

has the character of a gladiatorial contest between rival belief systems. To simplify, though not oversimplify, the belief systems of the Left and the Right both merit ascription as idealist rather than realist. The former seeks safety and perhaps even "real peace" through arms control; the latter seeks security through military strength. In their distinctive ways, both Left and Right seek an unattainable quality of security, decline to recognize the geopolitical structure of U.S. national (in)security, and hence fail to appreciate the goals that should be sought and might be achieved.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, though I see the malady of idealism on both the Left and the Right, I find it more prevalent on the Left and more dangerous to national security in its Leftist form. Specifically, while overarmament by the superpower that is the principal organizer and provider of security for the extant international order may be undesirable, it would not imperil the structure of international security. But underarmament inevitably must invite political pressure that could endanger the international order. History shows that a margin of safety—overarmament perhaps—on the side of the party of stability is an error on the side of prudence.

The identity of U.S. survival and vital interests has not been challenged in recent decades; that is, there has been no great American debate over the basic wisdom of the alliance framework for a multilateralist containment. But the U.S. survival interests in deterring nuclear war, in being able to recover from a nuclear war should it not be deterred, and in preventing an erosion in the correlation of forces that denies Soviet hegemonic control over Eurasia are perpetually at risk to the existential or minimum deterrents and to those who believe that the Soviet Union has finite security goals.

Organizing the Rimland

A defense community perpetually immersed in the taxing effort to maintain a multilateral alliance structure typically finds little leisure and less incentive to reflect upon the purpose of the coalition enterprise. To an important and generally healthy degree, U.S. policy toward its alliance partners in peripheral Eurasia is on automatic pilot. Its practical day-by-day purpose is system maintenance. Gregory Treverton's choice of title for his recent study of NATO was exactly correct: *Making the Alliance Work*.¹

A potential problem for a policy that is fueled more by inertia than by explicit and careful understanding of U.S. security interests is that U.S. officials and policy commentators may fail to appreciate the importance of particular issues relative to the significance of the alliance connection as a whole. Furthermore, a defense community unschooled in geopolitical analysis is unlikely to be suitably equipped to debate intelligently those who would question the policy of security through coalition; hence, U.S. policy course for the containment of Soviet power could be at risk to the political potential of the views of Right-isolationists and Left-isolationists, as well as of Right-unilateralists and Left-unilateralists. These four somewhat imprecisely detectable tendencies agree at least on one proposition: that the United States should cease to depend upon allies in a multilateral framework in its pursuit of the national interest.²

The purpose of this chapter is to anchor the subsequent discussion of alternative policy courses (in Chapters 10-13) to an understanding of the alliance structure of the West as it has developed and as it functions today. It can be no easy matter to maintain perspective in face of the frustrations that attend (by way of analogy) assembly of the alliance convoy over particular issues, discouragement of independent policy sailings, choice of course for the convoy, its protection against highly selective assault by Soviet "wolf packs," and prevention of policy straggling.

One should not undervalue the quality of past performance. Notwithstanding the persistence of national particularisms, war among the states of west-central Europe is unthinkable today. The Soviet Union has a

massive geostrategic incentive to coerce individual western European countries into a neutralist—preferably a Soviet-leaning neutralist—stance. But since the formal founding of NATO on April 4, 1949, no country has left the alliance, no neutral or neutralist European country has joined the Soviet security system, and the Soviet Union has not used force directly in any East-West dispute in the European region.

The extent to which the pacific interstate history of post-1945 Europe should be attributed to the creation of the first peacetime “entangling alliance” in U.S. history must remain a matter for speculation.³ The U.S. security connection may have been less important for the political independence of western Europe than was either the devastation wrought by World War II upon the economies of all the European belligerents, or Stalin’s reluctance to assume security responsibility for an empire so expanded as to include societies with very alien political traditions and cultures.⁴ Nonetheless, the evidence of history unmistakably says that the NATO alliance, if not essential, has certainly been compatible with the maintenance of vital U.S. and western European security interests.

The Eurasian Rimland allies perform several important and arguably essential security functions for the United States. Above all else, geopolitically, the independence from Soviet control of important countries around the periphery of Eurasia keeps the Soviet Union landlocked and distracted from pursuing *Weltpolitik* from a secure dual-continent power base. The Soviet armed forces of today have the structure one would expect of a continentally minded landpower that faces a very serious prospect of ground war on two fronts.⁵ However, if Moscow were to seize a position of preponderance in Europe by conquest or by intimidation, then the United States would be desperately short of regional access points on which to anchor a defense perimeter in the western Atlantic. It would not be sufficient for the Soviet Union to be denied control of the economic assets of western Europe; in addition, U.S. security requires that Soviet military power be denied uncontested egress from the “choke points” that could be used to confine its maritime power in the Barents Sea, the Baltic, and the Black Sea/Mediterranean.

In keeping with an axiom of balance-of-power politics—that one seeks alliance with the next state but one, geographically—the Chinese People’s Republic is functionally in security alliance with NATO in Europe. The regional balance of power in northeast Asia depends upon the maintenance of a regional balance of power in Europe. Soviet hegemony in Europe would imperil the political independence of China and Japan.

The many strategic advantages relative to Soviet power that the United States as *the* global maritime power has enjoyed since 1945 have reflected not so much the nature of the Soviet and American politics, or even strategic geography, as the balance of power in Eurasia. There is a synergistic relationship between landpower and seapower.⁶ Soviet dis-

traction on land has prevented development of a global Soviet seapower, which could have negatively affected U.S. freedom of action in Korea, southeast Asia, and elsewhere. In its turn, U.S. command of the sea has sustained favorable regional balances on land.

One should not be confused, however, by the mere number of countries in strategic question. Crude arithmetic of the regional military balance in Europe could mislead if it counts half-trained, ill-equipped, and malpositioned Italian and Turkish infantrymen as the equivalent of Soviet soldiers in central or northern Europe. Similarly, strategic access is far more a matter of the quality, including quality of geostrategic location, than of the quantity of territory. To cite just one example, it is not self-evident that the continental security of NATO in Europe would be militarily viable were Great Britain to join the Warsaw Pact or even to slip into a position of Soviet-leaning neutralism.⁷ Military issues aside, it is a reasonable prediction that were Britain to leave the alliance, the U.S. political constituency for the NATO connection would be fundamentally undermined.

A formal alliance nexus with peripheral Eurasia is not strictly essential to American security—provided the landlocking and continental distraction of Soviet power could be performed adequately by whatever peripheral-Eurasian security coalition(s) would become the successor(s) to NATO and to the mutual security treaty with Japan. Less plausibly, the formal alliance nexus would not be so necessary to American security should developments within the Soviet empire render an assertive Soviet foreign policy highly improbable. Unfortunately, increased Soviet anxiety over the internal stability of its territorial and hegemonic patrimony would be as likely to promote a militant course abroad as to promote a prolonged period of quiescence in foreign policy.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, as in the early years of the American Republic, U.S. national security policy cannot afford to be indifferent to the evolution of the balance of power in Eurasia. Consistent with due respect for the political-supportive needs of a global alliance architecture that to date has worked well enough, American policymakers should retain an open mind as to the methods and means that might continue to insure the necessary containment of Soviet power and influence.

A structural advantage enjoyed by the United States in the long-term competition with the Soviet Union is the fact that its friends and allies are friends and allies by choice. Geopolitically, NATO-European countries really have no interesting alternatives to the transatlantic security nexus, but they are at liberty to pursue novel paths for their national security should they so choose. Steven Kime argues that there is a strange paradox in the alliance architectures of East and West.⁸ Save in extraordinary cir-

cumstances (which seem to occur roughly once in each decade: Hungary, 1956; Czechoslovakia, 1968; Poland, 1980), it is the western Alliance that appears near-perpetually on the brink of terminal fission, whereas the Warsaw Pact parades in near-lockstep on orders from its Soviet drill-master.⁹ Yet the NATO Alliance, which looks so fragile in peacetime, would likely be staunch for the common enterprise in time of war, while the alliance that is generally so obedient to central direction in peacetime would likely fracture under the pressure and with the unique opportunities of war.

Kime is probably too optimistic concerning the reliability of allies and friends, and not sufficiently sensitive to the fissile effect of their separately perceived national survival interests. Geopolitical factors and cultural preferences suffice to insure that different national perspectives will clash from time to time. Nonetheless, there is an important truth in Kime's analysis. The NATO Alliance does rest upon a firm basis of common interests among its members. At the most basic of levels the alliance helps prevent the expansion of Soviet influence in (and ultimately beyond) Europe, helps retain active U.S. participation in a system of security for Europe, helps keep the still-unresolved "German problem" quiescent and helps sustain a framework of international order within which peaceful commerce can be conducted.¹⁰

It is possible, even probable, that in extremely stressful circumstances NATO and the security tie with Japan might fracture and local partners scurry for unilateral salvation. But unlike the members of the Warsaw Pact, none of the allies of the United States harbor such antipathy toward their alliance leader that they would be motivated to seize any opportunity, created by the military distraction elsewhere of their major partner, to work directly and deliberately against the interests of that partner. The eastern European security "partners" of the U.S.S.R. are, with the exception of Bulgaria, the more or less obedient but unwilling instruments of Soviet (really Great Russian) interests only for so long as they discern no viable alternative policy course. Soviet interests are either irrelevant or actually antipathetic to the essential concerns of Pact allies' societies, though not always of their ruling elites.

The United States has to be concerned lest the military situation of its forward-deployed forces be compromised by any spirit of *sauve qui peut* among NATO-Europeans under dire threat (one may recall the situation of the British Expeditionary Force in Belgium in May 1940), but it has no reason to question the depth of allied commitment to the common security enterprise. NATO-Europeans are prone to state, accurately enough, that the United States is a player in the security politics of Europe for its own selfish interests. But they know that the external security functions of NATO are of more importance to them than they are to the United States. The small and medium-sized allies of both superpowers

Percentage of GNP Committed to Defense

	1971	1984
Belgium	2.9	3.2
Britain	4.9	5.3
Canada	2.2	2.2
Denmark	2.4	2.3
France	4.0	4.1
Germany	3.4	3.3
Greece	4.7	7.2
Italy	2.7	2.7
Luxembourg	0.8	1.2
Netherlands	3.4	3.2
Norway	3.4	2.8
Portugal	7.4	3.3
Spain	—	2.9
Turkey	4.5	4.4
United States	7.1	6.5
Japan	0.8	1.0

Source: Casper W. Weinberger, *Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1986), p. 89.

might cave under duress, but only the allies of the Soviet Union have major security grudges against their alliance principal, and to some degree against other alliance partners. Soviet domination of eastern Europe has not so much resolved the irredentist politics of the region as frozen them. Every east European member of the Warsaw Pact has a set of more or less major irredentist claims against other pact members.

Defense debate within the United States is typically well larded with references to persisting deficiencies in the defense efforts of NATO-European allies. The claim has some basis in fact, but the popular American image of "free-riding" allies is a considerable exaggeration. Americans do have grounds for complaint about the absolute levels of the defense burdens carried by NATO-European countries, but the trend over the past decade is no worse than should have been expected. One should not forget the enduring factors that shape the scale of military contribution by the small and medium-sized members of a coalition led by a much larger power.

Although it is not clear whether a meaningful comparison can be made, on the basis of percentage of gross national product (GNP), between the defense budgets of regional powers and a superpower that has a global strategy in defense of worldwide interests, the accompanying table captures the trend of the 1970s and early 1980s. Some recent Amer-

ican estimates have identified 56-58 percent as the NATO share of the U.S. defense effort. Given this admittedly dubious calculation, it would appear that the United States has been devoting approximately 3.7 percent of its GNP to the defense of NATO—a figure noteworthy, if not suspiciously noteworthy, for its fit in the middle range of allied efforts.¹¹ Any such comparisons must be regarded with a skeptical eye, however. The more geostrategically exposed of the NATO allies argue that they are contributing (albeit of necessity, not by choice) the initial battlefield for the common defense. Moreover, there is something distinctly unpersuasive about the very concept of a NATO share in the U.S. national defense effort. The Soviet Union is not deterred from military action in Europe by that NATO share alone, for it cannot assume that it would have to fight only those U.S. forces explicitly assigned to the defense of Europe. Given that a war involving the superpowers easily could be global, on what analytical basis should some U.S. forces be identified as not relevant to the deterrence of aggression in the NATO area?¹²

Some American commentators have sought to quantify the “free-riding” sins of NATO-Europe by estimating what Europeans, bereft of U.S. military assistance, would have to spend in order to make up for their U.S. loss. Since there is a marked absence of plausible, let alone authoritative, alternative budgets and defense postures for a United States and a western Europe proceeding down separate security paths, these arguments lack persuasive substance.¹³

Protagonists for one or another position on the question have a way of selecting the figures that best support their argument. For example, those in the United States who seek to demonstrate NATO’s unjust burden on the American taxpayer have a strong preference for citing per capita defense expenditures. By this measure it can be shown that in 1983 the United States, at \$1,023 per capita, spent more than twice as much as Britain, three times as much as West Germany, and so on.¹⁴ In common with the East-West strategic balance, comparative burden-sharing within NATO is an enormously complex subject that lends itself to political exploitation by sometimes remarkably amateurish analysts determined to make a particular case.

American opinion leaders who tend to think in simple bipolar terms are often surprised to discover just how substantial are the national forces maintained by the NATO allies. These are of uneven quality, are deployed substantially in accordance with national preferences, and in many cases are only very contingently available for centralized NATO disposition; nonetheless, the absolute levels of non-U.S. NATO forces are impressive. Laurence Martin, a noted British authority on NATO strategy, has observed: “In terms of output, the balance between the United States and the Europeans is not nearly so unfavourable to the latter as often supposed. In the European theater and surrounding oceans European mem-

bers of NATO provide 90% of the ground forces, 90% of the armoured division[s], 80% of the tanks, 80% of combat aircraft and 70% of combat naval vessels. Europe’s military manpower numbers some 3 million active forces and 3 million reservists; the corresponding figure for the United States is 2 million active and 1 million reserve.”¹⁵ Whether or not the NATO-Europeans are doing as much as they could or should, and allowing for the inflation of numbers caused by including almost strategically irrelevant Turkish and Italian forces, it is quite evident that the European allies of the United States are not just lightly armed; neither have they downgraded their defense establishments in recent years.

As recently as 1977-78 the United States, emphasizing its continental European commitment, secured formal NATO-wide adherence to a long-term defense program (LTDP) that required a steady 3 percent annual increase in real defense expenditure. The fall of the Shah of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan seemed to redirect U.S. geopolitical focus upon the military implications of instability in the Persian Gulf region and to place at some risk the absolute priority to which NATO-European countries believed they were entitled in U.S. military planning. In practice, the European emphasis in U.S. military policy in 1977-78 was as shallow in its roots as the Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf focus of 1979-80. The former reflected the calculation that the defense of Europe was domestically the least controversial of the distant missions of the armed forces; the latter was an instrument of diplomatic signaling.¹⁶

Since 1979-80, NATO-Europe has witnessed a U.S. policy shift from the changing regional emphases of the Carter years to a far more global perspective, reflected in a major reemphasis upon maritime power. The 1980s have seen the demise of SALT II and the abrupt reemergence of U.S. official commitment to strategic defense. Closer to home for Europeans, the U.S. Army has formally adopted (1981-82) in its new AirLand Battle doctrine an approach to warfare that revives long-standing anxieties over both the quality of U.S. commitment to defend West German territory far forward and U.S. willingness to expand promptly the geographical scope of a conflict in central Europe.¹⁷ Europeans are nervous about the proclaimed emphasis of AirLand Battle on “elastic” defense-in-depth, operational maneuver, and offensive action. The associated, though distinctive, strategic preference of SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe) for follow-on forces attack (FOFA)—adopted in November 1984—raises many of the same anxieties in NATO-European minds.¹⁸

The merit of shifts in U.S. military policy over the past several years is not the issue here. The point is that a NATO-Europe perennially concerned about change in the political-military architecture of its regional security has had to accommodate major changes (and essentially unilateral ones: Alliance consultation has ranged from none on the SDI to close and continuous in INF negotiations), changes in U.S. foreign policy

rhetoric; the regional battle doctrine of the U.S. Army; the strategy of the U.S. Navy; U.S. strategic-forces doctrine (the implications of the SDI for an "SDIskey" and hence for the U.S. strategic-nuclear extended deterrent); and U.S. policy on strategic arms control.

The reasons for western European and Japanese adherence to their American security connection are as robust and enduring as is the geopolitical basis for the hostility between the United States and Soviet Union. Americans determined to recast the political and military postures of the non-Communist world are frequently frustrated by the skepticism or even frank disinclination of their allies. But the general commitment of so large a fraction of "the global product" to the American side of the scales of international order is a massive and enduring (short of upset by Soviet intimidation or conquest) source of strength in support of the principal Western guardian of international security.

There is, however, a persisting tension within the NATO Alliance caused by the growing number of "out of (NATO) area" security duties accepted by the United States in its role as global superpower, as opposed to its more narrow role as alliance-principal. There is no little irony in this situation. Through the late 1940s, the 1950s, and even the early 1960s, it was the out-of-area security and prestige responsibilities of Britain and France that were major sources of tension within the alliance. Whatever may or may not be desirable geopolitically for the West in the littoral area announced by Zbigniew Brzezinski to constitute an "arc of crisis" (from the Horn of Africa to the Indian subcontinent),¹⁹ this is a region of which American policymakers are exceptionally ignorant. Given that the American way in strategy has always—generally of geographical necessity—been about logistics, and that "space [distance] determined the American way in war, space and the means to conquer space,"²⁰ observers need no general staff training to appreciate that U.S. strategic reach into the Persian Gulf area is exceptionally tenuous. The U.S. Navy of 1979-80 could not simultaneously have held NATO's northern and western flanks, supported its southern flank in the Mediterranean, defended Japan and encouraged China, and also projected power into and from the Arabian Sea. There are grounds for wondering whether the more global strategy of the last Carter year and of the Reagan administration has military integrity, even with the expansion of the U.S. Navy that has been funded in the 1980s.²¹ But there is no doubt that the violent dismantling of the U.S.-blessed 1970s order in the Gulf has revealed a severe problem for American military power, either of strategy or of means.

In principle, the NATO-European allies have not been unsympathetic to the out-of-area problems of their superpower ally.²² Indeed, France and Britain have both retained some supervisory roles in particular regions of traditional interest and political competence: France in west-central Africa and Britain in the littoral states of the Gulf. But NATO-Europe does

not wish to be demoted in American geopolitical textbooks and strategic plans to the status of just one region among many that may need U.S. military assistance, or to see the United States husbanding its military power in North American geostrategic reserve to be available flexibly for application as circumstances evolve or erupt around Eurasia-Africa. The NATO allies understand that the U.S. continental commitment in Europe, once abandoned, could be very difficult to restore. (Their view is reminiscent of French statecraft vis-à-vis the British in 1938-40.)²³

In global perspective for the United States, the NATO Alliance is a strong net plus, but one should not neglect the "net" while appreciating the "plus." Notwithstanding their demographic and economic strength with respect to the United States and the Soviet Union,²⁴ the NATO-Europeans persist purposively in providing local defense capability at a level sufficiently low that a major U.S. regional contribution remains essential for the balance of power. That contribution severely inhibits the American ability to design and fund the strategy and forces most suitable for a truly global security system. In addition to the possible "skewing" effect of the preponderant European commitment upon the balance of U.S. armed forces,²⁵ the NATO allies typically function as a policy brake upon what they regard as prospective U.S. adventures out of the NATO area. NATO-Europe has been less than empathetic to American concerns about Central America (a region about which NATO-Europeans tend to be as abysmally ignorant as are Americans of the southern and central Asian areas where British and Russian agents used to play the Great Game). Moreover, NATO-Europe remains generically uneasy about the ability of the United States to perform with minimal policy competence (with respect to European perceptions of European interests) in the Middle East, given the political nexus that binds Washington to Jerusalem. And NATO-Europe is always anxious lest the United States imperil the quiet security life enjoyed generally in postwar Europe, either by withdrawing much of the transatlantic military underpinning of that life in order to pursue more pressing global security duties elsewhere, or by generating tensions out of area that would spill over to the heavily political structure of security in Europe.

The Free World Alliance, as an earlier generation of political commentators termed it, is in no serious danger of jumping ship, provided the United States behaves internationally in a manner that European and Asian allies consider compatible with their survival and vital interests. The Asian allies know that for many years to come the structure of their security problems allows no attractive alternative to ultimate dependence upon the United States. NATO-Europe and Japan know that they probably cannot improve their security condition by seeking to build strictly regional security structures for the balancing of Soviet power, at least in the short run (and history is a series of short runs).²⁶ They know also that

strictly national-unilateral security courses would entice Soviet regional hegemony by installments: the degree of political freedom enjoyed by Finland, constrained though it is, is the product of the weight of NATO-allied or NATO-leaning countries behind Finland.

The true source of the perennial complaint by Americans that their allies are not pulling their weight in the common military enterprise is geopolitical. The political cohesion, and hence the combined deterrent effect, of the NATO Alliance is constantly weakened by American dissatisfaction with the military performance of its allies.²⁷ This dissatisfaction is founded upon legitimate concerns. Americans have difficulty understanding why they should shoulder what appears to be a disproportionately large share of the common defense burden, given a general agreement on the military threat and no great asymmetries in economic ability among the allies to bear defense costs.²⁸ Yet all the allies of the United States are net consumers of security produced by the United States. In vain, many Americans look for tangible expressions of gratitude.

It is a political fact of life that a small country in an alliance among countries of very different size will contribute to the common defense to a disproportionately modest degree. The highly unofficial terms of the Western Alliance hold that the medium-sized smaller members must expend enough effort to satisfy U.S. domestic opinion.²⁹ In European perspective, enough must be done to soften the impact of American complaints that the allies are enjoying a free ride in security. At the same time, NATO-Europeans have always been aware that their likely reward, should they achieve a first-class local defense capability, would be a belief in the United States that Europe no longer needed substantial forward deployment of American forces. In short, NATO-Europe knows it must do enough, but not too much.

It is exceedingly unlikely that NATO-Europe will ever satisfy American desiderata for ideal security partners. A relatively small country in peacetime alliance with a very large country will rarely find persuasive reasons to expend more as opposed to less effort upon military preparation. The only exceptions pertain to political assessment of what is needed to keep the larger country tolerably satisfied, and to threats quite aside from the business of the alliance. Americans should know this as a perpetual historical truth, but they still have difficulty understanding the perspectives of much smaller countries. For example, if Denmark were to double the percentage of its GNP devoted to defense functions, from 2.3 to 4.6 percent, would Denmark be any more secure? It is virtually impossible for small countries in a greatly unequal alliance to relate even very substantial changes in levels of defense effort to their security. In recent centuries small countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands have not

endeavored to build national military deterrents to aggression; their security has had to rest upon the protection offered by the balance-of-power system as a whole.³⁰ Security is a "collective good" that the United States cannot either generally withhold or reduce in a finely calibrated fashion in the event of underperformance by smaller allies.

The medium-sized powers of NATO—West Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and France—each has unique historical parameters guiding the kind and scale of its military preparations. Apart from being constrained by the terms of its accession to the Western European Union in 1954, West Germany is all too well aware of the genuine sensitivities both west and east concerning its military capabilities. Politically speaking, the West German military contribution to NATO could be increased very markedly only in the context of a general increase in all NATO defenses—meaning that the relative scale of the German military effort would not alter very noticeably. Readers should recall that former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt insisted in 1979 that his country's acceptance of new intermediate-range nuclear missiles was contingent upon their acceptance also by two other NATO-European countries, one of which had to be continental.³¹

The size of the British defense effort, trending upward from 5 toward 6 percent of GNP, is sufficiently close to American practice as to invite no adverse notice. The Italian defense effort is modest by medium-power NATO standards, though readily understandable in terms of Italian geopolitics. The Italian Army has had long-standing problems of unbalanced manpower-to-equipment budgets and uncertain political reliability. Even if Italian land and tactical air forces were greatly increased, their potential utility to NATO as a whole would be severely constrained. Indirectly at least, a larger and more competent Italian maritime and maritime-air capability could be of considerable value to NATO by reducing the U.S. Navy's need to maintain so substantial a presence in the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet. However, neither the countries of NATO's southern flank nor America's security clients in the Middle East would be at all enthusiastic over any noteworthy substitution of Italian for American military presence.

French defense policy has been directed for twenty years by the explicit, limited concern to protect the frontiers of France. Anything else is forward defense of those frontiers or, with the *force d'intervention*, protection of traditional French political, commercial, and cultural interests in Africa (largely). The character and scale of the French defense effort is related implicitly to French assessment of the freedom of action accorded by the NATO shield; French governments understand very well indeed that the quality of French security cannot be determined unilaterally. But France has endeavored to provide itself with a distinctive military—particularly nuclear-military—profile intended to permit the country a

distinctive role in European security matters; the aspiration persists that even in war the Soviet Union might just treat France in a uniquely cautious fashion. By removing itself in 1966 from the unified military command structure of NATO, though not from the alliance in a political sense, France took itself out of the column of comparative defense effort.³² It should be recalled that the long-standing French rationale for military disengagement from NATO has been the judgment that NATO unduly constricted France with respect to its ability both to play a uniquely French role in international security and to provide prudently for the protection of its distinctive vital and survival interests.³³

NATO-European countries will never voluntarily sanction, or develop the necessary forces for an alliance strategy projecting the plausible defeat of a Warsaw Pact military offensive strictly within the European theater of operations.³⁴ NATO-Europeans are variably, though residually, nervous about formal and implicit American commitments to the employment of homeland-based U.S. strategic nuclear forces on behalf of distant allies, but they are even more disquieted by U.S.-authored plans to improve NATO's ability to impose a regional defeat on pact forces. The allies of the United States do not want to be defended successfully; even less do they take a comfort from distant and highly implausible prospects of liberation. Rather, they want war of any kind to be deterred. The new operational maneuver doctrine of the U.S. Army (AirLand Battle), SHAPE's preferred FOFA design, U.S. official interest in an antitactical missile component for a weaponized SDI, and the whole thrust of the U.S. defense community toward new smart technologies for battlefield application and for deep-strike interdiction of Soviet second-echelon armies are all of deep concern to a NATO-Europe worried that new defense capability may undermine the familiar if incredible structure of deterrence.³⁵

This is to deny neither the national variations in doctrinal preference among the European allies nor the salience of the factor of affordability. Gen. Bernard Rogers has claimed that the FOFA option can be purchased by NATO if the 1978 LTDP guideline of 3 percent per annum in real growth in defense expenditure is increased to 4 percent. Since even 3 percent has proved beyond reach of sustained achievement,³⁶ the prospects are not glittering for a NATO-European 4 percent real-growth rate in support of an unpopular doctrine.

In political fact, the European allies of the United States favor a multilateral defense structure that commits the United States to local combat in the field from the outset³⁷—which at every hypothetical level of violence opens up more and more plausible visions of explosive escalation, and which would not likely be able to contain a Pact theater-operational offensive *à outrance*. The seemingly perpetual irritation within NATO on the subjects of strategy in general and fair levels of defense effort and the

roles of nuclear weapons in particular pertain at root to the geopolitics of the alliance. As observed earlier, the United States has a vital but not a strictly survival quality of interest in Europe—at least not an *immediate* survival quality. This means that a U.S. government responsible for its society, and at the same time seeking to devise and sustain a workable national security policy, cannot credibly promise *survival*-level military action on behalf of only *vital* interests. Armageddon may ensue from armed conflict in Europe, but the United States credibly and prudently cannot and should not commit itself to a course of military action that must, if ever executed, produce such an outcome. To state the matter with brutal frankness, the stakes are not high enough; Europe is not worth "Apocalypse Now" for the United States.³⁸

The inevitable tension within a strategy simultaneously believed to be most efficacious for the deterrence of war yet nationally intolerable if ever implemented has been alleviated by what might be called creative ambiguity. Ambiguity over the use of nuclear weapons certainly should generate a healthy uncertainty in the minds of Soviet defense planners. However, that ambiguity also expresses both a quite genuine confusion and a psychological process of denial in Western minds. In short, one lives with a potentially intolerable contradiction—a strategy for deterrence that one could not face in action—by the familiar device of choosing not to admit the contradiction. Indeed, NATO has elevated confusion and contradiction to the status of valued principle, dignified by the terms "ambiguity" and "uncertainty."³⁹

NATO's authoritative strategic concept of flexible response reflects both the diversity of locally identified survival interests within the alliance and the inevitable imprint of the "free-rider" phenomenon. Moreover, the evolution of U.S. strategic nuclear policy since the design of the first fully integrated strategic war plan in 1960⁴⁰ shows a sensible appreciation of U.S. self-interest in escalation control; a prudent regard for the necessity of providing for early war termination; and at least some regard for the adverse trends in the multilevel East-West military balance. The persistent refusal of NATO-European countries to accept a scale of conventional, chemical, and battlefield/theater-nuclear defense burdens that could greatly diminish the deterrent, counterdeterrent, and deterrence-restoration (or compellent) functions of U.S. strategic nuclear forces means that a noticeable element in the evolution of NATO-wide defense policy has been a refinement in the publicly advertised character of the "backstopping" U.S. strategic nuclear threat.⁴¹

On many different grounds there is a strong case for a strategic targeting policy that provides for considerable discrimination.⁴² However, it is paradoxical that the thrust toward greater flexibility has fed latent European fears of dangerous American behavior—even though that thrust has been driven in good part by the American desire to sustain

the value of strategic forces as compensation for theater deficiencies. During the 1980s, U.S. policymakers have shifted increasingly toward an explicit "war-fighting" theory. This shift expresses recognition of the incredibility of heavily punitive threats as a means of effective extended deterrence in a context of rough strategic parity.⁴³ On the one hand, it is attractive to NATO-Europeans not to have to pay the economic price that would enable them to answer for their own security in the last resort. On the other hand, the European dependence inherent in the contemporary military arrangements of NATO puts the security destiny of western Europe in the hands of an American president an ocean away.

Rights and duties obtain on both sides of the Atlantic. From time to time NATO-Europeans complain about the absence of American leadership, clarity of purpose, and firmness of policy application, but—understandably—NATO-Europe favors U.S. leadership, clarity, and firmness only with respect to the policy directions that it prefers. Europeans want to be led only where they wish to go. As the net security producer vis-à-vis all other members of the alliance, the United States has the right to insist that it should have the largest say, and certainly the initiative function, in alliance-wide military policy. However, the duty that attends the leadership role—a tacit condition for European acquiescence in decisions that European countries view with less than wholehearted enthusiasm—is that the United States should not expose the alliance as a whole to needless military dangers (in the judgment, accurate or otherwise, of Europeans).

The unique style of the United States in its approach to international relations combines with the trans-oceanic geography of the alliance, the enduring major differences in military power among members, and the immediate eastward concern of Bonn,⁴⁴ to produce serious and permanent problems of system maintenance for NATO. If governed with tolerable competence, the Soviet Union will always be able to play upon NATO-European fear that the United States cannot be trusted not to behave in a manner reckless of security and peace in Europe. In addition, Soviet leaders can invoke the theme of "we Europeans" among countries sensitive both to the fact that the United States is not a European power and to the proposition that U.S. defense commitments to forward-placed allies would count for little if the American homeland were believed to be "on the line."⁴⁵

This book is not pessimistic about the future of NATO. Nor does it suggest that basic choices in U.S. national security policy should be greatly influenced by the possibility that allies and peacetime friends will serve themselves first in moments of crisis, should they believe they have that choice. To notice that many allies cannot fully be trusted to adhere to the common cause under all circumstances is merely to notice the ob-

vious. All alliances are alliances of convenience. The strength of the alliance structure led by the United States is that it rests upon a secure foundation of common interests. Those common geostrategic interests are sufficient to permit NATO to weather storms over a Soviet gas pipeline, over unfair trading practices, over deployment of intermediate-range land-based missiles,⁴⁶ and—looking to the future—even over the shaping of a weaponized SDI.⁴⁷ But should individual allies ever come to believe that strategic disassociation from the alliance would offer a real chance to evade nuclear damage that would otherwise seem inevitable (as opposed to merely possible) then all predictions of comradely staunchness would have to be revised.

George Washington's advice—that the "great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little *political* connection as possible"⁴⁸—was as practical for the nineteenth century as it has been impractical for the very different geostrategic circumstances of the twentieth. Moreover, as Selig Adler has pointed out: "The isolationism of the Revolutionary Era possessed a dynamic quality that men of the future failed to perceive. The earliest Presidents guided the destiny of a weak and untried republic, striving to make its mark in a warring, unfriendly, and monarchical world.... The Founding Fathers would have been startled to learn that later generations, speaking in their name, would use non-intervention and neutrality to escape the grim realities of *Machtpolitik*. Strategies formulated by the Fathers as the means of statecraft became in time the final goals of American diplomacy."⁴⁹

Adler was writing at the floodtide of national confidence in the American Century, in the mid-1950s (but pre-Sputnik). Thoughtful conservatives and liberals in the 1980s, chastened though no longer overwhelmed by the U.S. adventure in Vietnam, are not as dismissive of the policy sense in all variants of "the isolationist impulse" as was fashionable among national security sophisticates in the 1950s and most of the 1960s. Very much a sign of the times is an article titled "Do We Still Need Europe?" written by Eliot Cohen, a well-respected young conservative scholar. In keeping with the more globalist and maritime focus of contemporary U.S. military policy, Cohen argues that "broadly speaking, three changes have occurred over the history of the Atlantic alliance": he cites, or alleges, "Europe's relative decline as a strategic stake and asset in the competition with the Soviet Union"; he claims "that Europe has become more of a strategic liability to the United States, less for reasons intrinsic to Europe than because of transformations elsewhere"; and he asserts that "from the point of view of strategic geography it is the flanks of NATO that are becoming increasingly important."⁵⁰

Cohen's argument is carefully reasoned and nonpolemical; it eschews oversimplified strategy choices (maritime versus continental, Atlantic

versus Pacific). Rather, it promotes the increasingly popular view that the military arrangements of the alliance have failed to evolve in response to a changing security environment.⁵¹ The U.S. ability to behave appropriately as a global power, Cohen alleges, is needlessly constrained by the biasing effect upon force posture of a European Central Front focus that is no longer warranted, given the economic and political recovery of western Europe, the evolution of the Soviet threat, and the emergence of new threats to Western security far outside the NATO region.⁵²

There is a significant emergence on the American Right of explicitly strategic, pragmatic critiques that doubt the security sense for the United States of the long-traditional allocation of defense burdens among NATO members. Many of the critics are not obviously persons suffering from any delayed form of a Vietnam syndrome, are not nostalgic (neo)isolationists, and are not romantic unilateralists. In their view the "don't rock the boat" sentiment that is the standard response of American and European "Atlanticists" to proposals—however constructive—for change in NATO strategy, command organization, or distribution of burdens will no longer suffice: "Military logic suggests the peculiarity (at the very least) of a strategy which relies heavily on the appearance within a week of massive armies from a power thousands of miles distant from the main battle front. Such a dependence is as politically unhealthy as it is militarily tenuous. The primary responsibility for Europe's defense on the ground must rest with Europeans."⁵³

One must also recognize the possibility that novel dangers, as yet unforeseen, may emerge. Readers might consider as a cautionary tale the history of European diplomacy following the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. *In retrospect*, as always, it is plain that the Hapsburg menace to the balance of power was very much a spent force by the 1650s.⁵⁴ However, to Britain and the Dutch Republic, the rising maritime powers of the time, this truth was not so plain. Hence, history records Cromwell's England joining France in alliance against Spain in 1657 and thus contributing usefully to the promotion of France as an overly great power.⁵⁵ It is possible that a century from now the balance-of-power problem for the United States will be not the Soviet Union but a Sino-Japanese alliance.⁵⁶ Halford Mackinder wrote of this possibility,⁵⁷ and Nicholas Spykman believed in the superior power of the Rimland over the Heartland.⁵⁸

A weak China and a weak Japan are not desirable for the United States within the current framework of security relations. Ideally, China and Japan, separately or together, should pose a second-front problem—of dimensions arguing strongly against military boldness in Europe or the Middle East—for Soviet military planners. But a newly powerful China and/or Japan would be certain to have significant impact upon the very structure of the current international order.

Near-term Soviet purpose is capable of almost infinite variation as

security circumstances alter. A Soviet Union that could sign the Brest-Litovsk (1918) and Molotov-Ribbentrop (1939) treaties is certainly capable under duress, of finding tactical common cause with the United States—yet again. Nevertheless, the principal thesis of this book, that the United States has a permanent security problem or condition with the Soviet empire, is not weakened noticeably by this brief consideration of the threat that one day might be posed by China and Japan. Because it is rooted in a conflictual worldview, the character of Soviet power and purpose is most unlikely to alter in a benign direction.

U.S. policymakers need to ask themselves whether or not the terms and conditions of the NATO Alliance are altering to so great an extent that muddling through may be the most prudent course to adopt. It is possible that the putative benefits of a restructuring of responsibilities within the alliance could be of less significance than would the risks that must attend such a venture. What benign consequences for U.S. security should follow a restructuring that would free U.S. ground forces from anything approximating their current European continental commitment? The United States should be able to plan for peripheral expeditionary warfare on a far more substantial and reliable basis than is possible at present—but that increased flexibility in force employment would have to be considered in its full geopolitical context. If greater U.S. freedom to pursue a maritime-peripheral strategy were purchased, albeit unwittingly, at the price of the collapse of the Western Alliance structure, then the maritime strategy would not offer satisfactory security.⁵⁹ To realize anything approximating its potential in threat and in action, maritime power requires that the principal enemy should not be securely preponderant on land. Furthermore, the use—not just the denial of use to the Soviet Union—of Rimland territory is, and will long remain, critical to the neutralization of Soviet maritime power.

U.S. policymakers have recurring difficulty reconciling the frequently divergent needs of the internal political management with the external security function of the alliance. European allies whose domestic politics reflect and express a fear of Soviet military power that is not matched in an insular United States an ocean away (albeit only minutes by ballistic missile) tend to be willing to sacrifice the military integrity of NATO's full strategy and defense posture in the interest of controlling actual or predicted political tensions with the East. The strategic purpose of NATO is to deny the Soviet Union hegemony over all of Europe. But satisfactory pursuit of that high purpose requires some degree of political solidarity within the alliance. The European members of NATO are concerned to shift as much of the burden of the common defense to the United States as the political traffic will bear—a universal motive in alliance politics—but are also determined that the United States should not press a strategy or posture upon the alliance which, no matter how

intelligent in strictly military terms, might increase the Soviet political incentive to attack. Conceivably, a point could come when, in official American estimation, the European need for reassurance against war would threaten to undermine fatally the ability of the alliance to fulfill its overriding, antihegemonic strategic purpose of balancing Soviet military power.

Plainly, allies are a mixed blessing. Geopolitical argument is important both to discipline NATO critics who assert falsely that the United States as alliance leader is foolishly engaged in a dangerous and protracted act of charity, and to bring down to earth NATO advocates who are enamored of the alliance for reasons no more solid than those of sentiment or habit.

The Course of Soviet Empire

In common with its systemic complement, balance-of-power analysis,¹ geopolitical analysis is impartial as between one or another political system or philosophy. This book is decidedly partial in that I am interested in advancing the security interests of the Western world in general and the United States in particular.

The Soviet Union is identified overwhelmingly as the principal direct and indirect source of security problems for the West at the present time. However, it should be understood that this focus upon the Soviet adversary is entirely a matter of historical circumstance. Viewed in historical perspective, the Soviet state is not uniquely wicked in its political practices; indeed, neither the despotic character of the Soviet state nor the unlovable nature of Russian political culture merit particular Western security attention. The Soviet state and Russian political culture dominate the adversary column in this analysis strictly because the growth of Soviet imperial power happens to threaten the balance-of-power system that protects Western and U.S. interests. Had this book been written fifty or eighty years ago, the focus of concern would have been upon Germany. Fifty or a hundred years from now the focus may need to be upon China and Japan.

A systemic level of analysis should not incline a commentator to be indifferent to the strategic cultures of particular states, just as prescriptive analysis should not be confused with descriptive analysis.² Balance-of-power theory yields persuasive propositions concerning what states should do in order to maintain their independence. It is a theory of stability for the independence of states in an essentially anarchic world. Furthermore, the prescriptive theory of the balance of power rests upon an impressive empirical record of actual balancing behavior. Nonetheless, states do not always do what they should do, at least not in good time.³ History is replete with examples of states and empires that balanced too little and too late—or even too much: by creating intolerable insecurity problems for others, states can fall victim to the consequences of malperformance in their response to the classical security dilemma.