.

NATO’s evolution

There is plenty of evidence to support the view that British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, coerced the birth of NATO from a reluctant America and not as the Revisionists would have it, a tool created by the US to impose American hegemony.¹ If we first accept that NATO’s original primary purpose was the defence of Western European democracy against Soviet communist expansion, we should briefly look at events during the Cold War, NATO’s search for legitimacy immediately after the Cold War and its apparent evolution in the latter part of the twentieth century. The superficial success of Ostpolitik² and détente of the late 60’s and 70’s gave way to a sense of grave danger in the early 80’s typified at the time in speeches given by Giscard d’Estaing³ and Pope John

² Ostpolitik or Eastern policy was a political and diplomatic policy of West Germany primarily as it sought closer economic and political ties with the USSR and the Federal Republic of Germany. (East Germany).
Paul 2\textsuperscript{nd} stressing the risks of a new world war.\textsuperscript{4} A new feeling of insecurity and inadequacy dawned with the realisation that the Soviets had achieved conventional and nuclear superiority in Europe and intercontinental nuclear parity.\textsuperscript{5} This feeling was compounded by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Polish crisis,\textsuperscript{6} the Iran Iraq war and the breakdown and realisation of failure of East-West détente. All this, at a time of a deepening economic crisis in Europe and the emergence of a new wave of pacifist and neutralist sentiment.

It was during these dark times that it dawned that the threat was not just in the European theatre. Europe woke up to the fact that Soviet influence now extended to the Gulf and into countries such as Ethiopia and Yemen. Like the US it realised that it would now have to defend its access to the raw materials and the energy sources in the Middle East and Africa, without which European democracies could not survive. In this sense, it is fortunate that early on in its existence, NATO asserted its right, indeed its duty, to consult, review and analyse events beyond the geographical limits set forth in the North Atlantic Treaty. In fact, since the early 60\textsuperscript{\textdegree}s experts in NATO had regularly met, analysed and discussed all aspects of security for members, in all the regions of the world. The principles of “out of area activity” has been established for many years, with groups of NATO countries having acted together a number of times in many theatres such as Namibia, Zaire, the Indian Ocean and the Gulf area. Part of this co-operation involved keeping the other members fully informed and briefed on all joint activities.\textsuperscript{7}

**The collapse of the Soviet Union**

The mid to late 80\textsuperscript{\textdegree}s could not have been more different, it is argued that this started in December 1980 with the election of US president, Ronald Reagan. Put simply, he used over $2 trillion to escalate the arms race beyond the financial capability of the Soviets,

\textsuperscript{5} (Ibid. p88-89).
\textsuperscript{6} Resulting in the imposition of martial law in Poland on the 13th December 1981.
thereby bankrupting their military capability and at the same time destroying them politically and economically at home and abroad. This is not an unreasonable hindsight analysis, but not one that I would subscribe personally to Ronald Reagan. True or not, there was no doubt that significant changes were developing in the USSR as a result of severe economic difficulties and a changing political spectrum. Add to all this a second wave of European and US détente and we have the right arena for an enlightened approach to the structural reformation of East-West and US-Soviet relations. The speed of change in the latter part of the 80’s was breathtaking and it is argued that the development of economic and political co-operation were so significant, that they rendered the notions of post-war security, intellectually inadequate. These rapid changes in relationship appeared to create a gradually emerging structure of common security, the theory of which requires taking the potential adversaries security needs into consideration, when formulating one’s own security policy.

The end of the 80’s and early 90’s saw the demolition of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany. These monumental changes brought a realisation to the western security community that their strategy for collective defence against a clearly defined enemy was no longer valid. Their solution was simple; we will just create another reason to legitimise these institutions. We will build a new European security architecture and create a framework of “interlocking institutions” that include and legitimise those institutions made redundant as a result of the end of the Cold War. Many in Western Europe saw this as an opportunity of creating the long-desired defence structure independent of the US. This mistake and many others were soon to be discovered in the lessons learnt during the Gulf War and the appalling Balkan tragedy.

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9 The notion of common security is a theory first developed by the Palme Commission during the early 1980’s. See Lucas, M. R. (1990) Note 1 p5.
11 (Ibid. p24).
Europe’s weakness

The Gulf War will be remembered for many things, such as, the massing of almost 700,000, mainly military personnel, supplied or supported by over 20 sovereign states.\(^\text{13}\) But there were two other very important facts that were and are to have very significant implications for the future. The first was the highlighting of the almost non-existent European Political Co-operation (EPC), among the members of the EC. They displayed conflicting views about the use of force against Iraq and demonstrated the difficulty of developing a common security policy with a defence component.\(^\text{14}\) Ironically this was at the same time as the Intergovernmental Conferences, (IGC’s) and discussions relating to a proposed Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), for inclusion in the Maastricht Treaty. The Gulf War saw a resurfacing of old national positions and divergences of interests and views and exposed the fragility of European co-operation.\(^\text{15}\) The EC’s initial assessment was quite upbeat,\(^\text{16}\) whereas in reference to the Gulf in March 1991, Jacques Delors\(^\text{17}\) observed that they had neither the institutional machinery nor the military force to act as a community.\(^\text{18}\) But the view of the British was that these problems were not caused by the absence of machinery, but by differences in view on substance.\(^\text{19}\) If anything the Gulf War demonstrated that the Europeans were short of coherence and even logistics and highlighted how valuable the NATO alliance was in delivering an effective and successful response.\(^\text{20}\)

NATO and the UN

The second important factor is the relationship between the NATO military machine and the UN. In a legal sense the Gulf was “out of area” for NATO and therefore the European content was provided by the Western European Union, (WEU),\(^\text{21}\) under its agreement to use NATO equipment and facilities, all of which operated under a US


\(^{16}\) (Ibid.p203)


\(^{19}\) (Ibid.p199)

\(^{20}\) (Ibid.p198-212)
command, technically independent of NATO. If we strip away all the legal and theoretical technicalities, this show was run by the US under the tried and tested infrastructure of NATO. This was clearly evidenced by France’s intention to reintegrate into the military structure of NATO as it realised its own shortcomings and the fact that it was likely to be left out of crisis management tasks.\textsuperscript{22} But the real issue here is the evolution of a relationship between the US, the UN and NATO. To make this a little clearer we need to briefly consider the difference between collective security and collective defence. Collective security is a moral overseer and enforcer within the boundaries of its own jurisdiction, singling out and punishing aggression from within, whereas, collective defence is an alliance against an external threat, or the punishment of aggression from outside. By these definitions, the UN is a collective security and NATO is a collective defence organisation.\textsuperscript{23} This particular point is significant because whereas in the Cold War era NATO represented collective defence, i.e. the punishment of those outside, during the Gulf War under the auspices of the UN, NATO became part of a collective security by the punishment of those within by those within. This is a critical redefinition of the role of NATO to be seen again in the Balkans.

**The Balkans**

If we consider the Gulf war to be a defining moment, then the appalling tragedy of the Balkans, that is still unfolding today, is going to be a major landmark in history. When the Balkan crisis first exploded in June 1991, NATO defined Yugoslavia as “out of area,” as it had not been a member of the Warsaw Pact. This policy was not officially reversed until 1993.\textsuperscript{24} The US policy was that it had no strategic interest in Yugoslavia. The more cynical interpretation of that policy was that by going it alone, the EU was expected to fail and demonstrate the continuing importance of NATO and US leadership.\textsuperscript{25} Unfortunately for the many thousands who died, the evidence to date supports this. At the beginning of the crisis a troika of EC Foreign Ministers visited Belgrade in the

\textsuperscript{21} The WEU was a defence and security arm born out of the Brussels Treaty. See Blair (1999), p330.
\textsuperscript{24} Woodward, S. L. *Balkan Tragedy – Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, (1995) p150.
\textsuperscript{25} (Ibid.p158)
mistaken belief that the absence of a military option was of no consequence.\textsuperscript{26} As explained by Jacques Delors in 1991, EPC had only three weapons at its disposal, public opinion, the threat of withholding diplomatic recognition and economic sanctions.\textsuperscript{27} But it was not the absence of a military option that was significant, it was once again the deep divisions among the EC’s member states, which were numerous. The most pungent example of this was Germany’s unilateral decision to recognise Croatia and Slovenia and in order to avoid a damaging split, it was reluctantly endorsed by the other member states. It has been argued that this act was the ultimate trigger for Serb aggression\textsuperscript{28} and undoubtedly contributed to the horrific genocide that eventually followed.

It was not until August 1993 that the North Atlantic Council definitively committed NATO assets to a UN peacekeeping mission, albeit this was only the use of air support for UN troops and retaliatory air strikes.\textsuperscript{29} This was as a result of US congressional pressure on the White House, to show more leadership against what it called EC ineptitude.\textsuperscript{30} The final confirmation of the failure of the EU’s CFSP in Yugoslavia became evident with the establishment of the Contact Group\textsuperscript{31} in April 1994 to “manage” the Yugoslavian situation. It was to be the Serb atrocities at Sarajevo and Srebrenica that finally resulted in heavy NATO bombardment. And, although the Dayton Peace accords were formally signed in Paris, it could not disguise the predominantly US stamp on the peace process and the failure of the EU to resolve the crisis.\textsuperscript{32} This was adequately summed up by Carl Bildt, the EU’s former High Representative in Bosnia who wrote “The EU’s involvement in the Bosnian crisis as luckless mediator, then ineffective peace-keeper and finally as America’s junior partner as peace-maker was a grim experience.”\textsuperscript{33}

The Yugoslav War exposed the deep Foreign Policy differences among EU member States and provided a lesson in the limits of EU involvement in post Cold War conflict

\textsuperscript{27} Nicoll, W. & Salmon, T.C. (1994) p198.
\textsuperscript{30} (Ibid.p302)
\textsuperscript{31} Contact Group, UK, France, Germany, Russia, Italy and US.
resolution. It was not simply a lack of the necessary infrastructure, but rather, profound historical differences.\textsuperscript{34} The Yugoslav crisis raised even more fundamental questions about cohesion on CFSP issues.\textsuperscript{35} It was a salutary lesson in the limits of European integration, specifically in the difficulty of sharing sovereignty in the sensitive areas of security and defence.

There is no doubt that the Bosnian crisis highlighted the CFSP failures of the EU, but there are two other significant points to note. One was the continuing relationship between the UN and NATO who was technically “out of area” and secondly the reluctance of the US to commit itself where it had no apparent strategic interest. The following war in Kosovo was just another chapter in the unfinished book of the Yugoslavian crisis, but in many ways it mirrored the hesitations of the earlier crisis, with the US seeing Kosovo as an internal Serbian problem, similar to Chechnya and Russia. But the Bosnian crisis had sown other seeds and although they eventually produced a far more rapid reaction, they once again did not stop the appalling genocide. The similarities were, ineffectual EU posturing and the involvement of the UN, but there were two differences from the US and or NATO perspective. Firstly, the war in Kosovo could quite easily involve Greece and Turkey which would oblige NATO to respond.\textsuperscript{36} But more significantly, the humanitarian principle had already been established and this was to bring a swift and powerful retribution from the US via NATO. Once again we were to see NATO working with the UN in an area that fell more into collective security than collective defence.

**European ambitions**

The main lesson of the Gulf and the Balkan crisis has to be the hard realities with the failure of the EU EPC and CFSP. The EU may be an economic giant but it is politically weak and as long as CFSP remains an intergovernmental issue decided by unanimity, the prospects of formulating an effective defence policy is remote. However, it is wrong to

\textsuperscript{34} Dinan, D. (1999) p521.
\textsuperscript{35} (Ibid,p204)
dismiss the EU’s longer term potential to become an important actor on the global stage, the Maastricht Treaty did establish the principle of a CFSP which was strengthened at Amsterdam.\textsuperscript{37} Probably the most important point was to integrate or devolve defence and security to the WEU and attempts have been made to address the issues of historical ties, neutrality and sovereignty with some degree of success. Unfortunately, the complex issues regarding security and defence are not that easily addressed and this has left a number of questions unanswered. In particular, the interpretation of the relationship between the EU, NATO and the US, with regard to the existence and scope of an independent European Defence Force (EDF). To consider this issue we need to study the possible realities of EDF, whether the current proposals have any significance militarily and is there sufficient political will to make it a reality?

The four main issues revolving around a European defence capability are; cohesion, political will, independence and cost and I believe the EU has adequately demonstrated its lack of cohesive policies, particularly in the Balkans. As far as cost is concerned the Europeans do not have the necessary political will to increase defence spending to a level needed to create an effective basic infrastructure. Politically, European leaders make all the right noises but continue to look to Washington for leadership and financial commitment, except of course France, who just do not like anything American. Finally, as far as independence is concerned, there are those who see a EDF as a pillar of NATO and others who do not, particularly the French. The Americans also want to have their cake and eat it. Since the beginning, they have justifiably requested Europe to accept more of the burden of defence and for this reason they strongly support a EDF but only within a NATO defence structure. However, US expectations of European “burden sharing” demonstrates just how much they really understand the complexities of the EU and its member states.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{37} For a brief description of the main points of CFSP p449, example of a CFSP joint action p452, & common position p454, see Nugent, N. (1999) 4\textsuperscript{th} Edition.
\textsuperscript{38} Lucas, M. R. (1990), p84.
The problem for the Alliance is that, as the French insist, the Nice treaty specifies that a EDF will have its own command structure independent of NATO and the entire chain of command will remain under the political and strategic direction of the EU.\textsuperscript{39} The Americans describe a EDF as “a dagger pointed at NATO’s heart.”\textsuperscript{40} Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, has personally assured US President George Bush that the Nice proposals would not undermine NATO and would in fact strengthen it.\textsuperscript{41} The real question is, given the EU’s difficulties in agreeing a CFSP, how effective can an alleged rapid reaction force of 60,000 combat troops be, when they will lack the right equipment from communications to precision weapons and the necessary transport to get them swiftly to a trouble spot. The Europeans have been failing to come up with these goods in NATO for years.\textsuperscript{42}

To summarise at this point, an effective EDF is a long-term option. The EU lacks the necessary cohesion, it will not commit the necessary expenditure and it does not have the political will to make it happen. However, this is only true as long as there is the alternative of NATO. The EU have laid the foundations for a common defence force and it is just possible that an effective EDF could be born out of a crisis. From the American perspective, the dissolution of NATO and US leadership of it, is not an option from an economic or a security point of view. Stability in Europe is as important to the US today as it was 50 years ago. It cannot allow its eastern flank to become unstable at a time when it has so many potential threats from elsewhere in the world. And it is in this context that we address the final issue regarding the relationship of Western Europe and the US and that is whether there is a continuing security need for an Atlantic Alliance.

\textsuperscript{39} Times Editorial, \textit{Taken on Trust}, Monday February 26 2001.
\textsuperscript{40} Attributed to John Bolton, an under-secretary of state, by Campbell C. & Grey S. \textit{French query British defence pledge to Bush}, The Times, February 26 2001.
\textsuperscript{41} Times Editorial, Monday February 26 2001.
\textsuperscript{42} The Economist Magazine, \textit{European defence A long march}. February 17\textsuperscript{th} 2001.
European stability

The French see a reunified Germany not constrained to the east and in no need of an alliance to the west, as a very big threat to their security. I would not completely dismiss French fears, as it is not beyond the bounds of feasibility, that a united and stronger Germany, strategically located at the centre of Europe, may feel that it is only able to achieve its full potential, free from some of the shackles of the European Union. The next question to ask is how cold is the Cold War? According to the Americans, it’s definitely not over and the Russians may still be a threat if they decide to be. There is no doubt that Russian President Vladimir Putin is determined to restore his country to its former glory. One of his explicit aims is rebuilding Russia’s power abroad. Through various agreements, primarily economic, he is attempting to bind Eastern European countries like Ukraine back into Russia’s sphere of influence. The US has also expressed its displeasure and concerns about European relationships with Russia in general and specifically Germany’s growing dependency on Russian gas and oil. Russia has also been accused of using its vast network of international pipelines, in tactics reminiscent of Stalin, to reimpose its authority on the former Soviet Union. On the military front, it has managed to successfully repatriate all its nuclear weapons to Russian controlled soil and gone one step further by the redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, marking a return of theatre nuclear weapons to Eastern Europe. And, in a return of the Soviet tactics of the 80’s, they conducted long-range missile flight tests, probed Japanese airspace with warplanes and flew bombers close to Norwegian airspace as part of a week of large-scale war games. You can also add to this list, the resurrection of Russian arms sales to a number of countries considered unstable and known to be hostile to America, such as Iran. This was heartily

43 The Economist Magazine, Divorce after all these years? January 27th 2001.
51 Whittell, G. US alarm at Russian arms sale to Iran, The Times, Saturday, December 30th 2000.
denounced by the Americans as proliferation to sensitive regions fermenting instability. The Russians condemn the US as being stuck in a Cold War mentality, but in probably the most typical Cold War fashion, each country has arrested alleged spies and seen as a result tit for tat expulsions of 50 diplomatic personnel. Is this the Cold War? Did it ever go away?

The reality is that although we must not dismiss lightly the still significant Russian military power, the parlous state of the economy precludes it from even minor superpower status for the foreseeable future. Despite its decision to earmark 5% of GDP for defence over the next decade, the current annual budget of £5.2 billion is insignificant next to the US defence budget of £212 billion, representing a little over 3% of GDP. What is clear, is that Russia fears American plans for a National Missile Defence system (NMD), the resurrection of the principle of Ronald Reagan’s Star Wars. There is no doubt that Putin wishes to restore some of Russia’s previous status, but all these recent provocative acts are more about sabre rattling than real threats. However, it would be unwise to dismiss US sentiments, bearing in mind that the best policy for a weakened Russia, would be détente and Westpolitik, allowing Europe to integrate itself economically into its vast mineral and energy wealth and at the same time distancing a mainly willing Europe from past American Hegemony.

**Global instability**

In its relations with the US, Western Europe must similarly conclude, that any instability in the world can ultimately threaten them. There are serious rumbles in the Pacific as China slowly awakes. It has been raising defence expenditure steadily since the Gulf War and has recently announced a 17.7% increase in this years defence budget. Although a large part will be used for placating the army ahead of next years communist party reshuffle, it is also a response to the realisation of US capability witnessed in the bombing of Kosovo and the ever fraught relations with the US over Taiwan.

have a resurgence of nationalism in Japan, troubles in Malaysia and Indonesia and a still belligerent North Korea. The ritual fighting and nuclear threats between India and Pakistan continue and Muslim fundamentalism now stretches from the Gulf to the Balkans. Not to forget the ever explosive Palestinian and Israeli problem and the continuing instability in the former Yugoslavia and some of the former regions of the Soviet Union.

One other area for potential conflict is the growing divide between the wealthy North and the impoverished South. This wealthy fifth of the world’s population control almost three-quarters of its wealth.\(^55\) This will create tensions, which in turn could lead to military confrontations. It seems that we have been here before, but the difference this time is that the legacy of the Cold War has enabled weapons of awesome destruction.

In summary, for the US and WE, peace and security in Europe cannot be taken for granted. The collapse of the Soviet Union has not dispelled the threats from Russia and although remote, we cannot discount the ambitions of a united Germany. The military legacies of the Cold War, the collapse of the bipolar system, the needs of modern society, globalisation and global reach have all created a much smaller, more unstable and a dangerous new world order. Western Europe needs the Atlantic Alliance as much as the US does.

**NATO’s future**

In concluding the answer to our question, we have to consider the positions of the US and WE separately and together. In respect of military alliances, the US has a basically isolationist perspective dating back almost two centuries. They have a constant desire to withdraw their forces to home soil unless there is a pressing strategic objective. They were clearly reluctant to commit to the North Atlantic treaty and only did so after exhausting all other options and the realisation of the gravity of the threat. It is their assessment that the threat of communism in Europe has now abated but not dissolved. However, the principles of access to the European markets have not changed, in fact it is

probably now more important for the US to have access to this now very large and still evolving market place. It still needs to maintain its influence and prosperity through peace and stability and this objective is best achieved through NATO. Globally, American interests now reach into nearly every corner of the world. This means that its security resources are spread more and more thinly and so the more areas of interests that it shares with its alliance partners the more it strengthens and legitimises its presence. This can only be achieved through a well-honed integrated military structure like NATO.

The Europeans on the other hand, crave for a separate identity devoid of American hegemony. Having lived for the last 50 years in the shadow of two great superpowers they have learnt to cherish sovereignty and respect that of others. But at the same time, they aspire to the power and greatness of a superpower. We can witness this paradox in the masochistic contortions as these sovereign state’s struggle in their attempts to integrate into a federal superpower. From a security perspective, there is a desire to feel free and at peace, but there is also an awareness that after nearly a century of war or fear of war, that the current air of peace is short and fragile. Most Europeans by participation or education have an awareness of the horrors and insecurity of the twentieth century and they will not allow those with political ambitions to take away the level of security that they have enjoyed for the last 50 years under NATO. In the UK, this view is particularly strong as indicated in a recent Mori poll for the Economist where 60% of respondents said that they thought that the US would be Britain’s most reliable political ally in a crisis compared with only 16% who supported Europe.56 Most Europeans realise that their interests and concerns spread far beyond Europe and they know that for the foreseeable future a EDF, though desirable, will never be as effective as an alliance that includes the Americans. They know that the most effective way of delivering continuing peace and prosperity for and in Europe is through NATO.

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To try to understand and get to the heart of the alliance, we must first consider that the superpower perspective produced abstract generalisations about the nature of alliances, which are different from the abstractions which emerge from the prospective of the alliance itself. The relationship between the US and WE is not just one of international agreements, it is much deeper. In accepting American hegemony after the war, Europe accepted an economic and cultural dominance that came as part of the package. This dominance and subtle change of culture and identity was the price for peace, prosperity and security. Over this half-century, the US and WE have evolved together in an ever-changing world and in a similar vein NATO evolved in response to that ever-changing world. Whether done deliberately or not and frequently challenged since, Article’s 4 and 12 of the original treaty,\(^{57}\) created the ability for NATO to evolve in changing circumstances. Almost since the beginning, NATO signatories have used the NATO infrastructure to collude in and conduct operations beyond the purpose for which it was originally conceived. NATO has evolved from the primary role of European defence to a proactive foreign policy tool of the West, often in collusion or in support of the UN. Its deployment in these different theatres legitimises its evolution. There is clear evidence that the Western Alliance still faces the potential of many threats to its interests and its security and the luxury of peace and prosperity have allowed it to develop a humanitarian prospective. NATO binds the Western Alliance into an effective and combined military structure capable of preserving this prosperity and peace and the means of preventing or containing some of the most brutal acts of humanity seen in the genocide and wars of the twentieth century.

In summary, we can use the conceptual theory of “neo” or “structural” realism to explain how the distribution of power within the structural constraints of the global system has created an alliance of which the sum total is greater than any individual state or group of states, as actors. If we accept this to be an anarchic evolutionary process and draw it to a logical conclusion, then it is not theoretically possible to create a more effective or purer model. At this point in time there cannot be a comparable alternative

\(^{57}\) Full Treaty text, see Appendix A.
capable of all the variables. Therefore, in the absence of a viable alternative, the Atlantic Alliance and NATO are very good reasons for it to be sensible to speak of a US-Western European relationship in the new Millennium.

A fully acknowledged, referenced and linked copy of this essay can be found at The United States and Western Europe
Appendix A

The North Atlantic Treaty

Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949

The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments. They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security. They therefore agree to this North Atlantic Treaty:

Article 1

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

Article 2

The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.

Article 3

In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Article 4
The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.

**Article 5**

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

**Article 6**

For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

- on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;
- on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

**Article 7**

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This Treaty does not affect, and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations under the Charter of the Parties which are members of the United Nations, or the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

**Article 8**

Each Party declares that none of the international engagements now in force between it and any other of the Parties or any third State is in conflict with the provisions of this Treaty, and undertakes not to enter into any international engagement in conflict with this Treaty.

**Article 9**

The Parties hereby establish a Council, on which each of them shall be represented, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council shall be so organised as to be able to meet promptly at any time. The Council shall set up such subsidiary bodies as may be necessary; in particular, it shall establish immediately a defence committee which shall recommend measures for the implementation of Articles 3 and 5.

**Article 10**

The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.

**Article 11**

This Treaty shall be ratified and its provisions carried out by the Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Government of the United States of America, which will notify all the other signatories of each deposit. The Treaty shall enter into force between the States which have ratified it as soon as the ratifications of the majority of the signatories, including the ratifications of Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, have been
deposited and shall come into effect with respect to other States on the date of the deposit of their ratifications.

**Article 12**

After the Treaty has been in force for ten years, or at any time thereafter, the Parties shall, if any of them so requests, consult together for the purpose of reviewing the Treaty, having regard for the factors then affecting peace and security in the North Atlantic area, including the development of universal as well as regional arrangements under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

**Article 13**

After the Treaty has been in force for twenty years, any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the United States of America, which will inform the Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation.

**Article 14**

This Treaty, of which the English and French texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America. Duly certified copies will be transmitted by that Government to the Governments of other signatories.
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